

Sabercat Trail Extension Frequently Asked Questions

The City of Fremont has held three (3) public meetings to review and collect input on the Sabercat Trail Extension Project. The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are an accumulation of common themes originating from public comments and concerns received over these three meetings.

To assist in finding a theme that concerns you, we have organized the FAQs in the following 10 themes in the following order:

- 1- Impacts on wildlife within Sabercat Historical Park
- 2- Best location for pedestrians and bicycles paths
- 3- Suggested I-680 overcrossing designs (bikeway connection options; Pine/Sabercat Road)
- 4- Crime inducement
- 5- Homeless inducement
- 6- Increase in fire risk
- 7- Reaching Ohlone College
- 8- Status of the Paleontological Museum
- 9- Preferred I-680 overcrossing design identification process
- 10- Risk related to the Hayward fault

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers:

1. **There are a variety of wildlife that use the habitat found within Sabercat Historical Park. The presence of additional people and the potential for path lighting may adversely affect their habitat and they may be inclined to cross the pedestrian/ bicycle bridge over I-680. How is the project addressing this?**

The Project is being designed to avoid sensitive habitat areas to the extent possible. This includes wetland, riparian, and native tree cover areas. These areas are most likely to attract wildlife for foraging and habitation. During construction, it is likely that wildlife may be disturbed by construction noise and presence of heavy equipment and self-relocate, but since the construction is anticipated to be relatively short in duration (less than a year in any one location), then it's likely that wildlife would re-establish easily. The bridge is positioned some distance from the more common migration corridors, such as waterways and riparian valleys; it is a hard-surface structure that would be over 600 feet long making it a deterrent for wildlife to cross without knowing what to anticipate on the other side. Wildlife species that have few predators, such as coyote, deer, foxes, racoons, and skunks have been known to be bold in traversing these types of human structures, albeit infrequently. This may be more likely during late night hours when few, if any, humans are using the facility.

The use of lighting on the trail and/or overcrossing structures has not been determined yet. Only downward lighting with shade shields to reduce light spilling beyond the trail areas would be considered to reduce impacts on adjacent habitat areas.

2. **Why wouldn't bicycles be diverted to on-roadway shoulder and/or paths? How can bicycle traffic co-exist on the Sabercat Creek Trail without disturbing pedestrians and families from enjoying the natural setting?**

The City is working on developing both a robust network of on-street bikeways and a robust trails network. On-street bikeways and trails provide cater to different types of cyclists and provide different types of experiences. Trails are an important type of bikeway facility to accommodate bicyclists of all ages and abilities who do not feel comfortable biking along higher speed roadways or through freeway interchanges. Trails also provide a different type of cycling experience by allowing users to enjoy natural surroundings.

In May 2021, the City initiated a formal feasibility study of improvements to the existing trail for safely accommodating increased usage resulting from the new trail extension. This includes consideration of small retaining structures along the trail to facilitate widening along with rehabilitation of trail pavement to improve surface quality and longevity. The study will include scoping for subsequent design and environmental work along with cost estimates needed to program a future trail improvement project. It is the intention of the City to make these improvements in advance of the Sabercat Trail Extension being opened to connections from west of I-680.

In addition, the City understands that walking and bicycling are different activities that are not always compatible. Recreational bicycling and commuter bicycling occur at different times of the day and often occur on different routes.

To curb speeds of bicycles around pedestrians along recreational trails, the City is reviewing bicycle calming measures on the existing trail, such as clearly installed bollards that narrow the path and speed bumps that force bicyclist to slow down. Finally, the City is also exploring other routes for commuter bicyclists in the area, such as maintaining a route on Washington Boulevard and/or Pine Street.

3. What are the key considerations in including or not including the alternative designs that connect to both the Park and Sabercat Road on the east side of I-680?

The City completed a study and concluded that a bicycle route to Sabercat Road is not feasible and practical. Considerations evaluated were the potential environmental impacts on a sensitive mitigation area between Sabercat Historical Park and the east side of I-680, the feasibility of building near the very steep and deep ravine of Mammoth Creek, the likelihood of bicyclists using this route to facilitate access through other parts of Fremont, and the relative costs in comparison to the current route. In addition, this study is coordinating with the updates of the Fremont Trail Master Plan to understand how this path may support existing bicycle path priorities. The report findings will be posted on the website. In summary, however, the City has decided not to advance these options for the following key reasons:

- The first option with an at-grade trail climbing the slope up to the Park will impose permanent impacts on an established and protected biological mitigation site. Based on discussions with Caltrans, the City does not believe that this will be acceptable to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional Water Quality Control Board both of whom have jurisdiction over the site.
- The three-legged bridge structure of the second option will have significantly higher construction costs than the City's current design concept.
- Both options rely on the ability to direct bicycle users to new bicycle lanes along Sabercat Road and Pine Street. The City is skeptical about the feasibility of this given the considerably greater distance of travel required and somewhat steeper terrain compared with the Park trail. The new bicycle lanes will also add cost to the project and are not included in the City's Bicycle Master Plan.

4. How can the City provide assurances that this additional linkage would not induce crime in the Sabercat Historical Park and to the neighborhoods that adjoin the park?

The City considers the safety of its residents as its highest priority. The City has many tools and approaches to managing crime. Our police department is reviewing this concern and will make additional proposals to address these issues where this project would be built. One of the considerations is to clearly post hours for park use. In addition, effective measures include how the park and adjacent landscaping are designed. **Crime prevention through environmental design** (CPTED) include implementing lights that only turn on through movement, plantings that re-enforce keeping persons on trails, such as native thorny bushes to deter people from deviating from the path. Further review and development of these concerns will be forthcoming.

5. **We understand the value of sharing park resources with the broader community, but how can the City provide assurances that this project would not attract homeless encampments in Sabercat Historical Park?** Homelessness is a significant issue and one that Fremont has been actively managing. Many of the same approaches listed in question #3 above are also applicable to limiting homeless encampment. (Summarize current efforts and provide link to webpage(s)).

However, under the 2020-2021 State Shelter-in-Place order, and CDC Guidance, Fremont has been focused on managing debris accumulation and environmental impacts through routine clean-ups and consistent trash service in over 100 encampment areas. We have also provided portable handwashing stations and lavatories to promote hygienic practices and reduce biohazard waste in the current encampment areas. Outreach teams regularly connect with those encamped, and are working, through an individualized process, to transition people to better situations through the Housing Navigation Center, as space becomes available. With these services in place, the encampments seem to remain in the existing clusters.

The City and the regional partner agencies are managing over 100 encampment areas for homeless persons. Any observation of homeless encampment should be brought to the City Human Services Department's attention through the following website: <https://fremont.gov/3226/Report-Homeless-Concerns>.

6. **With the presence of more people in Sabercat Historical Park, and the increased risk of fires in foothill areas, how will the City address the need to avoid or contain fire potential within the park?**

Fires are becoming more and more prevalent in northern California and understandably this is a concern we all have a role in managing. The City Fire Department is prepared and equipped to respond to an emergency in this area quickly. They also collaborate with Alameda County and State of California Fire agencies to leverage additional personnel and equipment. Additionally, goats are brought in periodically to manage underbrush which reduces the fuel load and chances of fires.

Fire threat is present with or without this trail extension project but with higher use, there are benefits, such as more visibility and more potential to identify an issue early enough to respond in time. This past year, more fires were started through natural causes than by human mishap.

7. **How does this Project reach Ohlone College since Sabercat Creek Trail only extends to Pine Street?**

The City is currently updating the Trail Master Plan (now complete) and is reviewing how to extend the bike path connection from Pine Street to the Ohlone College. The likely plan is to provide a wide sidewalk, along Pine Street and along the Ohlone College driveway that would be suitable for shared use by people walking and bicycling, referred to as a "multi-use sidewalk".

8. **The public meeting presentation indicated that the Paleontological Museum site is not supported by Caltrans on their property. What is the plan forward for siting and funding the future museum?**

The City is planning to solicit community input on the proposed museum development including: the scope of the museum, how it could be funded and where it could be located. Based on this feedback, the City will develop a strategy for how best to proceed with the project, including the feasibility of potential sites for the development. Status?)

9. **How was the preferred bridge design selected?**

The process for the preferred bridge design was to:

- gather initial community input on bridge architectural themes and general design considerations (this occurred during the first Community Meeting)

- develop design concepts and relative costs
- solicit input from Caltrans which must approve the bridge type
- gain additional community feedback on the various design concepts (this occurred during the second Community Meeting)
- consider design and construction complexity and proximity to the Hayward Fault
- consider compatibility of bridge types with the reversing curved alignment needed to minimize or avoid environmental impacts
- be able to secure construction funding considering the needs of other bridges concurrently in the City's project pipeline



Weighing these considerations, the City's preference is Concept B, "Curved Spine," as presented during the second Community Meeting. This design incorporates enhanced architectural features, consistent with a paleontological theme, with a conventional girder-type structure that adapts favorably to the reversing curved alignment selected to avoid and minimize environmental impacts. Concept B is also one of the more affordable options that maximizes the City's ability to secure construction funding.

10. The I-680 Overcrossing will be very close to the Hayward Fault. How will the structure be designed to withstand a large earthquake on the fault?

The Project team is aware of the proximity of the fault and will design the structure in compliance with current seismic safety standards. Our geotechnical consultant performed fault studies for the area and is familiar with the seismic hazards of this location. The Project team includes engineers who have extensive experience designing bridges near and crossing fault zones. Furthermore, an independent review of the engineering drawings and the calculations will be conducted, and Caltrans will perform oversight as part of the design process.