



# Memorandum

**TO:** TRANSPORTATION AND  
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT:** TRAIL PROGRAM UPDATE

**DATE:** 09-29-08

Approved

Date

9/29/08

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Transportation & Environment Committee accept this report on priorities for the development of the City's trail system.

## BACKGROUND

The City's Trail Network is composed of 32 trail systems. At this time, 50.78 miles of trails are open to the public.

In 2000, the City Council adopted the Greenprint that identified the development of a 100-mile network. In 2007, the Mayor set forth the Green Vision with Goal No. 10 reinforcing the 100-mile objective and specifying that it should occur within 15 years.

In recent years, the City has used four primary strategies for funding trail development: 1) secure grant funding, 2) condition private development to construct trails as part of parkland dedication ordinance or impact obligation (PDO/PIO), 3) utilize funds from the 2000 Park Bond to support partial construction of four trail systems, and 4) secure Council support for the full or partial funding of trail projects.

Development of trails can require several years. A 6-phase approach is used to ensure that projects meet the needs of trail users, the community in general and agencies with environmental oversight:

| Phase       | Description                                                                                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Identify | Referenced in Greenprint, SNI Plan or other Council-adopted planning document.                                 |
| 2. Study    | Prepare feasibility study if site challenges or other issues place some doubt on the viability of the project. |
| 3. Plan     | Prepare master plan and associated environmental document to determine the                                     |

|              |                                                                                                         |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|              | preferred alignment. Obtain National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) clearance if federally funded. |
| 4. Design    | Prepare construction documents and secure permits.                                                      |
| 5. Construct | Bid, award and construct project.                                                                       |
| 6. Open      | Open to the public. Routine operation and maintenance activities.                                       |

The Trail Program is managed by a Park Manager with support from a Planner I. The Program Team is supported by the Department of Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Service's Community Facilities Development fiscal team to ensure full invoicing of expenditures, the Department of Transportation to help pursue related grant opportunities, and the City Manager's CIP Action Team to facilitate resolution of interagency and other issues. Funds secured by the Program Team are used to partially fund staff positions in the Departments of Public Works (DPW) and Planning, Building and Code Enforcement. DPW has recently created a team of Landscape Architects managed by a Senior Landscape Architect to develop the funded trail projects. Operational funds are secured through the annual budget process for 1) operation and maintenance of trails, and 2) trail patrols to enhance public safety.

Over the past 5 years, the rate of trail development has been 2 miles per year, on average. In order to meet the Green Vision's 15-year time frame, it will be necessary to increase the rate of development to 3.3 miles per year.

Staff will provide a presentation to engage the Committee and City Council in a discussion on how to accelerate the pace of trail development. The presentation will focus on the following topics:

- Trail Program Update
- Cost Estimate for Network Build Out
- Constraints and Opportunities

**ANALYSIS**

Trail Program Update

The Trail Program currently has 24 partially or fully developed trail systems, accounting for 50.78 miles of open trails. The many trail systems offer a range of experiences, including access to open space within natural riparian settings, urban landscaped corridors, and alignments along highways.

The Trail Team currently oversees development of 19 projects. Several examples include:

| Trail System                            | Phase of Development | Distance |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| Albertson Parkway                       | Construct            | 0.5 mi.  |
| Bay Trail Reach 9B Pedestrian Bridge.   | Design               | 540 lf   |
| Coyote Creek Trail – Tully to Los Lagos | Construct            | 0.5 mi.  |

|                                     |           |         |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Guadalupe River 6 – Woz to Virginia | Design    | 0.4 mi. |
| Lower Guadalupe River Trail         | Design    | 6.4 mi. |
| Penitencia Creek – King to Mabury   | Construct | 0.3 mi. |

Development of the 100-mile trail network is Goal 10 of the Green Vision. The staff-level Green Vision Steering Committee is currently working on a strategic framework for the implementation of all the Green Vision goals. This framework is intended to leverage common efforts and facilitate a cohesive and collaborative approach for the realization of the Green Vision goals as well as to help highlight priorities for each of the goals. Preliminarily, key areas critical to the success of each goal have been identified and ways to advance these key areas can be broadly categorized into five discrete strategy areas:

- o Leading by example – Policies and practices that the City can modify or establish to advance the Green Vision priorities
- o Advocating policies at the regional, state and federal level – Advocating legislative action and positioning the City to partner with other regional entities on policy development
- o Financing mechanisms – Exploring other financing mechanisms to supplement the City’s dollars such as grants, public private partnerships, and assessment districts
- o Forming strategic partnerships – Partnering with other entities such as schools, universities, non-profits and private corporations to work towards common goals
- o Communications and engagement – Communicating with key audiences to bring about awareness, acceptance and action on all of the goals

In keeping with these focus areas, the following table describes the strategic priorities for the trail system development over the upcoming year:

| Strategies                    | On-Going Efforts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lead by Example               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master plans for all trail projects</li> <li>• Demonstration projects: Recycled Asphalt Concrete, Permeable Pavement</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Advocate Policies             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate with DOT to propose trail projects as part of regional planning (Bicycle Expenditure Plan)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Financing Mechanisms          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track and apply for existing grant sources</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Strategic Partnerships        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trail Count: Partner with Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and Friends of the Guadalupe River Park &amp; Gardens</li> <li>• Pursue private sponsorship for trail segments, in conjunction with citywide public-private partnerships</li> <li>• Google Street View: Initial conversation about mapping of trails</li> </ul>                               |
| Communications and Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate trail goal as part of larger Green Vision communication effort.</li> <li>• Seek to use existing communication tools:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annual Trail Program Report (5<sup>th</sup> year)</li> <li>2. Fact Sheets: Trail Security, Trail Facts</li> <li>3. Website</li> </ol> </li> </ul> |

Cost Estimate for Network Build Out

The current estimate for development of trails is approximately \$3 million per mile. Recent projects constructed along the Lower Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek support this figure. Developing 3.3 miles of trails each year per the Green Vision would require at least \$9.9 million in annual funding. Build out of the remaining network in current dollars is estimated to cost \$150 million. The increasing complexity of constrained project sites and often-restrictive environmental permits may further increase project costs.

Over the past 3 years, on average, staff has been able to secure \$1.18 million in grant funds. This amount excludes the large federal earmarks from the Transportation Bill (SAFETEA-LU) legislation of approximately \$11 million. This earmark funding is not typical and is unlikely to be available on a consistent and predictable basis. Excluding a large infusion of federal earmark funding, there is shortfall of approximately \$8.8 million each year to reach the Green Vision's goal.

Further discussion on funding of trails will occur as part of a future coordinated discussion about the Green Vision.

Conclusion

San José is making good progress in developing an inter-connected trail network and currently offers over 50 miles for recreation and commuting. Current fiscal resources limit the pace of development and may make the Green Vision's 15-year goal for network difficult to achieve. Steps are being taken to increase the City's competitiveness for grant resources. Finding means to increase competitiveness, identify additional fiscal resources and support staff's ability to deliver more projects requires the City Council's attention.



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