




City of Santa Barbara
Transportation & Circulation Committee
Staff Report

DATE: September 23, 2011

TO: Transportation & Circulation Committee (TCC)

FROM: Browning Allen, Transportation Manager 

SUBJECT: **Voluntario Street Trail Easement**

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Transportation and Circulation Committee hear a status report and concur with staff's pursuit of grants for improvements to the Voluntario Street Easement Trail.

PROJECT LOCATION:

The Voluntario Street Trail Easement is located between East De la Guerra Street and East Canon Perdido Street. It spans approximately 200 feet of the former Voluntario Street right of way (see attached vicinity map).

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

In 2004, the City abandoned for street purposes an approximate 200 foot long portion of the Voluntario Street right of way between East De la Guerra Street and East Canon Perdido Street, yet reserved a fifteen foot wide easement for trail purposes. The trail access is relatively steep at the Voluntario Street side, leading down to a drainage gully and then a gentler ascent to Canon Perdido Street. As part of an adjacent applicant's land development permit, an effort was made to make nominal improvements to the trail which would be maintained by the City. Though the trail is not a major circulation connector, it has been used by the surrounding neighborhood. The gully is off the street, somewhat sheltered from view and lacks lighting which has allowed it to be an attractor to loitering by individuals involved in numerous nuisance activities.

In February of 2010, due to recurrent complaints and enforcement difficulties, the Police Department (P.D.) contacted Public Works staff requesting that the adjacent neighbors be allowed to close the trail. Initially, Public Works did not support a closure, hoping that brush clearing and police attention would lesson undesirable activity. However, according to the P.D, illegal and unsafe activities continued unabated. After numerous contacts with adjacent neighbors and P.D. and with no plan or capital funds to improve the trail, Public Works agreed that the best solution was to allow a temporary closure of the trail easement. The adjacent neighbors were asked to apply for an administrative Minor Encroachment Permit to allow the closure, with fencing to be handled and paid at their expense. The neighbors moved forward and closed off the trail entrances in June of this year.

Soon after closure, some neighbors became concerned that the closure wasn't permitted and may be permanent. Public Works and P.D. staff met with members of the community at the site in July to review the history and the effect of the temporary closure. Some of the issues discussed by staff, applicants, and neighbors included the safety, fire hazards, recreation, drainage, , police

action, and historical value of the trail. This TCC meeting will provide a forum for all interested parties to voice their concerns about the trail and its future potential.

Due to safety concerns, staff continues to support the temporary closure of the trail. Staff will also continue to explore grant opportunities for permanent improvements to the trail that would address the nuisance issues that have occurred in the past.

Attachment: Vicinity Map

SF/kts

