



## **Staff Report**

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### DISCUSSION AND DIRECTION FOR PAPER STREETS AND TRAILS

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

#### **Summary**

The City Council established a priority calendar item for an assessment of Paper Streets and Trails. This report provides additional information that the City Council requested from the meeting of April 26, 2005. Staff is seeking direction from the City Council for the next steps to complete a preliminary pathway improvement plan.

#### **Background**

Paper streets and trails are lands of public right-of-way delineated on a subdivision map or other deed that exist on paper but have not been improved for use. These locations should not be confused with the Open Space Trails that the Parks and Recreation Department mapped. Over the past century, the City has received numerous paper streets and paths through subdivided dedications. The City could construct roads or pedestrian and bicycle pathways on some of these right-of-ways. Some show potential for connection to the existing network of hiking trails available to Belmont residents. Also, there are pathways that show connections between neighborhoods that could serve as scenic walkway. It must also be noted that there are some pathways that have already been improved and are currently in use.

The majority of these pathways ranges in width from 5 to 20 feet and are a variety of lengths. Staff visited each mapped location to characterize the condition of the right-of-way and assess the practicability of improving the right-of-way for public use. Each end of the pathways was photographed, if possible, and Public Works has filed these photographs for future review by interested parties.

Previously, Council had directed staff on the following items:

- Revise the map for easier interpretation
- Verify the pathway easements by obtaining title reports
- Research pathways that have been encroached upon

## Discussion

Staff had a second go-around reviewing file information, subdivision maps, and county records to re-quantify and re-characterize the City's paper streets and pathways. To date, sixty-five separate right-of-way segments have been identified (see Attachments A and B).

### Revisions to the map

Staff took note of Council's comments and reworked the map (attached) to make it easier to read. The pathways are now numbered sequentially from 1 to 65, classified into one of the following four categories, and color-coded on the map as a means of organizing the information.

1. (Green) - Pathway is improved and appears to be in use – paved.
2. (Magenta) - Pathway is unimproved but does appear to be used – dirt/gravel pathway.
3. (Blue) - Pathway is unimproved and is not used, but could potentially be improved for public use.
4. (Grey) - Pathway is impassable or otherwise impracticable for improvement due to steep grade, large obstructions (trees), lack of connectivity, or unappealing location.

The classification is the same as was used in the earlier version of the map. Improved pathways include City maintained paved paths such as those leading to Cipriani and Hallmark Parks. Unimproved but used pathways showed signs of bike and/or foot traffic such as the unimproved sections of Monte Cresta Drive and Marsten Avenue. Pathways having the potential for being used showed nice connectivity between neighborhoods on the map but were overgrown with brush and often had moderate to steep grades. Those that were deemed impassable were highly overgrown with trees or had severe steepness. Staff made these assessments typically based on a single site visit. We would welcome the opinion of the Council and other community members who may have better first-hand information about some of the pathways.

### Verification of pathway easements

Council asked staff to verify the City's rights to develop the identified pathways. Staff was directed to obtain title reports to determine ownership and to check if the City has vacated any dedicated pathway rights-of-way. Staff contacted several title insurance companies and found that it will be very expensive and difficult to obtain formal title reports for all 65 pathways. The title companies are reluctant to accept the task because right-of-way is relatively difficult to trace. Each abutting parcel must be searched to see if it received vacated right-of-way. A single firm quoted a price of \$1,500 per parcel for this work. Therefore, Staff undertook a thorough review of the Public Works and City Clerks files to identify vacated right-of-way. Although the City's records are not official for title search purposes, staff believes we have identified the majority of vacations. The City can assume it has rights to the remaining dedicated right-of-way for planning purposes. We would then propose to obtain title reports only as warranted for those few parcels where title is unclear and the pathway is scheduled for improvement.

Council also asked staff to check for locations where adjacent property owners have built encroaching structures onto these dedicated pathways such as with fences or other structures. Again, staff suggests that the most cost-effective method to accomplish this is to first identify the pathways to be improved and then to conduct boundary surveys. The City is not at risk of forfeiting any right-of-way to unpermitted encroachments since property owners cannot claim prescriptive easements over public land. It will be the sole responsibility of the property owner to remove any encroaching structures if so requested by the City.

#### Other research and findings

During the time that staff was working on this project, it was noted that the City of Berkeley and the Town of Los Altos Hills were profiled in the newspaper for doing similar research and improvement to their pathway systems. Staff made contact with these cities and was able to note some actions that could be implemented with the City of Belmont's pathway system. The Town of Los Altos Hills has worked towards creating an approved map for the town's pathways and has also made them part of their development review process. Under a homeowner that requests approval for an addition, remodel, or new construction upon their property would be asked to improve the adjacent pathway. The City of Berkeley also has a pathway map and upgrades their pathways through the help of the city and a non-profit organization. This organization, titled the Berkeley Path Wanderers Association (BPWA), holds walks, meetings, and path-building work outings. Both of these cities allocate funds yearly for maintenance and extensions to the pathways.

#### Recommended next steps

Staff believes that the next step is to develop a conceptual workplan for a Belmont pathway system similar to those undertaken by Los Altos Hills and Berkeley. We believe this plan should address the following items:

- priority list of pathways to be improved based on feasibility and public desire,
- physical location, alignment, and survey,
- conceptual use and restrictions (ADA compliant, bicycles, dogs, etc.),
- conceptual physical improvements (clearing, path surfaces, structures),
- compliance with City plans and policies and other regulatory requirements,
- public outreach,
- public and neighborhood acceptance, safety, and privacy issues,
- cost estimates for construction and long-term maintenance,
- potential liabilities,
- funding sources,
- volunteer groups and volunteer opportunities.

Staff previously identified a few potential pathways that we would give priority for improvement to serve as possible connectors to adjoining paths or neighborhoods. These are as follows:

1. Areas 54, 57, and 58. Though these areas are heavily wooded, overgrown and steep, they could provide a connector for those interested in traveling from Oak Knoll Drive to

Arbor Avenue. Heavy clearing and grubbing and the construction of stairs, which would allow pedestrian access, would be needed.

2. Areas 50 and 51 could serve as a link for those interested in traveling between portions of North Road, Winding Way, and Ridge Road.
3. Areas 63 and 64. Construction of stairs and some clearing would allow pedestrian access to Paloma from O'Neill and from Molitor to Sunnyslope.

### **Fiscal Impact**

There is no fiscal impact to this report. However, there could be substantial costs with developing and maintaining trails.

### **Public Contact**

Public contact includes posting of City Council agenda. A link to the report was sent to all Neighborhood Association Presidents.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Council direct staff to begin a conceptual plan for a paper trail system. Staff proposes to return to Council in three months for approval of the conceptual workplan outline, scope and milestone timeline. Staff will also continue researching what other cities are doing and will continue working on the priority and feasibility evaluation.

### **Alternatives**

1. Refer back to staff for further information or other options
2. Take no action

### **Attachments**

- A. Paper Streets and Trails Spreadsheet
- B. Paper Streets and Trails Map (24" x 36")

Respectfully submitted,

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Engineering Technician

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Raymond E. Davis III, PE, PTOE  
Director of Public Works

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Jack Crist  
Interim City Manager

**PAPER STREETS AND TRAILS**



Attachment A

| No. | Location  | Description  | Classification                |
|-----|---|--|-------------------------------|
| 1   | Marsten Avenue (a&b)  | Paper Street   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 2   | Near westerly Ralston Avenue city limits                      | Access easement to John Brooks Memorial area off Ralston Avenue BCC #8, Vol 14, pg 65-68 APN BK 43   | Impassable                    |
| 3   | Adjacent to 2570 Naughton Avenue                              | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded Mar 24, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                                 | Impassable                    |
| 4   | Near 2839 Hallmark Drive                                      | Pedestrian access easement Hallmark Unit No. 4, recorded Sept 18, 1967. Vol.85 pg36-37 APN book 43   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 5   | Old Lake Road behind Hallmark Drive                           | 40' wide pedestrian access easement. Hallmark #2 Vol 64 pg.3 also Hallmark #1 Vol. 59 pg.46 APN BK 45  | Currently unimproved and used |
| 6   | E. Laurel Creek Road  | Paper Street   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 7   | From Hillcrest to Paper Road Bartlett                         | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded Mar 24, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                                 | Impassable                    |
| 8   | Bartlett Way  | Paper Street   | Potential                     |
| 9   | Lake Road easement off Hallmark Drive                         | Paper Street   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 10  | Between 3400 Plateau and 3247 and 3301 Upper Lock             | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 8, recorded December, 1926. Vol. 14 pg 65-68 APN BK 43                                | Impassable                    |
| 11  | Between Lower Lock and San Juan                               | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded Mar 24, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                                 | Impassable                    |
| 12  | Between 1027/1023 Tahoe Drive                                 | 6' wide pathway Belcrest Gardens, recorded Sep 26, 1956. Vol. 46 pg 11 APN BK 43   | Impassable                    |
| 13  | Between 3040 & 3100 San Juan Blvd                             | 5' Path BCC #10, Vol. 15, pg 32 APN BK 43  | Impassable                    |
| 14  | Between 2947 and 3013 San Juan (used for fire access)         | 20' wide easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded on March 8, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                                     | Potential                     |
| 15  | Between E. Laurel Creek and Alhambra                          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded Mar 24, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                                 | Potential                     |
| 16  | Marburger Avenue  | Paper Street   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 17  | Between 2838 Alhambra and Monte Cresta Dr.                    | 10' path   | Impassable                    |
| 18  | Between 2900 Alhambra and 2901 Monte Cresta                   | 10 wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded Mar 8, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 31-32 APN BK 43                                   | Impassable                    |
| 19  | Monte Cresta Drive  | 50' wide Paper Street  | Currently unimproved and used |
| 20  | San Ardo Way  | Paper Street   | Potential                     |
| 21  | Alhambra Drive  | 50' wide Paper Street  | Impassable                    |
| 22  | 2600 Belmont Canyon to 2855 San Juan                          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 10, recorded March 24, 1927. Vol.15 pg. 29-38 APN BK 43                               | Impassable                    |
| 23  | Between 2569/2565 Hallmark Drive Easement to Hallmark Park    | 20' trail easement (Highland Trail) Hallmark West Unit No. 2-B, recorded April 29, 1974. Vol.84 pg. 25-26 APN BK 45  | Currently improved and used   |
| 24  | near 2556/2600 Belmont Canyon Road to 2853-2855 San Juan      | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 5, recorded Oct.6,1925. Vol. 12 pg 67-71 APN BK 43                                    | Impassable                    |
| 25  | Between 2640and2700 Monserat to 2846 and2848 San Juan Blvd.   | B.10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 9, recorded Dec 1926. Vol. 14 pg 69 APN BK 43.                                      | Potential                     |
| 26  | Adjacent to 2624 Somerset Drive                               | 33.64' wide pathway/road easement Hallmark West No. 2A recorded June 25, 1973. Vol. 82 p.4 APN 45  | Currently improved and used   |
| 27  | Between 2732/2728 Wakefield Drive                             | 10' wide pathway access to the open space area.  | Currently improved and used   |
| 28  | Adjacent to 2516 Hallmark Drive                               | trail easement (Highland Trail) - width varies Hallmark West Unit No. 2-B, recorded April 29, 1974. Vol.84 pg. 25-26 APN BK 45                                   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 29  | Between 2314/2316 Wooster and 2806/2808 Newlands (side yards) | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 2A, recorded June 1925. Vol. 12 pg 38-39  | Potential                     |
| 30  | From 2624 Read to 2700 Prindle                                | 5' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 4, recorded July 3, 1925. Vol. 12 pg 45 APN BK 44                                      | Impassable                    |
| 31  | Near 2500 Carlmont Drive                                      | 75' wide pedestrian and equestrian access easement Carlmont Woods, Recorded at County Recorder, April 28, 1971. Vol. 72 pg 11 APN BK 45                          | Impassable                    |
| 32  | Near 2500 Carlmont Drive                                      | 6' wide pedestrian access easement Carlmont Woods, recorded at County Recorder April 28, 1971. Vol. 72, pg 11 APN BK 45 Note also 20' pedestrian access easement | Potential                     |
| 33  | Between 2226 Semeria and 2325 Buena Vista                     | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 2, recorded Dec 30, 1924. Vol.12 page 14  | Potential                     |
| 34  | Between 2140/2136 Lyon Ave and 2233/2231 Semeria Ave          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 2, recorded Dec 30, 1924. Vol.12 page 14  | Impassable                    |
| 35  | from 2327 Casa Bona to 2508 Carmelita                         | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 2, recorded Dec 30, 1924. Vol.12 page 14  | Potential                     |
| 36  | Between 2403/2501 Read Avenue and 2324/2322 Coronet Boulevard | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 4, recorded July 3, 1925. Vol. 12 pg 43-49 APN BK 44                                  | Potential                     |
| 37  | Between 2644/2642 Ponce Ave and 2422/2420 Arthur Ave          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 4, recorded July 3, 1925. Vol 12 pg 43-49 APN BK 44                                   | Potential                     |
| 38  | 2419/2417 Coronet to 2134 Ewell Road                          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 4, recorded July 3, 1925. Vol. 12 pg 46 APN BK 44                                     | Potential                     |

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|-----|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 39  | Between 2590/2600 Coronet Blvd. and Ralston Ave.                                 | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 4, recorded July 3, 1925. Vol. 12 pg 45 APN BK 44 - Used for Storm Drain line. | Impassable                    |
| 40  | 2300/2286 Hastings Drive to open space   | 10' wide pathway easement Carlmont Woods No. 2 recorded September 26, 1975. Vol.88 p.35-42 APN BK 45  | Currently improved and used   |
| 41  | between 2331/2327 Hastings Drive to open space                                   | 10' wide pathway easement Carlmont Woods No. 2 recorded September 26, 1975. Vol.88 p.35-42 APN BK 45  | Currently improved and used   |
| 42  | between 2413/2411 Hastings Drive to open space                                   | 10' wide pathway easement Carlmont Woods No. 2 recorded September 26, 1975. Vol.88 p.35-42 APN BK 45  | Currently improved and used   |
| 43  | 609/607 Alameda de las Pulgas to 1779/1775 Terrace Dr.                           | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11                                    | Impassable                    |
| 44  | between 1774/1772 Terrace Dr. and 1777 Valley View Ave                           | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11 APN BK 44                          | Impassable                    |
| 45  | 714/712 Alameda de las Pulgas to 2225/2223 Coronet Blvd                          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 2, recorded Dec 30, 1924. Vol. 12 page 14                                      | Impassable                    |
| 46  | From 1133/1127 Village Drive to 1110 Alameda de las Pulgas                       | 5' walkway Carlmont Village Subdivision November 5, 1956, Vol 46, pg 22 APN BK 45   | Potential                     |
| 47  | between 2619/2617 Hastings Drive to open space                                   | 10' wide pathway easement Carlmont Woods No. 2 recorded September 26, 1975. Vol.88 p.35-42 APN BK 45  | Currently unimproved and used |
| 48  | 1803 Bayview Ave to 1908 Lyon Ave  | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11                                    | Currently unimproved and used |
| 49  | Between 1825/1823 Mezes Avenue to 1816/1814 Hillman Ave                          | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 6, recorded Nov 13, 1925. Vol. 13 pg 13 APN BK 44                              | Impassable                    |
| 50  | Between 1568/1566 Winding Way to 1811/1813 Hillman Ave via 1709/1707 Hillman Ave | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 6, recorded Nov 13, 1925. Vol. 13 pg 13 APN BK 44                              | Currently improved and used   |
| 51  | Between 1526/1522 Ridge Road to 1563/1559 Winding Way                            | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 6, recorded Nov 13, 1925. Vol. 13 pg 13 APN BK 44                              | Potential                     |
| 52  | 1938/1936 Oak Knoll Dr to 1717 Pine Knoll Dr                                     | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11                                    | Impassable                    |
| 53  | 1504 Pine Knoll and 1611 Notre Dame  | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11                                    | Potential                     |
| 54  | Between 1906/1904 Oak Knoll Dr   | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11 APN BK 44                          | Potential                     |
| 55  | 1720/1718 Valley View Ave to 1920 Oak Knoll Dr                                   | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11 APN BK 44                          | Potential                     |
| 56  | 1700 Terrace Dr to 1723/1721 Valley View Ave                                     | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11                                    | Potential                     |
| 57  | 1740/1736 Terrace Dr to 1753 Valley View Ave                                     | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11 APN BK 44                          | Potential                     |
| 58  | 2006/2004 Arbor Ave to 1737 Terrace Dr   | 10' wide pathway easement Belmont Country Club Properties, Subdivision No. 1, recorded Oct 1, 1924. Vol. 12 pages 1-11 APN BK 44                          | Potential                     |
| 59  | Walkway from North Road to Davey Glen  |   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 60  | Between 411 and 413 Yorkshire Way  | 20' wide pathway for Alexander Park entrance recorded Vol. 16, pg 41 APN BK 40  | Currently improved and used   |
| 61  | Adjacent to 800 Laurel Avenue  | Concrete stairs from South Road to 800 Laurel Avenue  | Currently improved and used   |
| 62  | Between 1050 and 1048 O'Neill  | 10' wide path, bridge and watercourse easement (City Hall parking lot to O'Neill) recorded Vol 121, pg 64 APN BK 45                                       | Currently improved and used   |
| 63  | From O'Neill to Paloma   | 2 - 10' wide pathway easement. Amended Vol.17 pg11 APN BK 45  | Potential                     |
| 64  | Between 1601/1597 Molitor Road and 1600/1596 Sunnyslope Avenue                   | 20' easement Bayview Heights Subdivision No. 2, Vol 16, pg 33 APN BK 45   | Currently unimproved and used |
| 65  | Off Island Parkway   | 20' non-motorized easement Vol 118 pg 63 Public Trust Easement 88099588 (Sports Complex) APN BK 40  | Currently improved and used   |