

## **APPENDIX C**

### **MULTI-USE TRAILS PLAN & TRAILS SITING GUIDELINES**

# DRAFT ORCUTT MULTIPLE USE TRAILS PLAN

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## ORCUTT TRAILS

### I. INTRODUCTION

As part of the Orcutt Community Plan, the Planning Commission, County Park Department, and the General Plan Advisory Committee proposed updating the Parks, Recreation, and Trails map for Orcutt with several additional potential trails (Figure 1).

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive review of each trail and its associated environmental, legal, and policy issues. Rather, this study provides a clearly defined trail network with substantial background information on trail siting and design, liability and funding issues, along with a general set of guidelines for how the network should be eventually implemented. Depending upon individual circumstances, some of the trails may be easily implemented through the discretionary review process with little need for mitigation, while others may require complex negotiations with property owners and more detailed review.

### BACKGROUND

Historically, much of Orcutt and the Solomon hills have been used for oil exploration and cattle grazing. Informal trails existed over most of these areas and were highly utilized by the public. However, over the last 20 years Orcutt has seen a significant increase in urbanization which has led to the loss of many informal trails, which were at one time available to the community. In particular, South Orcutt which has seen tremendous growth and as a result historically used trails along Orcutt Creek and within the Solomon Foothills have slowly been removed or closed to public use.

The Orcutt Planning area contains approximately 14,650 acres, of which nearly 8,600 acres are agriculturally zoned. The planning area boundary contains both the unincorporated urban areas of the community of Orcutt and adjacent rural unincorporated areas which either have some potential for urbanization, or are related to the urban area from a resource perspective.

### Existing Setting

With the exception of a short 500-foot section of a road-shoulder trail east of US 101, there are currently no officially dedicated public hiking or equestrian trails or off-road bikepaths

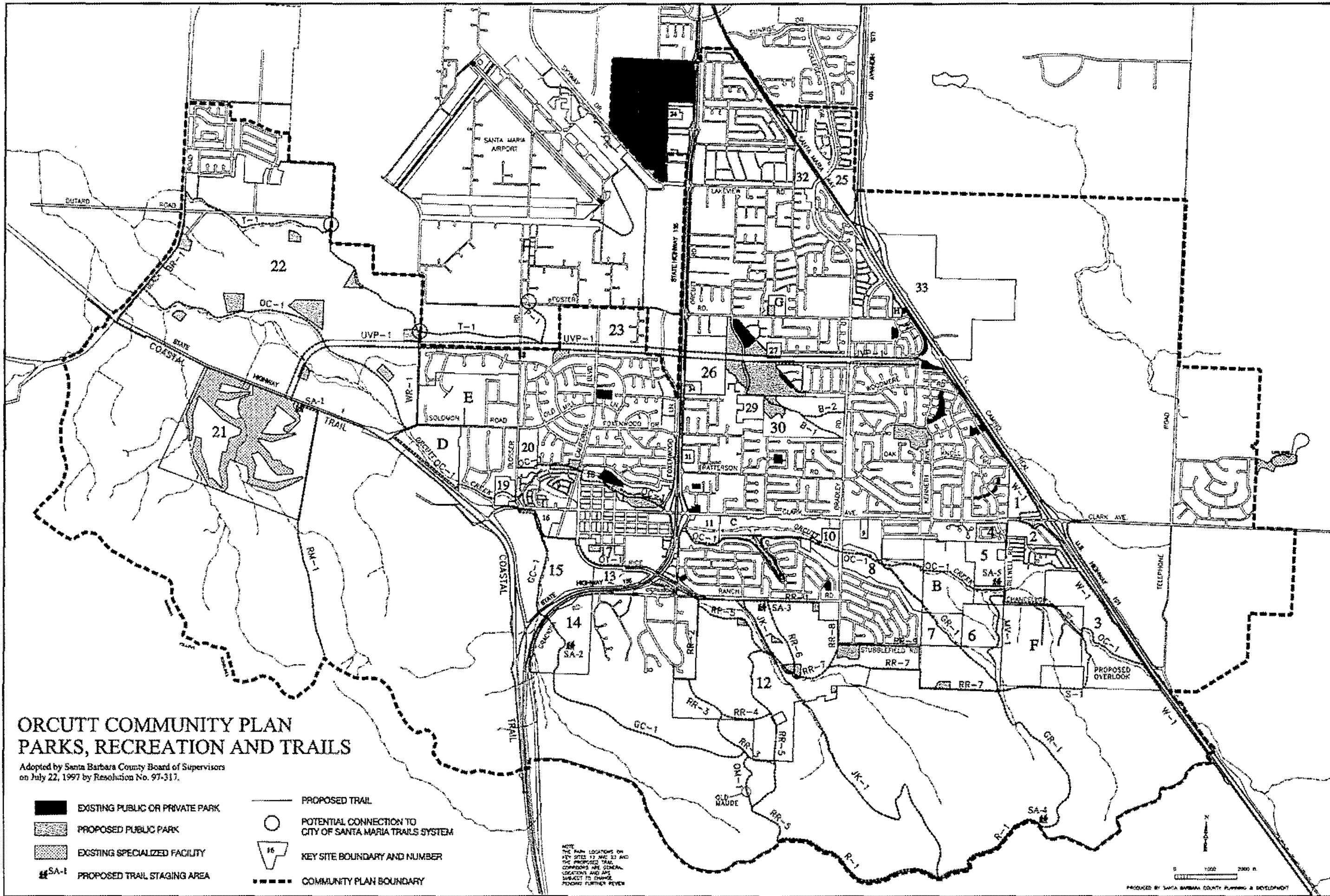


FIGURE 1

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within the Orcutt Planning Area. However, an extensive network of "unofficial" trails accommodate hikers, bikers, equestrians, and motorcyclists. Although urbanization has substantially diminished this unofficial network over the last decade, it remains extensive in the community's undeveloped lands. The trail system is especially extensive in the southern portion of the Community along many parts of Orcutt Creek, with spurs leading into the Solomon Hills. Unofficial trails occur throughout the undeveloped open spaces of the airport approach zone between Bradley Road and Highway 135 (e.g. Key Site 30), on County and Airport property west of Highway 135 and along both sides of Foster Road.

The current adopted Parks, Recreation, and Trails map (PRT-6) for the Santa Maria Valley depicts one (1) existing trail and three (3) proposed trails. The existing (on-road) trail is located along Clark Avenue near the Lake Marie Estates, of which approximately 500 feet of this trail extends into the OPA. Of the three proposed routes depicted on the PRT-6 map, two are within the OPA with the third located to the north along the Santa Maria River Levee. The routes within the OPA are located along Union Valley Parkway and adjacent to Key Site #1 paralleling US Hwy 101.

As part of the Orcutt Community Plan Update, several public trail corridors are proposed for addition to the PRT map for the Orcutt area. These corridors overlap some areas proposed for inclusion within the Open Space Overlay. **Figure 1** shows the proposed trail corridors. These trail additions would serve to expand the existing inadequate trail system into a comprehensive network, facilitating access for pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle trail users between jobs, shopping, schools, park facilities, SMPA, and the local foothills.

Primary trail users are recreational walkers, people on horses, and mountain bicyclists. Population growth, both under the OCP ten-year and full buildout growth scenarios, can be expected to result in more trail users. Therefore, the current need for additional trails to serve the Orcutt area as well as an increased demand for trailhead parking can be expected to grow as a result of population growth.

## II. POLICY DISCUSSION

This study attempts to bring together, and balance, competing goals and policies of the Land Use Element, Orcutt Community Plan, and the Agricultural Element to facilitate an organized and efficient process for gradually creating and expanding the Orcutt trail network.

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**Policy #4 of the Parks and Recreation section of the Land Use Element states:**

"Opportunity for hiking and equestrian trail should be preserved, improved, and expanded wherever compatible with surrounding land uses."

Additionally, policies and programs identified within the Orcutt Community Plan, reflect the need to provide a long-term trail network which facilitates increased public access to the Orcutt Foothills, while also expanding the urban trail network emphasizing linkage between residential and commercial areas.

### III. LIABILITY ISSUES

The owners of underlying property and the County are each immune from liability for any negligent act resulting in a recreational trail-related injury. These immunities are embodied in Civil Code section 846 (known as the Recreational Use Statute) and Government Code sections 831.2, 831.4 and 831.7. The Recreational Use Statute was first enacted in 1963 in response to a growing tendency among private landowners to prohibit public access to their property for recreational purposes. The scope of the immunity conferred on property owners by statute has been expanded by subsequent amendments and court decisions to include, for example, injuries occurring when trail users trespass on private property adjacent to the trail.

Despite this statutory immunity, property owners have expressed strong concerns regarding any potential liability arising from trail-related injury, and have urged that the County should indemnify them from such lawsuits, which they fear may be brought in spite of their statutory immunity. However, California Code of Civil Procedure section 128.5 provides for monetary sanctions to be imposed where the court finds that a lawsuit has been brought without merit. County records indicate that only two trail-related lawsuits against property owners have been commenced in the last ten years. One of these was based on factors other than negligence, and one is still pending. In all the years the County has been accepting grants of easements from private property owners it has not been the policy of the County to indemnify the grantor.

There is therefore no demonstrated need for the type of indemnification sought in this instance. A policy of indemnification would defeat the benefits of the immunities enjoyed by the taxpayers in this instance, and may lead to an increase in lawsuits because of the attractiveness of the public treasury to plaintiffs' lawyers.

The prospect of defending and indemnifying persons over whose activities the County has no control is contrary to the interests of the taxpayers. There have been instances in the past of property owners intentionally or recklessly interfering with public use of trails by obstructing the

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trail or making use more difficult or unpleasant. If the County were responsible for indemnifying them, such persons would almost certainly tender any resulting injury lawsuits to the County for defense, embroiling the County in litigation with which it would otherwise have no connection. It must also be pointed out that the proposed policy may result in property owners acting without regard for the safety of trail users.

The County has not in the past indemnified grantors of easements or property owners, which is consistent with advice given by County Counsel and by the Risk Management Division. Indemnification of new grantors may lead to claims that the County should indemnify all grantors and property owners, including those who have previously granted trails on their property. This would result in a significant undertaking of potential liability from which the County would otherwise be immune.

The statutory immunities cited above sufficiently protect the County and owners of underlying private property from negligence-based lawsuits. In the siting of actual trails, potential conflicts between agricultural activities and recreational trail use can and should be minimized to the extent possible.

### IV. TRAIL ASSESSMENT RATIONALE

The rationale utilized in assessing a "potential" urban and rural trail's ability to fulfill the Orcutt Community Plan's goals and policies was based upon the following three trail assessment components: 1) trail feasibility criteria (Appendix A-developed by P&D with input from current literature and discussions with other jurisdictions on how trails are generally sited), 2) the issue of multiple use on trails related to future trail implementation, and 3) Trail Siting Guidelines.

#### A. Urban Trails

The rationale behind the creation of the urban trails network is to facilitate pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycling access to jobs, shopping, recreational areas, etc. Urban trails are intended to link existing trails, parks and open spaces within Orcutt, complete missing trail segments, as well as provide new opportunities for trail dedication in undeveloped and/or under-developed areas.

Because the terrain of the urban area is relatively flat, physical features such as topography, slope, and erosion potential were not the primary criteria for evaluating urban trail feasibility. Rather, criteria such as location (i.e., proximity to urban population and destination points), availability of public right-of-way (i.e., utilization of Flood Control Easements and County road right-of-way), trail corridor width/length, the ability to create trail linkages and/or trail loops within the trail network, and location of sensitive resources were qualities considered for siting urban trails.

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### B. Rural Trails

In contrast to criteria utilized for assessing urban trail feasibility, nearly all of the feasibility criteria listed in Appendix A were considered for assessing rural trail feasibility. These criteria included: 1) *physical factors* - such as topography, soil erosion, location (i.e., County vs. private lands), potential impacts to environmentally sensitive resources, fire hazards, 2) *land use compatibility factors* - such as potential agricultural and neighbor privacy conflicts, intensity of trail use, accessibility/multi-use trails, and 3) *additional feasibility factors* such as parking availability, trail corridor width/length, and aesthetic qualities of the trail; both in terms of the users' experience and physical impacts within a viewshed.

### C. Multiple Use Trails

Multiple-use was developed as a way to provide recreational opportunities to as many user groups as possible. However, with the rise in popularity of mountain bikes, controversy has arisen over the multiple use concept, particularly between the mountain bike and equestrian communities. This is especially true in most foothill areas.

State and local government efforts on this issue have focused on mitigating potential and/or existing problems between different user groups through trail use or etiquette guidelines and, in some instances, closing trails to certain user groups.

Generally, most trails are designed to accommodate all user groups, and to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. An increase in education regarding proper trail use as well as appropriate signage placed strategically along trail corridors, informing users of basic principles of trail traffic and etiquette, can increase compatible multi-use trails.

All trails dedicated to the County of Santa Barbara are considered multiple-use trails (i.e. hiking, horseback riding, bicycling); the exceptions are a few existing trails specifically designed for hiking and/or equestrian use only in the Grants of Easements.

In meeting the objective of multiple-use as expressed within the Orcutt Community Plan, proper design and placement of future trails will be a primary factor in determining a trails ability to accommodate all trail users. However, trails that are physically constrained (ie., too narrow and too steep) may be inadequate for certain user groups or a combination of uses. This may require each new trail to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine its potential for multiple-use compatibility. Safety issues top the list when discussing multiple-use trails. Appropriate signage and education of trail users regarding proper trail etiquette and correct traffic patterns will most likely minimize conflicts among various trail user groups.

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### D. Trail Siting Guidelines

The Trail Siting Guidelines (Section VII-D) were developed as part of this study to assist in the siting, design, construction, and implementation of potential trail corridors. The siting guidelines provide additional guidance when reviewing potential trail corridors for future trail implementation. The guidelines address not only general siting characteristics, but biological, agricultural, access control, archaeological/historic, maintenance, as well as trail specific guidelines, providing one more additional tool in assessing proposed trails.

### V. TRAILS DISCUSSION

The following section provides a general description of each trail proposed for addition to the PRT-6 map:

**Black Road Trail:** The proposed Black Road Trail would extend approximately 1.1 miles north from Highway 1 to the Tanglewood subdivision on the eastern side of Black Road. Portions of the trail which cross Orcutt Creek and other small drainages, may require a small bridge or other type of creek crossing. An alternative to the creek crossings would be to divert the trail onto Black Road to avoid these areas. The trail terminates near the southern boundary of Tanglewood at the southern end of Myrtlewood Road. This trail would provide a loop between the Coastal, Orcutt Creek and Tanglewood trails, as well as provide access between the foothills and several urban trails for residents of Tanglewood.

**Bradley Connector:** The proposed Bradley Connector (approximately 0.80 miles in length) traverses Site 30 from southeast to northwest, providing a connection between Bradley Road, Hummel Drive and Union Valley Parkway. This trail would provide a safe convenient route through the proposed open space on Site 30 and the proposed Union Valley Park located in the northwest corner of Site 30 and adjacent parcels to the northwest.

**Coastal Trail:** The Coastal trail is located along Highway 1 through the planning area and is designated as the Pacific Coast Trail on State and Caltrans maps. Although there is currently no designated trail along either side of the Highway the existing shoulder may be used for alternative transportation, such as biking and hiking.

**Graciosa Canyon Trail:** The proposed Graciosa Canyon Trail extends approximately 2.5 miles and is located in southern Orcutt east of Highway 135. The trail begins at the northern boundary of Key Site #15 at Clark Avenue. The trail continues south through Key Site #14 and the proposed Graciosa Canyon staging area located on Key Site #14. From the staging area the trail



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extends south along Graciosa Creek for approximately 200 feet turning east toward the foothills eventually connecting to the Rice Ranch Trail System. This trail corridor and staging area would serve as an important trail location in southern Orcutt.

**Graciosa Ridge Connector:** The Graciosa Ridge Connector extends approximately 2.2 miles between the Orcutt Creek Trail near Bradley Road to the Graciosa Ridge staging area. This trail originates from Orcutt Creek extending south through the creek bed and up along a row of eucalyptus trees near the rear of the homes along Via Alta Road. The trail continues across Sites 7 and 12 through a second eucalyptus grove where it connects to a series of existing foothill roads. The trail follows the westernmost road south past the Unocal picnic facilities terminating at the Graciosa Ridge Staging Area. This trail provides connections and loops between several neighboring trails.

**John Karamitsos Trail:** This trail is approximately 2.65 miles in length and parallels an existing oil access road which extends between Rice Ranch Road at Site 12 and Graciosa Road along the foothill ridgeline. This trail would provide central access for future and existing residents in South Orcutt into the Solomon foothills.

**Marcum Connector:** The proposed Marcum Connector extends about 0.50 miles along the western and southern boundaries of Site 16, across Marcum St to Rice Ranch Rd, directly opposite the Old Town trail. The trail provides access into Old Town for residents in West Orcutt.

**Mesa Verde Trail:** The Mesa Verde Connector is a short segment, approximately 0.70 miles in length, which extends from the proposed Stillwell Park along the east side of the proposed Stillwell/Stubblefield Road extension. This trail provides a connection between the Orcutt Creek Trail, the Graciosa Ridge Connector, and the Rice Ranch trail system.

**Old Maude Connector:** This trail is a short (0.35 miles) connector providing direct access from three trails to the historic oil drilling site known as "Old Maude". The trails northern origin intersects with the Graciosa Canyon and a Rice Ranch trail, while the southern origin connects with another Rice Ranch trail.

**Old Town Connector:** The Old Town Connector extends approximately 0.65 miles along the southern boundary of Site 17 to Orcutt Road. As the trail makes its way under State Route 135 the trail would cross Rice Ranch Road to the southside connecting to the Rice Ranch Trail System. In places where the trail crosses the roadway measures will need to be taken to reduce potential hazards by installing crosswalks, stop signs, traffic lights, etc. This trail would provide an important link to many of the South Orcutt trails for Old Town residents, businesses, and the

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existing junior high and elementary schools.

**Orcutt Creek Trail:** This trail traverses the OPA from east to west extending approximately 7.4 miles between US 101 and Black Road. The trail parallels the proposed Orcutt Creek Class I bikeway providing access throughout the community for hikers, walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians, and several connections to neighboring trails which continue into the foothills.

**Pioneer Trail:** The Pioneer Trail extends approximately 0.3 miles between the extension of Union Valley Parkway and Foster Road west of Key Site #23. Although this trail is located within Santa Maria City limits, the trail provides access for residents to the south to the proposed park/specialized facilities south and north of Foster Road. The route follows partially existing unofficial trails and a mostly graded road corridor across the central portion of the site.

**Rancho Maria Trail:** The Rancho Maria Trail (approximately 1.7 miles in length) originates at the Rancho Maria Staging Area located at the northeast corner of the Ranch Maria Golf Course. The trail extends along the eastern boundary of the golf course adjacent to agricultural fields. Due to several significant eroded areas adjacent to the golf course, the trail meanders east and west in several places to avoid these areas. From the southern end of the golf course the trail continues across open grasslands terminating at the local ridgeline. This trail provides the only access to the foothills west of State Route 135.

**Rice Ranch Trail System:** The Rice Ranch Trail System covers approximately 7.4 miles throughout Site #12 and into the foothills. The southern portion of the trails extend along existing roads bordering Site #12. The westernmost trail extending into the foothills runs along the site's western boundary with a branch extending west connecting to the Graciosa Canyon Trail. The Rice Ranch Trail System provides an important part to the overall Orcutt Trails network providing access to the foothills between numerous neighboring trails as well as from central and Old Town Orcutt.

**Ridgetop Trail:** The Ridgetop Trail is approximately 1.8 miles in length extending east/west along Graciosa Road providing a connection between the three ridgetop trails. This trail provides possible loops for all trail user groups. The Graciosa Ridge Staging Area is located at the eastern origin of this trail.

**Solomon Connector:** This trail (approximately 0.85 miles in length) provides a connection between the Orcutt Creek Trail on Site #3 to the Graciosa Ridge Connector and Mesa Verde Trail. The trail would allow hikers to traverse from the Woodmere Trail to the Graciosa Ridge Connector and the Rice Ranch Trail System.

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**Tanglewood Trail:** The Tanglewood Trail extends approximately 2.85 miles between the intersection of the Union Valley Parkway and Pioneer trails to the Black Road Trail immediately south of the Tanglewood subdivision. The eastern portion of the trail (w/in City limits) extends through proposed open space as identified within the Santa Maria Airport's Research Park Specific Plan while the western portion meanders through the northern portion of Site #22, close to the vernal pool complex. This trail would provide possible loops with neighboring trails, as well as provide access to the Orcutt Trail System for residents of Tanglewood.

**Union Valley Parkway Trail:** This trail extends approximately 4.10 miles across the Orcutt Planning Area from east to west, between US Highway 101 and State Route 1. The eastern portion of the trail runs along an easement north of the existing portion of UVP from US 101 to Hummel Drive. The remainder of the trail, from Hummel Drive to SR 1 would be completed in conjunction with the extension of UVP (portions of the trail occur w/in City limits). The trail would cross several roadways, including Hummel Drive, State Route 135, Foxenwood Lane, California Blvd., Blosser Road, etc. The trail parallels the proposed Class I Bikeway along UVP which would provide an important link across the central urban core for hikers, bikers, equestrians, etc.

**Village Connector:** The Village Connector originates directly opposite Village Drive on Key Site 30 and is about 0.25 miles in length. This trail provides additional access for residents to the northeast of Site 30 to the open space and recreational areas proposed for this site.

**Windrow Connector:** The Windrow Connector extends about 0.50 miles between State Route 1 and the Tanglewood Trail, serving as a possible loop between the Coastal, Orcutt Creek, Union Valley Parkway, and Tanglewood trails. From SR 1 the trail parallels Solomon Road turning north at the eastern edge of Site #22, continuing along the eucalyptus windrows to the Tanglewood trail.

**Woodmere Trail:** This trail extends along the western side of US Highway 101 from Cedarhurst Drive (north of Foster Road) south into the foothills for approximately 4.0 miles. Although the northern portion of the trail between Clark Ave and Union Valley Parkway is currently an existing private trail (part of the Tiffany Park housing development), this trail has been designated as a proposed route on the County's PRT-6 map. The southern portion of the trail crosses Key Sites 1, 2, & 3 extending south to the Torch access road along the planning area boundary. This trail would provide loops between the Union Valley Parkway Trail and the Orcutt Creek Trail as well as providing trail access to residents in Tiffany Park and future residents in southeastern Orcutt.

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### STAGING AREAS

Staging areas would serve to provide trail users with parking and restroom facilities as well as information on trail locations and historical significance of the area. Four staging areas are proposed as part of the Orcutt Multi-Use Trails Plan. They include the following:

**Rancho Maria Staging Area:** This staging area would be located at the base of the Rancho Maria Trail along State Route 1 immediately east of Rancho Maria Golf Course. The area is currently open grassland along the golf course with access available from SR 1. This staging area is the only one in western Orcutt and would provide parking for several trails.

**Graciosa Canyon Staging Area:** The proposed Graciosa Canyon Staging Area would be located at the base of the abandoned oil dam on Site #14 along the Graciosa Canyon trail. Access to the area would be available from Graciosa Road which runs parallel to State Route 135. The area is currently open grassland which is currently being used for grazing.

**Rice Ranch Staging Area:** The proposed Rice Ranch Staging Area would be located along Rice Ranch Road along the northern boundary of Site #12. The area is currently open grassland. This centrally located staging area would provide access to a number of trails on Site #12 and South Orcutt.

**Graciosa Ridge Staging Area:** The proposed Graciosa Ridge Staging Area would be located at the southern terminus of the Graciosa Ridge Connector along the Torch access road where the terrain is fairly level. This is the only staging area located within the foothills and would provide parking facilities for trail users at the top of the Solomon Hills.

### VI. TRAIL NETWORK ELEMENTS

Designating appropriate locations for future trail corridors is only the first step towards achieving a comprehensive trail network system. Often the most important features are related to trail implementation and the ability to acquire funding for implementing and maintaining desired trails. The following sections discuss these factors as they relate to establishing a long-term trails system for the Orcutt Planning Area.

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### VI-A. Trail Acquisition Methods

The County of Santa Barbara utilizes various methods in acquiring public trail dedications. Many of the existing front country trails on the south coast were obtained through long term uninterrupted public use, through gifts of easements or corridors from private landowners or are constructed on lands which have been under public ownership over the long term. To a more limited extent, over the last 10-20 years trail easements have been acquired through exactions during the development review process. However while useful, the piecemeal nature of this approach has been more successful in protecting segments of existing informal trails from development, in providing some connector links and/or in obtaining segments of future trails rather than entire corridors.

Because of ongoing development and the requirements of adopted County policies, urban trails will most likely be acquired through dedication as part of the development review process. In the short term, rural trail acquisition will likely be pursued through negotiation and direct purchase of trail easements from private landowners, or if unavoidable, purchase of easements through eminent domain proceedings could be an option. The range of possible acquisition methods include:

**Exactions:** State law and adopted County policies allow for the dedication of trail easements as a condition of discretionary project approval. The majority of dedicated trail easements in the County have been, and will likely continue to be acquired through this method (particularly for urban trails). One of the principal tenets is that there must be a legitimate connection (eg: nexus) between a permit request and the governmental purpose being furthered by the permit condition to dedicate a trail easement. Existing County policy allows the County to require the dedication of a trail easement for any discretionary project on property which contains a trail designated on the PRT maps. However, in order to protect agricultural land, Agricultural Element Policy I.A restricts the circumstances under which the County can require the dedication of a trail easement on agriculturally zoned land outside the coastal zone.

**Planned Development Zoning:** Planned development land use and zoning designations require the clustering of residential development on a portion of a property, typically to avoid environmental constraints or to further some other public policy directive. The County's Planned Residential Development (PRD) zone district requires that 40% of a site be maintained in open space, the use of which can include trails. This zone district usually require that development be sited outside of sensitive, hazardous or unbuildable areas such as riparian woodlands, floodplains and canyons, portions of which can be set aside for low intensity public use such as trails.

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**Purchase of Easements:** An easement is an interest in land owned by another that entitles its holder to a specific limited use or enjoyment. Most trail easements average fifteen (15) feet in width, but the actual trail tread may only be about four (4) to six (6) feet wide. A fifteen-foot trail easement allows for flexibility when placing a four-foot trail tread. An easement's width may exceed fifteen feet if it is necessary to accommodate steep slopes, or avoid trees, boulders, or other natural features.

Trail easements may coincide with flood control access easements or non-exclusive public utility easements. If feasible, it is often preferred to use combined easements, because the purpose of combined access easements on a property may not conflict and combining such easements minimize the cost of acquisition and the use of private property for public purposes.

The purchase of such an easement would first be pursued cooperatively with the affected property owners. An appraisal(s) would be conducted to determine the fair market value of the proposed easement and the County would obtain funds from potential sources discussed in section VI-C. Should the potential sellers be unwilling, the Board of Supervisors would need to determine if the purchase was sufficiently in the public interest to undertake eminent domain proceedings and acquire the property through condemnation.

Because of the length of these foothill trail corridors and the complexity of the issues surrounding trail installation, it is likely that purchase of easement would be combined with a number of other methods to facilitate corridor acquisition.

### **VI-B. Trail Maintenance Issues**

In the development of potential trail corridors, provisions need to be made to properly address the maintenance issues surrounding a trail system. Trail maintenance is an ongoing task, and requires a long-term commitment of money and labor to effectively maintain a trail system. Because funds for maintenance are scarce, provision of adequate levels of maintenance for new trails is a major concern and necessity. The possible formulation of a local group, and/or "Adopt a Trails Program" could provide both the funds and labor necessary in meeting the maintenance demands from a comprehensive trails network.

The following section briefly describes several key maintenance issues.

#### **Signs and Fences**

The need for fencing of trail easements is determined on a case-by-case basis. According to County Park Department, the County will install fencing only in situations where the movement

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of trail users outside of the dedicated trail easement area may: 1) have a potential impact on surrounding agricultural operations or other ongoing uses of the property; 2) create a potential safety risk to trail users or others, and/or; 3) significantly impact the privacy of neighboring residents. Property owners may install their own fencing outside the boundaries of the trail easement. Where the County Park Department does agree to provide fencing, basic wooden post-and-rail fencing is generally used. The County typically will not agree to provide any type of fencing beyond the standard of existing fencing on the property.

Although existing Park Department sign and fence standards have proven adequate in other areas, potential effects on agricultural land and/or environmental resources in Orcutt may warrant increased fencing and use of signs in the certain areas. The trail siting guidelines provide clear direction on these standards and should be followed to minimize potential conflicts.

### Encroachments Into Trail Easements

On-road trails are road shoulder trails located within the existing public road right-of-way. The Public Works Department will be requested not to issue encroachment permits within these reserved road shoulders for anything which might prevent or inhibit safe use of the trail, including but not limited to paving, walls, fences, structures, or landscaping other than low growing grasses. Encroachments within road rights-of-way are prohibited and addressed in County Code Chapter 28.

Encroachments into off-road trail easements are specifically prohibited in County Code sections 26-45, 26-126 through 26-131, which also provides the Director of Parks prompt remedy for removing any encroachment following proper noticing of the property owner.

### Trail Design Standards

In most cases, trails required as a condition of approval for proposed subdivisions must be constructed by the applicant, in a location approved in the field by the Park Department. Required Park Department standards for trail construction cover trail dimensions such as trail tread width (4-6 feet), height clearance (10-12 feet), brushing limits (2-3 feet from centerline), driveway crossings, maximum acceptable grade, tread materials, drainage control measures (e.g. water bars, culverts), fencing, and motor vehicle and access control barriers. These Park Department standard dimensions are averages only, and can change according to site constraints and anticipated types of use.

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### Brushing/Waterbar Repair

The USFS recommends a seven year brushing cycle for most rural trails, utilizing volunteers in the removal of vegetation 2-3 feet from the centerline of a trail. In addition, a minimum of 2-3 visits a year to clean out the waterbars is conducted before and after the rainy season. These visits would also involve replacing, where necessary, dirt waterbars with wooden waterbars.

### **VI-C. Trail Funding Issues**

The construction and maintenance of recreational trails would be based upon the utilization of funds from existing revenue streams which are dedicated to recreation, the utilization of grants for construction of trails, the participation of citizens organizations to assist in the construction and maintenance of trails, and coordination with the County Park Department for assistance with maintenance, planning and administrative support. The existing fiscal constraints facing the County increase the difficulty of obtaining funding for trails in Orcutt. Exploration of other revenue sources would be necessary. Potential funding sources for both off-road and on-road recreational trails are described below.

#### **1. Potential Funding Sources For Off-Road Recreational Trails:**

**Local Funds:** A variety of local funds ranging from the general fund to the hotel bed tax could theoretically be used for trail acquisition, construction and maintenance. However in practice, fiscal constraints at the local level narrow the likely range of portions available for use as discussed below.

**Coastal Resource Enhancement Fund (CREF):** The source of this categorical fund is annual payments derived from several oil companies which were required to mitigate adverse impacts to coastal biological, scenic and recreational resources. The funds are administered through the County Planning and Development Department's Energy Division. Applications for use of the funds are made by local organizations and agencies. The County Board of Supervisors makes the final decision regarding allocation of these funds. The County estimates that an average of more than \$800,000 a year will be available from this program through 1997. The interest revenue gained is used to offset the administrative costs of the program. Because the CREF program is renegotiated every 5 years, the level of long term funding is uncertain. However, it is likely that this program will continue to provide a substantial source of funding over the mid term, dependent upon negotiations and possible pending developments.



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**County Service Areas:** Assessment districts provide a funding mechanism through which residents within the boundary of such a district can level an assessment (e.g tax) at a set rate on property to provide services. The County has a number of such districts providing a range of services. County Service Area 5 in Orcutt currently levels an annual assessment in order to maintain County open space/recreational greenbelts throughout Orcutt. Although, the existing revenues of CSA-5 appear to be fully subscribed, over the long-term, CSA-5 could be utilized for purchase or maintenance of trails through either partial diversion of existing revenue streams, or an increase in benefit assessment by the Board of Supervisors.

**Quimby Funds:** This program is funded through developer fees to offset increases in recreation demand from subdivision developments (parcel maps and tract maps). These funds are collected when the final subdivision map is legally recorded. Use of the principal and interest is limited to park acquisition and development within the local area. The fund is administered by the Santa Barbara County Park Department. Recommendations for funding projects are made by the Park Commission to the Board of Supervisors who make the final decisions regarding allocations.

**Park Development Fund:** This program is funded through developer fees to offset increases in recreation demand from developments such as apartments and condominiums (Conditional Use Permits and Special Use Permits). This fund is also administered by the County Park Department. Most of the same restrictions apply to these funds (and interest accrued) as the Quimby Funds with the exception that they can be used for maintenance. In most cases however, capital improvement projects are the preferred allocation.

**Transient Occupancy Tax:** The Hotel Tax is derived from transient overnight accommodations in the unincorporated area of the county. The funds are collected by hotel/motel owners and paid to the County. Although these funds can be used for any purpose the County Board of Supervisors feels is appropriate, all of these funds are currently used to fund the Sheriff's patrol.

### **Federal/State Programs:**

**National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA):** The trails program is administered at the federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Up to \$30,000,000 may be allocated annually, nationwide. The allocation is subject to appropriation each year. Funds are allocated to states by (1) 50 percent equally among all eligible states and (2) 50 percent proportionately on non-highway recreational fuel use. For non-motorized trails, seventy-five percent of the funds received by California will be available on a competitive basis. At least one-half of the funds for non-motorized trails will be available to cities, counties, districts and nonprofit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands.

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Under NRTFA, funds may be used for a variety trail needs. The following is a list of permissible uses:

1. Development of urban trail linkages near homes and work places including schools, parks, and existing trails;
2. Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails and backcountry terrain;
3. Development of trail-side and trail-head facilities that meet goals identified by the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee; (The terms "trail-side and trail-head facilities" mean trail components or associated facilities which may include: drainage, crossings, stabilization, parking, signage, controls, shelters, and water, sanitary, and access facilities.);
4. Acquisition of easements for trails, or for trail corridors identified in the State trail plan;
5. Acquisition of fee simple title to property from a willing seller, when the acquisition cannot be accompanied by acquisition of an easement or other means;
6. Construction of new trails on state, county, municipal, or private lands, where a recreational need for such construction is shown;
7. Construction of new trails crossing Federal lands, when required by the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan (construction must be approved by State and the Federal agencies managing those lands);
8. Maintenance of existing recreational trails, including grooming and maintenance of trails across snow (motorized only); and
9. Operation of environmental protection and safety education programs relating to the use of recreational trails (motorized only).
10. Provisions of features which facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.

Bridges may be constructed, repaired, or replaced to provide an integral link along a trail, to provide connections between trails, and/or to improve trail crossings over railroads, roads, rivers or other watercourse, ravines wetlands, or to prevent erosion on slopes.

Non-permissible uses of these funds are primarily with motorized use of trails and condemnation of any kind of property.

***Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program:*** The National Park Service operating under the Department of Interior is the administering agency. This program is of technical assistance only for state and local governments and citizen groups. It would provide staff assistance for river, trail and conservation projects. Selected projects have included conceptual plans for trail corridors, river corridor plans, and statewide river assessments. Projects are

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selected if they protect significant resources, achieve tangible results, incorporate public involvement during the planning process, and serve a large number of people.

### 2. Potential Funding Sources for On-Road Trails:

***Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991:*** The ISTEA offers significant opportunities to enhance state and local bicycle and pedestrian programs. Federal-aid funding is available from a number of ISTEA programs for these efforts. Funding sources for trails under ISTEA include the following:

***Public Lands Highway Program*** - This may be used to construct roads/bikeway, leading to and serving National Forests. Caltrans is the administering agency for dispersing funds to eligible applicants for federally funded programs.

***National Recreational Trails Fund*** - These monies may be used for a variety of recreational trails programs to benefit bicyclists, pedestrians, and other non-motorized and motorized users. Projects must be consistent with a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan required by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. Each State Governor designates the agency responsible for administering these funds within the State. Half of the annual appropriation is distributed equally among the States. The other half is based on the amount of non-highway recreational fuel used in each State. Within each State, 30 percent of the funds are allocated for non-motorized uses, another 30 percent for motorized uses, and the remaining 40 percent among trail uses at the discretion of the State.

***Transportation Enhancement Activities Program:*** This program is administered by California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) and provides funds for transportation enhancement including, provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicycles, acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites, scenic or historic highway programs, landscaping and other scenic beautification, historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals), preservation of abandoned railroad corridors (including the conversion and use thereof for pedestrian or bicycle trails), control and removal of outdoor advertising, archaeological planning and research, and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff.

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***State Land and Water Conservation Fund Program:*** This program has funds available for the acquisition or development of neighborhood, community or regional parks or facilities supporting outdoor recreation activities.

Eligible applicants include counties, cities, recreation and park districts, special districts with public park and recreation areas, the California Departments of Parks and Recreation, Boating and Waterways, and Water Resources, and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

This is a 50/50 matching program. The applicant is expected to finance the entire project and will be reimbursed 50% of the costs, up to the amount of the grant. The amount of funds available vary from year to year.

***Community Development Block Grants - Entitlement Program:*** This program is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development focusing on Community Planning and Development. The types of projects available for these grants include, neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and provision of improved community facilities and services. All eligible activities must either benefit low and moderate-income persons, aid in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight, or meet other community development needs having a particular urgency. Several rail-trail projects which have been awarded funding under this program include the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle, and the Baltimore-Annapolis Trail in Maryland. Cities in Metropolitan Areas with populations in excess of 50,000, urban counties of at least 200,000, and cities under 50,000 which are central cities are eligible. The grants available have no matching requirements.

***Small Reclamation Projects:*** The Bureau of Reclamation agency under the Department of Interior has project grants and direct loans available for projects of single and multiple purpose, including flood control, fish and wildlife, and recreation development, etc. Cities, counties, irrigation or water districts, or other entities organized under state law and eligible to contract with the federal government are eligible applicants. *Note:* Construction grants can be made for a portion of the costs allocated to flood control, fish and wildlife enhancement, and recreation development, if such development is of general public benefit.

***Highway Planning and Construction (Federal-Aid Highway Program):*** This program is administered by the Federal Highway Administration and includes both formula grants and specific project grants. The types of projects eligible for this program are bicycle transportation, pedestrian walkways, rest areas, and fringe and corridor parking facilities as part of highway beautification projects. There is also potential for assistance for river and trail projects. These projects must be either part of a highway project or if independent of a highway project, but must serve the highway corridor.

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### VI-D Trail Siting Guidelines

#### I. General

The following are general trail guidelines applicable to all proposed trails.

- A. To the maximum extent feasible, trails should be sited and designed to keep hikers, bicyclists and equestrians on the cleared pathways, to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat areas and environmental resources, and to avoid or minimize erosion impacts and conflicts with surrounding land uses.
- B. As part of the trail implementation process, County Parks Department should evaluate a future trails ability to accommodate multiple-use on proposed County trails. Potential modifications to the County's multiple-use trail policy should be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- C. Maps depicting future trails should include a statement expressing "Trail routes shown as proposed trails are not open for public use until County acquires public access rights".
- D. County Parks should monitor trails for potential impacts such as vandalism, impacts to archaeological/historical sites, intensity of use, erosion, etc., and when/where necessary, recommend temporary trail closures to alleviate or remedy the problem.
- E. Trails should be sited so as to utilize existing roads and trails as much as possible, except where the trail may conflict with surrounding land uses and environmentally sensitive areas.
- F. Trail width shall be consistent with County Park Department standards. Typical trail width ranges between 4-6 feet, except where intended trail uses and physical/environmental constraints of the trail corridor deem it infeasible and/or inappropriate. Then a trail width less than 4-6 feet would be acceptable.

#### II. Biological Concerns

- A. Trails should be sited to minimize damage to riparian areas while allowing some public access to these resources. Measures should include locating the majority of trail corridors outside riparian areas, while occasionally bringing trails into contact with streams for public enjoyment. All trail construction should minimize removal of riparian vegetation and utilize natural features and/or lateral fencing to discourage public access to sections

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of streams not directly accessed by trails.

- B. To the greatest extent feasible, the number of creek crossings should be limited in order to protect stream/riparian resources.
- C. Fences constructed along trail corridors should allow for wildlife movement, to the greatest extent feasible.
- D. Both trail siting and maintenance should be conducted to minimize introduction and proliferation of exotic weedy plants.

### III. Agricultural Concerns

- A. Where appropriate (e.g. adjacent to existing agricultural operations, buildings, residences, etc.), the County should construct fencing between the trail and private land uses. County Parks shall determine on a case by case basis appropriate fencing design and type. The County should consider landowner input on fence design. To the greatest extent feasible, fencing should not hinder the natural movement and migration of animals and should be aesthetically pleasing.
- B. Where trails bisect private land, locked gates should be installed at appropriate intervals to allow the landowner to cross the trail easement from one side of the property to the other.
- C. Trails should be located away from cultivated agriculture and should be sited to avoid bisecting existing agricultural operations, to the greatest extent feasible.

### IV. Land Use Compatibility Concerns

- A. Trails should be sited and designed to avoid significant environmental resources and to minimize user conflicts with surrounding land uses, to the maximum extent feasible. This may involve re-alignment of the trail corridor, signage, fencing, and/or installation of access control barriers in certain sensitive areas.
- B. Where feasible, trails should be sited a minimum of 100 yards from structures, and utilize topography and vegetative barriers to buffer surrounding residences from potential privacy impacts.

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- C. Where feasible, trails should be sited along parcel boundaries in an effort to minimize land use conflicts.

- V. Access Control

These trail guidelines are intended to protect surrounding land uses and environmentally sensitive areas, while providing a safe, enjoyable experience for the trail user. Many of the following access control guidelines are particularly relevant in siting proposed trails to avoid potential agricultural impacts.

- A. Where appropriate, trailhead parking areas should be pursued by the County at logical points to provide parking areas for vehicles and turning areas for horse trailers without blocking emergency vehicle or residents' access to and from private lands. Such trailhead parking should be sited and designed to minimize disruption to existing neighborhoods.
- B. Where appropriate, vehicle barriers (e.g. steel access gates) should be constructed at trailheads to prevent unauthorized motor vehicle access, while allowing hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, and authorized motor vehicles to access the trail. Internal access control barriers (i.e., any combination of steel gates, chain link or barbed wire fence may be necessary) should also be installed along trails at appropriate "choke points" (e.g. placement of barriers utilizing natural topography and/or trail user decision points) in order to keep trail users on the established trail route and prevent trespass and/or further entry into private property and/or environmentally sensitive areas.
- C. Before the County permits public use of any acquired trail right-of-way, adequate fencing and other precautions should be installed to prevent vandalism to neighboring properties and appropriate trailheads should be acquired and constructed to provide for the public safety.
- D. Appropriate trail signage should be placed at all access points, and along the trail corridor. Signs should state when entering/leaving public or private property, no trespassing, and to remain on the established trail route (especially where the trail easement crosses private land). Trailheads should be marked with low-key identification signs that also post regulations, prohibited uses, and trail user guidelines. Educational and trail etiquette signs should also be displayed at strategic locations along a trail corridor.

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### **VI. Archaeological/Historic Concerns**

Archaeological and historic sites are non-renewable resources which are vulnerable to trail construction and use. The following guidelines are intended to aid in the siting of potential trail corridors in order to avoid disturbances to important resources.

- A. Trails should be sited and designed to avoid impacts to significant cultural, archaeological, and historical resources to the maximum extent feasible. This may involve re-alignment of the trail corridor, signage, fencing, and/or installation of access control barriers in certain sensitive areas.
- B. A Phase I archaeological survey may be required prior to implementing proposed trail corridors.

### **VII. Guidelines for Trail Maintenance/Construction**

- A. Wherever possible, trails should be sited to avoid highly erosive soils and be constructed parallel to the slope contours with drainage directed off the trail to minimize soil erosion. Where the trail must go directly down the slope, a course of water bars (stone, wooden or jute meshing) should be imbedded perpendicular to the trail. This treatment should be implemented where necessary to minimize the effects of erosion.
- B. The County should utilize the USFS standards for rural trail maintenance, as identified in the USFS Trail Handbook on a case-by-case basis.
- C. County Public Works shall consult with County Park Department prior to issuing any encroachment permits along road shoulders with current or proposed trails.
- D. County Park Department shall actively pursue removal of any unauthorized structures, fences, or other obstructions in dedicated easements, as set forth in Chapter 26 of the County Code.



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### **VIII. Guidelines for Individual Proposed Trails**

The following guidelines would be applicable if and when the County pursues acquisition, development, and use of proposed trail corridors.

#### **A. Black Road Trail**

1. The portions of the trail which cross Orcutt Creek and the drainage area to the north of the creek should be designed to minimize potential damage to riparian vegetation, etc.

#### **B. Bradley Connector**

1. To avoid significant dune scrub habitat throughout Key Site 30, appropriate control barriers and informational signs should be constructed and installed.

#### **C. Old Town Connector**

1. In order to provide safe roadway crossings along Rice Ranch Road the County shall pursue the installation of cross walks, stop signs, traffic signals, or any other type of crossing to minimize potential hiker/automobile conflicts.

#### **D. Tanglewood Trail**

1. To avoid vernal pools in the area along the trail route, appropriate control barriers and information signs should be constructed and installed.