

Officials aim to begin work on 'Cross Alameda Trail' across Island

By Peter Hegarty

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ALAMEDA -- A bicycle and walking path that would stretch from the city's West End to the Fruitvale Bridge will move a little closer to reality if city officials can secure a grant to help start building it.

The grant would go toward creating a 2,300-foot stretch of the "Cross Alameda Trail" along Ralph Appezato Memorial Parkway between Webster and Poggi streets. A dirt strip now hugs the road as it borders the College of Alameda.

"You could not ask for a better project," said Gail Payne, transportation coordinator with the city's Public Works Department. "This part of the trail will link Alameda Point with Webster Street. It will also help the neighborhood because it's considered a low-income area compared to others in Alameda."

The site is near one of Webster Street's busiest intersections and was once part of the Alameda Beltline, the former railroad property set to become a city park.

When completed, the Cross Alameda Trail will begin on Main Street near the former Alameda Naval Air Station, travel along the former railroad and end on Tilden Way at the Fruitvale Bridge. It would be part of the San Francisco Bay Trail, the network that will eventually provide a continuous path around the bay shoreline.

"I am a fan of any open space," said Marlene Forestel, 26, as she walked on Webster Street near where city officials are hoping to begin work on the Alameda trail. "It preserves what we have for future generations, which is especially important in a place like the Bay Area where land is a precious commodity."

The stretch of path is projected to cost about \$991,000, Payne said.

City officials are seeking an approximately \$793,000 grant from the Alameda County Transportation Commission to help offset most of the cost, while the remainder of the money would come from city developer fees.

The grant would be partly funded through Measure B, the half-cent sales tax measure that Alameda County voters passed in November 2000 to pay for transportation work.

City officials expect to know by June if their project will receive the grant.

The effort to secure the money comes as Alameda Recreation and Park District officials are gathering in on what residents would like to see at the former railroad property, which will be known as the Jean Sweeney Open Space Preserve.

proposed path near College of Alameda, are part of the property and are scattered across the city. On Tuesday, trustees with the Alameda Unified School District passed a resolution supporting the Cross Alameda Trail, saying it offered "many inherent benefits for the community."

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