



**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**Agenda Item # 8**

**AGENDA REPORT SUMMARY**

**Meeting Date:** September 14, 2021

**Subject:** Exploration of a formal pedestrian trail connection between the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills

**Prepared by:** Dave Brees, Special Projects Manager

**Reviewed by:** Jim Sandoval, Engineering Services Manager

**Approved by:** Gabe Engelman, City Manager

**Attachments:**

1. Los Altos Parks Plan, Page 17, Redwood Grove
2. Town of Los Altos Hills Letter, dated July 29, 2021
3. Resolution 2021-48

**Initiated by:**

Town of Los Altos Hills

**Previous Council Consideration:**

None

**Fiscal Impact:**

There are no anticipated costs for the recommended action. Future project related costs may be considered should a project result from commission and council deliberations.

**Environmental Review:**

None required. Approval of the recommended action will not commit the City to the future development of a trail. Prior to approving any trail design, appropriate environmental review would be required unless the project were determined to be exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act. Furthermore, the analysis of environmental impacts of a hypothetical trail would be speculative without design plans.

**Policy Questions for Council Consideration:**

- Does Council desire to explore a formal trail connection between Redwood Grove Nature Preserve and Fremont Road in the Town of Los Altos Hills?
- Does the Council wish to direct the City Manager to work with Town of Los Altos Hills staff to develop proposed project options for Council's future consideration?

**Summary:**

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City Manager

GE

**Reviewed By:**

City Attorney

JH

Finance Director

JM

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**Subject:** Exploration of a formal pedestrian trail connection between the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills

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- An unofficial pedestrian trail has existed for years in Redwood Grove connecting the hillside trail with the end of Fremont Road in Los Altos Hills
  - On July 29, 2021 the Mayor of Los Altos Hills sent a letter to the Mayor of Los Altos proposing a formal trail in the same location
  - The Los Altos Hills letter indicates the Town is willing to pay for the design and construction of the pathway connector

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approve Resolution No. 2021-48 expressing support for the exploration of a formal pathway trail connection between Redwood Grove Nature Preserve and Fremont Road in Los Altos Hills and directing the City Manager to work with Los Altos Hills staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission to return to the City Council with recommendations on the project.



**Subject:** Exploration of a formal pedestrian trail connection between the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills

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### **Purpose**

To support the exploration of a formal pedestrian trail between the City of Los Altos and the Town of Los Altos Hills

### **Background**

For several years an unofficial pedestrian trail has existed in Redwood Grove between the park's hillside trail and Fremont Road in the Town of Los Altos Hills. This is problematic because use of a non-engineered hillside trail is less safe than an engineered trail and may cause erosion or other environmental harms. To avoid these risks, since the City purchased the park in 1974, there have been several attempts to discourage park users from entering or exiting the park utilizing the unimproved trail connection. These attempts have met with little success in deferring pedestrian use of the unofficial trail. In 2012 Council adopted the Los Altos Parks Plan which identifies exploring the creation of a formal connection between Redwood Grove and Los Altos Hills (Attachment 1).

### **Discussion/Analysis**

On July 29, 2021, Town of Los Altos Hills Mayor Tankha sent Mayor Fligor a letter expressing interest and financial support for the design and construction of a formal pedestrian pathway connecting Redwood Grove to Fremont Road in Los Altos Hills (Attachment 2).

While brief initial conversations regarding the possibility of the creation of a formal pedestrian pathway have occurred between City and Town staff, several issues remain to be addressed. These include, for example, design, environmental permitting, responsibility for construction and ongoing maintenance costs, and the potential impacts of increased park use. The parties will also have to ensure that any trail design meets Americans with Disability Act design guidelines to avoid access barriers.

Before any further discussion is held or project design ideas contemplated, Council direction is requested to proceed with any future consideration of pathway options. If Council desires to proceed with consideration of future pathway options, a resolution has been prepared for Council's approval (Attachment 3). If Council does not support a formal pathway between Redwood Grove and Los Altos Hills, no further action need be taken.

### **Options**

- 1) Option #1 Approve Resolution No. 2021-48 expressing support for the exploration of a formal pathway trail connection between Redwood Grove Nature Preserve and Fremont Road in Los Altos Hills and directing the City Manager to work with Los Altos Hills staff and to return to the City Council with recommendations on the project.



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**Advantages:** This action expresses support for a possible future project connecting the City of Los Altos with the Town of Los Altos Hills and allows for consideration of the project at both the staff and commission levels. An engineered trail connection may prove safer to users than a non-engineered connection, and it may prevent erosion or other environmental damage to hillside.

**Disadvantages:** A future project may impact staff time and resources in the project development.

2) Option #2 Do not approve the proposed resolution.

**Advantages:** Makes clear Council's position of not exploring a formal trail connection option between the two communities.

**Disadvantages:** The City of Los Altos may lose out on the opportunity to have the Town of Los Altos Hills pay for access and trail improvements within Redwood Grove Nature Preserve. The benefits of an engineered trail would not be realized.

### **Recommendation**

The staff recommends Option 1.

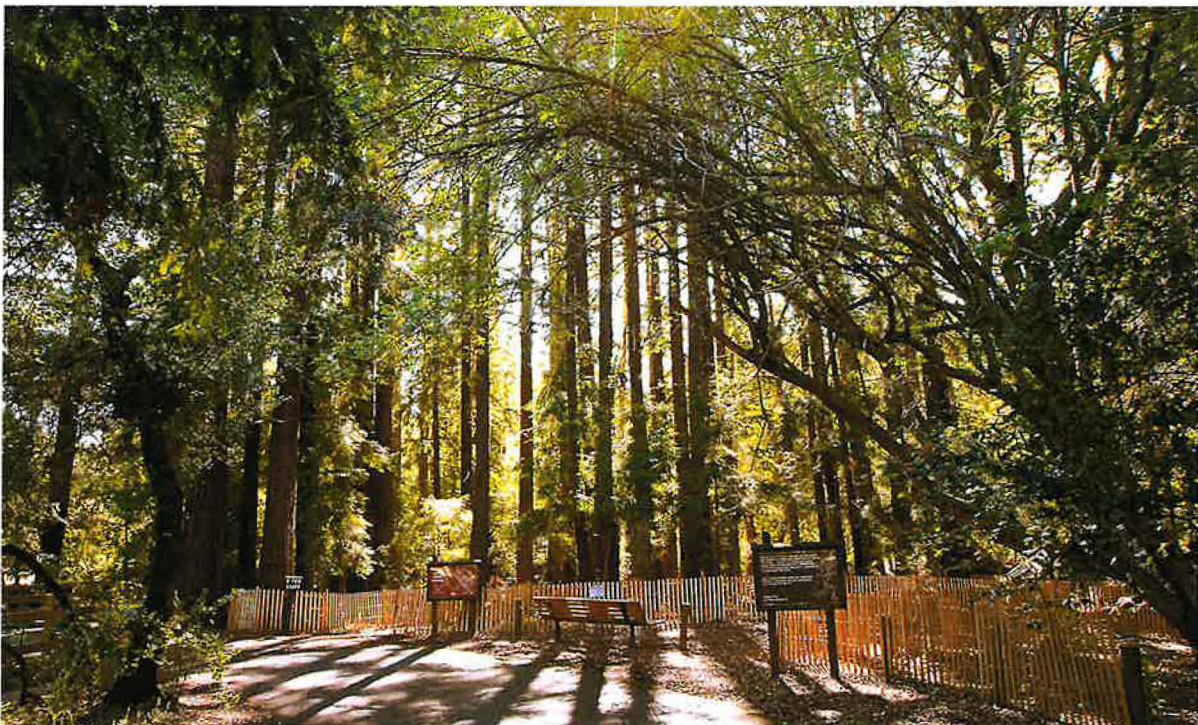


# Redwood Grove

## 482 University Avenue

In March 2012, the Council directed that the Parks Plan consider the following recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission:

1. Provide facilities in Redwood Grove consistent with its current use, including:
  - a. Two meeting spaces, each to accommodate a group of 25 to 30 people, to meet requirements for the average size of school tours and designed to meet Group E Occupancy requirements for buildings used for children under 18 years of age
  - b. Public restrooms that are ADA-compliant with exterior access
  - c. Boardwalks and pathways
  - d. One ADA parking space
  - e. Signage for fire safety and dog rules
  - f. Outdoor gathering circle of rough-hewn design, integrated into landscape and potentially reflecting Ohlone customs
  - g. Administrative office with supplies storage
  - h. Teaching garden; may include raised vegetable beds, native landscape demonstration area
  - i. Pathway connection to Los Altos Hills
  - j. Animal safe trash receptacles
  - k. Kitchen to enhance program potential





July 29, 2021

The Honorable Mayor Neysa Fligor  
City of Los Altos  
1 N. San Antonio Road  
Los Altos, CA 94022

RE: Path from LAH Fremont Rd to Los Altos Redwood Grove

Dear Mayor Fligor:

Residents of both Los Altos (LA) and Los Altos Hills (LAH) communities have walked between the Redwood Grove and the end of Fremont Road for the last 50 years. Children, adults, and members of high school track teams have created two informal paths, both of which are far steeper than would be officially sanctioned by either the Los Altos City Council or the Los Altos Hills City Council. The idea of building an easy connection between the towns has been discussed for years and was brought to the attention of the Los Altos Hills City Council in 2009. The Town of Los Altos Hills is seeking the formal support of Los Altos to move ahead with a pathway that would link the LAH pathway system, at the end of Fremont Road, to Redwood Grove in Los Altos.

Los Altos Master Plans and Studies published the May 8, 2012, Los Altos Parks Plan and on page-17 section 1i it states a Redwood Grove recommendation of a 'Pathway connection to Los Altos Hills.'

[https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/parks\\_and\\_recreation\\_commission/page/30331/final\\_los\\_altos\\_parks\\_plan.pdf](https://www.losaltosca.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/parks_and_recreation_commission/page/30331/final_los_altos_parks_plan.pdf)

In addition, the Los Altos Hills General Plan cites the Pathway Element that specifically states on Page-4 section-108 that the nearly 90 miles of LAH trails that connect to LAH parks and open spaces should also connect to neighboring cities and specifically calls for a connection to Redwood Grove in Los Altos. <https://www.losaltoshills.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/157/General-Plan--9-Pathways-PDF>.

A pathway originating at the end of Fremont Road and connecting to the established path existing in Redwood Grove would satisfy both jurisdictions' stated goals.

In November 2017, during a joint session between the City Councils Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, those present favored the idea that Los Altos would accept the path if Los Altos Hills would pay for it. No formal vote by Los Atos was taken.

The Honorable Mayor Neysa Fligor  
July 29, 2021  
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During the budget cycle for 2018-2019, the Los Altos Hills City Council approved funds for the project. Diagrams of the route showed a single long switchback at a reasonable grade. The homeowners closest to the route, Ginger and Roger Summit, greatly favor installation of the path.

Due to turnover of personnel in both jurisdictions, the project has been stalled but recently Donna Legge, Los Altos Parks and Recreation Director and Bob Elson, LAH Pathway Committee Chairman, facilitated an on-site meeting with Jim Sandoval (Los Altos Engineering Service Director), George Tyson (LAH Vice Mayor), Carl Cahill (LAH Town Manager), John Chau (LAH Associate Engineer), Avery Lai (LAH Assistant Engineer), and Bob Elson. This meeting led to a second meeting that then included those mentioned above and Los Altos Dave Brees (Manager of Special Projects for Los Altos) & Steve Padovan (LAH Director of Building and Planning). There appears to be no technical reasons why a pathway cannot be installed but at this juncture, before any additional effort is spent by either jurisdiction, an official declaration by the City of Los Altos to proceed with the pathway project is needed.

Once the City of Los Altos recognizes this pathway as a formal special project, LAH would work in close concert with Los Altos Staff, especially Dave Brees and Jim Sandoval. Please note that LAH City Council voted in 2018 to recognize this pathway project as a formal CIP project but we are looking for a similar vote from Los Altos.

Our communities are already closely linked and this small pathway between our communities would only strengthen that bond. During Covid, all jurisdictions have learned that paths, parks, open spaces and the ability to walk between these entities were greatly appreciated by our residents. The public has already spoken with its feet and both of our government documents state that connections between of communities is desired so I'm asking you to support the noted project to create another safe, accessible path between our communities.

Respectfully,



Kavita Tankha  
Mayor, Town of Los Altos Hills

cc: The Honorable Members of the Los Altos Hills City Council  
The Honorable Members of the Los Altos City Council  
Carl Cahill, Los Altos Hills City Manager  
Gabriel Engeland, Los Altos City Manager

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-48**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS  
DIRECTING STAFF TO ANALYZE OPTIONS FOR A POSSIBLE  
PEDESTRIAN PATHWAY PROJECT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF LOS ALTOS  
HILLS AND THE CITY OF LOS ALTOS TO CONNECT REDWOOD GROVE  
NATURE PRESERVE AND FREMONT ROAD**

**WHEREAS**, on July 29, 2021, the Town of Los Altos Hills sent a letter to the City of Los Altos expressing a desire to connect Fremont Road in Los Altos Hills to Redwood Grove Nature Preserve in the City of Los Altos; and

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Los Altos Hills has offered to pay for the design and construction of a future pedestrian pathway project; and

**WHEREAS**, a formal pathway connection would enable Los Altos residents pedestrian access to Los Altos Hills extensive trail system; and

**WHERE AS**, walking and hiking along pedestrian pathways promotes community health.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Council of the City of Los Altos supports the exploration of the opportunity and options for a pedestrian pathway connection between the City and the Town of Los Altos Hills and directs the City Manager to return with possible pathway recommendations for Council consideration at a future meeting.

**I HEREBY CERTIFY** that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Los Altos at a meeting thereof on the 14th day of September, 2021 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Neysa Fligor, MAYOR

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea Chelemengos, MMC, CITY CLERK