

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Countywide Trails Master Plan presents a summary of the planning background and a proposed master plan for trails that was developed by the Santa Clara County Trails Master Plan Advisory Committee. This report is complemented by a program level Supplemental Environmental Impact Report (SEIR). The two documents formed the basis for the General Plan Amendment forwarded by the Santa Clara County Trails Master Plan Advisory Committee to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, which, in turn, adopted the Committee's recommendations and updated the trails policies and trails map of the Santa Clara County General Plan on November 14, 1995.

GENERAL PLAN POLICIES: Trails policies are proposed to guide continued planning, define processes in implementing trails and coordinating with private property owners, establish priorities, mitigate environmental impacts, and direct detailed design, operations and management. These policies are organized into the following general strategies:

- Strategy #1: Plan for Trails
- Strategy #2: Balance Recreation and Other Public Trail Needs, Environmental and Landowner Concerns
- Strategy #3: Implement the Planned Trail Network
- Strategy #4: Adequately Operate and Maintain Trails
- Strategy #5: Establish Priorities
- Strategy #6: Facilitate Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination

TRAILS MASTER PLAN MAP: Approximately 535 miles of off-street countywide trail routes are proposed within Santa Clara County. Of these, approximately 105 miles exist today. An additional 120 miles of on-street bicycle-only routes are also part of the plan.

Trail routes are categorized into three hierarchies. These are:

- **Regional Trails:** that are of National, State, or regional recreation significance and extend beyond the borders of Santa Clara County;
- **Sub-Regional Trails:** that provide regional recreation and transportation benefits by providing continuity between cities and convenient, long-distance trail loop opportunities that link two or more Regional Trails; and
- **Connector Trails:** that provide convenient means of access from urban areas to the trail network of Regional and Sub-regional Trails or that connect County Parks.

TRAIL PRIORITIES: Approximately 18 miles of trails are identified as high priority within unincorporated Santa Clara County and 75 miles within the County's Urban Service Areas. These trails generally emphasize urban and urban-fringe areas where the need for trails and the usefulness of trails are the greatest. Priority criteria include: need for trail uses; compatibility of the trail route with adjoining property; trail usefulness; complexity of land acquisition; opportunities for a large number of users; safety concerns; financial considerations; need for trail settings; and opportunities for a sense of remoteness.

TRAIL GUIDELINES: Detailed guidelines are outlined that serve as mitigation to potential environmental impacts or that provide further guidance about the design, use or management of trails shown on the Countywide Trails Master Plan Map.

RELATED REPORTS: Committee meeting minutes that led to this plan proposal and numerous documents concerning the need for trails in Santa Clara County, evaluation criteria used in preparing this plan, a computer mapping system indicating parcels of land that may possibly be traversed after preparing this plan, the public involvement process, and trail and attitudinal surveys that support this plan as referenced in the Bibliography are on file at the Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation.

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