

## REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

**DATE:** DECEMBER 10, 2008

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** GREG RAMIREZ, CITY MANAGER

**BY:** MIKE KAMINO, DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

**SUBJECT:** ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2008-1509 APPROVING THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS TRAILS AND PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

---

On March 26, 2008, staff made a presentation to the City Council to receive direction on the creation of a trails plan for the City. The City Council provided feedback and direction for the Plan and indicated a desire to focus on shorter trails that would be easily accessible to the residents and workers in Agoura Hills. This would allow residents to walk or jog, as a form of recreation and/or exercise, in locations near their homes and provide trails or pathways for workers to walk during their lunch hour. The Council also requested staff to consider a trail on Ladyface Mountain.

The Trails and Pathways Master Plan (Attachment B) is a long-range trail planning document that will be used in guiding the creation and maintenance of a citywide trail and pathway network. Staff first prepared a preliminary draft Plan which was reviewed by the City Council Public Work Subcommittee on May 5, 2008. The Planning Commission then held a public hearing on the draft Trails and Pathways Master Plan and Mitigated Negative Declaration on November 6, 2008 and recommended approval of the Plan. The Plan has been modified to address all Planning Commission comments. The Planning Commission staff report, which includes a summary of the Plan, is included as Attachment D, and the Mitigated Negative Declaration is included as Attachment E.

The Trails and Pathways Master Plan contains guidelines for the design, maintenance, and management of trails in the City, as well as a trails map that identifies existing and the preferred location of future trails and pathways in the City. The Plan identifies three types of trails: neighborhood, open space, and equestrian bridle path. Standards for all three trail types are provided in the Master Plan. It should be noted that the Plan is not intended to show precise trail alignments or locations of physical improvements or easements. Precise locations will be developed on a case-by-case basis following appropriate review procedures.

Two priority trails proposed in the Trails and Pathways Master Plan are the completion of the existing equestrian bridle trail system in the Old Agoura neighborhood and the construction of a planned Medea Creek pathway along Medea Creek in the central part of Agoura Hills. These two trail segments are described as follows:

- Old Agoura equestrian trail system which will provide access to an equestrian bridle path system planned throughout the Old Agoura community.
- Medea Creek pedestrian/bicycle system which will provide access to a linear scenic pathway system traversing the entire community in a north/south direction along Medea Creek.

The City Council also expressed an interest in developing a trail that would traverse the length of Ladyface Mountain. This planned trail, as shown on the trails map, could be built in dedicated open space areas above the 1,100 elevation or, depending on the topography, the trail may need to be built utilizing an easement on private property. The general location of this trail and the access points to Agoura Road are shown on the Trails Map. As part of the upcoming Ladyface Mountain Specific Plan update, a more detailed study can be completed to identify the best locations for the trail. One of the goals would be to provide multiple access points to Agoura Road to allow for trail loops to provide opportunities for shorter hikes.

Generally, when selecting the location of the proposed trails shown on the trail map, staff looked for opportunities for short trails or trails that allow a user to easily loop back to the starting point. Staff also looked at trails that provided connections between trails in the City and to regional trails and opportunities to use existing dirt paths or roadways in open space areas to minimize this need for the City to construct trails. Many of the trails and pathways shown on the trails map are planned on land owned by a public agency or local homeowners associations.

The Plan is intended to serve as a framework for the development of trails in Agoura Hills. Once a trail or trail segment has been selected for construction, staff will prepare an implementation program that provides details regarding, but not limited to, funding, trail type (multi-use or single user), agency that will hold the trail easement, and responsibilities for long term trail maintenance. In addition, neighborhood meetings will be held. Effective communication between the City and its residents will more likely ensure a system of trails that benefits the community in terms of increased recreational opportunities, local economic development, and an environmentally sustainable and healthy community. Also, having an adopted master trails plan enhances grant opportunities.

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared for the Plan and is included as Attachment E. Three comment letters (County of Ventura, U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service and Resource Conservation District) were received. The letter from the Resource Conservation District was received after the Planning Commission hearing. All of the comments received have been incorporated into the project, either as mitigation measures in the MND, or as part of the Plan itself.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council conduct a public hearing and adopt Resolution No. 08-1509 approving the City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan and the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. City Council Resolution No. 08-1509
- B. Trails and Pathways Master Plan
- C. Planning Commission Resolution
- D. Planning Commission Staff Report
- E. Mitigated Negative Declaration

**RESOLUTION NO. 08-1509**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUCIL OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS,  
CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS TRAILS AND  
PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN**

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS HEREBY FINDS,  
RESOLVES, AND ORDERS AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS, in the General Plan Survey conducted in August 2006, as part of the City's General Plan Update, an overwhelming majority of residents (85%) indicated they would support developing a network of pedestrian-friendly paths in the City that would allow residents to walk between schools, shopping facilities, libraries, and residences and three-quarters (75%) of those who participated in the study supported a multi-use trail network for bicycles, horses, and pedestrians; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to City Council direction, staff prepared the Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan, a long-range trail planning document that will be used to create and maintain a citywide trail and pathway network; and

WHEREAS, the City Council supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of trails and pathways in the City that serve a variety of needs at the neighborhood, citywide, and regional level; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has considered the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the Trails and Pathways Master Plan and finds that a MND is appropriate because no significant impacts are anticipated and no substantial mitigation planning is necessary for project implementation; and

WHEREAS, the City of Agoura Hills Planning Commission considered the Trails and Pathways Master Plan during a regularly scheduled meeting held on November 6, 2008; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE AGOURA HILLS CITY COUNCIL DOES  
HEREBY RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The City Council considered the Planning Commission's recommendation to adopt the Trails and Pathways Master Plan during a public meeting held on December 10, 2008.

Section 2. A Trails and Pathways Master Plan is necessary in order to provide guidelines for the design, maintenance, and management of trails and pathways, identify existing and future trails and pathways, provide an implementation strategy and identify potential funding sources for trail construction, maintenance and operation.

Section 3. The proposed City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan as listed in attached 'Exhibit B' is hereby adopted.

PASSED, APPROVED, and ADOPTED this 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2008, by the following vote to wit:

AYES: ( )  
NOES: ( )  
ABSENT: ( )  
ABSTAIN: ( )

---

Denis Weber, Mayor

ATTEST:

---

Kimberly M. Rodrigues, City Clerk

**Attachment B**  
**Trails and Pathways Master Plan**

**CITY OF AGOURA HILLS  
TRAILS & PATHWAYS  
MASTER PLAN**

**December 2008**

## Table of Contents

	Page
<b>I. Introduction</b>	3
Purpose	3
Benefits of Plan	3
Key Guiding Principles of the Plan	4
<b>II. Setting and Existing Conditions</b>	4
Existing Setting	4
Existing Local and Regional Plans	5
<b>III. Proposed Trail and Pathway System</b>	6
General Trail and Pathway Types	6
Trail and Pathway Users	10
Future Trail and Pathway Alignments	10
<b>V. Equestrian Trail Standards</b>	11
Maintenance	14
Fencing	15
Footing	15
<b>VI. General Design and Management Policies</b>	15
Trail and Pathway Design	15
Trail and Pathway Management	17
<b>VII. Implementation</b>	18
Implementation Measures	18
Funding and Other Implementation Resources	19
<b>Figures:</b>	
Figure 1 – Neighborhood Trail and Pathway Standard	7
Figure 2 – Open Space Trail Standard	8
Figure 3 – Equestrian Bridle Path Standard	9
Figure 4 – Equestrian Trail Detail	13
Figure 5 – Equestrian Fence Detail	14
<b>Tables:</b>	
Table 1 – Equestrian Trail Relationship to Streets	12
<b>Appendix</b>	
Exhibit A – Trail and Pathway Map	23



## **I. Introduction**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan is to provide a pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian system that will link homes, schools, businesses, parks, and natural resources to each other. The Plan will serve as a guide to future trail planning, design and construction. The Plan is not intended to be a trail user's guide but is primarily a document for planning a future citywide trails and pathway system.

The Plan is not intended to show precise alignments or locations of improvements. Precise locations will be developed on a case by case basis following appropriate review procedures and are subject to further analysis of geologic, topographic, environmental, hydrology, property ownership, and other factors. Except for the equestrian bridle paths in Old Agoura, the alignments are shown at a corridor level which means the trail or pathway will be located anywhere within approximately 100 feet of the location shown on the trails map (Exhibit A). The location of the equestrian bridle paths in Old Agoura are planned adjacent to the roadway as described below under Equestrian Trail Standards.

The Plan is intended to serve as a framework for the development of trails in Agoura Hills. Once a trail or trail segment has been selected for construction staff will prepare an implementation program that provides details regarding, but not limited to, funding, trail type (multi-use or single user), agency that will hold the trail easement, responsibilities for long term trail maintenance any potential impacts on adjacent sensitive habits, soils, geology and hydrology. In addition, neighborhood meetings will be held. Effective communication between the City and its residents ensure a system of trails that benefits the community in terms of increased recreational opportunities, local economic development and an environmentally sustainable and healthy community.

### **Benefits of Plan**

Trails and pathways positively impact individuals and improve communities by providing not only recreation and transportation opportunities but also health benefits and an overall improvement in quality of life. In the General Plan Survey conducted in August 2006 as part of the City's General Plan Update, an overwhelming majority of residents (85%) indicated they would support developing a network of pedestrian-friendly paths in the City that would allow residents to walk between schools, shopping facilities, libraries, and residences. Three-quarters (75%) of those who participated in the study supported a multi-use trail network for bicycles, horses, and pedestrians.

Trails and pathways provide places for cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners, horseback riders, and physically challenged individuals to exercise, enjoy the outdoors and experience the many benefits of living in the City. If properly planned for and constructed, trails and pathways can connect residential areas with commercial areas, schools, and open space

which will provide residents not only a place to exercise but an alternative route for commuting or running errands, thus reducing air pollution and traffic congestion.

In general, trails and pathways add to the attractiveness of the community and help improve the City's quality of life.

### **Key Guiding Principles of the Plan**

- Develop a comprehensive trail and pathway system, including both on and off-street routes that makes pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian travel a feasible, safe and enjoyable mode of transportation and form of recreation in Agoura Hills.
- Develop a comprehensive trail and pathway system which traverses the community both east - west and north - south.
- Link the local trail and pathway system to existing and proposed regional trails.
- Create a trail system between neighborhoods and to local parks, schools and open space routing trail and pathway users off major roadways wherever possible.
- Develop trails and pathways to promote the health and well being of citizens and visitors.
- Locate trails in a manner that does not cause environmental degradation and protects environmentally sensitive areas.
- Make completion of the following two trail and pathway systems a high priority when seeking grants and funding:
  - Medea Creek pedestrian/bicycle system that provides access to a linear scenic pathway system traversing the entire community in a north/south direction along Medea Creek.
  - Old Agoura equestrian trail system that provides access to an equestrian bridle path system planned throughout the Old Agoura community.

## **II. Setting and Existing Conditions**

### **Existing Setting**

Agoura Hills is a predominately residential community surrounded by hills and open space. The City is located along Highway 101 corridor between Los Angeles and Ventura County, in the western part of Los Angeles County. Ladyface Mountain parallels Highway 101 and provides a dramatic backdrop of the City as viewed from along the freeway corridor and other arterials. Other important scenic resources include Strawberry Hill, the Morrison Ranch Hills, Palo Comado Hills, and the higher more distance Simi Hills to the north.

A number of regional recreational facilities surround Agoura Hills. The majority of these resources are situated within the Santa Monica National Recreation Area, which borders Agoura Hills on the south and east. Comprising 153,075 acres, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is the world's largest urban national park. A brief description of the sites situated within close proximity to Agoura Hills follows:

- Chesebro/Palo Comado Canyons remains generally undisturbed except for trails that traverse the canyons. Hiking, biking, and equestrian routes are available. To the east, this area joins the Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (formerly Ahmanson Ranch) in Ventura County which consists of 2,983 acres of open space with numerous trails and wildlife.
- Paramount Ranch is located south of Agoura Hills. Available facilities include hiking trails, picnic areas, and a western town movie set.
- Peter Strauss Ranch lies southwest of Agoura Hills. The property is owned by the National Parks Service and offers hiking, concerts, picnics, and art exhibits.
- Malibu Creek State Park is contiguous to the city's southerly boundary at Liberty Canyon. Hiking and equestrian trails lead through this wilderness preserve and cross Mulholland Highway.
- To the north, the Simi Hills, a small, rugged mountain range located in eastern Ventura County, abuts the City and provides access to the open space and trail system of the Oak Park community. The Oak Park open space system is owned and managed by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Parks District.

In addition to the publicly owned open space surrounding the City, the City has approximately 772 acres of protected open space (deed restricted) within it's boundaries including land owned by the City of Agoura Hills, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and many of the Homeowners Associations in the City. Local parks account for 44 acres in the City.

### **Existing Local and Regional Plans**

**Local Plans** - The Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan incorporates policies and guidelines specified by several plans that the City has already adopted. These include:

- General Plan (1993)
- Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1988)

**Regional Plans** - Regional planning efforts and trail plans prepared for adjacent cities and areas have also been considered in the Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan. These include:

- Santa Monica Mountains Area Recreational Trails Coordination Project -SMMART (1997)
- California State Parks Recreational Trails Plan (2002)
- Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan (2000)
- Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Plan (1986 – currently under review)
- Simi Hills Comprehensive Design Plan, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, NPS (1996)

### **III. Proposed Trail and Pathway System**

#### **General Trail and Pathway Types**

A variety of different trail types will be considered in Agoura Hills. These include:

- Neighborhood trail and pathway (Figure 1) –Hard surface of asphalt or concrete may be utilized except for trails and pathways adjacent to natural creeks or other sensitive habitats for which permeable surfaces should be utilized to reduce runoff. The trail or pathway should be designed to accommodate a variety of users. A minimum of 8' width is recommended and a 10' wide width is preferred. These trails include trails within the urbanized areas of the City and would also serve as a link to open space trails in the surrounding open space. Neighborhood trails and pathways should be designed as multi-use trails that allows bicyclists to pass pedestrians safely. Some of the neighborhood trails and pathways can also be designed to permit use by persons in wheelchairs.
- Open space trail (Figure 2) –Open space trails will serve primarily to provide access to open space areas in the City. The trail should be designed to accommodate hikers, equestrians and mountain bicyclists where width and/or slope do not present safety constraints. Whenever possible, natural trails should utilize existing fire roads or other unpaved roads or trails. Minimum of 4' width is recommended.
- Equestrian bridle path (Figure 3) – Equestrian bridle paths will be located adjacent to the streets in Old Agoura. The paths should be 8' in width and constructed with decomposed granite or similar self-compacting sand and binder mix acceptable to the City Engineer.

Where off street corridors are not readily available to connect residential areas with open space, schools and shopping, sidewalks can be utilized as connection paths. In addition, the existing and planned bicycle system in the City will complement and enhance the trail and pathway system.

Figure 1 – Neighborhood Trail and Pathway

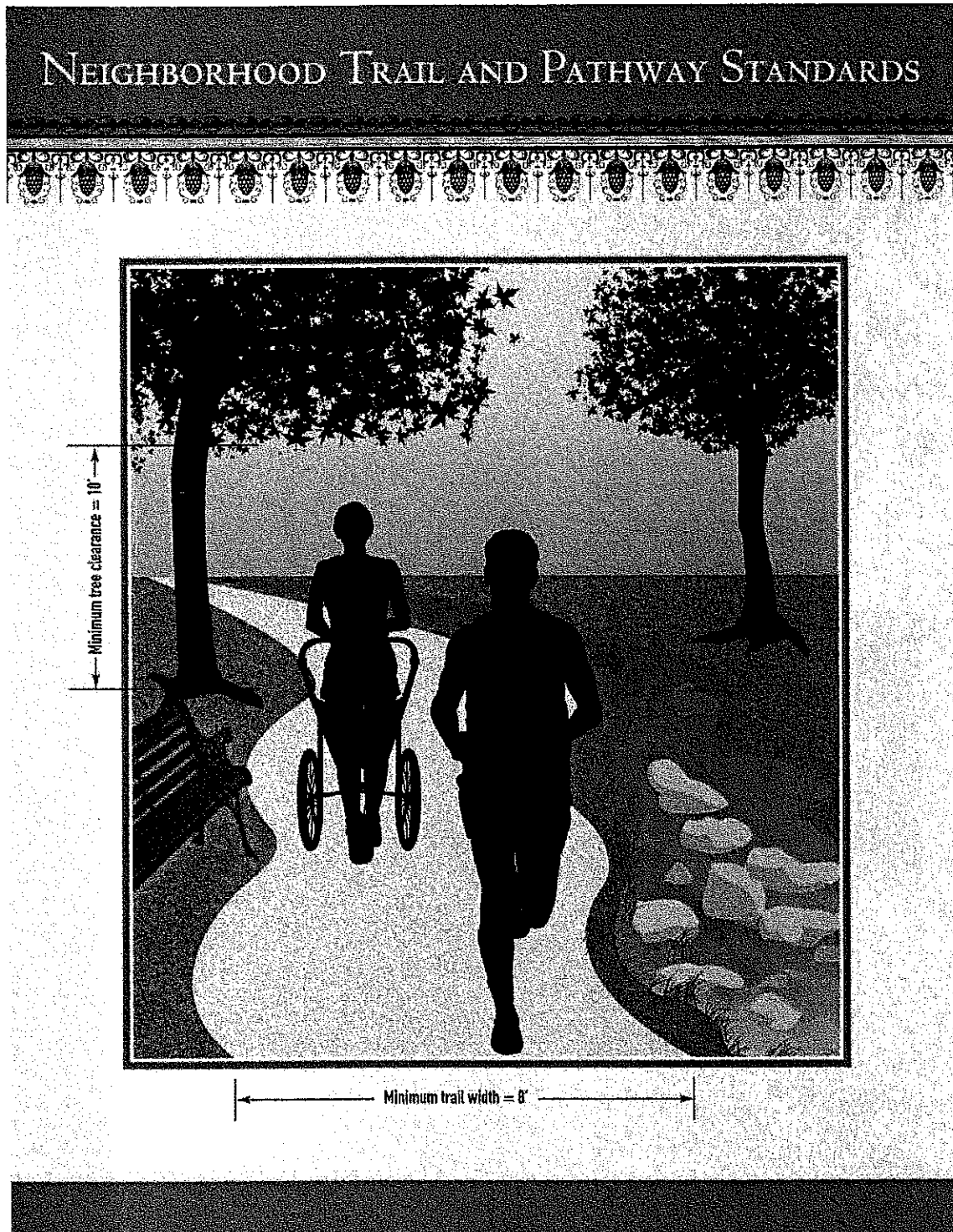


Figure 2 – Open Space Trail

# OPEN SPACE TRAIL STANDARDS

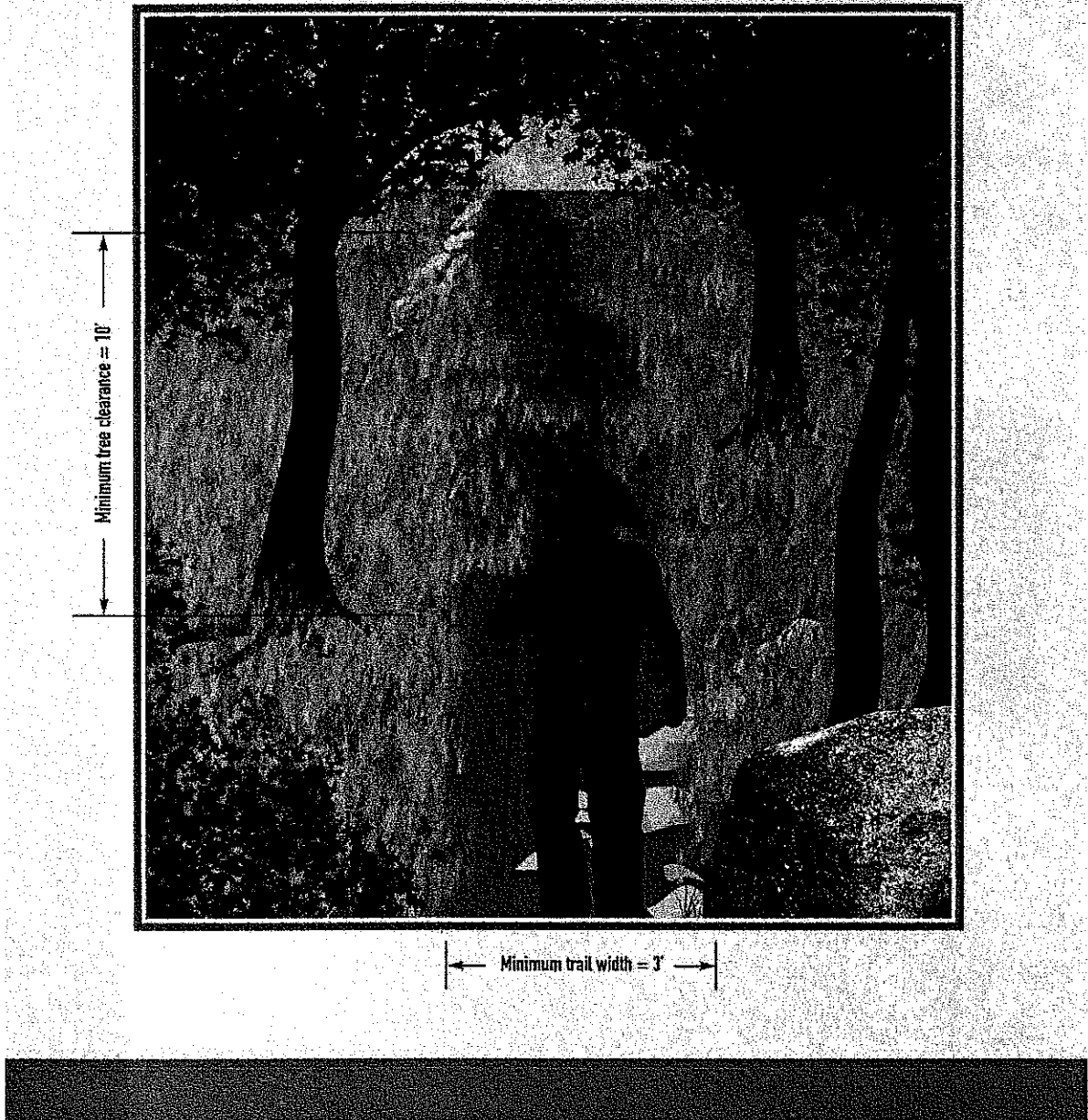
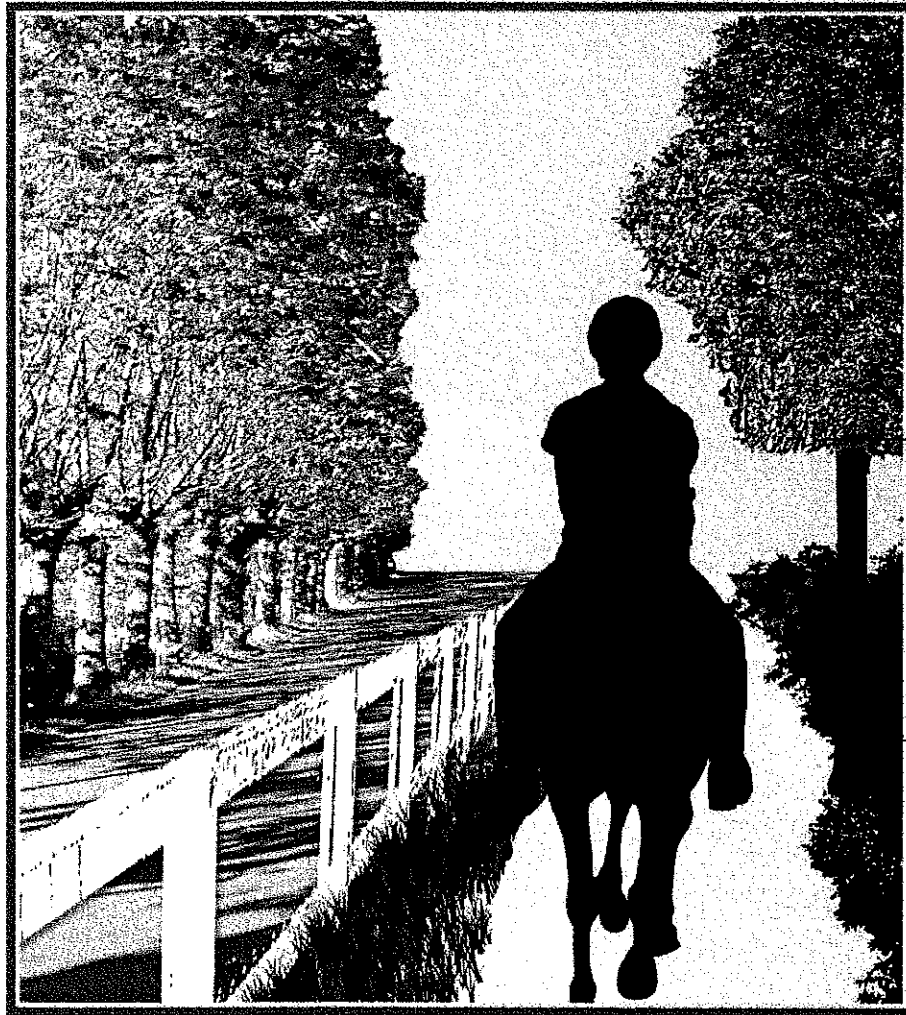


Figure 3 – Equestrian Bridle Path

# EQUESTRIAN TRAIL STANDARDS



Minimum tree clearance = 10'

Minimum trail width = 8'

## **Trail and Pathway Users**

Trails should be designed to accommodate a variety of users. Activity on a trail lends a sense of safety and comfort and encourages others who are not as active to use the trail.

Users of trails and pathways will include:

- Walkers – Use trails and pathways for exercise and recreation
- Joggers and Runners – Use trails and pathways for exercise and activity.
- Recreational Cyclist – Use trails and pathways for exercise and activity.
- Mountain Biking – Users can travel on crushed rock or more natural trail surfaces, and prefer trails with challenging terrain.
- Equestrians – Use trails and bridle paths to move throughout the community and access surrounding open space.

## **Future Trail and Pathway Alignments**

The Trails and Pathways Map (Exhibit A) depicts the long-range plan for trail and pathway construction in Agoura Hills. The majority of the proposed trail and pathway alignments utilize existing open space areas owned by public agencies and Homeowners Associations and public and private right of ways.

Future trails located in the open space areas owned and managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy are shown on existing dirt trails. While these existing trails have not been designated as official trails, it is the long term goal of the Trails and Pathways Master Plan to work with the Conservancy to have the trails officially designated and made part of the City's overall trails plan. In addition, trails shown in the open space areas in the northwestern portions of the City are proposed on either existing dirt trails or existing utility roads.

A trail is also planned that will traverse the length of Ladyface Mountain. The final trail alignment including connections to Agoura Road will be determined as part of a separate trails study that will be undertaken by the City. The goal will be to provide numerous short loop trails that can be accessed from Agoura Road and provide hiking opportunities for either short hikes that could be taken during a lunch hour or longer weekend hikes.

One of the guiding principles of the Trails and Pathways Master Plan is the completion of the existing equestrian bridle trail system in the Old Agoura neighborhood and the construction of the Medea Creek pathway along Medea Creek in the central part of Agoura Hills.



Currently, several equestrian trails exist in the Old Agoura community as shown on Exhibit These include a trail along Driver Avenue that connects to Old Agoura Park which includes a horse arena. The trail traverses the perimeter of the park and provides equestrian access from the park along a flood channel (Chesebro Creek) east of Colodny Drive which continues under Highway 101. The trail then follows the flood channel in a westerly direction along Agoura Road to Agoura Village. The trail, which is part of the regional Zuma Ridge Trail, currently ends at the western edge of the Mann Theater Shopping Center. Plans call for the trail to be extended to the south near Medea Creek to the Santa Monica Mountains. The trail will also connect with the pathway planned adjacent to the flood channel west of the Mann Theater which is part of the Medea Creek pathway system. The actual trail location and alignment will be coordinated with each development proposed in Agoura Village.

As shown on Exhibit A, there are two (existing and planned) off street crossings under Highway 101. The first is an existing under crossing that is part of the Zuma Ridge Trail which is described above. The highway underpass exists in the vicinity of Colodny Drive on the north side of Highway 101 and Dorothy and Roadside Drives on the south side. The other off street crossing of Highway 101 is planned at an existing highway underpass along Medea Creek adjacent to the Mann Theater shopping center on Roadside Drive.

The planned Medea Creek pedestrian/bicycle circulation system would provide access to a linear scenic walk and pathway system. This trail will provide a linear path along Medea Creek connecting the residential neighborhoods in the north part of the City to Agoura Village which will be located south of Highway 101 on Agoura Road. Currently, an existing trail called the Medea Creek Trail winds through Medea Creek Park, a tree-shaded suburban greenbelt located in Oak Park. Medea Creek forms on the south flank of Simi Peak in the Simi Hills. The creek descends from Conejo Ridge and flows year-round through Oak Canyon Community Park, Oak Park, Agoura Hills, and into the Santa Monica Mountains, merging with Malibu Creek at Malibu Lake. The Trails and Pathways Master Plan envisions the continuation of the Oak Park trail as it enters Agoura Hills. The trail would be located along the naturalized portion of the creek as it traverses Morrison Ranch and continue to the concrete flood channel behind the Twin Oaks and Agoura Meadows shopping centers on Kanan Boulevard and Thousand Oaks Boulevard before crossing over Kanan Road and through the Oak Creek apartment community eventually crossing under Highway 101 near the Mann Theater complex. The trail would continue on to Agoura Village and the Santa Monica Mountains trail system beyond.

In addition, to these two major trail systems, trails are planned throughout the community to provide opportunities for residents to walk to local parks and schools as well as walk for recreation and exercise.

#### **IV. Equestrian Trail Standards**

Exhibit A shows the equestrian bridle trail system throughout the Old Agoura area. This network of connecting bridle paths greatly enhances the unique rural character of the area.

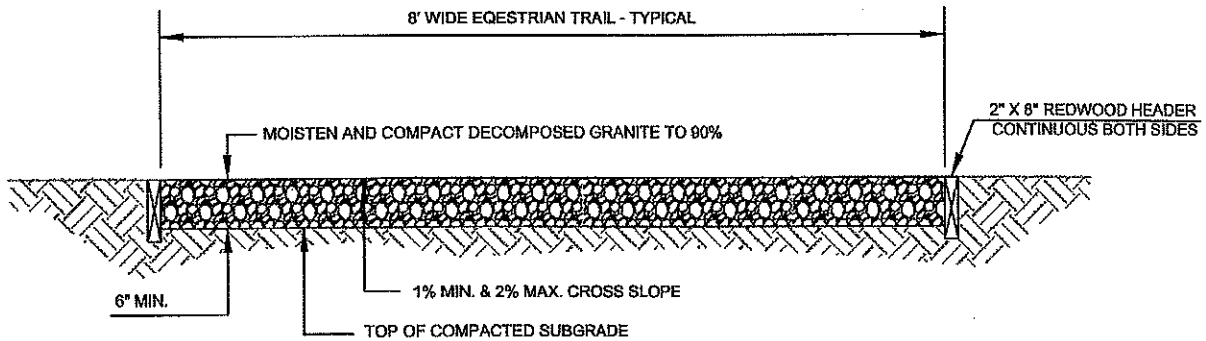
Table 1 provides the roadside locations of equestrian trail easements for Old Agoura streets and Figure 4 provides trail details.

**Table 1 –Equestrian Trail Relationship to Streets**

<b>Street</b>	<b>Location (Street side)</b>
Balkins Drive	S
Driver Avenue	N
Easterly Road	E
Colodny Drive (Section II)	E
Fairview Place	E
Lewis Road	E
Chesebro Road	W
Foothill Drive	S & E
Fountain Place	S

The continuation or creation of 8-foot wide bridle paths along residential streets will be required for all new development projects. Remodel projects with an alternation/addition of 50% or more with an existing trail easement, will also be required to construct an equestrian trail along the parcel frontage per City of Agoura Hills standards. The City may establish and collect an equivalent fee for those properties that do not have an equestrian easement on their side of the street or for flag lots.

Figure 4 – Equestrian Trail Detail



**NOTE: NO PESTICIDES OR HERBICIDES TO BE USED TO TREAT TOP OR SUBGRADE SURFACES**  
**TRAIL SURFACE DETAIL - RAILING IS SHOWN HERE UNDER IN TWO VIEWS**

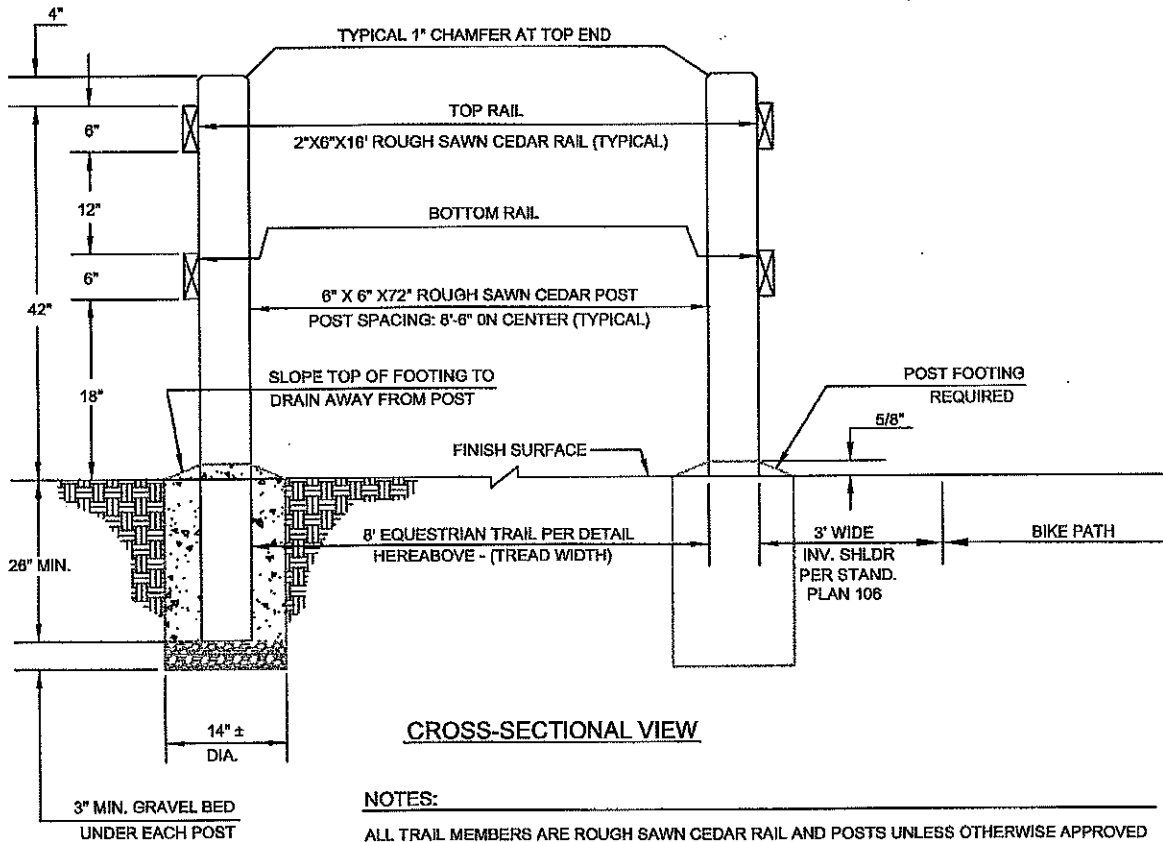
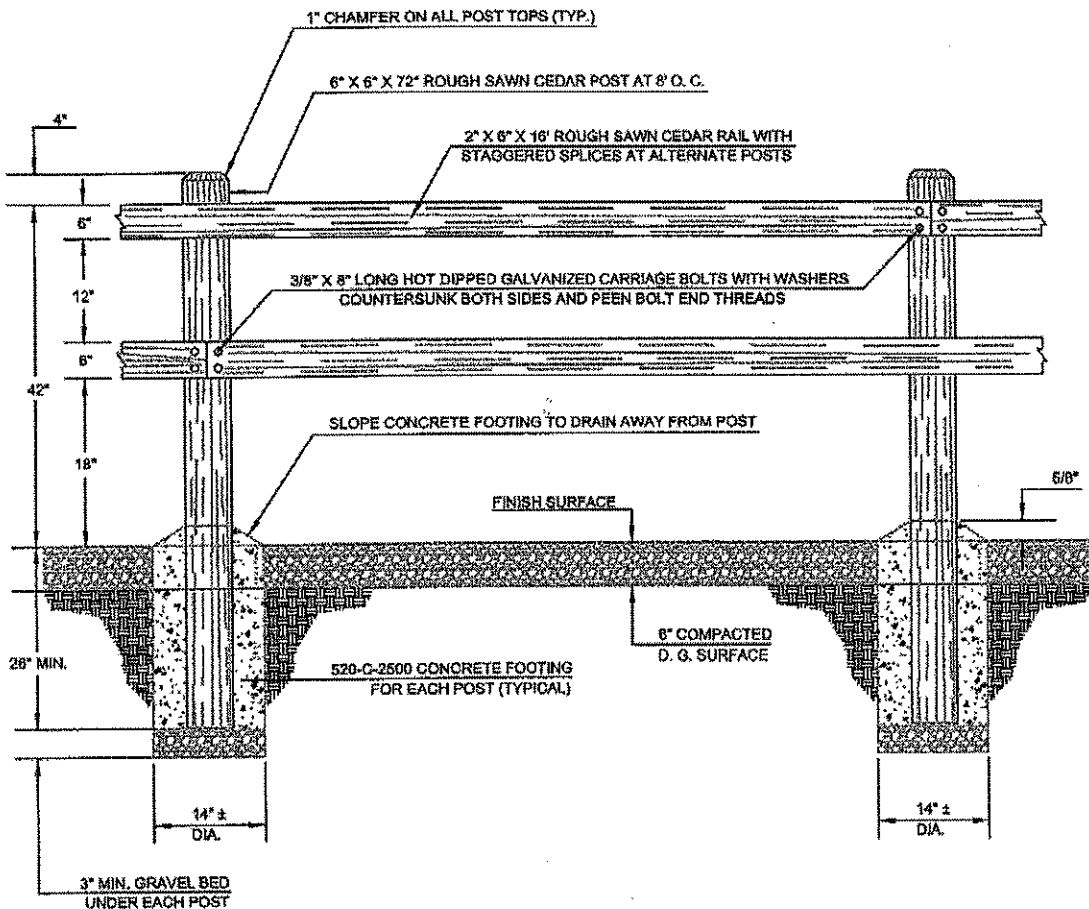


Figure 5 – Equestrian Fence Detail



The following items outline the City's requirements regarding equestrian trails.

### Maintenance

It will be the responsibility of private property owners to maintain those equestrian trails located along the property frontages on private roads. Maintenance of equestrian trails fronting public roads will be the responsibility of the City.

Upon installation, penetrating oil shall be applied to the fence to enhance and protect the wood. If available, non-toxic and environmental friendly oil should be utilized. Fences should also be sprayed periodically with a non-toxic and environmental friendly penetrating oil-based product to maintain the appearance of the fence.

Sprinklers on private property shall be directed away from the fence at all times.

## **Fencing**

Equestrian fences help to increase the safety of roadways that are used by both the driving and horse-riding community. Except for the continuation of the bridle path on Driver Avenue, a fence between the public roadway and equestrian trail shall be constructed by the property owner in accordance with the Old Agoura Trail Standards and Details. An additional fence between a public roadway and equestrian trail may be constructed by the property owner, subject to approval of the City. The City may not require fencing if a determination is made by the City that fencing would make the pathway impassable.

In addition, to the fencing requirements shown in Figures 4 and 5, equestrian bridle paths in Old Agoura shall meet the following standards:

- Minimum of 10 feet of vertical clearance beneath tree limbs
- Grade of trail segments shall be 10% or less. Cross grade not to exceed 2%

All equestrian trail materials and/or designs are subject to review and approval by the City.

## **Footing**

The recommended material for construction of equestrian trails is decomposed granite. All other footing materials must be approved by the city prior to construction. Figure 4 – Equestrian Trail Detail provides footing details.

In sloped areas where roadways exist, a stair-stepped retaining system may be used to reduce substrate erosion. Steps should be long and broad with no more than a 2% slope or as recommended by a civil engineer. Steps should be retained by railroad ties, split telephone poles, and any other treated lumber; and no more than 12 inches higher than the previous step.

## **VI. General Design and Management Policies**

These design, maintenance and management policies are intended to assist city staff with implementation of the Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan, as well as provide the development community with a clear understanding of design standards considered appropriate by the City of Agoura Hills. The policies in this section are based on a number of factors, including safety, accessibility, and overall appearance of the trail system.

### **Trail and Pathway Design**

- Where feasible, parking opportunities should be provided near trailheads. Parking could be provided on the street, in a dedicated parking lot or in a parking lot shared with an adjacent commercial, industrial building or institutional building.

- Trails and pathways should be designed and managed to minimize conflicts among users.
- Maintenance of adequate sight distances should be provided around horizontal and vertical curves.
- Gentle trail grades should be provided to minimize unsafe downhill speeds.
- Adequate trail widths should be provided to accommodate anticipated user volumes.
- When developing trails through residential neighborhoods efforts will be made to maintain the privacy of existing residences.
- Trails should be located and constructed in such a manner as to minimize maintenance requirements and to maximize access.
- Trails in natural open space areas should follow natural contours where possible and respect surrounding land forms.
- Drainage features should be incorporated into the design and construction of trails where appropriate to reduce erosion.
- Wide, gentle curves with good forward sight distance should be utilized.
- When possible, trail systems should offer loops, allowing the individual to return to a starting point without having to back-track.
- Trail design should be incorporated into plans for natural drainage channels, street rights-of-way, landscape corridors, utility right-of-ways and other open space.
- Trail plans should be incorporated into plans for new transportation structures such as roads, bridges, and overpasses.
- The City should retain existing city-owned rights-of-way that have potential to assist in the implementation of the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.
- The City should obtain rights-of-way from other entities (e.g., utility districts) that assist in the implementation of the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.
- Techniques, such as site specific trail routing, erosion control measures, site specific adjustment of construction standards, and site specific construction practices should be implemented to minimize environmental, visual, or construction impacts.
- Native vegetation including oak trees along all natural open space trails should be

preserved to the greatest extent possible to protect the aesthetic quality of the trail. Clearing of vegetation for trails, especially along creek banks, should be minimized.

- Native and/or self-sustaining plant materials should be used for re-vegetation of all disturbed areas to prevent erosion or for screening purposes.
- The City shall work with outside agencies such as the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Resource Conservation District during the design and construction of trails in open space areas to ensure the preservation and protection of sensitive habitats.
- As determined by staff, prior to the construction of any new trail biological surveys should be conducted at the appropriate times of year.

## **Trail and Pathway Management**

### *Motorized Vehicles*

Except for authorized maintenance and emergency vehicle access needs, the trail system is for non-motorized use only. All motorized vehicles of any type are prohibited. Trail entry points will be designed to discourage motorized vehicle use. Trail signage, barriers, fences, and active trail management will help restrict use by motorized vehicles.

### *Daylight Hour Trail Use*

Evening use (after sunset) of a trail will be restricted on trails managed by the City. Trail signage will indicate this restriction. The evening closure serves several purposes:

1. Reduces the impact of the trail on neighboring private properties by limiting hours of use, and
2. Allows law enforcement personnel to take corrective action against violators on the trail who may have criminal intent.

### *Trail Easements*

All trails that are open to the public should be located on publicly owned or dedicated property. There are a variety of mechanisms for this to occur. Dedicated easements are the most common and acceptable form of public access rights.

### *Signage*

Trail signs should be created to perform some or all of the following functions:

- Direction: On-street signs to direct people to trail access points.
- Trailhead: Identify trail access points and parking areas.
- Information: These may include a map with information about the trail, places it accesses, trail rules, interpretive/educational information and seasonal closures.

As new trails are completed, signs should be installed along the major corridors of the trail system with information on direction, safety and trail policy. Specific locations of signs will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis during the initial trail design. All signs should be designed and built with high quality materials that will be vandal resistant and weatherproof.

Appropriate warning signs should be installed to indicate potential hazards, limited sight distance or where the slope exceeds the recommended standard or where the trail width or vertical clearance is less than the recommended standard. Signs identifying private property should be installed to ensure that the trail user does not trespass on private property.

Important trailheads should include the following information on the trail sign: a map of the trail, destination and distances, permitted uses, regulations and rules including but not limited to keeping dogs on a leash, no smoking, high fire danger, and how to handle emergencies, information on hazards in the area, trail conditions, trail difficulty, hours of use, and access for the disabled. The sign may also contain interpretive and educational information.

## **VII. Implementation**

### **Implementation Measures**

- As part of development, require property owners with a future trail designation on or adjacent to their property to provide a trail easement or construct the trail as required by the City Engineer.
- Complete a study to determine alternative methods, such as payment of a fee, for new development to share the cost of installing and maintaining equestrian trails in Old Agoura.
- Pursue creative methods of trail easement acquisition and strive to work with willing property owners when acquiring trail easements. To encourage the donation of easements or land the City will develop educational materials and assist property owners.
- Incorporate off-street trail rights-of-way/easement acquisition and trail development into the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Apply for grants and alternative funding sources for trails.
- Develop a trail user's guide.
- Coordinate the City's trail system planning, implementation and management efforts



with those of regional jurisdictions and public agencies.

- Identify partnership opportunities with neighborhood groups, private individuals and local businesses as a means to acquire various trail amenities.
- Develop a trail promotion program which includes developing a trail user's guide, providing information on the City's web page and providing information, at activity centers such as the City's community centers and parks, on the location of trails within the City and connections to regional trails surrounding the City.
- Incorporate off-street trail rights-of-way/easement acquisition and trail development into the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Establish an "Adopt a Trail" program for ongoing trail construction, maintenance and patrol activities.

### **Funding and Other Implementation Resources**

Funding is a key element to successfully implement trail-related projects. The following list provides the potential funding sources at the various government levels.

#### Local Funding Sources

##### *Bonds and Assessment Districts*

In the past, various state and local agencies have successfully used bonds or assessment districts to fund improvement projects or acquisitions.

##### *General Fund*

An annual set-aside in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) could be used to fund trail development. These funds could be leveraged annually by using them as matching funds for grants, for example.

#### State Programs

##### *Transportation Development Act (TDA)*

TDA funds are available for transportation projects, including trails. Funds are allocated by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA).

##### *California Wildlife Coastal and Parkland Conservation Act of 1988*

Competitive grants are available for acquiring and developing land and rights-of-way for bicycle riding, horseback riding, hiking and handicapped access trails.

### *Land and Water Conservation Fund*

The Land and Water Conservation Fund program provides funds to federal agencies and to the states. The money allocated to the states may be used for statewide planning, and for acquiring and developing outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Because Agoura Hills is located within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and proximate to several NPS and State park facilities and lands, this fund may aid the City's neighboring jurisdictions with regional trail system projects and planning.

This program provides \$20 million annually to cities and counties on a 70 percent state and 30 percent local matching basis. This program is administered by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation. The program provides funds for acquisition, development and innovative trail programs. Limited funds would be available from this fund as most of the money has been allocated to other projects.

### *Habitat Conservation Fund*

Cities, counties and districts are eligible to apply for the \$12 million that is available under this program which is administered by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation. Trails and recreational programs are new additions to the categories of projects supported by this fund.

### *Trail Grant Program*

Acquisition and enhancement of property for public trails are eligible for this program. Grants are available to local governments and authorized non-profits. The program is administered by the California State Department of Parks and Recreation.

### *Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act (Prop 50)*

This program provides grants for the acquisition, restoration, protection and development of river parkways. Providing compatible recreational opportunities, including trails along rivers and streams, is an eligible activity.

### *Urban Stream Restoration Program*

This program provides grants to assist local agencies and organizations with on-site restoration work including erosion control, landscaping and creek channel maintenance.

### *Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program*

This program is administered by the California State Resources Agency and is available for projects that provide mitigation for the environmental effects of transportation facilities. Roadside recreational projects are eligible and may provide for acquisition and/or development of trails, trailheads and parks.

## Federal Programs

### *Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) Funds*

TEA-21 funds are administered by the California Department of Transportation and were established to fund transportation-oriented projects.

### *Recreational Trails Program (RTP)*

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds annually for recreational trails and trails-related projects. The RTP is administered at the federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is administered at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The purpose of the program is to provide acquisition and development/rehabilitation of trails and support facilities, such as trailhead staging areas.

Cities, counties, districts, state agencies and nonprofit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands are eligible. A 20% match is required and can be made in cash or in-kind services. Five percent of the 20% must come from local sources such as a city, county, state or private source.

### *Federal Highway Administration Funds*

These funds are made available based on a three year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) prepared by the MTA, the regional transportation planning agency for Los Angeles County.

### *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program*

This program provides funds for bicycling and walking facilities by offering competitive matching grants to cities and counties.

### *Safe Routes to School Program*

The purpose of the Federal Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is to encourage communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. The Program makes funding available for a wide variety of programs and projects, from building safer street crossings to establishing programs that encourage children and their parents to walk and bicycle safely to school.

## Other Grant Sources

### *American Hiking National Trails Fund Awards*

To be eligible for an award, applicants must be a nonprofit (501(c) (3) organization and meet one of the following three criteria: 1) building or maintenance of trails which will result in improvement to the environment and enhancement of the hiking experience, 2)

acquisition of trail lands including costs associated with acquiring conservation easements, and 3) constituency building surrounding specific trail projects including volunteer recruitment and support. Awards range from \$500 to \$10,000 per grant. The program is administered by American Hiking Society.

#### *The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

This foundation funds a number of different kinds of projects that deal with its mission to improve the health and health care of all Americans. There are no deadlines. Applications must be received via email.

#### Public/Private Partnerships

In addition to government sponsored revenue-generating opportunities, other types of public/private partnerships can be considered which would result in the constructing or maintaining of trails facilities, including:

- Donations
- Fundraising
- Contributions commemorating an event or memorializing an individual
- Club or organizations sponsorship (Kiwanis, Boy Scouts, etc.)

Private contributions can be enlisted to adopt a trail, whereby they provide on-going trail construction, clean-up and maintenance in return for on-site public recognition.

#### California Conservation Corps (CCC)

The CCC may offer an opportunity for State-funded implementation of a trail system. CCC field crews are capable of providing trail construction and maintenance. Members of the crew have moderate and specialized technical skill levels.

#### Private landowners

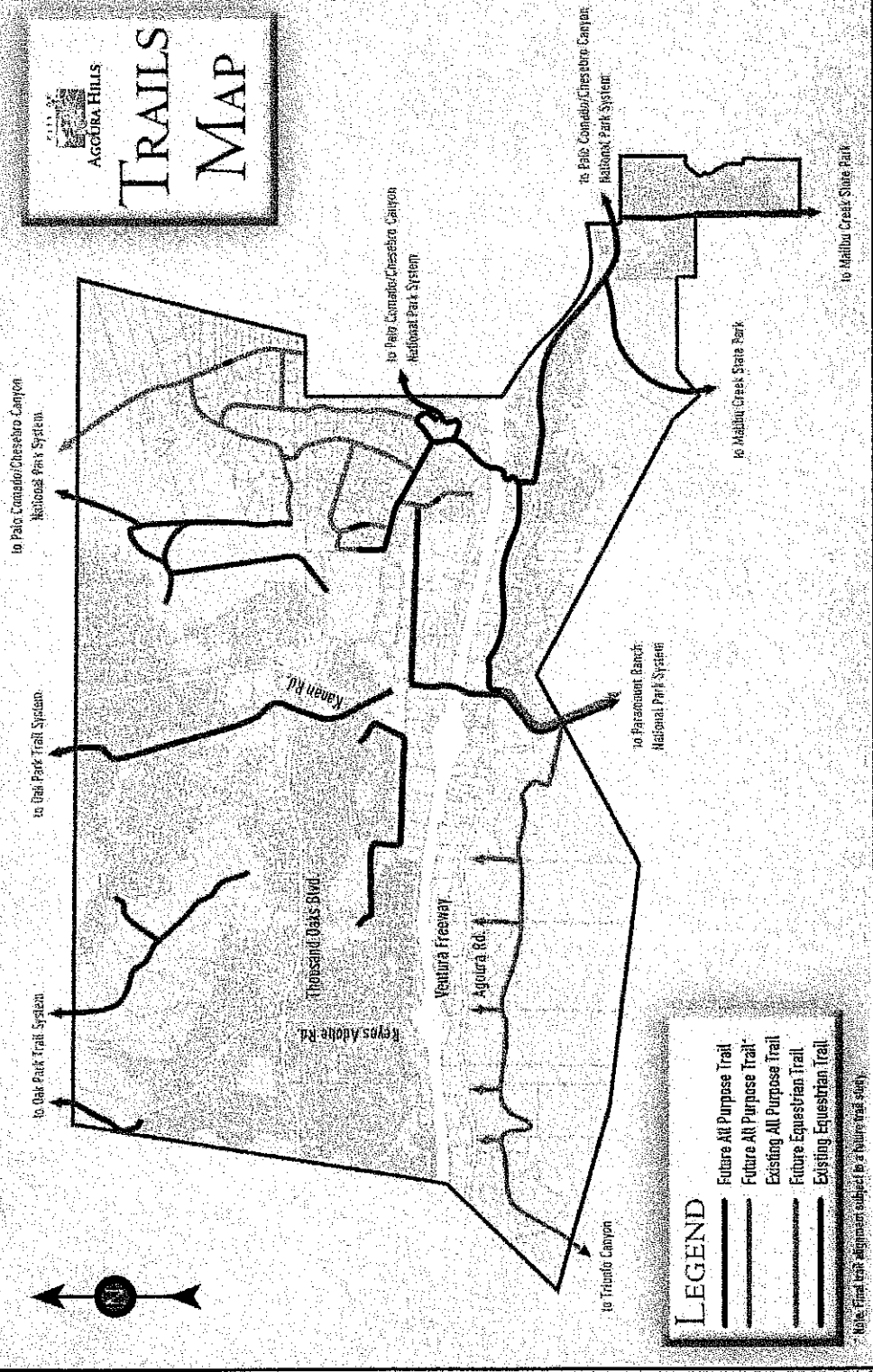
Landowners can assist in the acquisition of land for trails. The implementation of the Trails and Pathways Master Plan offers opportunities for landowners to accrue state and federal tax benefits from whole or partial donations of land for trails. Land donations often generate tax benefits that equal or outweigh the unrealized gain of a conventional market-rate sale.

#### Citizen involvement

The City of Agoura Hills, through its Community Services Department, can enlist the help of local citizens to implement the Trails and Pathways Master Plan. Active citizens can help construct trails or perform periodic clean-up and maintenance.



# TRAILS MAP



## LEGEND

- Future All Purpose Trail
- - - Future All Purpose Trail\*
- ..... Existing All Purpose Trail
- ..... Future Equestrian Trail
- ..... Existing Equestrian Trail

Note: Final trail alignment subject to a future trail study.

**Attachment C**  
**Planning Commission Resolution**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

**RESOLUTION NO. 956**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING  
APPROVAL OF A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND THE  
AGOURA HILLS TRAILS AND PATHWAYS MASTER PLAN**

**THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF AGOURA HILLS DOES  
HEREBY RESOLVE, FIND, DETERMINE AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to City Council direction, staff has prepared the Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan, a long-range trail planning document that will be used to create and maintain a citywide trail and pathway network; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on the City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan on November 6, 2008, in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 30001 Ladyface Court, Agoura Hills, California Notice of the public hearing was duly given; and

**WHEREAS**, in the General Plan Survey conducted in August 2006 as part of the City's General Plan Update, an overwhelming majority of residents (85%) indicated they would support developing a network of pedestrian-friendly paths in the City that would allow residents to walk between schools, shopping facilities, libraries, and residences and three-quarters (75%) of those who participated in the study supported a multi-use trail network for bicycles, horses, and pedestrians; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission supports the development, maintenance and enhancement of trails and pathways in the City that serve a variety of needs at the neighborhood, citywide and regional level; and

**WHEREAS**, a Trails and Pathways Master Plan is necessary in order to provide guidelines for the design, maintenance, and management of trails and pathways, identify existing and future trails and pathways, provide an implementation strategy and identify potential funding sources for trail construction, maintenance and operation; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has considered the information contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) prepared for the Trails and Pathways Master Plan and finds that a MND is appropriate because no significant impacts are anticipated and no substantial mitigation planning is necessary for project implementation.



**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Planning Commission of the City of Agoura Hills recommends the City Council adopt the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

**PASSED, APPROVED and ADOPTED** this 6<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2008, by the following vote to wit:

AYES: O'Meara, Nouzille, Buckley-Weber, Rishoff, Zacuto

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

---

John O'Meara, Chairperson

ATTEST:

---

Mike Kamino, Secretary

**Attachment D**  
**Planning Commission Staff Report**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.



---

## DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

---

**ACTION DATE:** November 6, 2008

**TO:** Planning Commission

**APPLICANT:** City of Agoura Hills

**SUBJECT:** Consideration of the City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

**REQUEST:** That the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing and formulate its recommendations to the City Council regarding the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

**ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:** Mitigated Negative Declaration

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the attached Resolution recommending that the City Council approve the Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

---

### I. BACKGROUND

On March 26, 2008, staff presented a proposal to the City Council to create a Trails and Pathways Master Plan for the City. The City Council provided feedback and direction for the Plan and indicated a desire to focus on shorter trails and pathways that would be easily accessible to the residents and workers in Agoura Hills. This would allow residents to walk or jog as a form of recreation and/or exercise in locations near their homes and provide trails or pathways for workers to walk during their lunch hour. The Council also requested staff to consider a trail on Ladyface Mountain.

As noted in the Trail and Pathways Master Plan, in the General Plan Survey conducted in August 2006 as part of the City's General Plan Update, an overwhelming majority of residents (85%) indicated they would support developing a network of pedestrian-friendly paths in the City that would allow residents to walk between schools, shopping facilities, libraries, and residences. Three-quarters (75%) of those who participated in the study supported a multi-use trail network for bicycles, horses, and pedestrians.

## II. STAFF ANALYSIS

The City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan (Attachment B) is a long-range trail planning document that will be used in guiding the creation and maintenance of a citywide trail and pathway network. The Plan contains guidelines for the design, maintenance, and management of trails in the City. The Trails and Pathways Master Plan also includes a trails map that identifies existing and future trails and pathways in the City.

The Trails and Pathways Master Plan identifies three types of trails: neighborhood, open space and equestrian bridle path. Standards for all three trail types are provided in the Master Plan. Neighborhood trails and pathways would be the trails and pathways with some type of hard surface that would be designed to accommodate a wide variety of users and would be located in the urbanized areas of the City such as adjacent to Medea Creek. Open space trails would typically be dirt trails constructed in the open space areas in the City including property owned by local homeowners associations and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). The last trail type is the equestrian bridle path which would be located adjacent to the streets in Old Agoura. The equestrian trails in Old Agoura have been a part of the General Plan since its adoption in 1993. Equestrian trail standards (pages 11-15) are discussed in more detail than the other trails because the Public Works Department in conjunction with Old Agoura HOA had already developed many of the standards. These standards were utilized for the existing equestrian trails in Old Agoura including the trail adjacent to Driver Avenue. The construction of bridle paths will be required as part of any new development, major additions and additions.

The Master Plan (pages 16-17) set forth the policies the City will use in the design of trails and pathways in the City. The Plan also includes standards on the management of trails and pathways (pages 17-18). These include prohibition of motorized vehicles, daylight hours of trail use, trail easements and signage.

The final section of the Master Plan provides a list of implementation measures and resources (pages 18-22) to build the proposed trails and pathways shown on the trails map. It is anticipated that the public entity that owns a trail or holds a trail easement on the trail would be responsible for the trail management and maintenance. Management issues would include items such as hours of operation, enforcement of trail rules, clean up, security, etc. In addition, while one of the goals of building a trail would be to construct the trail in a manner that minimizes maintenance, the cost of on-going

maintenance would need to be considered. Currently, the City does not have adequate staff to manage or maintain an extensive network of trails.

In areas of the City where another public agency owns the land or has an easement on a portion of the land, such as the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), they would typically own and manage the trail. However, agencies like MRCA have a very small trails maintenance crew and rely mainly on established trail user groups to help with maintenance. Two such groups that work in the Santa Monica Mountains are the Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council (SMMTC) and the Concerned Off Road Bicyclist Association (CORBA). However, these groups typically maintain trails in natural open space areas in the Santa Monica Mountains.

### Trails Map

Two trails are identified as priority trails for completion in the Master Plan. These include the existing equestrian bridle trail system in the Old Agoura neighborhood and the proposed Medea Creek pathway along Medea Creek in the central part of Agoura Hills.

Any trail alignment shown in the Master Plan is conceptual in nature and for planning purposes only and would be subject to further analysis of geologic, topographic, environmental, and property ownership issues. In addition, cost, maintenance and easement issues would need to be worked out at the time the City decided to build any of the trails shown on an adopted trails map.

Most of the trails would probably be designed for multi-use which would provide opportunities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. However, the City would most likely determine if an individual trail would be a multi-use during the design and construction phase taking into consideration the steepness of the trail, available right-of-way, safety, user frequencies, and other conditions.

Again it is important to note that except for the equestrian bridle path trails, which will be placed adjacent to the street, the map is not intended to show precise alignments or locations of physical improvements. Precise alignments will be developed on a case-by-case basis after the trail has been selected for construction. Since precise alignments aren't shown, staff felt it was important to clearly describe the various trails shown on the trails map in text format. That description (pages 10-11) is summarized provided below.

In selecting locations for proposed trails and pathways, staff looked for the following opportunities:

- Short trails or trails that allow a user to easily loop back to the starting point
- Connections between trails in the City and to regional trails
- Use of existing dirt paths or roadways in open space areas to minimize need for City to construct trails

Many of the proposed trails shown in the natural open space areas of the City include trails proposed on existing dirt paths and/or utility roads. For instance, the trails shown on properties owned and managed by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (east of Sumac Elementary and west of Liberty Canyon on Agoura Road) currently exist as dirt paths but have not been designated as official trails. The trails shown in the open space areas owned by the Morrison Ranch Homeowners Association in the northwestern portions of the City are planned on an existing utility road and existing dirt paths.

The City Council had expressed an interest in developing a trail that would traverse the length of Ladyface Mountain. This planned trail could be built in dedicated open space areas above the 1100 elevation or depending on the topography the trail may need to be built utilizing an easement on private property. The proposed trail is shown on the map at approximately the 1100 elevation with connections to Agoura Road at existing property lines. The City anticipates completing a trail study to determine the best location for the trail as part of another work effort once the Master Plan is adopted. Multiple trail connections to Agoura Road are shown to provide short hiking paths for employees in the area as well as opportunities for longer weekend hikes. Parking opportunities exist in several areas adjacent to Los Angeles County flood control facilities and/or the City could explore shared parking options in some of the parking lots of office buildings that may get built north of Agoura Road.

As noted earlier, the two trail systems that are identified in the Master Plan as priorities for completion are the equestrian bridle path system in Old Agoura and the Medea Creek system (a linear pathway along Medea Creek)

The proposed equestrian bridle path system has been in place for years and is identified in the City's General Plan. Currently there are several existing equestrian trails in the Old Agoura community including the Driver Avenue equestrian path. The equestrian paths are all planned adjacent to the streets in Old Agoura. Some of the paths are located on public streets and these trails will be maintained by the City. The bridle paths planned along the private streets in the area would be maintained by the adjacent property owner. The bridle path system is currently being completed through a combination of City efforts (Driver Avenue) and private efforts. Segments of the equestrian trail are completed as a condition for new construction and major remodels and additions in the area.

The Medea Creek system is envisioned as a linear walking path that would follow Medea Creek as it enters the City from the Oak Park community to the north and traverses the length of Medea Creek south to Agoura Village. This walkway will connect the residents in northern Agoura Hills with the southern portions of the City and allow residents to walk or jog along the creek with options for either shorter or longer walks. This planned pathway will cross numerous properties including HOA open space, L.A. County flood channels/creeks and private property. Easements would need to be secured from the various property owners to complete the pathway system.

As shown on the trails map, there are two off street crossing shown on the trails map that will allow hikers and equestrians to cross under Highway 101. One under crossing currently exists in the vicinity of Colodny Drive and another crossing is planned at an existing underpass along Medea Creek adjacent to the Mann Theater shopping center on Roadside Drive.

### Summary

In summary, staff is seeking feedback from the Planning Commission on the proposed Trails and Pathways Plan and Trails Map. Commission's comments will be forwarded to the City Council for their consideration prior final adoption.

### ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is included as Attachment C. The Mitigated Negative Declaration was circulated from October 9, 2008 to November 4, 2008. One comment letter was received prior to the distribution of the staff report and is included with the MND. If other comment letters are received after the distribution of the staff report, staff will provide the comments to the Planning Commission at their hearing.

The Planning Commission's action on the Mitigated Negative Declaration will be in the form of a recommendation to the City Council who will have the final decision making authority on the Master Plan and the MND.

### III. RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the attached draft Resolution recommending that the City Council approve the City of Agoura Hills Trails and Pathways Master Plan.

SPECIAL PROJECTS PLANNER: Joyce Parker-Bozylinski



IV. ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Planning Commission Resolution
- B. Trails and Pathways Master Plan
- C. Mitigated Negative Declaration

**Attachment E**  
**Mitigated Negative Declaration**

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK.

# City of Agoura Hills

## Mitigated Negative Declaration

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the City of Agoura Hills has assessed the environmental impacts of the Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan. This Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared based upon the analysis in the Initial Study.

**Project Title/File No.:** Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan

**Project Location:** Citywide, in the City of Agoura Hills, County of Los Angeles.

**Project Description:** The Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan is a long-range trail planning document that will be used in guiding the creation and maintenance of a citywide trail and pathway network. The Plan contains guidelines for the design and construction of trails as well as the maintenance and management of trails. The Plan identifies existing trails in the City and provides guidance on the preferred location of new trails. The Plan is not intended to show precise alignments or locations of physical improvements. Precise locations will be developed on a case-by-case basis following appropriate review procedures.

**Finding:** The Community Development Department finds that the project described above will not have a significant on the environment based upon the analysis in the attached Initial Study. The Initial Study identifies significant effects on the environment for which the project has incorporated mitigation measures into the project to reduce impacts to less than significant level.

### MITIGATION MEASURES INCLUDED IN THE PROJECT TO REDUCE THE POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS TO A LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT LEVEL.

#### AESETHICS

##### Mitigation Measures

- Trail alignments shall be designed to minimize visible scarring of the hillside. Criteria to be used in siting the trail include, but are not limited to: avoidance of excessive cuts in slopes that could not be effectively revegetated and the presence of native soil to support revegetation.
- Final improvement plans shall be designed to minimize the use of lighting so that it is the minimum necessary to provide for a safe use of trail facilities. Any lighting should be directed downward and hooded to minimize spillover and glare impacts to adjoining uses.

#### BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

##### Mitigation Measures:

- A preliminary biological resource assessment shall be conducted by staff within areas of intact natural habitats.
- Damage to oak woodland habitat can and should be prevented by avoidance. In the event that Oak woodland habitat is damaged, the damaged habitat shall be replaced at a 1" removal to 1"

replacement ratio.

- Damage to riparian habitat can and should be prevented by avoidance. In those areas where riparian areas must be crossed, the trail crossing shall be designed to minimize disturbance. Flat rocks/stepping stones shall be utilized to traverse slow moving streams. When bridges or culverts are required, they should be designed so that they visually and functionally blend with the environment and do not substantially interfere with water flow. Crossing structures shall be designed to allow for passage of high flows with flows from the structures directed away from downstream channel banks to prevent erosion of channel bank.
- When parallel to a stream or riparian zone, new trails shall be set back from the top of bank or from the outside edge of the riparian zone, whichever is greater, except where topographic, resource management or other constraints and management objectives make this not feasible or undesirable.
- If any proposed trail alignment(s) result in impacts to riparian habitat under the jurisdiction of state and/or federal agencies, a Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit or other clearance from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Army Corps of Engineers and California Fish and Game shall be obtained prior to the start of the project.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

### **Mitigation Measures:**

- City staff shall review the cultural resource sensitivity of any property on which a trail is proposed by consulting available inventories of prehistoric and historic sites prior to the any construction on the trail.
- Phase I studies (literature search and preliminary surface survey) shall be required for all trail locations determined by the City to be potentially sensitive for subsurface cultural resources.
- In the event any significant cultural materials are encountered during subsurface construction of a trail, all construction within the vicinity of the find shall be halted until a qualified archaeologist is notified. The archaeologist will examine the find and make appropriate recommendations regarding the significance of the find and the appropriate mitigation.

## **HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

### **Mitigation Measures:**

- Appropriate signage prohibiting the use of all motorized vehicles on the proposed trail alignments shall be placed at all trailhead locations and other points of access to any trail on the system. The language prohibiting motor vehicle use shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Agoura Hills Planning staff prior to the opening of any trail for public use. If signs prove to be ineffective and the City determines that physical barriers are necessary to keep motorized vehicles off of the proposed trail, barriers shall be installed.

## **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

### **Mitigation Measures:**

- Trail construction shall follow Construction Best Management Practices (BMP'S) including :
  - ✓ Limit construction activities to the dry season.
  - ✓ Stabilize construction sites, including entrances and exits.
  - ✓ Protect exposed slopes and use of straw wattle to prevent erosion.
- Following construction, disturbed areas, including stream banks, shall be stabilized with native plant materials, straw wattles, hydroseeding or similar measures to prevent erosion.


- In order to reduce erosion and maintenance problems, disturbance of the soil surface shall be kept to a minimum.
- Surface water shall be diverted from trails by out sloping the trail tread between 1% and 3%.
- Where a potential for significant soil erosion exists along a new trail alignment, specific erosion control plans shall be prepared by a qualified professional. Criteria to be used in determining the erosion potential includes: slope, soil type, soil composition and permeability and the relative stability of the underlying geologic unit.

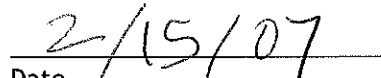
## LAND USE AND PLANNING

### Mitigation Measures:

- Trail improvements/facilities shall be designed to minimize conflicts with adjoining uses, including privacy and circulation issues.
- Access easements must be acquired from those property owners whose land will be traversed by portion of the trail system, prior to trail project implementation.
- The City will consult with the any state (MRCA or Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy) or federal (National Parks Service) agency during the planning and design of any portion of the trail system that impacts their property.

Based on the analysis in the Initial Study and the mitigation measures identified therein, and incorporated into the project, the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

  
Signature

  
Date

# INITIAL STUDY AND MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

## AGOURA HILLS CITYWIDE TRAILS AND PATHWAY PLAN

Prepared by:  
Joyce Parker-Bozylinski, AICP

---

June 2008

**INITIAL STUDY**  
**Environmental Checklist Form**

1. **Project title:** Agoura Hills Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan
2. **Lead agency name and address:** City of Agoura Hills  
Community Development Department  
30001 Ladyface Court  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
3. **Contact person and phone number:** Joyce Parker-Bozylinski, 818-597-7300
4. **Project location:** Citywide. The City of Agoura Hills is located in western Los Angeles County, at the edge of the San Fernando Valley. The Ventura Freeway (Highway 101) runs east/west through the middle of the City. Neighboring communities include Calabasas, Westlake Village, Oak Park (Ventura County), and Los Angeles County. A portion of the northern boundary abuts Ventura County.
5. **Project sponsor's name and address:** City of Agoura Hills  
Community Development Department  
30001 Ladyface Court  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
6. **General Plan designation:** Varies. Urban Business (Business-Old Town, Business-Professional Office, Commercial-Retail, Business-Business Park, Business-Limited Intensity), Urban-Mixed Use (Mixed Use and Urban Hillside) Public Facilities  
  
(Pu Internet Explorer (No Add-ons).lnk blic Facilities-Institutional and Public Facilities-Recreational), Urban-Residential ( Residential-Single Family, Residential-Multiple Family, Residential-Mobile Home, and Non-Urban (Rural Residential, Rural Community, Hillside Mountainous, Open Space-Recreational, and Open Space-Resource Protection).
7. **Zoning designation:** Varies. Commercial Zones (Commercial, Business Park, Commercial, Limited, Commercial, Mixed Use, Commercial, Office, Commercial, Retail, Commercial, Old Town), Residential Zones (Residential, Single -Family, Residential, Multi-Family, Residential, Rural, Rural Community), and Special Purpose Zones (Hillside/Mountainous, Open Space, Open Space Development Restricted, Recreation and Public Facility).



8. **Description of project: (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)**

The Trails Master Plan is a long-range trail planning document that will be used in guiding the creation and maintenance of a citywide trail network. The Plan contains guidelines for the design and construction of trails as well as the maintenance and management of trails. The Plan identifies existing trails in the City and provides guidance on the preferred location of new trails. The Master Plan is not intended to show precise alignments or locations of physical improvements. Precise locations will be developed on a case-by-case basis following appropriate review procedures. The Plan identifies a trail network in the City serving virtually every neighborhood, and providing connections to activity centers (community centers, parks, and civic facilities) as well as nearby regional parks and open spaces. The trail network will also provide connections to the regional trails in the area.

9. **Surrounding land uses and setting: Briefly describe the project's surroundings:** Trails are proposed throughout the City on residential, commercial and open space properties and on public rights-of-way.
10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement.)** None

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

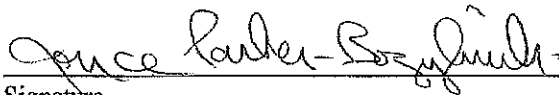
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture Resources                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology /Soils         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology / Water Quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources                        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation/Traffic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |  |

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

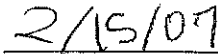
On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Signature

Joyce Parker-Bozylinski, Contract Planner  
For the Community Development Department  
City of Calabasas



Date

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).

- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
  - a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
  - b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<b>I. AESTHETICS -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES -- In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:</b>				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------	--------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-----------

**III. AIR QUALITY** -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

- |   |                          |                          |                          |                          |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓                        |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓                        |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓                        |

**IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** -- Would the project:

- |  |                          |   |                          |                          |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/> | ✓ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
g) Result in damage to, loss of, or removal of native oak trees or other locally identified specimen trees of significance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>V. CULTURAL RESOURCES</b> -- Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS --</b> Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv) Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

**VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** -- Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√



Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- Would the project:</b>				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
<b>IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING</b> -- Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
<b>X. MINERAL RESOURCES</b> -- Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
<b>XI. NOISE -- Would the project result in:</b>				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------	--------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-----------

**XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING --** Would the project:

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

**XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES --**

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:

Fire protection?

Police protection?

Schools?

Parks?

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------	--------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-----------

**XIV. RECREATION --**

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC --**

Would the project:

a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
<b>XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS --</b> Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	√

Issues	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
--------	--------------------------------	---	------------------------------	-----------

**XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

## Agoura Hills Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan

### Discussion of the impacts:

#### I. AESTHETICS:

Trail construction is organic in nature and the proposed trail alignments identified in the Trails Master Plan will be designed to blend in with their surrounding environs. The Trails Master Plan specifies that trails should follow natural contours where possible and respect surrounding land forms. The proposed Trails Master Plan does not propose any new buildings or structures that would affect the views or character of the area.

Some of the contemplated trails are located along scenic view corridors. The Trails Master Plan would preserve these view corridors by constructing at grade improvements, and would enhance access to these view corridors by providing improved public access in these areas.

To the extent that lighting is proposed in conjunction with implementation of the various trails contemplated by the Trails Master Plan, it would have the potential to create light and glare or spillover effects on adjoining properties. Accordingly, the ultimate design of future improvements should minimize lighting so that it is the minimum necessary to provide for safe circulation. All such lighting should be directed downward and hooded to minimize spillover and glare impacts.

**Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with aesthetic resources.**

#### Mitigation Measures:

1. Trail alignments shall be designed to minimize visible scarring of the hillside. Criteria to be used in siting the trail include, but are not limited to: avoidance of excessive cuts in slopes that could not be effectively revegetated and the presence of native soil to support revegetation.
2. The City of Agoura Hills Community Development Department shall review and approve final trail alignments prior to issuance of grading permits to verify compliance with the City's Scenic Corridor Ordinance.
3. Final improvement plans shall be designed to minimize the use of lighting so that it is the minimum necessary to provide for a safe use of trail facilities. Any lighting should be directed downward and hooded to minimize spillover and glare impacts to adjoining uses and shall meet the City's Dark Skies Ordinance.

#### II. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

There is no prime farmland, unique farmland or farmland of statewide importance in the City identified in the *1995 City of Agoura Hills General Plan*. In addition, there is no zoning that is exclusive for agriculture use. **Therefore, implementation of the proposed project will not result in any significant impacts to agricultural resources.**



### III. AIR QUALITY

Traffic and automobile travel are the most significant sources of air emissions. The use of the trail system will be limited to bicycles, equestrians, and hikers and therefore it will not result in significant contributions to air pollution. Minor quantities of particulates less than 10 microns in diameter (PM-10) may be suspended if portions of the trail system are utilized heavily by bicycles or horses. However, these concentrations will be less than significant based on emission projects developed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Motor vehicles or motorcycle use of the trail system will be prohibited, therefore, contributions to existing carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxide, and ozone concentrations will not be significant when compared to ambient suspended pollutant concentrations.

The small increase in traffic attributed to trail users traveling to and from trailheads is consistent with the State and Federal standards as outlined in the South Coast Air Quality Management Program. Trail construction in steep regions will involve the limited use of a small, gasoline powered excavator unit. Air pollutant emitted from this unit will not exceed state pollutant emission thresholds. **Therefore, implementation of the proposed project will not result in any significant impacts to air quality.**

### IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

A number of sensitive plant species and habitats and a variety of wildlife species can be found in the Santa Monica Mountains and parts of the City of Agoura Hills. Some of the proposed trail alignments are situated within intact natural habitats. When planning for trail construction within natural habitat areas, biological resource assessments should be conducted. **Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with biological resources.**

Mitigation Measures:

1. A preliminary biological resource assessment shall be conducted by staff within areas of intact natural habitats.
2. Damage to oak woodland habitat can and should be prevented by avoidance. In the event that Oak woodland habitat is damaged, the damaged habitat shall be replaced at a 1" removal to 1" replacement ratio.
3. Damage to riparian habitat can and should be prevented by avoidance. In those areas where riparian areas must be crossed, the trail crossing shall be designed to minimize disturbance. Flat rocks/stepping stones shall be utilized to traverse slow moving streams. When bridges or culverts are required, they should be designed so that they visually and functionally blend with the environment and do not substantially interfere with water flow. Crossing structures shall be designed to allow for passage of high flows with flows from the structures directed away from downstream channel banks to prevent erosion of channel bank.
4. When parallel to a stream or riparian zone, new trails shall be set back from the top of bank or from the outside edge of the riparian zone, whichever is greater, except where topographic, resource management or other constraints and management objectives make this not feasible or undesirable.
5. If any proposed trail alignment(s) result in impacts to riparian habitat under the jurisdiction of state and/or federal agencies, a Clean Water Act Section 401 and 404 permit or other clearance

from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, Army Corps of Engineers and California Fish and Game shall be obtained prior to the start of the project.

#### IV. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Based on the Archaeological Resources Sensitivity Map (Figure IV-6) in the General Plan, areas of potential archaeological sensitivity are located in some areas where the trails are planned. Some of these areas have already been developed with trails or structures; however, some of the proposed trail locations will traverse undisturbed open space areas. **Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with cultural resources.**

Mitigation Measures:

1. City staff shall review the cultural resource sensitivity of any property on which a trail is proposed by consulting available inventories of prehistoric and historic sites prior to the any construction on the trail.
2. Phase I studies (literature search and preliminary surface survey) shall be required for all trail locations determined by the City to be potentially sensitive for subsurface cultural resources.
3. In the event any significant cultural materials are encountered during subsurface construction of a trail, all construction within the vicinity of the find shall be halted until a qualified archaeologist is notified. The archaeologist will examine the find and make appropriate recommendations regarding the significance of the find and the appropriate mitigation.

#### VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

There are several known faults located within the larger region. The nearest known fault is the Malibu Coast Fault, located south of the City. The City is not within one of the "Fault Rupture Zones" that have been specified by the State of California Department of Mines and Geology. Although the City is not within a State designated fault rupture zone, it is located within a seismically active region of southern California and therefore the project area can be expected to experience a significant seismic event during the lifetime of the project. **However, since there are no known fault traces located within the City, the probability of fault rupture is not significant.**

Earthquake induced vibrations can be the cause of several significant phenomena, including liquefaction in fine sands and silty sands. Liquefaction results in a complete loss of soil strength and can cause structures to settle or even overturn. Fine sands and silty sands that are poorly graded (well sorted) and lie below the groundwater table are typically the situations where liquefaction is experienced. The trail usage will be periodic and no structures are to be built for human occupation. **Construction of the trail system will not result in any significant change in liquefaction risk on or off-site.**

None of the trail projects contemplated by the Trails Master Plan involve substantial amounts of excavation or fill. In those instances where contemplated improvements require any significant excavation, grading, or fill, the design document shall be reviewed and approved by a licensed civil engineer.

**In summary, the potential geologic and geotechnical impacts of the project are considered less**

than significant.

## VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Daily use of the trail system will not involve the storage or disposal of any hazardous materials. No unusual or unique hazardous material risks are associated with construction and use of the trails. The project will not create any potential health hazards or expose people to potential health hazards. Impacts resulting from risk of upset conditions are projected to be insignificant.

Portions of the trail system will be located in a high fire hazard area (Fire Zone 4). However, the construction and utilization of trail systems throughout much of Santa Monica Mountains has been common practice. The recreational benefits are believed to outweigh the minor risk of injury or death due to wildland fires. The risk of loss, injury, risk or death from wildland fire is considered less than significant. Proper maintenance of all equipment used in the construction of the proposed trail system and the prohibiting of motorized vehicles/motorcycle use will reduce the risk of wildland fire created by combustion machinery in combustible natural habitat areas to less than significant levels.

**Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with hazards and hazardous materials.**

Mitigation Measures:

1. Appropriate signage prohibiting the use of all motorized vehicles on the proposed trail alignments shall be placed at all trailhead locations and other points of access to any trail on the system. The language prohibiting motor vehicle use shall be reviewed and approved by the City of Agoura Hills Planning staff prior to the opening of any trail for public use. If signs prove to be ineffective and the City determines that physical barriers are necessary to keep motorized vehicles off of the proposed trail, barriers shall be installed.
2. During periods of high fire hazard danger, as determined by the Fire Department, signs shall be posted at trailheads advising hikers of the potential danger. Trails may also be closed if requested by the Fire Department.

## VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

There are no plans to substantially alter the overall drainage during the implementation of the Trails Master Plan. Trail alignments on steep slopes and alternations (crossings, culverts, etc.) to streams due to stream crossings, have the potential to impact hydrology and water quality. Mitigation measures to address erosion of channel banks are included under Biological Resources. Since trail alignments that include steep portions have the potential for localized erosion, especially if constructed during the winter months, the incorporation of standard erosion control measures will be needed to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Increased human and bicycle use within natural habitat areas also have the potential to cause increased soil erosion, accelerated soil compaction, and vegetation disturbance. If left unmanaged in a steep hillside environment these effects could be significant. However, with the implementation of proper trail building techniques and best management practices (BMP's) for the construction phase and long term maintenance of the proposed trail system, runoff and erosion related effects can be minimized. **Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with hydrology and water quality.**

## Mitigation Measures:

1. Trail construction shall follow Construction Best Management Practices (BMP'S) including :
  - Limit construction activities to the dry season.
  - Stabilize construction sites, including entrances and exits.
  - Protect exposed slopes and use of straw wattle to prevent erosion.
2. Following construction, disturbed areas, including stream banks, shall be stabilized with native plant materials, straw wattles, hydroseeding or similar measures to prevent erosion.
3. In order to reduce erosion and maintenance problems, disturbance of the soil surface shall be kept to a minimum.
4. Surface water shall be diverted from trails by out sloping the trail tread between 1% and 3%.
5. Where a potential for significant soil erosion exists along a new trail alignment, specific erosion control plans shall be prepared by a qualified professional. Criteria to be used in determining the erosion potential includes: slope, soil type, soil composition and permeability and the relative stability of the underlying geologic unit.

## IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING

The proposed Trails Master Plan is consistent with the Chapter VII. Community Development, Parks, Recreation and Trails in the General Plan. The City of Agoura Hills is within the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) which has numerous regional recreational opportunities including regional trails. The General Plan anticipated that the National Park Service (NPS) and other public agencies would develop an integrated trail system in the SMMNRA. The trail system was to include trails of varying lengths and degrees of difficulty for a wide range of people and abilities. The City's trail map is based on information from the National Park Service and includes all the regional trail connections as well as a system of local trails to provide connections between residential neighborhoods, area recreational facilities and the regional trail system.

The proposed Trails Master Plan will not result in significant inconsistencies with General Plan standards and guidelines, nor will the project result in any significant conflicts with existing uses. Both private and publicly owned properties will be traversed by the proposed trail alignments. Easements will need to be acquired from private land owners and the City will need to work cooperatively with the other agencies that build and maintain trails within the city. At the time that each trail improvement is developed, it will need to be designed to ensure that the siting and scale of improvements are appropriate within the context of surrounding land uses.

The trail alignments will be designed to ensure minimal impacts to sensitive biological communities. Therefore, the project will not conflict with any local or regional policies related to biological habitat preservation as long as all mitigation measures included in the Biological Resources section are implemented. **Mitigation measures have been developed to ensure proper compliance with land uses.**

## Mitigation Measures:

1. Trail improvements/facilities shall be designed to minimize conflicts with adjoining uses, including privacy and circulation issues.
2. Access easements must be acquired from those property owners whose land will be traversed by

portion of the trail system, prior to trail project implementation.

3. The City will consult with the any state (MRCA or Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy) or federal (National Parks Service) agency during the planning and design of any portion of the trail system that impacts their property.

## **X. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES**

There are no known mineral resources that would be impacted as a result of the Trails Master Plan. Other than the consumption of energy for the construction phase of the project, the implementation of the Trails Master Plan will not consume any natural resources beyond those necessary to complete construction of the trails identified in the Plan. **Therefore, impacts on mineral resources would be insignificant.**

## **XI. NOISE**

Since the traffic volumes for the City were incorporated into the city's General Plan long term noise analysis, future CNEL volumes predicted under General Plan build out and companion mitigation measure in the General Plan EIR make site specific analysis unnecessary. As a result, persons utilizing the proposed trail system will not be exposed to noise levels above standards set forth in the City's General Plan.

Construction related impacts associated with the project have the potential to create nuisance noise in the immediate vicinity. Minor construction related noise exposure may be experienced in homes around a trail that is proposed to be graded. However, such construction noise will be of relatively short duration and would likely be experienced only during the initial grading period. **Therefore, construction related noise impacts on adjacent neighborhoods are anticipated to be less than significant.**

## **XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING**

The proposed Trails Master Plan proposes trails for recreational purposes. The proposed project does not propose housing or employment, and would not induce substantial population growth in the area. Nor will the project create demands for housing or displace any existing housing. **Therefore, population and housing impacts are projected to be insignificant.**

## **XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES**

Impacts on municipal services and infrastructure are not anticipated to be significant. The proposed Trails Master Plan would not increase permanent population and would not trigger the need for new or altered facilities. The final alignment of trails will be reviewed by the Agoura Hills Fire Department and Sheriff's Department during the preliminary design/feasibility phase. Significant demands on educational facilities are not anticipated to result from the implementation of the project since no new residential is proposed.. **The proposed project will not generate significant additional demands on any public services, infrastructure, or related facilities.**

#### **XIV. RECREATION**

The project will involve the development of a public trail system; therefore, impacts on recreational opportunities within the City of Agoura Hills will be beneficial. The expansion of the City's trail system will result in minor impacts to natural habitat during construction. However, the proposed trail system will be designed to avoid all sensitive habitat areas to the extent feasible. **With the incorporation of biological resources mitigation, impacts are anticipated to be less than significant.**

#### **XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC**

The small increase in traffic attributed to trail users traveling to and from trailheads is anticipated to have a less than significant impact on the vehicle circulation within the City of Agoura Hills. The parking capacities at existing trailheads meet parking demand. There is no City zoning regulations regarding the number of parking spaces required for a trail system. A review of parking opportunities should be done on a case by case basis as trailheads are added to the system to ensure there is adequate parking to promote trail use. **Impacts to traffic are anticipated to be less than significant.**

#### **XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEM**

The project will not result in any unanticipated demands on existing utilities or public infrastructure. The development is consistent with the available energy supplies in the local and regional grid. **Therefore, no impacts on utilities and infrastructure are anticipated.**

#### **XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

As described in this report, no new construction or physical changes are proposed in the Trails Master Plan that would degrade the quality of the environment. **No mandatory findings of significance are applicable to the project.**

## REFERENCES

These references are intended to provide a list of Supporting Information Sources and/or evidence staff has relied upon in completing this document and in reaching the conclusions contained herein.

If any person of entity reviewing this Initial Study has a question regarding the supporting information source and/or evidence, they may contact the staff planner at the address and telephone number noted on the front page of this document during the public review period.

Agoura Hills General Plan, September 1995  
Agoura Hills Housing Element, 2000  
Agoura Hills Final EIR for the General Plan, September 1995  
Agoura Hills Consistency Review Program, September 1995  
Agoura Hills Development Code  
Las Virgenes Corridor Design Plan, January 1998  
Las Virgenes Gateway Master Plan, December 1998  
Old Town Agoura Hills Master Plan, March 1994  
Scenic Corridor Development Guidelines  
West Agoura Hills Road Master Plan, November 2006  
Parks and Recreation Master Plan, October 2005  
Mulholland Highway Master Plan for Capital Improvements, March 2004  
Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan, October 2000  
Santa Monica Mountains Area Recreational Trails Coordination Project (SMMART), September 1997

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY  
**county of ventura**

Planning Division

Kimberly L. Rodriguez  
Director

November 4, 2008

City of Agoura Hills  
Planning and Community Development Department  
30001 Ladyface Court  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301  
Attn.: Joyce Parker-Bozylinski

E-mail: [jparkerbozy@yahoo.com](mailto:jparkerbozy@yahoo.com)


Subject: Comments on NOA/NOI to Adopt ND – Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the subject document. Attached are the comments that we have received resulting from intra-county review of the subject document. Additional comments may have been sent directly to you by other County agencies.

Your proposed responses to these comments should be sent directly to the commenter, with a copy to Kari Finley, Ventura County Planning Division, L#1740, 800 S. Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009.

If you have any questions regarding any of the comments, please contact the appropriate respondent. Other related questions may be directed to Kari Finley at (805) 654-3327.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kimberly L. Rodriguez  
County Planning Director

Attachment

County RMA Reference Number 08-047



**From:** Theresa Lubin  
**To:** Kari Finley  
**Date:** 11/04/2008 1:07 PM  
**Subject:** Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan

Kari,

Thank you for providing a copy of the Master Plan from the City of Agoura for their City Trails Plan. It's a good start and brings up many of the important aspects of developing trails. I have no specific comments about the plan other than to offer that the links into Ventura County connect with the Community of Oak Park but there weren't any shown traveling east and north. The Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) the joint powers agency consisting of the City of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Recreation and Park District has a vast network of trails and is located north and east of the proposed Master Plan area.

It would be interesting to know if it's a network that would enhance the potential of the City's proposed network. They may already have identified the opportunities that exist in that part of Ventura County.

Sincerely,  
Theresa

Theresa Lubin, LA  
Program Administrator III  
Parks Department  
805.654.3968

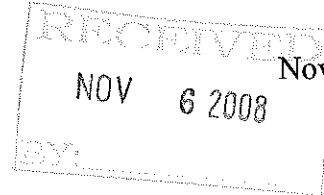


# United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office  
2493 Portola Road, Suite B  
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
2009-FA-0009



November 4, 2008

Joyce Parker-Bozylinski, Special Projects Planner  
Planning and Community Development Department  
City of Agoura Hills  
30001 Ladyface Court  
Agoura Hills, California 91301

Subject: Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Agoura Hills Citywide Trails and Pathway Plan, Agoura Hills, Los Angeles, California

Dear Ms. Parker-Bozylinski:

We are responding to your request, received in our office on October 10, 2008, for comments on the draft initial study (DIS) and proposed mitigated negative declaration (MND) regarding the adoption of the proposed Citywide Trails and Pathways Master Plan (Plan) for the City of Agoura Hills (City), Los Angeles County. The proposed Plan will provide a master plan for the design and construction of a system of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails and pathways that will serve as connections between homes, schools, businesses, parks, and natural resources. The Plan is not intended to show the precise alignment or locations of improvements; precise locations will be determined on a case-by-case basis subject to further analysis of geologic, hydrologic, environmental, topographic, and other features. Based on the information provided in the DIS, the City has determined that a MND is appropriate because the proposed project, with addition of mitigation measures, would not have a significant effect on the environment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). There are no specific mitigation measures proposed in the DIS/MND for any federally listed species and the IS/MND states that the Plan will have no impact to any federally listed species or species of special concern. The DIS acknowledges that a number of sensitive plant species and habitats occur in the Santa Monica Mountains and portions of the city of Agoura Hills and that biological resource assessments should be conducted when planning for trail construction within natural habitat areas. We are enclosing a list of federally listed species that may occur in the project area.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) responsibilities include administering the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), including sections 7, 9, and 10. Section 9 of the Act prohibits the taking of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Section 3(18) of the Act defines "take" to mean "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." Service regulations (50 CFR 17.3) define "harm" to include significant habitat modification or degradation which actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including

breeding, feeding or sheltering. Harassment is defined by the Service as an intentional or negligent action that creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering. The Act provides for civil and criminal penalties for the unlawful taking of listed species. Exemptions to the prohibitions against take may be obtained through the Service in two ways: through interagency consultation for projects with Federal involvement pursuant to section 7, or through the issuance of an incidental take permit under section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Act.

The federally endangered Braunton's milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*) and Lyon's pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*), and the federally threatened Agoura Hills live-forever (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *agourensis*) (listed as the Santa Monica Mountains live-forever (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *ovatafolia*)) are known to occur in the Plan area. We are concerned about the potential direct and indirect adverse effects of the proposed project to Braunton's milk-vetch, Lyon's pentachaeta, and Agoura Hills live-forever. Direct adverse effects to all three of these species could result from destruction of the occupied habitat or subsequent removal of the species' themselves. Braunton's milk-vetch and Lyon's pentachaeta may also be indirectly impacted by a change in the hydrology of the surrounding area if a trail is constructed directly above an occurrence of either of these species. Furthermore, we are concerned that without the implementation of complete avoidance measures, the proposed Plan may affect the conservation and recovery of both Lyon's pentachaeta and Agoura Hills live-forever.

From the information presented in the DIS, we are unable to determine if the proposed project would substantially affect federally listed or candidate species that could occur on the project site. To assist the Service in adequately evaluating the proposed project from the standpoint of fish and wildlife protection, we offer the following comments and recommendations:

1. We recommend that a botanical survey of the proposed project site be conducted in spring when both annual and perennial plant species are detectable. This survey should include focused searches for the Braunton's milk-vetch, Lyon's pentachaeta, and Agoura Hills live-forever, all of which are known to occur in the Plan area. We are enclosing a copy of the Service's guidelines for conducting and reporting botanical inventories for federally listed, proposed, and candidate plants. Without this information, we cannot concur with your determination that the proposed project would not significantly impact the known habitat of rare plant species.
2. The City should work with the Service to determine and design complete avoidance measures for Braunton's milk-vetch, Lyon's pentachaeta, and Santa Monica Mountains live-forever, including trail alignments which avoids these species' habitat and potential changes in the hydrology of the area directly surrounding the known occurrences of these species.
3. The DIS does not specify what level of biological reconnaissance for wildlife species was conducted, if any. To determine if habitats for federally listed species would be affected

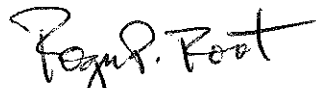
during project implementation, we recommend conducting focused surveys using Service protocols.

We are concerned about potential impacts to migratory birds that may result from the construction of the trails and pathways in the proposed Plan area. The Service has conservation responsibilities and management authority for migratory birds under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703 et. seq.). Any land clearing or other surface disturbance associated with proposed actions should be timed to avoid potential destruction of bird nests or young of birds that breed in the area, as such destruction may be in violation of the MBTA. Under the MBTA, nests with eggs or young of migratory birds may not be damaged, nor may migratory birds be killed. If this seasonal restriction is not possible, we recommend that a qualified biologist survey the area for nests or evidence of nesting (e.g., mated pairs, territorial defense, carrying of nesting material, transporting food) prior to the commencement of land clearing activities. If nests or other evidence of nesting are observed, a protective buffer should be delineated and the entire area should be avoided to prevent destruction of or disturbance to nests until they are no longer active.

Only listed species receive protection under the Act. However, sensitive species should be considered in the planning process in the event they become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. There are several species of special concern that are known to occur in the area. We recommend that you review information in the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base. You can contact the California Department of Fish and Game at (916) 324-3812 for information on other sensitive species that may occur in this area.

As it is not our primary responsibility to comment on documents prepared pursuant to CEQA, our comments on the DIS/MND for the Plan do not constitute a full review of project impacts, nor do they represent consultation with the Service. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed project and look forward to working with the City in the future to ensure compliance with the Act and to avoid and minimize impacts to federally listed species. If you have any questions regarding the contents of this letter, please contact Heather Abbey of my staff at (805) 644-1766, extension 290.

Sincerely,



Roger P. Root  
Assistant Field Supervisor

Enclosures

**FEDERALLY LISTED SPECIES THAT MAY OCCUR IN THE VICINITY OF  
THE PROPOSED CITYWIDE TRAILS AND PATHWAY PLAN AREA,  
AGOURA HILLS, LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

Plants

Braunton's milk-vetch	<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i>	E, CH
Lyon's pentachaeta	<i>Pentachaeta lyonii</i>	E, CH
Agoura Hills live-forever	<i>Dudleya cymosa</i> ssp. <i>agourensis</i>	T

**Key:**

E - Endangered      T - Threatened      CH - Critical habitat

## **Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for Federally Listed, Proposed and Candidate Plants**

These guidelines describe protocols for conducting botanical inventories for federally listed, proposed and candidate plants, and describe minimum standards for reporting results. The Service will use, in part, the information outlined below in determining whether the project under consideration may affect any listed, proposed, or candidate plants, and in determining the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

Field inventories should be conducted in a manner that will locate listed, proposed, or candidate species (target species) that may be present. The entire project area requires a botanical inventory, except developed agricultural lands. The field investigator(s) should:

1. Conduct inventories at the appropriate times of year when target species are present and identifiable. Inventories will include all potential habitats. Multiple site visits during a field season may be necessary to make observations during the appropriate phenological stage of all target species.
2. If available, use a regional or local reference population to obtain a visual image of the target species and associated habitat(s). If access to reference populations(s) is not available, investigators should study specimens from local herbaria.
3. List every species observed and compile a comprehensive list of vascular plants for the entire project site. Vascular plants need to be identified to a taxonomic level which allows rarity to be determined.
4. Report results of botanical field inventories that include:
  - a. a description of the biological setting, including plant community, topography, soils, potential habitat of target species, and an evaluation of environmental conditions, such as timing or quantity of rainfall, which may influence the performance and expression of target species
  - b. a map of project location showing scale, orientation, project boundaries, parcel size, and map quadrangle name
  - c. survey dates and survey methodology(ies)
  - d. if a reference population is available, provide a written narrative describing the target species reference population(s) used, and date(s) when observations were made
  - e. a comprehensive list of all vascular plants occurring on the project site for each habitat type
  - f. current and historic land uses of the habitat(s) and degree of site alteration

- g. presence of target species off-site on adjacent parcels, if known
  - h. an assessment of the biological significance or ecological quality of the project site in a local and regional context
5. If target species is (are) found, report results that additionally include:
- a. a map showing federally listed, proposed and candidate species distribution as they relate to the proposed project
  - b. if target species is (are) associated with wetlands, a description of the direction and integrity of flow of surface hydrology. If target species is (are) affected by adjacent off-site hydrological influences, describe these factors.
  - c. the target species phenology and microhabitat, an estimate of the number of individuals of each target species per unit area; identify areas of high, medium and low density of target species over the project site, and provide acres of occupied habitat of target species. Investigators could provide color slides, photos or color copies of photos of target species or representative habitats to support information or descriptions contained in reports.
  - d. the degree of impact(s), if any, of the proposed project as it relates to the potential unoccupied habitat of target habitat.
6. Document findings of target species by completing California Native Species Field Survey Form(s) and submit form(s) to the Natural Diversity Data Base. Documentation of determinations and/or voucher specimens may be useful in cases of taxonomic ambiguities, habitat or range extensions.
7. Report as an addendum to the original survey, any change in abundance and distribution of target plants in subsequent years. Project sites with inventories older than 3 years from the current date of project proposal submission will likely need an additional survey. Investigators need to assess whether an additional survey(s) is (are) needed.
8. Adverse conditions may prevent investigator(s) from determining presence or identifying some target species in potential habitat(s) of target species. Disease, drought, predation, or herbivory may preclude the presence or identification of target species in any year. An additional botanical inventory(ies) in a subsequent year(s) may be required if adverse conditions occur in a potential habitat(s). Investigator(s) may need to discuss such conditions.
9. Guidance from California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) regarding plant and plant community surveys can be found in Guidelines for Assessing the Effects of Proposed Developments on Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities, 1984. Please contact the CDFG Regional Office for questions regarding the CDFG guidelines and for assistance in determining any applicable State regulatory requirements.