



Staff Report

File #: 24-0127

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 02/21/2024

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:
ADOPTION OF THE TRAILS MASTER PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to adopt the Trails Master Plan. This master plan was developed with extensive community involvement and provides a vision for the future of trails in the City of Corona that will improve connectivity to local destinations, close gaps in our trail system, and increase safety and accessibility to open spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt the Trails Master Plan.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The Trails Master Plan (the Plan) is designed to be a guide for the management and development of multipurpose trails in the City of Corona. It will improve connectivity to local destinations, close gaps in our trail system, and increase safety and accessibility to open spaces. The goals of the Plan are to establish Corona as a "City of Trails," preserve and improve trail access, accommodate the needs of various trail users and stakeholders, establish standards and implementation guidelines for trails, and coordinate with partner jurisdictions.

The Plan builds upon several other planning efforts by the City of Corona to improve trail access and create more opportunities for recreation within the city. The Trails Master Inventory (TMI) was created in May 2019 to outline the existing trails and trailheads within the City. It established objectives to create a comprehensive system of paths and trails, including connecting multipurpose trails to schools, local and regional parks, residential neighborhoods, open space areas, downtown and other community destinations in Corona. The Plan also encourages the creation of a multipurpose trail system for hiking, biking and equestrian use in areas commonly used such as washes, drainage channels, hillsides, parks and other public use areas.

The Trails Master Plan Phase I (TMP I) was adopted by the City Council on September 15, 2021, and continued the work of the TMI by expanding and thoroughly documenting the trail inventory, identifying deficiencies and opportunities, providing a framework of trail types, and proposing new trail corridor projects and circuits.

The process for preparing the Plan was multi-faceted and included extensive community outreach to identify a vision for multimodal uses and connectivity to the Cleveland National Forest. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted at trail cleanup events with several residents. Outreach was conducted several weekends at Skyline Drive, Halloween event, and the Tree Lighting Ceremony. Innovative and purposeful marketing and outreach efforts were conducted with the Corona community through online surveys.

The project established a Trails Working Group (TWG) consisting of 30 members comprised of mountain bikers, hikers, trail runners, and residents. The TWG held six meetings and met with representatives from County and State agencies including the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Riverside County Transportation Department, Riverside County Regional Parks and Open Space District, and the United States Forest Service. The public engagement helped shape the recommended improvements to popular trailheads and informed the trails prioritization process. Meeting with the outside agencies also provided the project team and TWG with insight into projects happening in adjacent jurisdictions and within the City that influence trail routes and trail access throughout the city

ANALYSIS:

The Plan builds on the information presented in the TMI and TMP I and provides recommendations on policies and design guidelines for trail development. It prioritizes proposed trails from the TMP I and identifies new opportunities to build on and off-street active transportation connections for the residents of the City of Corona. With the help of community members and the TWG, this plan identifies popular trailheads into the Cleveland National Forest and provides recommendations for improving access to these trails and formalizing trails that have been historically accessed through trespassing. This Plan also includes connections to destinations within the City via interior trail circuits.

The Plan was developed concurrently with the City of Corona Parks and Recreation Master Plan and City Park Master Plan to ensure that these plans interconnect and support the same overall goals. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a Needs Assessment which notes deficiencies within Corona’s recreation system based on health factors from the California Health Places Index. The assessment included community outreach which showed that building more trails is a top investment priority for residents, and identified locations where residents are not within a 10-minute walk to parks or recreation facilities.

Recommendations outlined in the Plan include adopting policies and practices to support future development and improved access of the City’s trails system, establishing standards for trail and trailhead design and maintenance, pursuing funding opportunities for trail development, seeking opportunities to acquire properties for trailheads and parking, and marketing the trail system to

increase awareness and education about proper use. Prioritization criteria were established to identify and prioritize future trail development projects, and 30 projects were proposed for development during the 10-year implementation period. The Plan's full recommendations and implementation projects are discussed in detail in the attached Trails Master Plan document (Exhibit 1) and corresponding appendices (Exhibit 2).

COMMITTEE & CITY COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS:

On January 9, 2024, the Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously recommended the City Council approve the Draft Trails Master Plan. On February 7, 2024, the City Council received a presentation at their Study Session meeting to review the key components of the Plan and provide feedback. Based on the feedback received from the City Council during the Study Session meeting, the following key edits have been made to the Plan:

- A new Trail at Fresno Road was added to the Trails Inventory (Exhibit 2 - Appendix B).
- Update the language in policy #6 to include consideration for homeowners privacy and safety as follows: "Where desirable and practical, and considering homeowner privacy and safety, utilize publicly owned right-of-way such as flood control channels, levees, roadway corridors, and public utility corridors for trails if these facilities provide for a high quality user experience."
- Update the language in policy #8 to include electric bikes as follows: "Expand on the current safety policies that limit cyclist and e-bike activities in parks and include additional restrictions to prevent cyclists and e-bike users from riding on trails in a manner that disregards the safety of other trails users."
- Strike all references to Skyline "Regional Park."
- Update the language in the implementation plan and Trails Improvement Plan to state: "Each project will be assessed individually rather than collectively. City staff will present projects to the Council, Parks Commission and the community for discussion and consideration before proceeding with design and consideration."
- Revise the language on Policy #12 as follows: "Implement a policy that provides development with density bonuses when trail facilities beyond those identified in the Trails Master Plan, are constructed as a component of new development or redevelopment. Facilities must connect with local trails identified in the Trails Master Plan, with the City maintaining discretion in awarding density bonuses to ensure alignment with development goals and community needs."
- Added to "Personal Safety on Trails" on Page 38: "Considering safety concerns surrounding proposed trails along flood control channels, addressing these issues during the contracting phase of project implementation is crucial. The City of Corona can work with the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to empower City law enforcement and rangers to maintain security along those trails."

- Altered sentence on page 210 to read: "The maintenance, law enforcement, and responsibilities associated with implementing a trail would require an agreement to be created between the City and RCFC for licensee maintenance responsibility."

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no financial impact associated with the adoption of the Trails Master Plan. The individual projects identified in the 10-year Implementation Plan have estimated cost impacts associated with them, and these projects will be brought before the City Council for separate consideration during the annual budget process and when the projects are considered for approval.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This action is to approve and adopt the Trails Master Plan and there is no possibility that this action will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required. Any future actions to approve the projects identified in the Trails Master Plan will go through the appropriate CEQA review process.

PREPARED BY: BRETT DAWSON, TRAILS PLANNER & MOSES CORTEZ, FACILITIES, PARKS, AND TRAILS MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, INTERIM COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - Trails Master Plan
2. Exhibit 2 - Trails Master Plan Appendix