

SACOG Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Program

Humbug-Willow Creek/Lake Natoma Bikeway Gap Closure Project
Blue Ravine Road bike/pedestrian undercrossing to the Lake Natoma Trail

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The City of Folsom, in partnership with the State Parks Department and the Bureau of Reclamation, is requesting funds to construct the last trail segment in the 16-mile Humbug-Willow Creek Trail system and design a bicycle and pedestrian crossing over Folsom Blvd. at Humbug-Willow Creek. The trail project is referred to as the Humbug-Willow Creek trail, from the bike/pedestrian undercrossing at Blue Ravine Road to the Lake Natoma Trail. The project will include 4,000 linear feet of Class I trail and two bike/pedestrian bridges to cross Humbug-Willow Creek in two locations along the route. This project is a much needed segment of the Humbug-Willow Creek Trail because it fills the last gap in the 16-mile corridor and makes the long awaited connection between a newly constructed under-crossing at Blue Ravine Road and the Lake Natoma trail. The project will also include two formalized trail connections to the Lake Forest Technical center, which is a major employment center in Folsom, with over 5,000 employees. The three largest employers within the center include, Western Area Power Association (WAPA), California ISO and Video Products Distributors (VPD).

The second part of the project includes the preparation of plans, specifications and construction estimates for a bike/pedestrian overcrossing at Folsom Blvd. and Humbug Creek. The bike/pedestrian overcrossing is planned to cross the new light rail line and provide a much-needed grade separated crossing of Folsom Boulevard. The overcrossing would be designed to include two connector ramps that provide connections with the existing Class I trail system on the west and east sides of Folsom Blvd. The overcrossing will also provide direct non-motorized access between two large employment centers, the Lake Forest Technical center, Parkshore Plaza and the new light rail station at Glenn Drive. The crossing will support access to a planned smart growth community – the anticipated Transit Orientated Development (TOD) abutting the Glenn Drive Light Rail Station. In 2004 the City was awarded funding from the Community Design program to undertake a detailed planning process to implement a TOD at the Glenn Drive Light rail station. The bike and pedestrian over-crossing is needed to support the access needs to the new light rail station and will ultimately be a gateway for Sacramento County residents, Folsom residents and Glenn Drive LRT users to access the mix of land uses and opportunities as described below.

First, residents on the east side of Folsom Blvd and surrounding areas will be able to have safe non-auto access to retail, commercial and employment opportunities on the west side of Folsom Blvd. Second, residents of Sacramento County who bike to and within Folsom area from the Lake Natoma and Humbug-Willow Creek Trail will have safe non-auto access to the residential , retail and employment centers on the east side of Folsom Blvd. Third, the over-crossing will reinforce the opportunity for Folsom and Sacramento County residents to commute by alterative modes between the Glenn Drive LRT station and the residential and employment areas on the east side of Folsom Blvd, and the retail commercial/employment area's on the west side of Folsom Blvd.

The City of Folsom has already developed approximately 23 miles of Class I trails with an additional 25 miles planned in the next 5 years. The ultimate goal of the City is to provide a seamless system of Class I bikeways that enable convenient access to the east side and west side of

Folsom Blvd. and that eliminate the hazards posed by an at-grade crossing of Folsom Boulevard.

COMMITMENTS IN PLACE:

Over the last 5 years the City of Folsom has been working closely with both the State Fish and Game Department and State Parks to secure the property needed to construct this last segment of the Humbug-Willow Creek trail. The City of Folsom and the Fish & Game Department worked out a land transfer so that a trail could be constructed. The City agreed to provide 24 acres of city owned open space to Fish and Game in exchange for 9 acres of land from Fish & Game. It was a win, win for both parties. Fish & Game received 24 acres of open space continuous to 34 acres of existing Fish & Game property and the City received the 9 acres necessary to construct the trail.

The City has also been working closely with the State Parks Department to secure the necessary property to connect the proposed trail segment with their existing Lake Natoma Trail, which connects to the American River trail at Hazel Ave. State Parks is very much in support of this connection and has included a letter of support for the project.

The City is very committed to this project and has worked very hard to secure the necessary property to complete the trail and we are now ready to complete the design and construction of this important bikeway. This project is literally the last unfunded segment of the 16-mile Humbug-Willow Creek trail system. All of the adjacent infrastructure is in place, including a new undercrossing at Blue Ravine Road to the east and the existing Lake Natoma Trail to the west, and this section of trail fills that gap.

With regards to the proposed overcrossing at Folsom Blvd., all the necessary property needed for the project has been secured by the City. The overcrossing project is ready to move ahead with design. The trail segments at both ends of the proposed connector ramps are in place and the light rail station at Glenn Drive is completed with bike lockers and racks.

The project supports the Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Program Goals in the following ways:

Provide bicycle or pedestrian connections:

As mentioned in the introduction, the proposed trail will provide direct access to two large employment centers, which have in excess of 5,000 employees adjacent to the trail. These centers include the Lake Forest Technical Center and Parkshore Plaza (home to version wireless, Cal ISO, WAPA, etc.). Filling this one gap will transform the Humbug-Willow Creek trail from a local trail to a regional facility connecting 4 trails together (Humbug-Willow Creek Trail, Folsom Parkway Rail Trail, Lake Natoma Trail and American River Trail).

This project is very fortunate to enable trail users to make a direct connection to the Lake Natoma Trail, which provides access to the American River trail which makes connections to several business districts along the 30-mile route. In addition to the connections to the regional trails along Lake Natoma and American River, it makes a direct connection to the new light rail station which provides access to many business centers along the 50-corridor.

This project will also enhance existing State Park opportunities by providing a non-motorized, non-

polluting access to the state park system from throughout the City. This particular trail segment provides direct access to major recreation destinations – The Folsom State Recreation Area, which includes such highlights as the Lake Natoma Trail, Nimbus Point, CSUS Aquatic Center and the American River Bike Trail and Negro Bar via the historic truss bridge.

The planned Folsom Blvd. overcrossing will provide a barrier free connection across Folsom Blvd. between the new Glenn Drive light rail station and the Lake Forest Technical Center. In the current condition it is very difficult to encourage new commuter cyclists to confront Folsom Blvd. The overcrossing would remove that barrier and make it much easier to encourage more people to commute by bike and access the amenities on both sides of Folsom Blvd.

Provide bicycle and pedestrian access within or through central business districts of the region:

The location of the proposed trail is developing into the central employment center of Folsom. There is approximately 1,000,000 sq feet of office space located within a half mile radius of the proposed trail gap closure project and would have direct bike access to the new trail and planned overcrossing at Folsom Blvd. A vacant 4.67 acre parcel on the NW corner of Blue Ravine Road and Folsom Blvd. has been approved for mixed development, including 6,500 sq feet of restaurant and 6,000 sq feet of retail. A Mel's Diner has already been constructed at this site and has outdoor seating and direct access to the Humbug-Willow Creek trail. As mentioned previously, two of the largest employment centers, Lake Forest Technical Center and Parkshore Plaza have in excess of 5,000 employees and are located adjacent to the trail and overcrossing being proposed for funding.

As mentioned earlier, the proposed overcrossing will also support access to a planned smart growth community – the anticipated Transit Oriented Development (TOD) abutting the Glenn Drive light rail station with mixed use commercial, retail and residential. The ultimate goal of the proposed bike/pedestrian overcrossing is threefold; 1) to remove the current barrier that Folsom Blvd. creates for pedestrians and cyclists; and 2) to provide a seamless trail that enables convenient access to the east and west sides of Folsom Blvd. and, 3) to eliminate the hazards posed by an at-grade crossing of Folsom Blvd. Currently, there are approximately 40,000 vehicles per day that travel on Folsom Blvd through the Parkshore Drive and Woodmere Road intersections and that number will only increase.

Fill in gaps on existing, planned or proposed interregional bicycle or pedestrian routes:

As mentioned in the project title, the purpose of this project is to fill the last gap in the 16-mile Humbug-Willow Creek trail and finally make the connection between three other regional trails. Filling this 4,000-foot gap fulfills the long term goal of the City and State Parks to integrate the many on-street and off-street bikeways into a comprehensive network, linking homes with major destinations including employment centers, public transit and regional connections to destinations as far away as downtown Sacramento. The planned Folsom Blvd. overcrossing further enhances the Humbug-Willow Creek trail by removing the barrier that Folsom Boulevard now creates and it compliments the new grade separated trail under-crossing at Blue Ravine Road, just 800-feet west of the proposed overcrossing.

It can't be emphasized enough how important filling this one gap will make in the overall use of the entire 16-mile Humbug-Willow Creek trail and the number of new users it will attract.

Provide bicycle and pedestrian access across barriers such as arterial roads, highways, freeways, rivers, canals, creeks and railroads:

A very important goal of this project is to eliminate the barrier that the new light rail line, Folsom Blvd. and Humbug-Willow Creek creates to the continuation of the trail and the connections it will make to the Lake Natoma Trail and to major destinations on both sides of the creek. A major element of this project is the construction of two bridges to cross Humbug-Willow Creek and provide a seamless connection to the Lake Natoma Trail. At the other end of the project, the trail provides a connection to a new under-crossing at Blue Ravine Road, which is a major arterial street carrying in excess of 30,000 vehicles per day.

The second element of the proposed project fulfills the ultimate goal of eliminating the barrier that Folsom Boulevard creates to cyclists wanting to cross Folsom Blvd and/or Humbug-Willow Creek to gain safe, convenient and direct access between the new light rail station at Glenn Drive on the east side of Folsom Boulevard and one of the largest employment centers in Folsom (Lake Forest Technical Center) on the west side. Currently, there are approximately 40,000 vehicles per day that travel on Folsom Boulevard through the Parkshore Drive and Woodmere Road intersections. The over-crossing will help eliminate the potential for vehicle/pedestrian/cyclist conflicts at these locations. Included in the total scope of the project, are two connector ramps that will connect with the existing Class I trail segments on the east and west sides of Folsom Blvd. The existing off-road Class I facility extends along Humbug-Willow Creek on the east side of Folsom Blvd and provides access to adjacent businesses and another trail referred to as the Folsom Parkway rail trail. On the west side, the path runs adjacent to the Lake Forest Technical Center and connects to the Lake Natoma and American River Parkway trail system.

Improve the time convenience of walking and bicycling, for example with shortcuts or special features such as bicycle boulevards:

The overriding intent of this project is encourage more people to utilize their bike and/or walk to places they currently drive, through a design that makes it the most convenient and direct as possible. The filling of this one gap in the Humbug-Willow Creek trail allows cyclists to save potentially 2 miles from their commute. Currently, the only bike access to the Lake Forest Technical center is from the Lake Natoma trail at Parkshore Dr. This connection is at the very north end of the center is not a convenient access for bike commuters. Even with the access to Parkshore, cyclists and pedestrians are still forced to contend with crossing Folsom Blvd. The gap closure project, in combination with the planned Folsom Blvd. overcrossing, provides a seamless connection from the Lake Natoma Trail to the Lake Forest Technical Center and to all the destinations on the west side of Folsom Blvd., with never having to contend with traffic on Folsom Blvd.

One other benefit this project offers is providing convenient pedestrian access for the 5,000 plus employees on the west side of Folsom Blvd to access the numerous restaurants on the east side. Currently, people are actually choosing to drive the short distance across Folsom Blvd rather than attempting to walk across Folsom Blvd. and deal with the traffic. The proposed project will eliminate the current barrier and provide a very convenient and pleasant route for pedestrians to walk “above” Folsom Blvd.

Improve the safety and security of walking and bicycling:

The overall project, specifically the proposed Folsom Blvd. overcrossing will improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians that currently have no other choice but to cross Folsom Blvd. at grade. As mentioned earlier, traffic volumes on Folsom Boulevard near the project site are in excess of 40,000 vehicles per day. In addition, peak intersection volumes at Folsom Blvd/Parkshore Drive and Folsom Blvd/Woodmere Road are even higher. The recent opening of the three light rail stations has increased the peak volumes on Folsom Blvd as people access the Park & Ride lots in the morning and afternoon hours.

The ability to provide a complete separation between the Class I trail and Folsom Blvd. in this location is critical to encouraging more people to start using their bike to commute. The current conditions on Folsom Blvd make it very difficult to encourage new bike riders. The overcrossing will provide a seamless connection between the Humbug-Willow Creek trail and the new light rail station, encouraging more people to choose their bike in place of their car. With the ever increasing traffic in and around Folsom, the addition of a seamless grade separated bike facility like the one being proposed could actually enable a bike commuter to reach their destination faster than someone driving their car.

Provides an aesthetic, pleasant or more comfortable biking or walking experience:

What makes this project truly unique is that the proposed trail will be routed through former Fish & Game property that is densely wooded and has remained untouched since the early days of mining along Humbug-Willow Creek, but at the same time provides direct bikeway connections from the Lake Natoma Trail to the emerging central employment center of Folsom. You really get the best of both worlds. This project provides one of the most aesthetically pleasing bike commute routes in the City, while still being very direct and providing the necessary connections to attract the bike commuter. The pleasant and comfortable experience this trail provides will definitely encourage new commuter cyclists that were reluctant to start sharing the road with traffic on Folsom Blvd. A facility like this will help give the beginner cyclist the confidence to commute farther and to utilize both off-road and on-road bikeways in and around the Folsom area.

Provide capital facilities that support bicycling, such as storage, parking, or bike stations:

In anticipation of the proposed completion, the city has worked closely with Regional Transit to provide secure bike parking at the three new stations in Folsom, and specifically at the Glenn Drive station which is anticipated to have the largest bike ridership, in large part, do to the proposed gap closure project. The project also plans to add an information kiosk at proposed trail intersection with the Lake Natoma Trail. The kiosk will display light rail schedules, City and State Parks bike maps and other bike commuter related information.

Compliment projects funded with other regional or state sources such as Community Design or Safe Routes to School program, thereby improving bicycling and/or pedestrian access provided by those programs:

As stated earlier, in 2004 the City was awarded funding from the Community Design program to undertake a detailed planning process to implement a TOD at the Glenn Drive Light rail station. The bike and pedestrian over-crossing is a much needed element of the TOD to support the access needs to the new light rail station and will ultimately be a gateway for Sacramento County residents, Folsom residents and Glenn Drive LRT users to access the mix of land uses and opportunities in the area.

The City received Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation funding to construct the new undercrossing at Blue Ravine Road and trail extension to the planned overcrossing at Folsom Blvd. On the other side (eastside) of Folsom Blvd the City received Proposition 116 funding to construct the trail segment that extends from the planned ramp for the overcrossing at Folsom Blvd to the Glenn Drive light rail station. This project also included the construction of a 160-long bridge over Humbug-Willow Creek. This bridge was necessary to make the trail connection between the Glenn Drive light rail station and the planned bike/pedestrian overcrossing of Folsom Blvd.

All that is needed now is to fill the last gap....

Compliment bicycle and pedestrian plans and projects in an adjacent region:

The project is fortunate to cross jurisdictional lines, including the City of Folsom, State Parks Department and the Bureau of Reclamation. The proposed gap closer project is part of a comprehensive plan for the Lake Natoma Corridor including; City of Folsom, State Parks Department, Sacramento County and Bureau of Reclamation to provide seamless access along Lake Natoma with connections to adjacent jurisdictions. Some major elements of the plan already implemented include a bike/pedestrian overcrossing at Hwy 50, adjacent to Hazel Ave; completion of the Lake Natoma Trail, from Hazel Ave to the Historic Truss Bridge, and improved connection between the Lake Natoma Trail and the American River Trail at Hazel Ave. The final piece of this comprehensive network is the connection of the 16- mile Humbug-Willow Creek trail to the Lake Natoma Trail. Filling this gap opens up new opportunities for cyclists and pedestrians to access all the amenities and major destinations along the Lake Natoma, American River and Humbug-Willow Creek Trail corridors.

WHY THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE FUNDED

The City of Folsom, and the State Parks Department feels this is such a high priority that with all the other worthy high priority projects that need funding, this is the only project being submitted. The benefit of completing the last gap in the 16-mile Humbug-Willow Creek trail and finally making the connection with the lake Natoma Trail outweigh any other project on our list. The addition of the design of the overcrossing makes it an even more complete project and puts us in place to return for funds to construct the overcrossing with a very accurate cost estimate.

Folsom's current population is approximately 50,000 and the population numbers are expected to increase to 75,000 by the year 2015. In addition to providing a safe and scenic route for cyclists and pedestrians in Folsom, the project as mentioned, has regional connections to the American River Parkway and Lake Natoma bicycle trail. The State Park system, in this area, attracts more than 2-million visitors a year. It is anticipated that when the proposed project is completed and linked up with the state trail system, it is estimated to experience in excess of 400,000 users per year.

The Humbug-Willow Creek Parkway Master Plan (updated in March 1998) provides for a 16-mile trail system running from the El Dorado County to Lake Natoma and includes a future overcrossing of Folsom Blvd. This plan was developed through an ad-hoc committee of residents of Folsom, the City of Folsom Parks & Recreation, Public Works and Planning Departments. In addition, the City of Folsom passed Resolution No 7682 on October 25, 2005, pledging their full support of the Humbug-Willow Creek/Lake Natoma Bikeway Gap Closure Project, including the Folsom Blvd over-crossing.

Lastly, to show their support for this project a local business (HDR Engineering, Inc.) and two non-profit groups (Friends of Folsom Parkways, Folsom Area Bicycle Advocates) has committed to volunteer their time to assemble and install the information Kiosk proposed at the intersection of the Humbug-Willow Creek trail and the Lake Natoma Trail. The value of their labor is not significant in the overall cost of the project, but it shows the commitment the community is making toward completing this very important project. This same group of volunteers has volunteered their time on six volunteer bridge building projects along the Humbug-Willow Creek trail.