

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: May 17, 2010

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Catherine's Walk Upgrade

REPORT BY: Rich Cunningham, Public Works Manager
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STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council authorize execution of an informal contract for repair and related improvements to the public right-of-way called Catherine's Walk, located between Hillside and Washington Avenues.

BACKGROUND

Catherine's Walk consists of 15 percent wooden stairs and 15 percent concrete stairs. The remaining 70 percent is an unimproved dirt walk. The walk slopes at approximately 30 percent with a total length of 220' across an elevation difference of 65 feet.

There has been community interest in repairing and improving Catherine's Walk over the years. The stairs are used by pedestrians from the Hillside and Gateview Avenue neighborhoods and others to access Washington Avenue; neighbors report that a common use is as a path for commuter residents who walk to public transportation.

DISCUSSION

Problems associated with the current condition of the path include:

- 1) Slippery conditions during anytime of the year.
- 2) Winter months turn the walk into a mud path with no available safe access.
- 3) Unimproved portion is generally unsuitable for pedestrians because of the steep slope.

The walk consists of a dirt/mud floor over seventy percent of the walk and is largely without hand rails. The existing concrete steps are in need of patches and there are existing concrete slab areas that must be removed and replaced.

The proposed improvements consist of the following construction approach:

- The steps and hand railings would be constructed similar to the existing steps at the top of the Walk at Hillside Avenue.
- Existing steps are 2x12 pressure treated flat with 2x8 pressure treated risers. New 12” diameter and 36” deep concrete piers will be required every ten feet to support new pressure treated 4x4 wood posts. These piers would span 2x12 runners with 2x4 cedar railings above. The existing concrete steps will remain but need to be patched. The metal handrail at these steps will need to be removed and replaced. There are existing areas where the concrete slab is broken up and these areas must be demolished, removed and replaced with new concrete. A new landing will be required at the entrance to the only residence along the walkway.
- The pathway now includes stumps from fallen trees, which would be removed. Special considerations in the design will have to be made so not to harm the existing trees and their root structure now in close proximity to new walk.

ANALYSIS

Catherine’s Walk is a street-right-of-way owned by the City. It is incumbent upon the city to take reasonable steps to provide for the safety of pedestrians using the walkway. Because of the relatively small size of the job, and the desire to keep costs down, the staff would use a design-build approach and employ informal bidding.

If Council decides to approve the project, informal plan reviews would begin immediately and construction could be scheduled to begin in early June, 2010. The duration of the work would be 15 to 20 working days.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The proposed improvement will provide a safe and convenient incentive for residents to walk to their destinations instead of driving. Also, the 65 foot elevation rise would provide a safe and challenging aerobic exercise opportunity for the community, especially for stair-runners.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The construction cost is estimated to be \$62,100 including a 10% contingency.

The financial resources to support the project will be a combination of funding from the Landscape and Lighting District No. 1988-1 plus Albany Measure F-2006.