

Countywide Goals and Policies

Goals, Policies and Implementation Strategies

On January 9, 2002, the County Board of Supervisors approved goals and policies for inclusion in the General Plan and for the purpose of initiating this Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP). These goals and policies utilize information from the Trail System Assessment (TSA) completed July 2, 2001 and reflect the concept of trail development on public and private land, a baseline level of service, and incorporating a Regional Trails Map in the General Plan (GP) while placing community trail planning in a CTMP held outside the General Plan. These goals and policies guide future planning and implementation efforts for the County Trails Program.

The Countywide Goals and Policies that apply to both regional and community trails are included in the CTMP for convenience only. These goals and policies are part of the Public Facilities Element of the General Plan. Each

goal and corresponding set of policies is followed by “implementation strategies”. Implementation strategies are unique to the CTMP and since they are not part of the Public Facilities Element, can be modified with Board of Supervisors approval as part of the CTMP, and do not require a General Plan amendment.

Countywide Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies

Goals, policies, and implementation strategies represent a common hierarchy of planning principles – going from the most general to the most specific.

A goal as used in this document is a general direction-setter. It is a future result toward which planning and implementation measures are directed.

A **policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making and indicates a commitment to a particular course of action. A policy is based on and helps implement a goal.

An **implementation strategy** is the most specific of the planning principles. It describes specific actions or implementation measures that effect a policy.

The following are Countywide CTMP abbreviations:

- CG** = Countywide Goal
- CP** = Countywide Policy
- CIS** = Countywide Implementation Strategy

Countywide Goal: CG 1
Provide a Trail System

Provide a system of “non-motorized trails” (trails) that meets the needs of County residents by providing scenic and enjoyable experiences that include connections with other public facilities, such as parks, open spaces, trail systems of other jurisdictions, points of interest, and/or sites with educational or historical significance.

Policies:

CP 1.1

Continue to provide and expand the variety of trail experiences, including urban/suburban, rural, wilderness, multi-use and single use, staging areas and support facilities.

CP 1.2

Encourage trail routes that highlight the County’s recreational and educational resources, including natural, scenic, cultural and historic resources whenever possible.

CP 1.3

Provide a variety of linear distances for users to experience such as trails that offer long distance experiences and connect with other public trail systems, points of interest or transit facilities; and trails that offer short distance and loop experiences.

Implementation Strategies:

CIS 1.1

Provide adequate support facilities, including staging areas, which will sustain existing, and future trail implementation. Where appropriate, these facilities should include, but not be limited to, parking facilities, potable water supply, restrooms, emergency telephones and access, signage, fencing, refuse containers, benches, gates, horse tie rails and corrals.

CIS 1.2

All trails should be marked. Markers or signs should be provided which encourage responsible trail use by providing users with directional information and information regarding property rights in order to minimize public/private use conflicts and trespassing. Historically significant trail routes should have signs that include appropriate historical information.

CIS 1.3

Use of motorized vehicles on trails shall be prohibited, except for wheelchairs, maintenance, and emergency vehicles.

CIS 1.4

Wherever feasible and appropriate, future trails should be multi-use, in an attempt to satisfy the greatest number of users with the least acquisition and construction cost per user. In some instances, single-use or restricted-use trails may be more

feasible and economical and should not be excluded from trail planning efforts.

CIS 1.5

Monitor levels of use and types of use on trails to maintain safe conditions and minimize environmental impacts.

CIS 1.6

Consider shared-use of public utility easements if beneficial to the trail system.

CIS 1.7

Recognize the important public benefit of experiencing firsthand, natural habitats, and cultural and historic resources along trail corridors by designing trails that provide appropriate interpretative features and environmental protection.

CIS 1.8

Trail alignments shall avoid archaeological and sensitive cultural resources, wherever feasible.

CIS 1.9

Mitigate any potential impacts to cultural resources through collection of significant artifacts, documentation and curation of the items by a professional archaeologist. The documentation of the resources may then be interpreted as part of the trail opportunity while respecting the need for a requirement of confidentiality of site locations.

CIS 1.10

Provide evidence to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Land Use that all archeological material recovered during the archeological investigation of the property, including all significance testing and grading monitoring activities, have been curated according to professional repository standards. The collections and associated records shall be transferred, including title, to an appropriate curation facility with San Diego County, to be accompanied by payment of the fees necessary for permanent curation.

CIS 1.11

Minimize impacts on cultural resources by avoiding grading and other ground disturbing activities, where such resources are known to exist.

Countywide Goal: CG 2
Integrated Trail Planning

Initiate and sustain an effective and efficient trail system, using the Regional Trails Map contained within the General Plan and a Community Trails Master Plan as the basis for future planning, coordination, implementation, and management of the trail system.

Policies:

CP 2.1

Prioritize trail segments, and their development and acquisition in a manner that provides maximum public benefit given available public and private resources.

CP 2.2

Coordinate trail planning, acquisition, development, and management with appropriate jurisdictions.

CP 2.3

Participate in completing missing segments of regional trails to satisfy the need for long-range trail opportunities.

CP 2.4

Consider long-range “connectivity” as a principal planning element for regional trails.

CP 2.5

Encourage development of a Community Trails Master Plan to define community goals, policies, and implementation criteria.

CP 2.6

Consider a population-oriented numerical level of service as a principal planning element for community trails and for quantifying future trail needs but consider other community related factors as well.

CP 2.7

Pathways should be considered when connections to staging areas or trail systems cannot use a conventional trail and be routed along scenic roads where such routing is feasible.

Implementation Strategies:

CIS 2.1

Develop a Regional Trail Map that indicates general trail alignments having regional or countywide significance. Participate in the implementation and management of regional trails.

CIS 2.2

Encourage other jurisdictions to adopt appropriate portions of the Regional Trail Plan as part of local general plans, parks and open space master plans, and public facilities plans.

CIS 2.3

Use the Community Trails Master Plan as the “umbrella” document that defines countywide community trail goals, policies, and implementation criteria. Individual community-specific criteria and community trail maps are within the master plan.

CIS 2.4

Community Planning and Sponsor Groups interested in developing or expanding their local trail system will work closely with the County to develop their community trail maps. The County

will coordinate workshops, organize input and document the trails for approval and adoption of their maps by Board of Supervisors action into the Community Trails Master Plan.

CIS 2.5

Allow for periodic updates to community-specific criteria and community trail maps and priorities. At that time, participating communities should work with the County to re-evaluate the existing trail network and determine whether modifications, additions, or deletions are needed to reflect current conditions, anticipated future needs, long-term goals, and new opportunities.

CIS 2.6

Maintain maps and inventories of the location and status of easements, trail classifications, forms of access, landownership patterns, and MSCP and open space preserve systems relative to regional trails, community trails and pathways.

CIS 2.7

Encourage other jurisdictions to include important inter-jurisdictional trail connections in their planning documents.

CIS 2.8

The County will consult with the appropriate governing tribal council to discuss the feasibility of a trail connection that involves either tribal land and/or Native American cultural resources.

Countywide Goal: CG 3 Program Implementation

Consider both public and private lands for trail implementation.

Policies:

CP 3.1

Seek opportunities to designate or construct future trails on County-owned lands, such as parks, open space preserves and/or lands within the MSCP or other lands already under public ownership or proposed for public acquisition.

CP 3.2

Trail opportunities on public lands and public easements should be a priority over those crossing privately owned lands.

CP 3.3

Seek trail opportunities through easements, dedications, license agreements, or joint-use agreements with public and semi-public agencies including utility districts, school districts, water districts, transportation agencies, and parks and open space agencies.

CP 3.4

Secure trail routes across private lands through purchase, easements, and dedication or by other means from a willing property owner/seller.

CP 3.5

Discourage non-consenting public use of private trail systems through restricting connections, staging area locations, and trail map publications.

CP 3.6

Identify trail routes that meet a public need while recognizing the concerns of private property owners, safety requirements, land use concerns and environmental protection goals.

CP 3.7

Development projects and other discretionary projects proposed on lands upon which a trail or pathway in the Regional Trail Plan or Community Trails Master Plan has been identified may be required to dedicate and improve land for trail or pathway purposes.

CP 3.8

Seek to establish funding opportunities for trail acquisition, implementation, maintenance, and operation.

CP 3.9

Seek methods of offering incentives to private landowners that will encourage the voluntary dedication of trail easements and/or gifts of land for trails.

Implementation Strategies:

CIS 3.1

Encourage private developers to incorporate trail routes contained in the CTMP by delineating community support, increased property values, and home sale advantages.

CIS 3.2

Continue to provide indemnity (as currently provided by County Code Section 812.101) to persons granting trail easements and landowners adjacent to trails in order to encourage voluntary dedications and landowner support for efforts to implement regional and community trails.

CIS 3.3

Encourage volunteer efforts, and the involvement of non-profit organizations and/or land trusts for implementation of the Trail Program. Community and volunteer groups should be encouraged to provide trail support services by conducting limited, supervised maintenance and construction activities.

CIS 3.4

Consider benefits of “Adopt-a-Trail” programs and provide information and technical services to neighborhoods surrounding trails on how to establish adopt-a-trail groups.

CIS 3.5

Develop design guidelines that protect sensitive species and their habitats, and

encourage enhancement of habitats and educational opportunities as part of trail implementation activities.

CIS 3.6

Encourage coordinated decision-making and action by other jurisdictions (incorporated cities, regional, state and federal agencies) to implement their particular segments of trails that will be consistent with the County's vision. Acquisition responsibilities should be established on a project-by-project basis, and should be coordinated with all jurisdictions involved in each trail route.

CIS 3.7

Monitor proposed development, zoning changes, and/or subdivision of properties with planned trail routes, and work with property owners and/or their representatives to preserve the integrity of the trail in project design.

CIS 3.8

Maintain a list of priorities for trail acquisition and development through purchase, dedication, or other means.

CIS 3.9

Encourage non-profit organizations to seek funding from government and foundation sources, by sponsoring and/or collaborating with non-profits on grant proposals.

CIS 3.10

Review tax default properties and other County properties being sold, or easements vacated, for potential opportunities to secure trail routes.

Countywide Goal: CG 4
Manage, Operate and
Maintain Trails

Strive to manage, operate, and maintain trails so that proper use is encouraged, and that user safety, resource conditions, the environment, and adjacent land uses are not compromised.

Policies:

CP 4.1

Coordinate the operations and maintenance of pathways with similar activities for adjacent roads and road rights-of-way.

CP 4.2

Public improvement projects, such as road widening, bridge construction, and flood control projects, which may impact trails or pathways in the Regional Trail Plan or Community Trails Master Plan should incorporate such facilities in project design and construction.

CP 4.3

Encourage the involvement and input of the agricultural community in matters relating to trails on or adjacent to agricultural lands and place a priority on the protection of agriculture.

CP 4.4

Pursue mechanisms for securing trail routes across agricultural and grazing lands from willing property owners that are fair and reasonable, such as purchase, easements negotiated through incentives, or license agreements.

CP 4.5

Establish specific guidelines for trails in areas with active agricultural operations or active grazing lands that will minimize potential impacts and accommodate operational necessities through proper location, design, construction, and active management.

CP 4.6

During trail design on or adjacent to agricultural land, notify and coordinate with the affected landowners to consider any special features that may be needed.

CP 4.7

When locating specific trail segments, prioritize locations that avoid significant impacts to sensitive environmental resources.

CP 4.8

Establish and designate trails, whenever feasible, that correspond to existing (non-designated) trails, paths, or unpaved roadbeds that already have a disturbed tread.

CP 4.9

Trails should be closed when conditions become unsafe or environmental resources are severely impacted. Such conditions could include soil erosion, flooding, fire hazard, environmental damage, or failure to follow an outlined management plan.

CP 4.10

The County Agricultural Commissioner is authorized to close public trails for a specified period of time on or adjacent to land in active agricultural production when trail activity could be injurious to agriculture or the public. Such conditions could include, but not be limited to, quarantines, outbreaks of plant or animal disease, application of certain pesticides, or damaging infestations of insect pests.

Implementation Strategies:

CIS 4.1

When preparing to implement or open a new trail, consider design modifications to accommodate landowner concerns for privacy, security or safety.

CIS 4.2

Recognize that some agricultural operations will need certain controls on trails, such as authorized temporary trail closure for periods of pesticide application or other operational occurrences to maintain the economic viability of the agricultural operation, and solicit input from the operator as part of the trail design considerations.

CIS 4.3

Prepare a management plan and strategy to ensure provision of services necessary to adequately address concerns of maintenance, safety, and appropriate use prior to implementing any new trail route for public use.

CIS 4.4

Develop a trail monitoring program for evaluating current conditions and determining whether or not new trails or trail management programs, including maintenance, reconstruction, education and use regulations, are effective in addressing user conflicts, safety issues, and environmental impacts.

CIS 4.5

Utilize gas tax or other eligible transportation related funds for the development of pathways within or adjacent to road rights-of-way.

CIS 4.6

Encourage local communities to assist in the day-to-day management and maintenance of trails within their jurisdictions.

CIS 4.7

Work with local communities to secure sufficient resources for on-going maintenance of trail facilities.

CIS 4.8

Gates, fencing, and other physical barriers should be used to control access and provide increased user safety when warranted by site conditions.

CIS 4.9

If the County Agricultural Commissioner must close a trail pursuant to CP 4.10, the trail manager will give advance notification, when possible, by contacting affected local trail organizations, newspapers, or by posting the trail, and will consider potential temporary rerouting of the trail.

CIS 4.10

Establish a mechanism for trail and pathway users to notify the County Trail Manager of repair or maintenance needs.

CIS 4.11

Develop appropriate County ordinances and policies to provide the necessary authorities and enforcement powers for the protection and safety of the trails, trail users and environment.