

Courtland Creek Restoration Project

Public Meeting Summary Report

Virtual Public Meeting

July 29, 2021

6:30–8 p.m.

Via Zoom

In-Person Public Meeting

July 31, 2021

10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

Brookdale Park



Courtland Creek Restoration Project Overview

The Courtland Creek Restoration Project (Project), an Oakland Measure DD Initiative, will protect, enhance, and restore Courtland Creek in Courtland Creek Park. The Project will restore approximately 950 feet of open creek channel, and will provide accessible seating, gathering places, and a creek-viewing overlook. The Project will also improve creek habitat and water quality, reduce trash accumulation and illegal dumping, repair steep and eroding creek banks, enhance climate change resilience and park appearance, and serve the community as an educational and recreational resource. Project partners include the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, the Friends of Courtland Creek, and local schools.

Project Team

- Jennifer Stern, City of Oakland
- Terri Fashing, City of Oakland
- Mandolin Kadera-Redmond, Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation
- Paul Frank, FlowWest
- Anna Kladzyk Constantino, FlowWest
- Ivy Morrison, Circlepoint
- Patti Ransdell, Circlepoint



Meeting Noticing

Project neighbors who live within a 1,000 ft. radius from Courtland Creek Park were sent an invitation to both meetings via mail. The City of Oakland also posted information on the Project website, sent notifications via email, and made announcements via social media.

Meeting Summary

Public Meetings

On Thursday, July 29 the City of Oakland held a virtual public meeting for the Courtland Creek Restoration Project via Zoom and provided the same presentation in-person on Saturday, July 31 at Brookdale Park in Oakland. There were 13 attendees at the virtual meeting and 26 attendees at the in-person meeting. The purpose of the meetings was to provide an update on the Project progress, receive community input on different design features, and encourage community members to stay up-to-date on the process and upcoming meetings. The Project team used the Zoom Webinar format to accommodate possible interpretation needs and manage and respond to questions throughout the presentation.

The meetings began with introductions from the Project team, which is composed of the City of Oakland, the Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, FlowWest, and Circlepoint. Jennifer Stern, Watershed Program Specialist for the City of Oakland's Watershed and Stormwater Management Division, acknowledged the longstanding commitment to Courtland Creek and Courtland Creek Park by many of the stakeholders at the meeting.

The Project team then provided a presentation which included the history of the Project and the park, how the Project is being funded, and an explanation of the Project benefits. Flow West provided an overview of the preliminary design for the three project areas/creek reaches: Brookdale Reach, Congress Reach, and Thompson Reach.

The Project team also presented a Project timeline for completion of design and the window for construction. They also discussed the various construction activities that would take place, which include the removal of eucalyptus trees and non-native plants, concrete demolition, earthmoving and grading, trail improvements, and planting native plants.

After the Project updates, the Project team provided an opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions about the presentation and share their input on specific design features. A summary of key themes is provided below.

Design Elements

The Project team sought stakeholder input on the following design elements:

- Congress Reach Overlook Feature
- Creekside Seating
- Interpretive Educational Signage
- Trail and Lighting Design

The majority of attendees at both meetings preferred a natural style for all elements, so that the design reflects the creek setting. However, while this style is preferred, attendees also emphasized that having features that are durable, eco-friendly, and easy to clean is important, particularly to prevent the accumulation of graffiti and other acts of vandalism, which have been a problem previously in the park. It was asked if Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles were used in the development of the preliminary designs. It was also suggested that the Project team review seating/overlook designs in other Oakland parks that have proven to be durable.

Congress Reach Overlook Feature

- Many attendees preferred a natural style, but acknowledged that a more modern design made with metal features may be easier to clean and maintain.

Creekside Seating

- There was a strong preference for natural-style seating, potentially using wood from the removed eucalyptus trees. It was also suggested that the Project create a comfortable seating option with back support and find ways to incorporate more mosaic work. It was noted that current concrete structures in the park have held up well, and this may be a suitable material for durable seating.

Interpretive Educational Signage

- There was again a preference for more natural-looking signage, with an emphasis on a material that is easy to clean. It was also asked if mosaic work could potentially be incorporated into sign design as well.

Trail and Lighting Design

- Several attendees were most excited about the trail and lighting improvements the Project would create, noting these would be important to prevent crime and vandalism. Attendees had several questions on the type of material the trail will be made of, if it will be all-weather appropriate, and if it might be possible to allow bicycles upon it. The



trail material is still being considered, but it will be ADA compliant and contiguous between all reaches (including some sidewalks).

Attendee Questions and Concerns

There were several questions and comments about elements outside of the design features presented. Key items along with responses are provided below.

- In addition to the design elements discussed, attendees also suggested adding dog waste bag dispensers, sturdy trash cans, and bollards.
- It was asked if the Project team will be laying back the creek banks in any of the reaches.
 - The Project team is planning to do that in the Congress Reach. In the Brookdale Reach, there are some areas where it is possible to do this, but that Reach is much more limited due to private parcels adjacent to the Creek. In the Thompson Reach there is no need for this.
- There were several questions surrounding trees in the park, including if all eucalyptus trees will be removed, what will happen to any remaining tree stumps, and what type of native plants will replace trees removed.
 - All of the eucalyptus trees in the Brookdale and Congress reaches will be removed. The project team is unsure about which removal technique they will take – it will be in line with green solutions and safe herbicides may be possible. The preference of the City and designers is to totally remove them and not leave any stumps remaining. Trees that will be planted to replace those removed may include willow, cottonwood, box elder, and oak trees.
- Attendees wanted to know about outreach efforts to specific Project neighbors, including those in nearby buildings and those who live in homeless encampments.
 - The City and Project team have been actively reaching out to these groups and will continue to do so throughout the duration of the Project.
- Attendees wanted to know what the level of environmental review for the Project is.
 - The City has a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) clearance for Measure DD Projects. For this particular project, the City will have to obtain permits from several environmental protection agencies, including CA Dept Fish & Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
- In addition to comments on the proposed design features, attendees also expressed concerns related to the park, including issues of vandalism and graffiti, cars driving through or parking in the park, and unhoused people in the park.
 - The Project team is sharing these concerns with the appropriate City staff to address.



Polling

- Attendees at both meetings were asked about their relationship and engagement with Courtland Creek Park via polls. At the in-person meeting, the poll was conducted via a feedback form distributed and then collected during the meeting. At the virtual meeting, polls were conducted via Zoom.

Conclusion and Next Steps

- Attendees can provide additional feedback on design elements through August 31, 2021 by emailing watersheds@oaklandca.gov or filling out the Courtland Creek Design Input survey [linked here](#) or accessible on our website at tinyurl.com/CourtlandCreek. Many attendees also expressed interest in joining the Friends of Courtland Creek and participating in additional park activation activities, such as cleanups and educational outings. The next public meeting will take place in late 2021.