



Stocker Corridor Project and Connection to Rueben Ingold Park

Information Sheet

In 2002 the California Department of Parks and Recreation joined with the Baldwin Hills Conservancy to open the 33-acre Stocker Corridor for interim trail use. Over the next five years users enjoyed the mile long trail, and participated in planning for future improvements pursuant to the community-based Stocker Corridor Trail and Bike Path Conceptual Plan (2004). By 2009, partner agencies including the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority (BHRCA) seized the opportunity to incorporate the concepts and preliminary engineering of this eastern trail into the larger Park to Playa vision. Through a BHRCA grant to the MRCA, a two year planning effort was undertaken to gather input from area stakeholders, and design 13 miles of contiguous trail reaching from the Baldwin Hills Parklands to the Coastal Bike Trail.

The Stocker Corridor Project includes funding for the following improvements:

- 1) an approximately 60,000 square foot trailhead with monuments and gated parking at the corner of Stocker Street and Overhill Drive
- 2) trail widening, realignment and switchbacks along the existing Stocker corridor trail
- 3) trail access improvements west of Presidio Drive
- 4) gateway entrance development at the bottom of Valley Ridge Drive
- 5) stair and ADA ramp connection to Ruben Ingold Park
- 6) gateway entrance to the eastern ridgeline trail at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area
- 7) other infrastructure improvements include grading, retaining walls, native plant landscaping and irrigation, parking lot, crosswalks, fencing, bike racks, and other trail related amenities

Important benefits of the plan:

Improving connectivity and walkability – In the new millennium, the key barometer to a neighborhood living up to its full potential is the success residents have getting around without the use of vehicles. The walkability score of a neighborhood is consistently featured on modern real estate profiles. Easy access to parks, recreation facilities, and public transportation from a homeowner's doorstep is a fundamental measure of the quality of life in the region. Parks raise property values because access to open space in urban areas is scarce. From Los Feliz to Brentwood, the formula for maintaining high property values is to increase access and connectivity to quality open space amenities.

Within the greater Baldwin Hills, there are many opportunities to address insufficient connectivity and accessibility to local open space and recreational facilities. Increased park access and increased trails along the Park to Playa route will go a long way toward streamlining walking and biking between open spaces, and residential communities currently stymied from access due to major vehicular corridors and fences along the route. Thus, this project will not only increase the amount of available open and recreational space; but also improve access between people and parks, creating a neighborhood-wide benefit.

Addressing public safety concerns – The L.A. County Sheriff's Department has increased patrols and continues to successfully enforce regulations at the park through consistent communication with area block clubs. The connection will improve public safety by eliminating the need to scale down the slope from Rueben Ingold to get on the Stocker Trail. It will also eliminate

the need to navigate the culvert behind Windsor Elementary to get up from the Stocker Trail to Rueben Ingold Park. The current situation puts the well-being of the public at risk, and creates a nuisance behind the school playground. Specifically, the project adds a designated stairway and path with security fencing. This will prevent access from the slope or the culvert behind Windsor Elementary. This significantly improves safety as it eliminates multiple paths of travel, and allows higher visibility for users.

Creating a clear separation between the trail and Windsor Hills Elementary School– The school has always been within 1,000 feet of the park, and the connection point will not increase the proximity to the park facilities. The cement culvert behind the school is not associated with the park; it is a part of the school and would no longer be utilized by neighbors because the proposed linkage will provide the necessary access away from the culvert onto new ramps and stairs. The proposed upgrades and improvements will discourage vandalism or crime by increasing the amount of vested community eyes on the park.

Creating additional parking away from residences – New parking will be constructed at Stocker Street and Overhill Drive taking cars off of Mt. Vernon and adjacent streets. The parking lot/trailhead will provide access to both Stocker Trail and Rueben Ingold via a ramp or stairs. Hours will be from sunrise to sunset, and the lot will be locked overnight.

Improving public health through active transportation opportunities – One of the project's primary functions is to promote cycling and walking as a viable form of transportation and a cost effective means of improving the mobility and efficacy of the region's transportation system. Specifically, cycling has an important role in making transportation in Los Angeles County more sustainable. Increasing bicycle use will lead to less congestion by reducing the number of short car trips and parking demands. Creating connection between the existing Baldwin Hills Parklands and the Pacific Ocean will reduce the current need for people to drive from one recreational amenity to the next. This trail will serve as an investment in the well-being of the community. Walking and bicycling are healthy, affordable, and pollution free travel modes. This trail system will help address health issues facing the community, and create a unique opportunity for a more active lifestyle in South Los Angeles.

Chronology:

2004 – Under a grant from the Baldwin Hills Conservancy, conceptual plans for Stocker Corridor improvements were publically vetted at four public workshops held by the California State Parks Foundation, and supported by a steering committee that included representatives from United Homeowners Association board, Windsor Elementary, and Baldwin Hills Estates. Interim use trail opens for use until funds to fully implement plan are secured.

2010 through 2011 – Funding for Park to Playa Feasibility Study and Implementation Plan (FS/IP) is obtained from the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority and the FS/IP is finalized. Partner meetings, community workshops, web surveys, and park/trail user interviews were conducted. FS/IP is completed and publically released in November 2011.

2011 through 2014 – Construction Documents and Environmental Process for the Park to Playa trail takes place. Plans for improvements are publically vetted through multiple Park to Playa visioning workshops and update meetings. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is created for the project in 2012/2013. The document is publically distributed, reviewed, commented on and adopted by the Baldwin Hills Regional Conservation Authority Board. The goal of creating the first contiguous recreational trail from Baldwin Hills to the Marina is embraced by the region.

2013- Baldwin Hills Conservancy grants \$1.03 million to implement plans for Stocker Trailhead improvements for native landscaping, trail upgrades, parking, retaining walls, signage, fencing and linkage to Rueben Ingold Park.