

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Planning Department**

TO: Bicycle Advisory Commission  
FROM: Joel Svendsen, PE, Associate Engineer  
DATE: December 13, 2016  
SUBJECT: Bear Creek Bike Path Project Plan Update

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**BACKGROUND**

The City of Merced was awarded \$1,674,000.00 from the Merced Council of Governments Federal Transportation Improvement Program Fund in 2010 to construct a bike path from Buena Vista Drive at Sarasota Avenue to West 16<sup>th</sup> Street at Bear Creek (CMAQ Grant Project 5085-029). The bike path was changed to the Westerly Bike Path Connection which reduced the scope from Buena Vista Drive at Sarasota Avenue to the BNSF Railroad behind Walmart. The scope was reduced because the environmental impacts were viewed to be significant and the likelihood of environmental approval was low.

**DISCUSSION**

Here is a current update of the project as follows:

- Westerly Bike Path Connection Design Plans Completed.
- Construction funding will be available in October 2017.
- Estimated cost of construction and engineering administration is \$1,385,000.00

Improvements include one 10' wide pedestrian bike bridge spanning Black Rascal Creek, and three-fourths of a mile of class I bikeway including upgrades. The upgrades include removing half a mile of existing AC bike path and replacing that with a 10' wide class I concrete bikeway. Approximately \$289,000.00 will remain of unused funding after project completion, and will be returned back to the Federal Transportation Program Fund.

Staff invites comments and discussion of the items above.

**ACTION**

No Action Necessary.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A – BAC Recommendations

Exhibit B – Location Map

# EXHIBIT A - BAC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Bear Creek Bike Path Extension from 25<sup>th</sup> Street to 19<sup>th</sup> Street Recommendations from the Merced Bicycle Coalition

### Background

At the April 26, 2016 meeting of the City of Merced Bicycle Advisory Commission the City Engineering Department informed the Commission that it intended to apply for an Alternative Transportation Grant from the State of California to extend the Bear Creek Bike Path from 25<sup>th</sup> Street at Bear Creek to 19<sup>th</sup> Street at Bear Creek using a detour through City streets. (note that 'Bear Creek' refers to the east bank of the creek and not the street 'Bear Creek Drive'). The Commissioners were invited to provide input regarding the design of this extension. The Merced Bicycle Coalition invited the BAC members to join them on one of their public rides during which they would travel the streets in the area of the proposed project to help form their opinions.

On Saturday, June 18, 2016, four members of the Merced Bicycle Coalition, including one member of the Bicycle Advisory Commission, participated in a ride to survey the options for the extension of the Bear Creek Bike Path through city streets to meet the bank of Bear Creek at 19<sup>th</sup> Street. This will be referred to below as the survey ride.

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### General Recommendations

It is the opinion of the members of the survey ride that this project is of lower priority than many other possible bicycle transportation projects in the City, and therefore should be subject to a selection process that utilizes the most recent Bicycle Transportation Plan and the project prioritization process and prioritized project list contained therein.

Should this project at some time be chosen for construction then we offer the following design recommendations.

### Specific Recommendations

Use V Street as the north/south path extension from 24<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> Streets, and 19<sup>th</sup> Street as the connector between V and Bear Creek at which point the path can continue south on the creek bank.

Change the existing "Bike Route" on V Street to a bicycle boulevard.

At the intersection of V and 19<sup>th</sup> Streets, change the Stop Sign arrangement from 2-way to 3-way, to require both directions of traffic on V Street and westbound traffic on 19<sup>th</sup> Street to stop. This is to allow riders on the bike path turning north (left) onto V Street from eastbound 19<sup>th</sup> street to be protected from cross traffic during their left turn.

Use extensive signage and pavement paint, including green paint, to clearly mark V Street as a major bicycle thoroughfare.

### To cross the BNSF railway

Most preferred alternative:

Construct a bicycle tunnel under the BNSF railroad tracks from the cul de sac at the west end of 25<sup>th</sup> street to the northern end of V Street at 24<sup>th</sup>, in order to provide a direct connection from the bike path at the cul de sac of 25<sup>th</sup> Street and the Bear Creek bike bridge to the bicycle boulevard on V Street.

OR

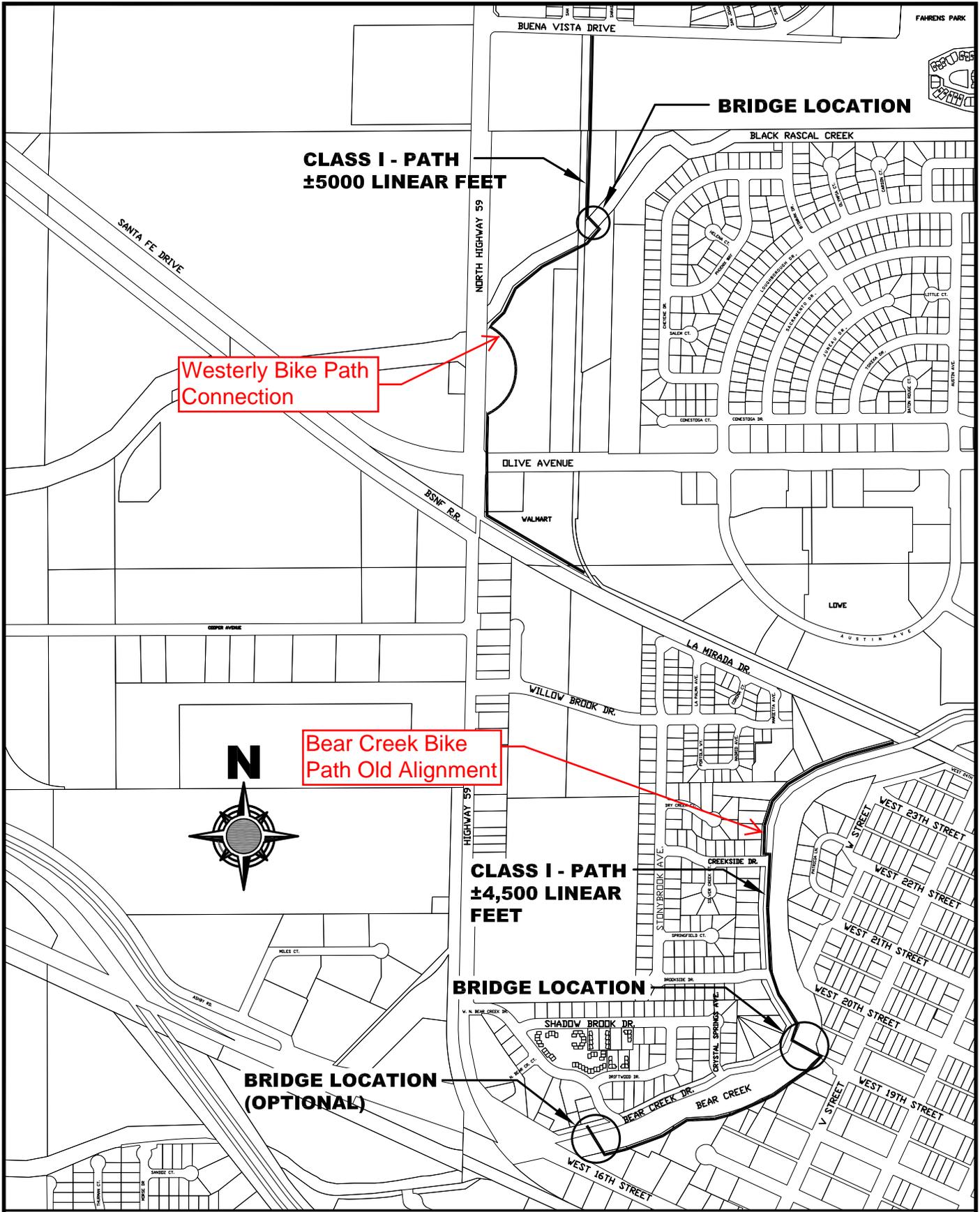
Route the path under the train trestle along the bank of Bear Creek

OR

In the event that neither of the above alternatives can be constructed, the bike path extension may be detoured from the bicycle bridge at the cul de sac of 25<sup>th</sup> street eastward on 25<sup>th</sup> street and south on U Street to cross the railroad tracks at the existing U Street crossing. The bike path extension should turn right onto 23<sup>rd</sup> street and left onto V Street and continue as described above. For the safety of the bicyclists, install 3 way stops at the intersection of U and 23<sup>rd</sup> streets and 23<sup>rd</sup> and V streets so that all left turns made by bicyclists on the route are protected (see above description for 19<sup>th</sup> and V).

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# EXHIBIT B - LOCATION MAP



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**City of Merced**  
 "Gateway to Yosemite"  
**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**  
 ENGINEERING PROJECTS AND STANDARDS  
 678 W. 18th Street (209) 385-6846

**CMAQ PROJECTS**  
**BEAR CREEK BIKE PATH CONNECTION**  
**16TH STREET / BUENA VISTA ROAD**

DR. BY: AV
DATE: 3/1/11
CH. BY: ##
DATE: 3/1/11
File No. 0876
SCALE: AS SHOWN