

Funding the Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail

February 22, 2022



Request to Tuolumne County Transportation Council

The Groveland Community Services District (GCSD) respectfully requests that TCTC adopt the Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail Project as a priority for funding, in whole or in part, through the various grant funding programs currently available including those focused on active transportation, public health and safety, emergency planning and preparation, recreational opportunities and similar sources. The trail project has been identified as a community priority through a multi-year public engagement process and has the full support as a priority of the GCSD Board of Directors. GCSD currently has no source of funding available to construct the trail; however once constructed GCSD has developed the partnership support and has the capacity and ability to provide long term trail maintenance and upkeep with volunteers, property tax dollars and GCSD staff.

Preliminary Estimated Cost - \$6 Million

- Planning, CEQA, Permitting and Design - \$200,000
- Phase 1 Construction (1.7 miles - Groveland Community Resilience Center to Mary Laveroni Park, Deer flat Rd and Sports Complex) - \$2.5 million
- Land Acquisition (Hetch Hetchy Railroad Properties) - \$100,000
- Phase 2 Construction (2 miles – Deer Flat Rd to Hwy 120 at west Big Oak Flat) - \$3 million
- Secondary and tertiary trail development - \$200,000

Project Overview

The Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail is a portion of a much larger trail system planned by other entities for over 20 years, that follows the route of the old Hetch Hetchy Railroad grade from Moccasin, through Big Oak Flat and Groveland. The trail was envisioned to extend to the west boundary of the Stanislaus National Forest near Buck Meadows, and beyond to Yosemite Park and the Pacific Crest Trail. As documented in the Tuolumne County Trails and Bikeways Plans, Regional Transportation Plan and Groveland Area Circulation and Active Transportation Plan; the Project meets the high priority need for non-motorized linkage of the disconnected communities in the Groveland region.

Currently, there is no safe access to the only community park, downtown businesses, or the new Groveland Community Resilience Center by non-motorized means of transportation. There are no bike lanes on roads in the region, nor are there offroad trails or paths linking the population areas to services and the businesses of the community. To ride their skateboard in Mary Laveroni Skate Park, a resident of Pine Mountain Lake must travel by car to the park ½ mile away. There are almost no bike riders on streets in the community, or those willing to walk downtown due to the lack of sidewalks or road shoulders, traffic load and speed of traffic. Seeing public health and community linkage as a priority, in 2018 GCSD has assumed the lead in planning, funding, constructing and operating the first public trail linkage between Groveland and Big Oak Flat in southern Tuolumne County.

The first phase of the Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail Project involves the construction of approximately 1.7 miles of handicapped accessible, paved multipurpose trail and support amenities including parking area, trailhead kiosk, wayfinding and interpretive signage, restrooms, pedestrian bridges over Garrote Creek,

benches and lighting. This paved trail will provide the first safe and accessible pedestrian linkage between the major population, recreation, public service and commerce areas of the region. The trail provides non-motorized linkage between the 3500-lot residential community of Pine Mountain Lake, the Groveland Community Resilience Center, GCSD administrative offices, Mary Laveroni Park and downtown Groveland business district including a medical clinic, pharmacy and post office.

The first phase of the trail is located entirely on developed roads and property owned by the GCSD and connects directly to public property and roads owned by Tuolumne County. A trail, pedestrian bridge and planned public restroom within the newly constructed Groveland Community Resilience Center (GCRC) campus are designed to interconnect with the Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail. As shown on the Trails Layout site plan; as you travel west from the GCRC toward Mary Laveroni Park, a main trail segment turns north traveling 2500 feet and connecting to the GCSD Sports Complex which currently contains a baseball field and dogpark. Future plans for this location include expanded parking, new public restrooms, relocation of the skatepark and its expansion to include bike features, lighting and ADA access. The sports complex exits to Flint Ct, a County road.

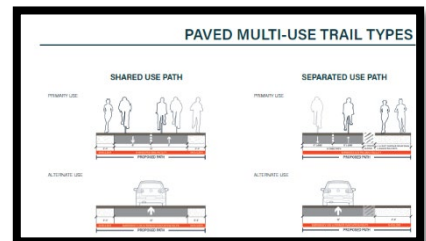
The trail passes down an historic railroad corridor as it approaches Mary Laveroni Park, through an area visited regularly by birdwatchers from throughout the state. Highway 120 through Groveland serves as the northern gateway to Yosemite National Park and is traveled by hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. The Park, its public restroom and entrance to the trail also serves as a stop for the Yosemite Area Rapid Transit busses, tour busses and those waiting for traffic to clear in Yosemite. The ability for tourists to walk the historic railroad trail and view wildlife in, and directly adjacent to downtown Groveland will increase the health and wellness of the community and visitors while supporting the economy of our region. The first phase of the trail terminates on Deer flat Road, a County road.

Interpretive signage will be installed along the trail to identify the historic nature and features of the Hetch Hetchy Railroad; to preserve local history and tell the story of California water development, gold mining and railroad development in the Groveland region. Public restrooms and drinking fountains will be situated in three locations along the trail; at the Sports Complex, GCRC and Mary Laveroni Park. Lighting will be installed along the trail for safety and to extend use hours. Benches and trash/recycling receptacles will be strategically placed along the trail route. The second phase of the main paved trail is planned to extend within the Hetch Hetchy Railroad properties and rights of way from Deer Flat Rd to Highway 120 on the western edge of the Big Oak Flat Community.



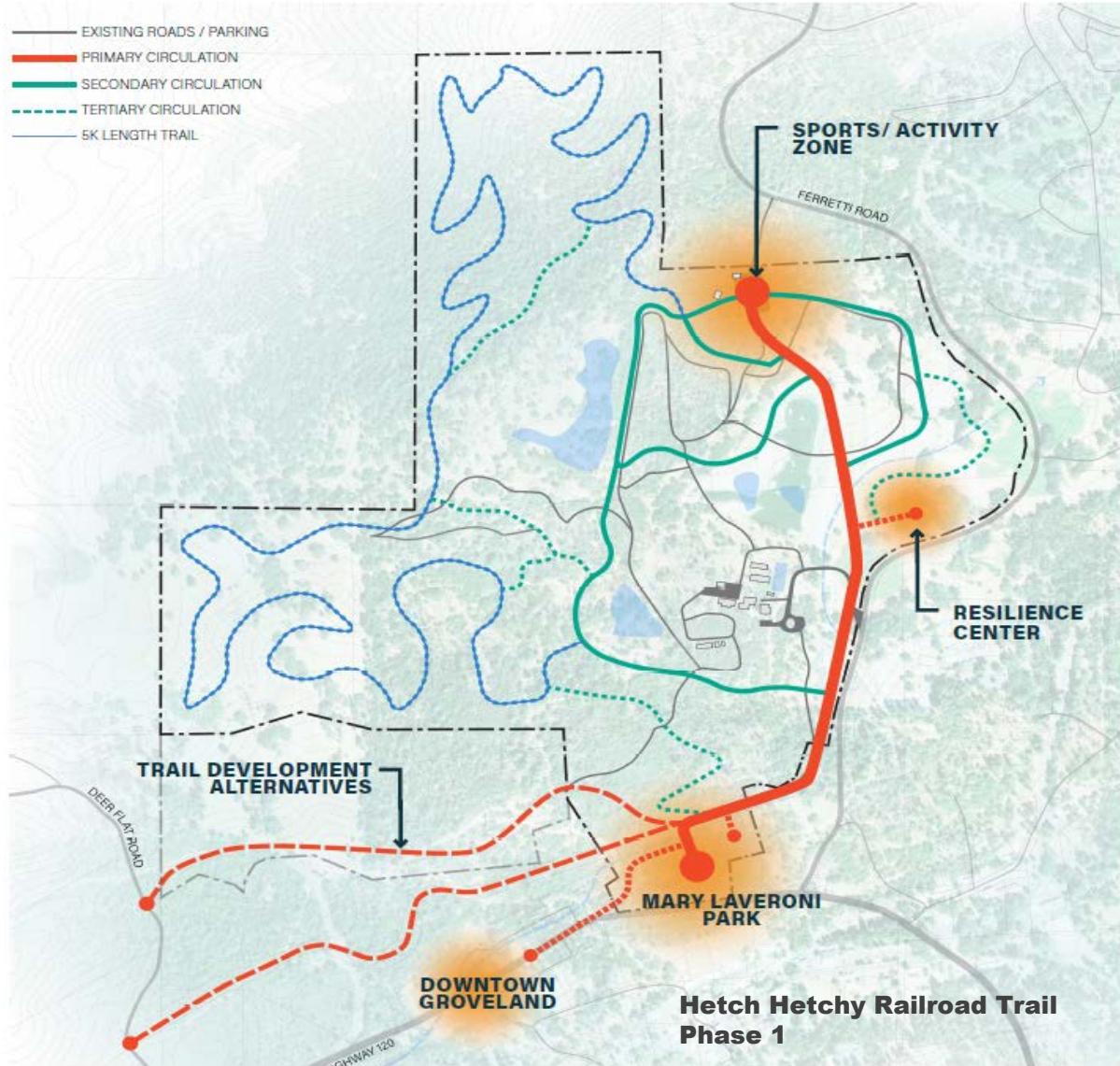
The GCSD trail system is planned to consist of the main 3.7 mile “backbone” paved Hetch Hetchy Railroad multiuse trail, leading to a secondary and tertiary trail network with 2.5k and 5k loop segments extending to the Jones Hill ridgetop on the 280 acre GCSD property and accommodating a variety of nonmotorized uses, interests, skill levels and running/biking events.

The trail serves a second, important community purpose as an alternative ingress/egress route to be used during emergencies. Designed primarily for nonmotorized travel, the paved trail will be designed and constructed with removable bollards at the Sports Complex off Flint Ct, and at the Deer Flat Road entrance. The trail route will facilitate vehicle/emergency vehicle travel providing a second route into and out of the Pine Mountain Lake residential

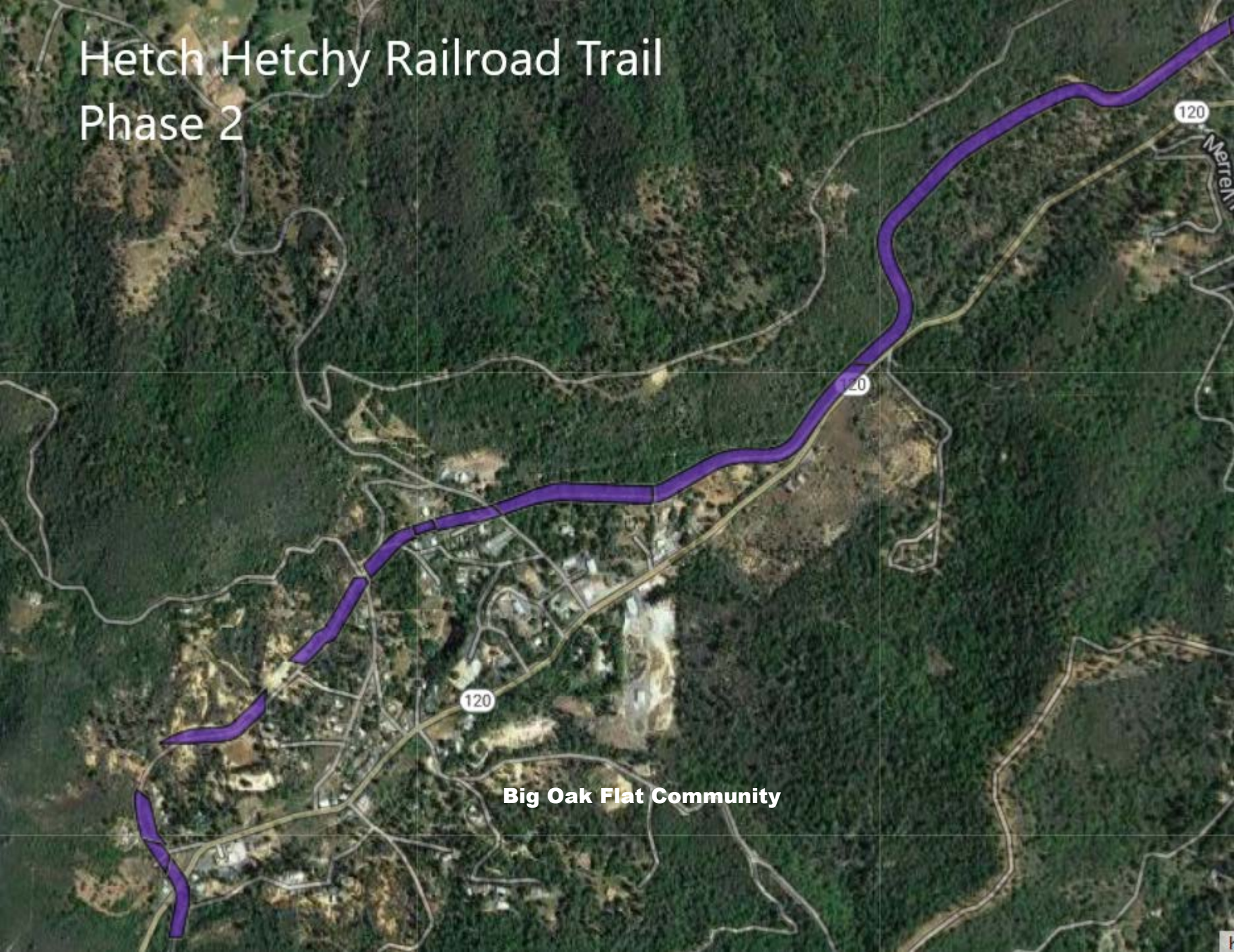


community, avoiding the congested areas of Highway 120 in downtown Groveland and at the 120/Ferretti Rd intersection. Future plans include a greenbelt consisting of drought tolerant and fire-resistant plantings irrigated with recycled wastewater from the adjacent GCSD wastewater plant.

GCSD TRAILS AND CIRCULATION PLAN



Hetch Hetchy Railroad Trail Phase 2



120

120

120

Big Oak Flat Community

Merrell

Alternate Emergency Route

- Alternate Route
- Main Route

Pine Mountain Lake Community

