



City Council Staff Report

Subject: Public Multi-Purpose Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Easement and Emergency and Maintenance Vehicle Access Easement - University Avenue Apartments (The Francis)

Date: May 12, 2026

Submitted By: Andrew Keys, Assistant City Manager

Department: City Manager's Office

Recommendation:

Adopt a Resolution Approving and Accepting a Grant of Public Multi-Purpose Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Easement and Emergency and Maintenance Vehicle Access Easement Agreement Associated with The Francis Project.

Background:

In early 2025 the City Council approved entitlements for The Francis (formerly the University Avenue Apartments) project, a 324-unit apartment community on 12.72 acres located west of University Avenue, east of State Route 65, and north of Sunset Boulevard, on APN's 017-276-005 and 017-276-006 (Resolutions No. 2025-015, -016 and 017 and Ordinance No. 1185). The project was originally approved at only 5% affordable units, but the developer has since changed plans to develop 100% of the project as affordable units.

As part of the site's existing conditions, a paved utility access road, sewer, and drainage improvements were installed along the north and west boundaries as part of a South Placer Municipal Utility District (SPMUD) sewer project. The site includes a sewer easement with a paved access road.

The property owner is now granting the City a perpetual non-exclusive easement over a portion of this area for public trail use and for City emergency and maintenance vehicle access. The easement will preserve a future trail connection to the southwest of the site, eventually reconnecting with University Avenue near the University Avenue and Sunset Boulevard intersection.

The proposed easement grants the City rights for public multi-purpose pedestrian, bicycle, and trail use, together with emergency and maintenance vehicle access by the City only, over portions of APN's 017-276-005 and 017-276-006.

The easement requires the developer to construct fencing on both sides of the trail corridor so that public access is limited to University Avenue and the southern trail connection shown in

the easement exhibits. The developer may provide separate secured access points for residents and visitors, provided that access points do not allow general public access.

Under the easement, the City will be responsible for improving, maintaining, repairing, and replacing the easement area at no cost to the grantor, including keeping the area clear of trash, litter, debris, hazards, and obstructions. The City will also maintain the fencing on the outer side of the corridor, while the property owner will maintain the fencing adjacent to the apartment development. The easement also permits the City to install necessary trail signage. There are no immediate improvements required of the City by the easement or to facilitate the easement's use as a trail.

The easement is expressly subject to the existing SPMUD sewer easement recorded on March 29, 2004, and neither party may allow use of the area in a manner that interferes with those rights. Staff has consulted with SPMUD and the district did not express any concerns to staff regarding the easement.

Approval and acceptance of the easement secures a future public trail corridor in conjunction with development of the site and preserves an opportunity for future pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in this area.

Environmental Analysis:

The proposed action is acceptance of an easement and does not itself approve new development. The underlying The Francis project was previously reviewed through an Addendum to the Northwest Rocklin Annexation Environmental Impact Report pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15164. The Addendum found that the project would not result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no cost to acquire the easement. Under the easement terms, the City would assume future responsibility for maintenance, repair, signage, insurance, and related liability obligations associated with the easement area and minor incremental costs to the City's budget for similar facilities city wide. Any future improvements or ongoing maintenance would be subject to City Council authorization and available funding.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Resolution](#)
2. [Easement Agreement](#)
3. [Easement Agreement Exhibits A-1 & B-1](#)
4. [Easement Agreement Exhibits A-2 & B-2](#)
5. [Easement Agreement Exhibit C](#)