



## Transportation Committee

Meeting Date: August 4, 2022

Agenda Item No. 9

Approve Prioritization and the Regional Trail Network Strategy

**Prepared by:** Victoria Cacciatore

**Attachments:** Yes

**Approved by:** Kristina Svensk

**Referring Committee:** Not Applicable

### 1. Issue:

The board of directors approved a prioritization framework to focus regional coordination efforts supporting implementation of planned trail segments and study corridors in the Sacramento Region Trail Network. Staff used this framework to identify the next steps to jumpstart implementation of the regional trail network as the final piece of the Regional Trail Network Strategy.

### 2. Recommendation:

That the Transportation Committee recommend that the board approve the prioritization to complete the strategic development plan for the Sacramento Region Trail Network.

### 3. Background/Analysis:

SACOG has been leading the development of the Sacramento Region Parks and Trails Strategic Development Plan since 2019. The project intended to develop a regional trail vision and strategic implementation approach for a connected trail system across all six counties. The strategic development plan also aims to help 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 2020 analysis uncovered that connected trail access for lower-income residents was 30 percent less than connected trail access for average- and higher income residents in our region.

The three-year planning effort started with staff reviewing close to 80 local, regional, and state plans addressing trails and active transportation throughout all six counties. The goals of safety, all ages and abilities networks, economic vitality, environmental justice, health, and recreation were universally present throughout these plans. Planning partners from cities, counties, and other invested organizations emphasized the potential for environmental justice, economic vitality, and health goals to deliver community and regional benefits as our region recovers from prolonged shutdowns and pandemic-related societal impacts. The public survey in spring 2021 uncovered what residents value in their biking and walking connections. These learnings shaped the prioritization metrics for identifying the regional trail network.

The SACOG Board of Directors released the draft regional trail network in December 2021, and approved the final regional trail network on April 21, 2022. The final trail network focuses on equitably creating regional trail connectivity and increasing access to the destinations that support the vitality and livability of the region. The majority of the identified connections (over 250 miles of existing trails and more than 800 miles of

planned trails) were selected from local plans for their potential to make connections across boundaries in the region. Over 300 miles of trail study corridors— connections identified for further study in future planning documents, planned connections with known implementation challenges, and high-concept connections— were also identified for their potential to connect via trails or trail-like facilities across the region, including 50 miles of on-road separated bikeways. The regional trail network will increase access for 406,000 residents, or a 17.1 percent increase over existing trail access conditions. Locally identified study areas can help fill in remaining gaps in the trail network and further expand access to residents.

Concurrent with the approval of the trail network, the board approved a prioritization framework to focus regional coordination efforts. The prioritization framework emphasizes priority policy goals expressed by the board and the Youth Leadership Academy. The framework was designed to elevate trail connections that demonstrate regional potential through different combinations of performance outcomes. Recommendations for projects were then grouped based on each project's readiness to move forward so the recommended actions would build on locally driven efforts.

#### **4. Discussion/Analysis:**

Using the prioritization framework, staff worked with key partners to sort planned trail projects from the Regional Trail Plan and trail study corridors into tiers based on their potential to: achieve trail network goals of transportation safety, health, environmental justice, economic vitality, all ages and abilities, and recreation; and further regional goals of crossing infrastructure boundaries, collaborating with partners, supporting critical connections, and filling in trail network gaps. (Attachment A)

Tier 1 trail projects were weighted between 60 and 100 points through the prioritization framework, Tier 2 trail projects between 41 and 59 points, and Tier 3 trail projects with 40 or fewer points. Top tier study corridors were weighted between 75 and 100 points through the prioritization framework and demonstrate similar performance potential as the Tier 1 planned trail network connections. Lower tier trail study corridors were weighted at 74 points or lower and demonstrated similar potential to Tier 2 and Tier 3 trail projects. Since trail study corridors are often more conceptual connections that need local assessment and vetting to be included in approved local planning documents, both top tier and lower tier trail study corridors need more local study to determine their viability to fill a role in the regional trail network.

##### *Tier 1 Trails and Top Tier Study Corridors*

Tier 1 trail projects and top tier study corridors demonstrate strong potential to move the region closer to the Regional Trail Plan performance metrics, such as increasing household access to longer trails and providing safe parallel connections to avoid high-crash roadways. These projects also frequently show strong potential to fill in trail network gaps and overcome physical barriers to biking and walking. These projects are at different stages of development based on local efforts. Regional coordination efforts focus on these projects in the zero to five and five to ten-year timeframe to help them either advance to the next stage of development or construction.

##### *Tier 2 Trails*

Tier 2 projects also demonstrate potential to achieve trail network goals such as creating all ages and abilities active modes networks and creating access to social gathering centers but may not support all the regionalism goals from the prioritization framework. Projects in Tier 2 may, alternatively, show high potential for meeting the region's goals of crossing infrastructure boundaries and providing critical access to job centers, but only further trail plan goals of increasing recreational opportunities and creating all ages and abilities networks. Regional coordination efforts include Tier 2 projects in the five- to ten-year timeframe and the ten-year-and-

beyond timeframe. This is to help set the next generation of trails in motion as in-progress Tier 1 projects are implemented. However, locally driven efforts may get these projects underway or built independent of SACOG coordination.

### *Tier 3*

Tier 3 projects represent the push to complete the planned regional trail network. These projects serve a critical role of connecting the network, stitching communities together, and providing trail connections to the places that make our region a desirable place to live. They also fulfill local needs and desires by providing transportation connections, in addition to their role in the regional trail network. Regional coordination efforts include Tier 3 projects in the ten-year-and-beyond timeframe. This contributes to the sustained effort to implement the regional trail network and make a regionally significant transportation and quality of life asset. Locally driven efforts may get these projects underway or built independent of SACOG coordination.

The prioritization to guide regional coordination efforts is the final piece of the Sacramento Regional Trail Network Action Plan. The three-year planning effort is documented in Attachment D to institutionalize the vision, goals, and performance outcomes identified through the planning process and to serve as a guidepost for future iterations of regional trail planning.

### *Attachments*

- A. Prioritization Approach for Regional Coordination Efforts
- B. Tier 1 Trail Projects and Top Tier Study Corridors
- C. Tier 2 and Tier 3 Trail Projects and Lower Tier Study Corridors
- D. Sacramento Regional Trail Network Action Plan

## **5. Fiscal Impact/Grant Information:**

This three-year effort was funded with a Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant for \$229,000 and \$39,670 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.

**Objective 5:** Begin sustained effort to address the racial inequities related to economic prosperity indicators associated with housing, transportation, and opportunity.

### **Goal 2 : Connected Communities**

**Objective 1:** Develop more sustainable sources of future transportation funding while winning new competitive state and federal transportation grants.

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