

## 1. PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Project will help the City of Garden Grove complete its long-awaited vision for the Medal of Honor Bike and Pedestrian Trail by providing additional trail amenities and beautification. On Tuesday, April 27, 2021, the City of Garden Grove dedicated the Garden Grove Medal of Honor Bike and Pedestrian Trail. During the dedication, Garden Grove Mayor Steve Jones spoke about the concept for the trail originating from the “High Line,” a universally revered elevated park and trail in New York City. However, due to a lack of gathering spaces and amenities, anecdotal evidence shows that the Garden Grove Medal of Honor Bike and Pedestrian Trail is currently underutilized as a place for community members (particularly school-aged children) to socialize and experience the outdoor space, thus falling short of its potential. This is evident through photo documentation shown in Section 3 below.

This Project will provide new infrastructure that will enhance public health, make cultural connections, contribute to community placemaking, and help bring that vision to life. To support these goals, the Project will both beautify existing community gathering areas and provide new infrastructure which will promote increased pedestrian/bicyclist traffic on the Trail. Specifically, this Project will provide new trash receptacles, new benches, new bicycle racks, and over 120,000 square feet of mulch at multiple locations throughout the Trail corridor, which will also prevent water run-off and flooding, as well as, add longevity to the recently added 363 trees and landscaping. In addition, the mulch will help reduce the urban heat island effect. The Project will install 22 new pieces of fitness equipment along the Trail to provide a more comfortable and inviting space, while enhancing the use and promoting public health initiatives.

The Project is located on a former Pacific Electric railway alignment, running between Brookhurst Street and Nelson Street. Owned by the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), the City has a licensed agreement with OCTA to use the property for 20 years – until 2039. The Trail is publicly open between 7 AM and 11 PM. It has seven access points, all of which are open during the Trail’s open timeframe.

The existing community surrounding the Trail is comprised of single-family residential and multi-family residential neighborhoods, with four public schools located within 0.5 miles of the Trail’s access points. These four public schools all feature enrollments that are over 75% eligible for free and reduced-price meals, per 2022-2023 California Department of Education data, indicating that these are underserved communities. This includes Garden Grove High School, which enrolls over 2,200 students and whose attendance boundary extends as far west as Brookhurst Street. Garden Grove High School is located about a 15-minute walk from the eastern terminus of the Trail, and students living in the western part of Garden Grove High School’s attendance area use the Trail to walk and bicycle to/from school. See the Project Location Map in Section 2 for visual reference.

The communities located between Nutwood Street and Brookhurst Street (along the Trail) are comprised of a relatively high proportion of public high school students. According to 2021 5-Year ACS data, about 7.5% of these neighborhoods’ total populations are enrolled in a public high school, which is higher than the percentage of Garden Grove’s population that is enrolled in public high school (5.86%). Given that a vast majority of these neighborhoods are assigned to Garden Grove High School, many of these high school students would benefit from improvements to the Trail – which is a key transportation link to Garden Grove High School. It should be noted that the City of Garden Grove recently installed a marked crosswalk near the eastern terminus of the Trail – at the unsignalized intersection of Nelson Street and Acacia Parkway. Acacia Parkway provides access to several key destinations in downtown Garden Grove, such as Garden Grove High School, the Main Street commercial corridor, Garden Grove Library, Coastline Community College, and Village Green Park. Beautifying the Trail will help encourage community members to utilize the Trail for both recreation and to reach key destinations, as well as making the Trail a destination itself to help support community placemaking.

The Project will include 22 pieces of new fitness equipment, four new seating areas, and four new bicycle racks for short-term parking. The fitness equipment, benches, and bike racks will be distributed throughout the Trail, encouraging users to explore the entire length of the Trail. The fitness equipment will allow community members and school-aged children to improve their physical health, while new benches will encourage community members to gather and enjoy the outdoor space. The City has been in discussion with Greenfields Outdoor Fitness, a provider for the facilities, to discuss potential partnerships should the City receive the award.

The Project would also provide new mulch to reduce the urban heat island effect and beautify the trail. The Project site has a paved bike facility and pedestrian trail made of decomposed granite, but the surrounding parts of the Trail are barren. Without intervention, the Project site becomes overgrown with weeds and other invasive vegetation in a relatively short period of time. The City recently planted 363 new trees; however, they will take a few years to mature, and recently several trees did not survive and required replacement due to flooding during the rainy season. Reduction of the urban heat island effect through this soft scaping measure will also be important during the time needed for the new trees to reach a maturity level where they can provide additional shade.

The Project would provide eight new trash receptacles – two new trash receptacles at each new fitness equipment area. Currently, the Trail only features trash receptacles at entrances. In addition, the Project would install four new anti-littering signs, located at each fitness equipment area. To demonstrate the City's commitment to beautifying the Trail, the City recently secured funding for a graffiti and weed abatement vendor to erase graffiti and reduce the amount of litter and debris on the Trail.

Shelley Kensington Park is the only space along the Trail that supports community placemaking, currently featuring a playground structure, a basketball court, and a small seating area. The community immediately surrounding the park is predominately characterized by medium-density residential apartment complexes, whose residents have few alternatives for outdoor recreation. This community is also considered underserved, with a median household income of \$60,278, per 2021 5-Year ACS data. This is well below the underserved community threshold of \$67,278. This community also consists of a low vehicle access rate of nearly 40%, per 2021 5-Year AC data, which is higher than the low vehicle access rate in both Garden Grove (29.5%) and Orange County (31.66%). Low vehicle access is defined as households with one car or less.

Providing this park with new fitness equipment, furniture, and mulch will support this underserved community's overall health and further encourage its school-aged residents to use the Trail during their daily commute to/from nearby public schools.



3. PHOTO OF EXISTING CONDITIONS AT PROJECT SITE(S)





## 4. DEMONSTRATED COMMUNITY NEED AND POTENTIAL OUTCOMES

### ***Goal 1. Reduce the Amount of Waste and Debris***

The Project site currently provides ten trash receptacles, eight of which are provided on the sidewalks adjacent to the Trail (near Trail entrances) and two which are located near the playground area by Shelley Kensington Park. There are currently no trash receptacles provided at midpoint sections along the Trail. This Project would provide eight new trash receptacles, to be installed next to the new fitness equipment stations. In addition, the Project would install four anti-littering signs, also to be located at each fitness equipment station. These new Trail amenities would help prevent littering, particularly at portions of the Trail that are not located near an entrance.

### ***Goal 2. Beautify and Improve Public Space***

The entire project site is in need of funding for beautification and improved infrastructure. The Medal of Honor Trail is available for the community to use, and since its construction, it has become a popular local destination for exercise and recreation.

However, currently the Trail lacks an adequate number of trash receptacles and seating. This Project would provide seating at four Trail access points, which would enhance the public space for both school-aged children and elderly residents.

New fitness equipment would also be installed as part of the Project, helping to encourage improvement to mental and physical health and to transform the Trail into a more attractive, dynamic community center.

The Project would also provide new mulch which would be an important natural-weed abatement method to help beautify the Trail. It would also help with regulating soil temperature, reducing flooding and stagnant water which becomes a prime breeding ground for mosquitos, reducing soil evaporation, and retaining moisture levels which would help reduce the urban heat island effect and support the establishment of recently planted shade trees while they grow to maturity.

### ***Goal 3. Improving Public Spaces for Walking and Recreation***

The Trail is a popular local destination and facility for community members to walk, bike, and travel through to local destinations, including nearby public schools. However, due to its lacking amenities, the Trail is heavily underutilized as a space for community gathering. New benches will allow community members to enjoy the outdoors and take respite from busy day-to-day life.

The Project improves a valuable pedestrian and bicycle facility that provides easterly connections to several destinations in downtown Garden Grove, such as Garden Grove High School (with an enrollment of over 2,200), the Main Street commercial corridor, Coastline Community College, and Village Green Park. The Trail extends primarily through residential neighborhoods, which provides the community with access to nearly every type of service within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile. Within a  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of the Trail, there are two major shopping centers, including 54 shops and restaurants, 5 banks, and 5 grocery stores. Also, 11 government and civic destinations including an office park, a library, and post office are within close proximity to the Trail. Within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile, there are 10 churches, 6 parks, 4 banks, 4 colleges or universities, 16 health care entities (i.e. hospitals, doctors, dentists, pharmacists) that can be reached from the Trail.

The Project would reduce vehicular use and increase active transportation modes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, thus create a more comfortable and enjoyable experience for pedestrians, bicyclists, and people on small-wheeled devices to reach their destinations, while also transforming the Trail into a community destination itself.

**Goal 4. Advance Equity for Underserved Communities**

Four public schools are located within a ½ mile of the project location, and over 75% of each school's enrollment is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, per 2022-2023 California Department of Education data. This includes Garden Grove High School, which is located less than a ½ mile from the eastern terminus of the Trail. Overall, of the 3,625 students attending the four public schools located within a ½ mile of the Project, 79.01% of those students (2,864) were eligible for free or reduced-price meals in 2022-2023 school year.

Additionally, two Census tracts within a ½ mile of the project location contain median household incomes below \$67,278, which is the threshold (80% of statewide median household income) for determining underserved communities. This includes Census Tract 887.01, which surrounds a central portion of the Project, between Lampson Avenue and Nutwood Street.

In particular, this underserved community consists of several neighborhoods with medium-density apartment complexes and mobile home parks, where community members experience high levels of linguistic isolation (>20%) and low vehicle access (households with 1 car or fewer), per 2021 5-Year ACS data.

## 5. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

This project is a culmination of numerous brainstorming events, planning sessions, and community engagement efforts that occurred in the development of five important planning and visioning efforts: 1) General Plan: Environmental Justice Element, 2) General Plan: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, Land Use, Community Design, and Circulation, and Air Quality Elements, 3) Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 4) Re: Imagine Garden Grove Initiative, and 5) Garden Grove Active Streets Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

1) Environmental Justice Element of the General Plan: The Environmental Justice Element contains many policies and actions that advance environmental justice in the city. Some goals that support this project include:

- Policy EJ-2.2: New Park Access. Prioritize new park and recreational facilities, including expanding opportunities for physical activity, within disadvantaged communities and residential neighborhoods lacking easy, walkable access to park and recreation facilities.
- Policy EJ-2.5: Neighborhood Cleanup. Support programs and organizations that assist in cleaning up residential neighborhoods, including litter, trash, and graffiti removal.
- Policy EJ-4.1: Civic Engagement. Support an equitable, transparent, and comprehensive approach to civic engagement and public outreach on all aspects of City governance and delivery of services. The neighborhoods adjacent to the Project Site and Shelley Kensington Park were explicitly called out in four of six maps that were included in the plan to give a context of communities that have specific characteristics: 1) Disadvantaged Communities, 2) Pollution Burdens, 3) Population Characteristics (for Linguistic Isolation), and 4) Park Access in Disadvantaged Communities.

The City used a comprehensive set of strategies to engage with community members to develop the Environmental Justice and Housing Elements. These strategies included: 1) Public Engagement Plan, 2) dedicated online Housing Element portal (<https://ggcity.org/housing-element>) that contained surveys, news, background information, and important links, 3) community workshops, 4) stakeholder interviews, 5) focus groups, and 6) online survey where 622 community members participated. Multilingual surveys were also printed and distributed to residents of large multi-family housing complexes and at the City's resource centers. Surveys, workshops, and important dates were advertised on the City's social media platforms with thousands of followers: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Next Door. Downloadable presentations and summaries of public comments from workshops and surveys were made available in the agendas published for study sessions and public hearings.

2) Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan: The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element provides numerous policies and actions that support this project, which include:

- Policy PRK-1.5 Encourage the development of linear parks along easements or rights-of-way, including but not limited to utility easements and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) right-of-way.
- PRK-IMP-1E Encourage coordination between the Community Services Department and the Community Development, Public Works, and Economic Development Departments to understand parkland and bikeway priorities, and secure available funding for new bikeways, parkland, and leisure spaces.
- Policy PRK-4.5 Foster community participation and public participation programs regarding open space resources.
- PRK-IMP-4C Partner with schools and colleges to foster an understanding and appreciation of open space among all age levels.

- Policy PRK-9.1 Provide ways for citizens and visitors to express, enjoy, and experience cultural diversity and community heritage through activities and visual arts.

3) Parks and Recreation Master Plan: The planning document identifies Shelley Kensington Park as a facility that needs general and ADA improvements. Recommended park renovation includes removing and replacing trash receptacles, removing and replacing play equipment, and removing wood chips and replacing with resilient surfacing.

4) Re: Imagine Garden Grove Initiative: The initiative is an innovative marketing campaign that morphed from a slogan to a business-attraction philosophy and serves as a model for event planning. Began in 2013, the genesis of “Re: Imagine Garden Grove” was to re-brand the city, locally and regionally, as a more progressive-thinking, economically-vibrant community.

Since its inception, the City has hosted three Open Streets events. The events occurred in 2014, 2015, and 2017 and all past events have attracted more than 10,000 people per event. A segment of the event included the portion of the Project between Nelson Street and Stanford Avenue. The City received significant amounts of positive feedback to expand and enhance the pedestrian and bicycle trail.

5) Garden Grove Active Streets Plan: The Plan builds upon the Re: Imagine Garden Grove Initiative to transform Garden Grove into a city known for its walk and bike-friendliness and as an active, healthy, and prosperous place to live, work, and play. The Plan contains a dedicated section that provides recommendations for the pedestrian and bicycle trail, all of which support this Project.

According to the Plan, “Development of an urban greenway along the Pacific Electric Right-of-Way (PE ROW) will be a catalytic project in Garden Grove, creating a diagonal active transportation, recreational and ecological spine through the heart of the city.”

The recommendations respond to comments received through the public engagement process, which involved: 1) stakeholder meetings, 2) community workshops, 3) project website and social media presence, 4) interactive online map (part of project website), and 5) online survey.

One of the public workshops took place at the second Open Streets event in 2015. The workshop attracted over 100 participants. According to participants, a top motivation to bike includes having more off-street trails, while the top motivations to walk and preferred amenities include having more benches, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, landscaping, lighting, playgrounds, and fitness equipment.

Participant feedback through the online interactive map also indicated that implementing a multi-use path on the Pacific Electric Rail Line would be a great way to increase access throughout the city and create a regional connection.

In the survey question, when asked what destination in Garden Grove respondents would like to get to by biking or walking, the most common response was "No Particular Destination." They want to do it for fitness or leisure. This statement supports the community's need to have the Trail as more than just a transportation facility.



## 6. PROJECT DELIVERABILITY

The City of Garden Grove is fully committed to ensuring the deliverability of this project. To show our dedication, the City has prepared a Funding Commitment Letter, located in the Additional Supporting Documents, that documents our in-kind contribution through our staff support.

For the outdoor fitness equipment, the City has been in correspondence with Greenfields Outdoor Fitness. The firm has provided several proposals to the City for different fitness equipment packages. The proposals contain photo renderings of how the equipment would look on the project site.

City staff from Community Services and Community & Economic Development Departments were consulted on other infrastructure components such as the provision for mulch, and trash receptacles. The City plans to use the same vendor for the mulch and new trash receptacles from recently completed projects.

City staff across different departments (e.g., Public Works, Engineering, Planning, and Community Services) are aware of the permits and building reviews for infrastructure such as fitness equipment that would be needed for construction. City staff could streamline, and waive certain fees for the permits of City initiated projects and expedite review processes so the project could be completed on time.

The project requires CEQA documentation for this grant, and therefore the City has contracted with an environmental consultant to prepare and complete the CEQA Categorical Exception for the proposed project prior to this grant application submittal.

As discussed in prior sections, the Project is on the former Pacific Electric Right-of-Way (PE ROW) Trail, and the City has a licensed agreement with OCTA to use the property for 20 years, until 2039. The City has confirmed with its OCTA representative that permits will not be required for this project and, per the lease agreement, the Trail property can be utilized for City project use, as the City sees fit. Recent grant projects for the actual construction of the Trail and all improvements, including the planting of the trees and the installation of lighting, did not require permits from OCTA.

## 7. MAINTENANCE PLAN

The City's dedication of maintenance resources to the project is supported by the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan. The following goals related to maintenance are identified in the Plan.

- PRK-IMP-3A Use fiscally responsible rehabilitation and maintenance strategies to maintain and improve parks and facilities in need.
- PRK-IMP-3B Continue to utilize and explore additional financing mechanisms for the operation and maintenance of existing facilities.

The City will develop a maintenance plan to formally commit to a frequent maintenance schedule. Maintenance will be defined by a written Policy/Procedure for the City to contract for services. Maintenance will be continuous over the life of the project.

The project elements such as benches, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks are anticipated to have a lifespan of 20 years. Following the installation of infrastructure elements, the City will hire vendors to perform maintenance activities that will be paid from the City's General Fund and from other grant funding, as it becomes available.

The City's Community Development department will commit to developing a formal maintenance plan for the Medal of Honor Bike and Pedestrian Trail where services will be performed weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual. Weekly basis will be added for maintenance of the landscaping and trees (previous Urban Forestry Grant). It should be noted that weekly maintenance basis has recently been approved for graffiti abatement along the Trail (six days per week).

The following is the current maintenance servicing schedule for the Trail and the proposed maintenance servicing schedule for each Project element, to ensure the project is sustainable for the next 3 to 5 years, and 10 years from project completion. The City's Public Works Department has confirmed that after the 5-year mark, the department will absorb the project maintenance into to their Maintenance Schedule and will also conduct minor maintenance repairs as-needed by on-call vendors.

Existing Maintenance Schedule:

1. Graffiti Abatement: City recently added contract for graffiti abatement services by a vendor. Contracted for 6 days per week (200\$ per day), or based on community complaints.
2. Lighting Services and Repairs: City is contracted with a lighting vendor for on-call repairs and services, including solar battery replacements on City properties.
3. Weed Abatement: City recently contracted with a weed abatement vendor to remove excess weeds and debris from the Trail. The servicing occurs every 2 months.
4. BeWell Mobile: City contracts with a mental health servicing response team to respond to any service calls related to homelessness.
5. Trees and Landscaping: City is contracted with a landscaping vendor to care for the City's trees. The vendor performs services every 7-10 working days.
6. DG Replacement and Slurry Seal: City has an ongoing budget allocation of \$10,000 for DG upkeep, including slurry seal and restriping, as needed.
7. Tree Information Signage: City is contracted with a sign vendor, with contract item for walk-up visual inspections of tree information signage, including cleaning and graffiti removal. This is performed quarterly.

Proposed Maintenance Schedule:

1. Anti-Littering Signage: City will utilize existing relationship with Tree Information Signage vendor, and hire that vendor to also perform walk-up inspections of newly installed anti-littering signage. This inspection will occur on a quarterly basis, and will include checking each sign's physical condition, cleaning each sign, and removing any graffiti.
2. New Trash Receptacles: City will hire a separate trash vendor to service and replace the trash liners of the new trash receptacles twice per week. In addition, the vendor will perform a walk-up inspection of each new receptacle, which will include cleaning the trash receptacle and removing any graffiti, if needed. The vendor also will replace any damaged trash receptacles. This service will occur on a quarterly basis.
3. Mulch: City will add the mulch maintenance service to the existing contract with its current landscaping vendor. This vendor will perform a walk-up inspection of the mulch depth at all locations along the Trail, to ensure that the mulch is consistently at the recommended depth of 2 inches.
4. Fitness Equipment: City will add the fitness equipment maintenance/servicing to its contract with the fitness equipment vendor. The fitness equipment maintenance/servicing will occur quarterly, including an inspection of fitness equipment's general condition, cleaning of the fitness equipment, and graffiti removal (if needed).
5. Concrete Pads: The City will hire a vendor to conduct biannual walk-up inspections of the concrete pads' physical condition and to repair any damage to the concrete pads, as needed. The City has an ongoing budget allocation of \$5000 for any needed concrete repairs.