



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

March 1, 2023

TO: Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Loren Umbertis, Director of Public Works

SUBJECT: Discuss fencing along banks of Fairfax Creek from School St to Town Hall and direct staff to proceed with design and solicitation of bids for construction

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council a) hear a presentation from Restoration Design Group, Inc (RDG) on style, layout, and purpose of protective split rail fence installation along Fairfax Creek, and b) Direct staff to complete design and construction drawings and seek bids for the installation of the fence and other furnishings, including interpretive signage, and c) receive preliminary information on a larger creek project envisioned in this area by staff to enhance flood safety.

DISCUSSION

The Fairfax Creek flows along Town owned property starting at School Street through Peri Park to Town Hall. The creek is a popular feature of Peri Park and conveys significant stormwaters through Town during the wet season.

On August 3, 2022 the Marin County Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPP) presented to Council regarding water quality in Fairfax Creek due to concerns raised by the communityⁱ. The presentation included information regarding unintentional discharges of sewage and other residential chemical wastes, agricultural discharges including fertilizers, pesticides and livestock waste and the impact on water quality in the creek that such unintentional discharges may cause. It was noted that negative impacts to the creek and wildlife from foot traffic by Peri Park visitors and domestic animals can cause degradation of the natural environment along the shore and slopes of the creeks.

While the causes of negative water quality impacts are numerous and difficult to quantify individually, it is important to recognize that multiple actions addressing these issues are recommended to improve the overall condition of our creeks. Staff recommends as part of Fairfax's effort to protect our creeks that the Council approve the installation of a split rail fence to be placed along the edges of the creek to reduce degradation to water quality, encourage vegetation restoration, provide a buffer zone to allow for fauna to enjoy the creek's benefits while still providing observation points for lovers of nature, and to provide a safety barrier in those areas where slopes are steep and are potentially dangerous.

The proposed split rail fence is intended to reduce foot traffic impacts upon the creek and allow the community to enjoy viewing the creek and its natural habitat. Staff recommends that at certain locations, benches and picnic tables be placed to encourage visitors to enjoy the creek. Staff also intends to place interpretative signage along the fence line to inform the public of the natural resources present, the importance of providing the creek with a protective buffer zone, and other information about the benefits of maintaining healthy creeks.

Staff will maintain a removable access point in the split rail to allow for debris removal before and after storms. At a future meeting, Staff may propose additional projects to assist in maintenance of the creek regarding flooding as the proposed split rail fence is not expected to have any impact on potential flooding.

A potentially larger project involving other creek protection and improvement plans, including the addition of a trash capture rack to prevent larger debris from proceeding further downstream to the Town Hall and improve the ability of Department of Public Works staff to remove debris, to provide slope stabilization at the bends of the creek where damage occurred during the last storms, and other flood mitigation measures shall be presented at a future date. These other potential improvements would necessitate further discussion with the Town Council, engagement with other agencies before implementation, and Staff will need to seek additional funding from grant sources. A preliminary map of these improvements is included for discussion purposes.

FISCAL IMPACT

The Town has an agreement with RDG, Inc to assist with the layout and design of the split rail fencing and RDG will also assist with providing input on the interpretive signage and the plans for bidding purposes at a cost of \$5,400 to be funded from 01-510-821.

The design of the fence will be approximately 600 feet in length. Staff has cost estimates for split rail fencing of approximately \$60 per linear foot. Adding budget for viewing and picnic benches, interpretive signs, and contingency, staff recommends a project budget of \$50,000. At this time, the consultant does not believe other permits will be needed for this split rail project given the typical distance from the actual creek flowline. If the Council directs, staff will develop design documents, solicit bids for the project and bring back any contracts over \$25,000 for Council approval.

ATTACHMENT

Typical Split Rail Fence Design Examples

ⁱ Fairfax Town Council Meeting and Presentation <https://www.townoffairfax.org/meetings/town-council-meeting-august-3-2022/> and [MCCSTOPP Water Quality Presentation](#)

Typical Split Rail Fence Designs

