Progress Continues on Camp Creek Improvement Project

The City of Colorado Springs initiated the Camp Creek Drainage Improvement Project in 2013 to work with the community to develop a plan that will result in drainage improvements along Camp Creek between Fountain Creek and the northern limits of Garden of the Gods Park. The Plan was adopted by the City in 2014 and improvements are being constructed as funding becomes available.

This newsletter provides an update on current and completed elements of the Camp Creek Drainage Improvement Plan. For those who would like more information about the Camp Creek Project and community planning process, all newsletters and community meeting materials are available for viewing on the City’s project web page: http://ColoradoSprings.gov/CampCreek.

Design Refinements to 31st Street Corridor Improvements

Work is progressing on design and pre-final plan preparation for the 31st Street channel and roadway improvements that were defined in the 2013-14 Camp Creek Drainage Improvement Plan. The pre-final plans will provide a basis for estimating project costs and will better position the project for future construction funding opportunities.

Through the design process, some refinements to the original design concepts have been made to better address physical constraints and issues occurring in the project corridor. Three of these refinements are described below.

Refinement #1: Roundabout at the 31st and Fontanero Intersection

While the Camp Creek project has primarily been focused on drainage improvements, refinements to the road design of the 30th Street and Fontanero intersection are needed to improve public safety.

Traffic studies performed for the City’s 30th Street Project have indicated that replacing the existing four-way stop at the intersection of 31st Street and Fontanero Street with a roundabout would significantly improve the flow of traffic through both the 30th and 31st Street intersections with Fontanero Street.

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Refinement #1 Designed to Reduce Traffic Backups at 30th and 31st Street Intersections (continued from page 1)

Because of the close proximity of the intersections, traffic backups frequently occur. During the Camp Creek community involvement process, a number of Pleasant Valley neighborhood residents expressed concerns about the 31st Street and Fontanero Street intersection. As traffic volumes increase over time, the backups will get worse and will require improvements such as a traffic signal or roundabout.

To address traffic concerns in tandem with the 31st Street drainage improvements, construction of a roundabout provides a more favorable solution than a traffic signal. Benefits associated with the roundabout concept include:

* Reduced wait time for the primary traffic movements made at that intersection (northbound-to-eastbound and westbound-to-southbound);
* Expected decrease in cut-through traffic from 30th Street to 31st Street north of Fontanero Street;
* Reduced braking and acceleration noise;
* Reduced traffic congestion in the Pleasant Valley neighborhood;
* Reduced air pollution due to fewer idling vehicles; and
* The potential to create a focal point or gateway for the neighborhood.

A concept design for a roundabout has been developed for the intersection, as illustrated above. The design fits the roundabout within the existing street right-of-way. The size of the proposed roundabout would be somewhat larger than the one in place at Mesa Road and Kissing Camels Drive.

Refinement #2: Extension of the Underground Camp Creek Culvert

The Camp Creek Improvement Plan called for the underground portion of Camp Creek to be extended from the Bijou Street/Echo Lane intersection to West Platte Avenue. Detailed design analysis has indicated that it is more appropriate to extend the underground portion of Camp Creek to the north end of the curve between Valley Road and Willamette Avenue. Consistent with the Camp Creek Improvement Plan, the existing channel will be replaced with a large concrete box culvert covered by a median. The 12-foot-wide Foothills Trail and native landscaping will be constructed on the surface of the median as shown in the rendering to the left.

Benefits to extension of the underground culvert include:

* Lessens the need for vertical walls along the channel;
* Eliminates the need for a separate pedestrian bridge near Valley Road;
* Reduces the curved portion of the naturalistic channel, resulting in reduced risk of erosion; and
* Reduces impacts to residents’ trees and parking strips in the area.
Refinement #3: Water Street and Pike Drive Intersection Improvements

The intersections of Water Street and Pike Drive are proposed to be modified as shown in the exhibit below. The existing Water Street bridge over the Creek would be eliminated and replaced with two new bridges, one at Pike Drive and one just north of Water Street.

Benefits associated with this refinement include:
* Creates fewer impacts and costs associated with relocating three very large and important water lines that cross Camp Creek at Water Street;
* Discourages 30th Street-to-31st Street cut-through traffic, a problem cited by participants in the Camp Creek community involvement process;
* Eliminates the need for a separate pedestrian bridge with a mid-block crossing; and
* Improves traffic circulation and safety around Howbert Elementary School.

Camp Creek Phase 1 Includes Additional Channel Stabilization Near Ranch

The City plans to construct a Camp Creek channel stabilization project in the southern portion of Rock Ledge Ranch in 2019. The project will add naturalistic rock vane structures and re-shape and re-plant Creek banks located near the small white chapel in Rock Ledge Ranch. Immediately north of the existing Chambers Way Bridge, where the channel turns south to align with 31st Street, it will be lined with a grouted, boulder-lined bottom with concrete sides.

A bridge over the Creek for the Foothills Trail will also be included in the project. The existing pedestrian bridge over the Creek located just southwest of the small chapel will be removed to reduce the potential for flooding the adjacent Pleasant Valley neighborhood and the chapel in large flood events.

Construction of two or three additional rock vane structures along the portion of Camp Creek located near Gateway Road are also expected to be included in the project. The project will reduce erosion of the Creek bed and banks which in turn will reduce the volume of sediment being carried by the Creek through Pleasant Valley and downstream waterways.
**Update on Flood Mitigation Facility**

The Camp Creek Improvement Plan includes a large stormwater detention and sediment collection facility to be constructed adjacent to 30th Street near the northern boundary of Garden of the Gods Park. Construction of that facility is still on hold pending completion and approval of further archeological studies through FEMA. The City hopes that these studies will be completed and approved by fall of this year so a contractor can be hired to begin construction.

**Camp Creek FEMA Floodplain Map Changes Affect Pleasant Valley Property Owners**

Property owners along Camp Creek are reminded that a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) for Camp Creek was issued by FEMA on October 27, 2016. The LOMR revised the floodplain boundaries shown on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) along Camp Creek between the southern portion of Glen Eyrie and Fountain Creek. A copy of the 2016 LOMR is posted on the project web page: [http://ColoradoSprings.gov/CampCreek](http://ColoradoSprings.gov/CampCreek).

Because updated hydraulic analysis had indicated lower 100-year flow rates than had been used by FEMA for the 1997 FIRM, the City of Colorado Springs requested the LOMR. As a result, FEMA’s 2016 LOMR narrowed the 100-year regulatory floodplain throughout most of the corridor because the revised flow rates were less than those used to define the floodplain for the 1997 FIRM. The LOMR removed 57 properties from and added six properties to the regulatory floodplain. Even more important, it removed 66 homes from and added two homes to the regulatory floodplain.

Owners of property and/or homes near the Creek may want to review the LOMR and contact their flood insurance and mortgage companies if they believe that the FEMA Regulatory Status of their property has been changed by the LOMR.

The next FEMA floodplain map revision planned for Camp Creek will reflect the impact of construction of the Garden of the Gods flood mitigation facility (see related story to right). The detention facility will significantly reduce the 100-year depth and width of the floodplain along 31st Street. The City has obtained conditional approval from FEMA for the future map changes, based on the effects of the proposed facility. After construction of the facility is completed and a LOMR is processed and approved by FEMA, it is expected that all but about 30 of the properties along the 31st Street corridor can be removed from the regulatory floodplain.

**Gateway Trail Improvements Coming Soon**

The City plans this year to construct improvements to Gateway Trail located north of Gateway Road in the Garden of the Gods. The project will include re-alignment of portions of the trail to provide more separation from Gateway Road and flatter trail slopes. Also included will be a new trail bridge across Camp Creek approximately 100-feet north of the existing pedestrian bridge. The reconstructed trail will enhance access for visitors wanting to experience the Park as pedestrians.

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