



Kyrene Branch and Highline Canal Shared Use Path Preliminary Design Study

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Chandler interested in this project?

The Transportation Master Plan conducted a series of public meetings and a citywide survey and found that a majority of respondents wanted to bike as a means of transportation for some trips but did not feel comfortable doing so in on-street bike lanes next to high-speed traffic. Off-street paths and protected bike lanes were viewed as a much more desirable bicycle facility than on-street bike lanes. The Master Plan looked for opportunities to implement these types of facilities, and a few locations (including the Kyrene Branch Canal, Highline Canal, Ashley Trail/ Paseo Trail Connection, and Frye Road Protected Bike Lanes) provided the best opportunities for early implementation of these types of bicycle facilities. Other projects in the master plan would also provide these types of facilities (Ocotillo Rd. Shared Use Path, Price Rd. Shared Use Path, Union Pacific Rail Corridor Shared Use Path, Loop 202 Shared Use Path) but would need more time to develop.

Has Chandler considered constructing other Transportation Master Plan projects before this?

Yes, Chandler also applied for funding for the Ashley Trail/ Paseo Trail connection project, but the project was not awarded funding. The City applied for funding for the Frye Road Protected Bike Lanes project in the previous CMAQ cycle and was awarded funding. That project is currently under design (final design phase).

The approved Chandler Transportation Master Plan 2019 Update contained a Kyrene Branch Canal Shared Use Bike Path project that appeared simpler and less costly. Have any changes to the project been made since then, and why is the cost estimate higher?

The project still follows the same general vision from the Transportation Master Plan. The difference in cost can be attributed to inflation and the fact that we are combining this project with the Highline Canal Path and Orchid Bike Lanes projects. The Kyrene Branch Canal by itself was anticipated to cost \$1.8M in 2019 dollars, and the latest estimate is \$2.35M in 2022 dollars, which is higher due to the rising cost of construction and the inclusion of a signalized crossing at Ray Road.

The Transportation Master Plan is a high-level document that is meant to provide high-level guidance that can be refined as a project is analyzed in depth. The review by our consultant and traffic engineering

staff found that the distance between McKemy and Kyrene Branch Canal crossing (approx. 700 ft) is enough to justify a pedestrian signal. A pedestrian signal would be the safer option because many trail users would attempt to cross at the canal crossing, rather than detouring to the McKemy light and back to the canal crossing. The new signal would only be activated when a pedestrian or cyclist pushes the button. Traffic will not have to stop at regular intervals.

What are the next steps for the project?

We are nearing the conclusion of the preliminary design study.

Final design is anticipated to be advertised in the fall/ winter of 2022-23, with a contract being awarded in early 2023 and design work beginning shortly after. The final design process typically lasts at least 12-18 months. Chandler staff will provide direction and review the design plans developed by a consultant.

Additional public outreach details will be developed for the final design phase after we award a design contract to a consultant (expected to happen early 2023). Public outreach will continue during final design, and the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on proposed design plans before they are finalized.

After final design is completed (anticipated in 2024), bid documents will be prepared, advertised, and awarded to the successful construction contractor. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2025.

What funding is being proposed to be used for this project?

The City was awarded a federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant to pay for the majority of the project. A 5.7% local match will be provided from the City's capital improvements budget.

Can the City use this grant funding on other projects or programs?

No, the federal grant funding can only be used for this project. If the City chooses not to spend this grant money on this project, the grant funding would be forfeited.

Who will be responsible for maintaining landscaping adjacent to the canal?

Any new landscaping installed would be maintained by the City. Existing landscaping that is currently maintained by an HOA would continue to be maintained by the HOA. Additionally, the City would maintain the path and the area adjacent to the path for trash, litter, etc.

Who will maintain the concrete path? Will heavy SRP trucks frequently damage the path and cause costly repairs?

The City of Chandler will be responsible for maintaining the path. The design will include thick concrete with reinforced joints to ensure that it will hold up to use by SRP trucks. This approach has been utilized successfully along other SRP canals in Chandler. However, any damage to the concrete path will be repaired by the City.

Will SRP maintenance vehicles create a danger for pedestrians and bicyclists?

Pedestrians and bicyclists currently use the trail today and encounter SRP maintenance vehicles. SRP operators are trained and experienced in operating in a bicycle and pedestrian environment. This interaction has not nor is it expected to result in incidents.

Is there any way to ensure unauthorized motor vehicles do not use the canal bank?

SRP posts signage to warn that unauthorized vehicles are not permitted, but as pointed out by residents in the area, unauthorized vehicles tend to drive on the canal bank at times. This land is owned by the Bureau of Reclamation and operated by SRP, but as a part of this project, the City can work with SRP to come up with solutions that would limit private vehicular access on these canals. Ultimately, any proposed solution would require SRP approval before being able to be implemented with this construction project.

Will the project post private property notice signage?

A comprehensive signage plan will be more thoroughly developed during final design next year, but we are happy to work with adjacent communities to supply and post private property warnings at the boundaries of privately owned spaces such as Tuscany HOA open space and privately-owned streets.

Will the proposed signal on Ray Road have any operational issues with the existing railroad crossing to the west?

Since there is a signal (McKemy) between this proposed signal and the railroad crossing, the new signal is not anticipated to cause a conflict with the railroad crossing.

What treatments will be made for path crossings of residential streets?

The specific details of these crossings will be established during the final design phase. The initial plan would be to post stop signs on the path to notify users to stop before crossing any streets. The initial concept would not include striping or markings on residential streets.

Will construction vehicles utilize private streets to access the construction site?

Streets within the Tuscany HOA are private streets (other than the Roosevelt Ave. bridge). Construction crews will be instructed to access the canal bank from Ray Road or Kyrene Road and not utilize private streets.

Will the City assume liability for any accidents or damages caused by any elements that it is responsible for?

The City of Chandler anticipates entering into a license agreement with SRP prior to construction of any improvements for the project where the City will assume liability and agree to indemnify SRP for incidents caused by the City and/or the City's improvements (e.g., path, benches, trash cans, lighting, etc.). The agreement would not likely extend to existing improvements owned or licensed by HOA's such as the two pedestrian bridges crossing the canal because the City is not responsible for maintaining those structures.

What lighting solutions will be installed with this project, and will light pollution be considered?

Lighting is proposed to be added, but details will be more thoroughly developed in final design. Light shielding strategies will be applied to mitigate light pollution to adjacent homes.

Will drainage and possible erosion from runoff be considered in project design?

Drainage issues and solutions will be assessed during final design.

Is there data available on the heat island effect of adding the amount of concrete necessary to complete the project?

The urban heat island caused by the path has not been analyzed in depth. However, the amount of hardscape being added is significantly less than any new street or street widening and is not anticipated to have a significant urban heat island impact.

Who or what groups will benefit from the Project?

Pedestrians and bicyclists wanting access to the regional trail system will benefit from the project. Individuals with a disability will also benefit from the project. Bike/ pedestrian count data would be examined after construction. Additionally, nearby residents will benefit from dust reduction from SRP maintenance and other vehicles, regular maintenance services that will reduce the presence of dog waste and other trash.

Whom should residents contact with questions or concerns about the project?

The City of Chandler is leading this project. Residents can contact Sasha Pachito 480-782-3440 or Jason Crampton 480-782-3402 at the City with questions/ concerns.

How will the City address any damage that may occur during construction?

While no damage to homes, common areas, or streets are expected during construction, the City will ensure that any damage is repaired. If repair is not possible, then the City will work with the impacted resident/ community to ensure reimbursement for damage.

Will increased trail usage result in increased litter in adjacent communities?

The City will regularly maintain the path and adjacent area to ensure that trash and debris are kept to a minimum. The path is currently open to the public today and does not have any such regular maintenance. Additionally, there are currently no trash cans along the canal bank, leaving little opportunities for pet owners to dispose of pet waste.

This project will install trash receptacles and can provide signage along with dog waste bags to encourage pet owners to clean up after their pet. Trash cans along with regular maintenance will help to keep the area clean.

Why is the path proposed to be 10' wide?

A minimum width of 10' is preferred for a shared use path to allow users to pass other users heading in the same or opposite direction. According to the analysis done during the preliminary design, it appears that there is sufficient width for a 10' path with a small area adjacent to the path available for pedestrians that choose to stay off the path. However, this width will be further analyzed in final design to ensure that adequate space is available.

Will the City expand patrolling in this area to ensure the public does not trespass onto private property and obey posted signs restricting unauthorized vehicular use along the canal?

The Chandler Police Department will continue to patrol this area and respond to calls, including trespassing, on a 24/7 basis. Additional patrolling is not anticipated to be needed as a result of any increased bicycle and pedestrian activity in the area. However, if the number of calls for service increases, the Police Department will adjust its service levels, which may result in additional patrolling in this area.

Can gates be added to close off a portion of the canal?

Public access for pedestrians and bicyclists must be maintained. The land is owned by the federal government and operated by SRP. As the operator, SRP is required to ensure that canals are kept open for public use. If pedestrian passage can be maintained, a gate that SRP can open for their maintenance use may be feasible. However, SRP would ultimately have to agree to install any gates.

Will the presence of the path attract more homeless individuals to the area?

It is anticipated that the path will discourage the presence of homeless individuals because more bicyclists and pedestrians will be passing through the area. Homeless encampments are more common in less visible areas with less foot traffic. Additionally, beginning Sept. 1, 2022, SRP will be authorized to trespass individuals camping or residing on canal property, giving authority to City of Chandler Police to enforce the presence of urban encampments along canals. Increased bicycle and pedestrian traffic would only increase the opportunity for SRP and the City to become aware of any issues and address them more quickly.