

# Innovative Approaches



## Background

San José's 5-mile Highway 237 Bikeway supports bike commuting between Sunnyvale and Milpitas. The convenient route permits access to a number of Silicon Valley employers like Cisco Systems, Cadence, and Tivo.

## History

A section of the trail was developed years earlier as a temporary access road for construction of the highway. Although not formally part of the trail system, the City worked to include the maintenance road as part of the City's overall trail network. Even in its deteriorated state, commuters appreciated the route's location and linkage to the Coyote Creek Trail.

Over the past 5 years, Trail Program staff succeeded in resolving property ownership issues, entered into a management agreement with the State of California for the overall bikeway, and secured the financial resources for

design and construction of a paved 0.8-mile addition to the bikeway.

Construction commenced in January 2012 with significant funding from an **Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program** grant. Advocacy from Silicon Valley Leadership Group helped the City secure this competitive funding. The Highway 237 Bikeway reopened to the public on June 28, 2012.



## Innovation

The Highway 237 Bikeway project was a timely and suitable opportunity for City staff to investigate and deploy a number of innovative approaches for trail development.

The project represents the first deployment in the South Bay Area of **warm mix asphalt**. This paving approach uses a less viscous oil to bind stone; requiring less energy to mix and produces fewer hydrocarbons and fumes. The pavement is mixed at 200 degrees versus 300 degrees for hot-mix asphalt, resulting in fewer emissions. Warm mix asphalt improves pavement performance life through better compaction and reduced permeability. It is cost competitive when the stone material is sourced from existing asphalt found at a project site. Recycling at the Highway 237 Bikeway project site avoided off-site landfill disposal and reduced the project's cost.

**Compostable blankets and “socks”** were used to meet stringent storm water measures required by the State of California's Water Resources Control Board. Seeded compost blankets replaced a typical hydro-seeding mulch application. The compostable socks do not require a follow-up visit for removal of stakes and plastic webbing common to other measures. Additionally, compost is locally sourced, does not require fertilizer, and retains water better to support more rapid seed germination.

Staff worked with a vendor to develop a **lighter-weight bollard** that would reduce the potential for employee injuries caused by heavy lifting – estimated to cost about \$15,000 annually in claims. The bollard includes two handles to ease lifting, aluminum fabrication, and a bayonet-style footing for weight reduction.

Centerline striping meets the San José-developed specifications for **highly reflective**

**and low-profile thermoplastic markings** to permit commuting during the dark winter months.



Finally, a newly designed **construction sign** is 1/3 the size of past signs and includes a QR code to direct interested users to construction updates on the web site. The sign reduces costs by 45%.



Several [Before/After photos](#) of the project site can be found on the Trail Program website.

## About San José Trails

The Highway 237 Bikeway is notable for its designation as part of the region's [San Francisco Bay Trail](#) and the multi-state [Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail](#).

The City of San José seeks to develop a 100-mile trail network by 2022. Over 54 miles of trails are already open and most travel along the city's many rivers and creeks, or within landscaped utility corridors. This extensive network of trails is already accessible to residents within 3 miles of their homes. An annual count and survey indicates that over 50% of north San José trail users are commuting to and from work. For more information about San José Trails, visit [www.sjpark.org/trails](http://www.sjpark.org/trails) or follow on Twitter at “SanJoseTrails”.



San José Trail Program  
[www.sjpark.org/trails](http://www.sjpark.org/trails)