

Pathway project costs on the rise

Suspension bridge construction contributing to cost overruns

Greenbelt

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SANTACRUZ » The Broadway-Brommer pathway and dual bridge system being built in the 68-acre Arana Gulch greenbelt could cost up to \$300,000 more than budgeted for construction.

Public Works Director Mark Dettle said unforeseen problems with the 340-foot-long stress-ribbon suspension bridge over Hagemann Gulch on the west end of the \$6.2 million project contributed to what are expected to be cost overruns of \$250,000 to \$300,000 in the coming year. He said the capital improvement budget likely will be tapped at the expense of other projects.

"You never know when you do a bridge what you are going to find with abutments," he said. "A majority of the project took longer than we originally estimated because it just took a lot longer to get started."

On July 8, the City Council approved spending nearly another \$200,000 for construction management and engineering services. A quarter of the additional expenses falls within the engineering group's original proposal and the city will get \$150,000 in regional transportation funds to cover the management costs.

The plans to build 8-foot pervious concrete pathways connecting Brommer Street in Live Oak to Broadway in the city of Santa Cruz is expected to be completed by November. There will be a second path leading from the Agnes Street entrance on the meadow's north end

ARANA » PAGE 4

Arana

FROM PAGE 1

to the Hagemann bridge. A second bridge, a 70-foot causeway over Arana Creek, will be built on the east end.

The city has committed at least \$2 million to the project, which is designed to help pedestrians and bicyclists avoid Soquel Drive. The plans also are linked to a restoration program for the endangered Santa Cruz tarplant native to the meadow.

"This project is a very good project that crosses both the county and city," Dettle said.

Public Works is preparing to solicit bids for another improvement project, this one on the western side of the San Lorenzo River levee. From the Water Street Bridge to Laurel Street Extension, there will be 41 pole-mounted LED lighting fixtures about 16 feet high, as well as new vegetation.

A State River Parkway grant of \$530,000 will pay for the project. And if there is enough funding, Dettle said crews will add a seating area, fitness station near the Kaiser Permanente



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

A pedestrian and bike path is slated to open in November inside Arana Gulch. The project could go \$300,000 over its construction budget because of unforeseen difficulties with a suspension bridge.

Arena and observation area between the Soquel Avenue and Laurel Street bridges.

Michelle Williams, executive director of Arts Council Santa Cruz County, is a member of the San Lorenzo River Alliance working to reactivate the corridor with economic, recreational and educational opportunities. She said, "Even something as simple as LED lighting can make a dramatic differ-

ence in how a place is perceived, and perception is reality."

Public art, also called for in the San Lorenzo Urban River Plan in 2003, can serve the same purpose, Williams said, adding, "If you start paying attention to something, it changes."

The Coastal Watershed Council coordinating the alliance seeks volunteers to conduct a users survey

on the San Lorenzo Riverwalk that will inform the organization's efforts to increase public access and enjoyment of the river.

The training will be from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday at the Coastal Watershed Council, 345 Lake Ave., Suite F, Santa Cruz. RSVP is required by emailing info@coastal-watershed.org or calling Laurie Egan at 831-464-9200.