



Sacramento Region Parks and Trails Strategic Development Plan Update

Information

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Approved by: Matt Carpenter

Attachments: No

1. Issue:

Staff is working to identify a regional trail network and priority projects that will provide benefits ranging from increased health and safety to decreased vehicle miles traveled, while also providing opportunities for recreation and tourism in the region. Over the summer, local agency and partner staff provided perspective on how trail connections embody the goals found in local plans and what opportunities and challenges exist for increased implementation of trail connections.

2. Recommendation:

None, this item is for information and discussion on addressing gaps in the planned trail connections and in community access as part of developing the regional trail network.

3. Background/Analysis:

SACOG is leading the development of the Sacramento Region Parks and Trails Strategic Development Plan. Through this work, we will develop a regional trail vision and strategic implementation approach for a connected trail system across all six counties. We are pursuing a regional trail network to add to the region's sustainability and quality of life through increased active transportation opportunities that can help improve health and wellness while providing valuable co-benefits like expanding transportation options, increasing safety for people biking and walking, and providing opportunities for recreation and tourism.

Examining access to trails is part of our regional commitment towards inclusive economic growth that creates opportunities for all. This commitment is why the strategic development plan will also help us identify how we grow the regional trail network to create low-stress active transportation access for disadvantaged populations to parks and other community destinations. The board will use this information and other regionally significant outcomes to identify the completed, planned, and proposed trails that will form our regional network, and then how to identify criteria for prioritizing trail segments to jumpstart the trail network.

Staff convened multiple sessions with local partners and invested stakeholders over the summer to vet our data and share preliminary findings about trail access in the region. From these discussions, we are identifying the regional perspective on opportunities and challenges for connecting our communities through trails.

4. Discussion/Analysis:

Staff analyzed close to 80 local and regional plans throughout all six counties to identify what goals motivate increasing active transportation mode share and expanding trail connections. Staff also assessed state plans for alignment with the themes from local plans to inform our discussions with partners. From this analysis, six goals consistently surfaced across the region: safety, all ages and abilities networks, economic vitality, environmental justice, health, and recreation. While safety and recreation took precedence in almost all local plans for trail planning and investments, the partners centered on how goals supporting environmental justice, economic vitality, and health respond to current crises and national movement while delivering immense community and regional benefits.

Staff also worked with partners to identify where gaps in the existing and planned trail network exist. These gaps in the network will require further examination and coordination to identify different opportunity corridors that could be used to connect communities throughout the region. The planned and existing trail networks also show where planned trails would have the potential to serve many residents, including those living in disadvantaged communities that have lower likelihoods of having a trail near them. This data will be shared with the committee and is also viewable online: <https://bit.ly/3hyHWJQ>.

The partners shared their experiences from past work with communities that highlighted specific challenges facing a regional trail plan and implementation. Many people discussed how barriers can delay or stop the implementation of trails or preclude a community from identifying a trail connection in the first place. In this instance, barriers were interpreted as both infrastructural—highways and rivers that are expensive to bridge—and institutional—coordinating with multiple landowners or large entities such as Union Pacific, and funding construction and maintenances of trails.

The partners also observed that while trails are often included in new development and are one of the frequently cited local opportunities for expanding trail mileage, trails in new developments often do not consider circulation patterns outside of the development and do not connect with existing trails. Lastly, partners discussed the importance of engaging with communities early in the planning process, especially in marginalized communities where residents do not have established relationships with jurisdictional staff.

Local and regional actions may help address these challenges through coordinated effort, planning, and analysis to achieve the benefits anticipated from a connected regional trail network.

5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:

This two-year effort is funded with a Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant for \$229,000 and \$29,670 of SACOG Transportation Development Act funds.

6. This staff report aligns with the following SACOG Work Plan Objectives:

Goal 1 : Advance Economic Prosperity

Objective 1: Invest in and protect the transportation infrastructure needed to implement the region's economic prosperity plan.

Objective 3: Improve people's ability to get to jobs, schools, and other economic opportunities.

Goal 2 : Connected Communities

Objective 3: Prioritize cost-effective transportation investments that enhance mobility while improving safety, air quality, and the condition of transportation infrastructure and assets.