

# Executive Summary

The revised draft of the Carlsbad Trails Master Plan (TMP) builds on previous efforts related to trails and is the principal planning document for developing and maintaining the citywide trails system. It sets the framework for a robust trails system and alternative modes of transportation for use by residents and visitors alike. As evidenced in the mission statement, **the Citywide Trails Program strives to meet the leisure and recreational needs of Carlsbad residents while protecting and preserving open spaces and coastal resources in accordance with the City of Carlsbad General Plan.**

The TMP also supports the following Carlsbad Community Vision Core Values:

- Small town feel, beach community character and connectedness
- Open space and natural environment
- Access to recreation and active, healthy lifestyles
- The local economy, business diversity and tourism
- Walking, biking, public transportation and connectivity
- Sustainability
- Neighborhood revitalization, community design and livability



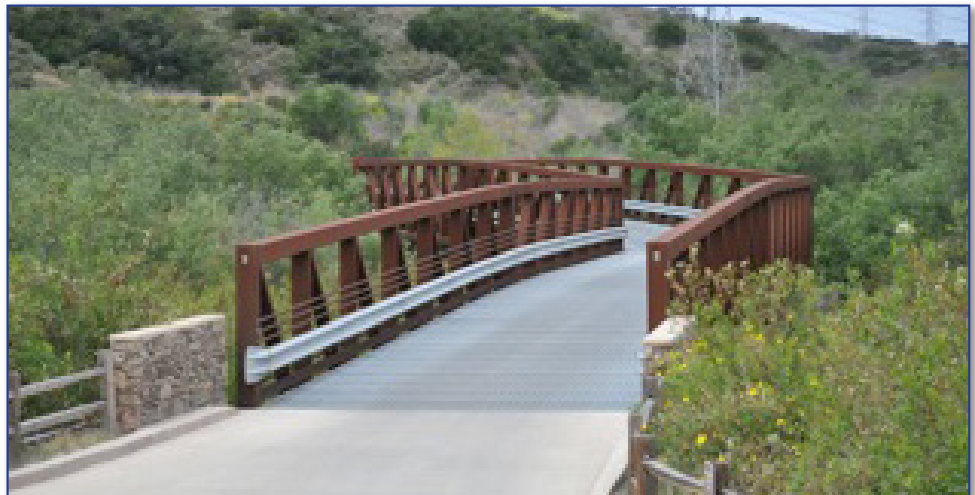
The Trails Master Plan consists of the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Introduction & Project Background
- Chapter 2: Planning Efforts & Consideration
- Chapter 3: Analysis of Existing Conditions
- Chapter 4: Trails Network Subarea Recommendations
- Chapter 5: Trail Development Implementation
- Chapter 6: Trail Standards and Design Guidelines
- Chapter 7: Trails Operations and Maintenance
- Chapter 8: Funding Opportunities

## Chapter 1 - Introduction & Project Background

Chapter 1 summarizes local and regional planning efforts related to trails. A formal trail system did not occur until early '90s. In 1990, an Open Space Ad Hoc Committee appointed by the City Council provided advice on the alignment of an open space trails system. Based on that advice, staff completed a Trails Feasibility Study. In 1992, the Open Space and Conservation Resource Management Plan (OSCRMP) expanded upon that study, and provided the framework for the city's trails development and maintenance.

The 1994 General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element incorporated principal trail recommendations from the OSCRMP by establishing trails development as a top citywide open space priority. In 2001, the City Council approved the Citywide Trails Program Report, which outlined the future vision and immediate steps necessary to implement the Citywide Trails Plan. In 2002, the Citywide Trails Implementation Plan was created. It identified which segments of existing private trails would be accepted by the city as public trails. It also identified which segments of public trails would be built over the next 5 years, either by private development or by the city. The Citywide Trails Maintenance Plan was also developed at this time.



From 2008 to 2010 the city engaged the community in Envision Carlsbad, resulting in a community vision based upon a set of nine core values. Three of these core values relate directly to trails:

- Access to Recreation and Active, Healthy Lifestyles
- Walking, Biking, Public Transportation, and Connectivity
- Neighborhood Revitalization, Community Design, and Livability

In 2013, the draft Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element of the Carlsbad General Plan identified a need to provide a comprehensive Carlsbad Trails Master Plan to address diverse user groups and trails connectivity. Later that year, the active transportation strategy and trails master planning process began simultaneously by hiring a consultant, and developing a public outreach program.

Trails development is an important regional initiative, addressed in the long-term

North Coast Corridor Public Works Plan/Transportation and Resource Enhancement Program (NCCC PWP/TREP) developed by Caltrans and SANDAG. It is a multi-modal transportation program that will implement a variety of improvements (highway, rail, bicycle, and pedestrian) to meet the North Coast Corridor's different transit needs. The North Coast Bike Trail and Coastal Rail Trails represent the most significant projects included in this plan.

## Chapter 2 - Planning Efforts & Consideration

Chapter 2 identifies the Trails Master Plan and Carlsbad Active Transportation Strategy (CATS) vision statement which was developed through the public outreach process. Trails should provide options for walking, hiking, running and biking, and to support community connectivity, sustainable transportation and access to open space. These objectives will encourage healthy lifestyles, social interaction, appreciation of natural processes, support for economic vitality and connections to neighborhoods, businesses and popular destinations. Chapter also describes the four major goals that were assembled as a result of the initial public input surveys and workshop, and from public comments on the draft TMP:

- Create a connected and complete trails system.
- Accommodate a variety of trail users in a safe and environmentally sensitive manner.
- Identify existing and future trail development opportunities.
- Integrate transportation related facilities as part of the trails system objectives.
- Manage, operate and maintain trails to encourage their proper use

Chapter summarizes the public input process which is a foundation of the trails planning process that aided significantly in drafting the master plan. Input was collected through a comprehensive public engagement that included an online survey and a public workshop. Over 330 surveys were submitted, and more than 270 comments on interactive maps were provided. Additionally, during the public workshop, more than 100 written comments were received, including many on the master plan vision, mapping components, and a variety of other topics. City staff and consultants then set out to create a comprehensive Carlsbad Trails Master Plan.





### Chapter 3 - Analysis of Existing Conditions

Chapter 3 analyzes the existing context and conditions of Carlsbad. These elements assist in making decisions on where future trails and CATS related infrastructure can provide for an integrated trail system. Analysis of the existing trail inventory identifies gaps in the network which aids in future trail development planning. During that process, additional trail segments were identified that had not been accounted for in the previous calculations. A majority of these segments include trails developed and maintained by private or non-profit entities, that are accessible to the general public, or trails that were added to the public trail system in recent years. Currently, there are 66.5 total miles of existing trail in the City of Carlsbad.



### Chapter 4 - Trails Network Subarea Recommendations

Chapter 4 discusses the distribution of trails within each of the 14 subareas identified in this plan. The goal for each subarea is to have an open space and trail system in close proximity to the local population. Components identified in each subarea include potential trail destination, level of difficulty, range of surface types, and opportunities for connectivity.

### Chapter 5 - Trail Development Implementation

Chapter 5 identifies the estimated project costs of future trail segments and the projected year for implementation. The privatization for developing these trail segments will be based on several criteria, including the conditions of approval for private development; government transportation initiatives; and funding for public projects (both locally and regionally), such as the Coastal Rail Trail Extension Projects, and the I-5 Freeway Widening Project. The development of trails is an opportunistic and flexible process. Some of the smaller/shorter trails segments, such as the Type 1 trails, may be constructed by the city, depending upon available resources. The majority of future trails, however, will likely be constructed as a part of larger projects. The initial step in considering development

of most trail segments is the completion of an environmental analysis, which determines the necessary measures to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate impacts to natural resources.

### **Chapter 6 - Trails Standards & Design Guidelines**

The contents of this chapter are organized around the trail types, which describe what should be expected in terms of width, trail surface, steepness, firmness, and type of amenities. Additionally, this chapter includes design considerations; state and federal trail standards; trail layout and locational guidelines; accessibility requirements; and supporting infrastructure. These standards and design guidelines provide a basis for estimating costs associated with trail development and operating costs associated with on-going trails maintenance – both of which vary significantly depending on trail classification, construction materials, location and complexity of the trail system.

### **Chapter 7 - Trail Operations & Maintenance**

Chapter 7 focuses on the proper maintenance of the city trails to ensure a safe and productive use of the facility; and for continued future recreational benefit to citizens and visitors. It includes an overview of trail maintenance responsibilities; maintenance schedules; and maintenance standards for typical tasks associated with trail management. It also describes the Trail Volunteer Program, which plays a vital role in maintaining existing trails in the city.

### **Chapter 8 – Funding Opportunities**

Trails connect people to natural and cultural amenities, as well as to important destinations, such as parks, schools, libraries, community centers, businesses and transit stops. Carlsbad’s trails system enhances sustainable transportation, access to open space, and community and regional connectivity. In so doing, the city is encouraging community social interaction, economic vitality and appreciation of natural resources. The Trails Master Plan positions the city for an exciting future and provides opportunities for residents to enjoy nature and healthy lifestyles right at their doorsteps.

Chapter 8 discusses a variety of funding sources for development of trails. In general, the City of Carlsbad has funded the majority of its trails by way of private developer dedications, and conditional requirements for development. Although this approach will continue into the future, the ultimate number of new developments is finite and other sources of funding will be needed, especially for existing built areas of the city. This chapter identifies a range of funding sources and grant programs that could assist the City of Carlsbad in expanding the trail system.

