



Staff Report

File #: 21-0793

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 09/15/2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Community Services Department

SUBJECT:
Adoption of Trails Master Plan - Phase I.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Trails Master Plan - Phase I document was developed through the combined efforts of the Planning and Development, Public Works, and Community Services Departments and KTUA, a consultant. This Master Plan will be used as a strategic planning document that identifies current trails and potential future connectivity, defines multi-modal access to open space and identifies opportunities for future trail enhancement and connectivity to ensure continued access to trails and open space while still providing for future development that benefits the community and establishing Corona as a regional hub for high-quality, active living.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt the Trails Master Plan - Phase I.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

The City of Corona (City) is uniquely positioned in the foothills of the Cleveland National Forest, abutting Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, and bordered to the north by the Prado Basin. Corona provides access to popular hiking trails such as Skyline Trail and Hagador Canyon, accessible through provided on-street parking on Foothill Parkway for users of Skyline Trail. Parts of the Santa Ana River Trail, a multi-jurisdictional trail, traverse the City. As homage to historic stage coach routes through the area, the City was included in an analysis for another regional project for the Butterfield Overland Trail Project - a joint effort between the City of Lake Elsinore, the City of Corona, Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, and Riverside County Park District Advisory Commission - with the goal to develop a conceptual plan for a preferred recreational trail alignment of the Butterfield Overland State Route through Temescal Valley suitable for potential future designation as a component of the National Historic Trail System.

For all of these reasons, Corona has been a center for outdoor activity, which includes taking advantage of the natural trails that exist in and around the City. In response to community requests, the City of Corona undertook the effort of completing a Trails Master Inventory in 2019. The Trails Master Inventory project documented existing trails and trail heads with the help of residents and visitor input. The resulting information was not formally adopted and served only to document the location of existing trails and trailheads that are being accessed.

Since the completion of the Trails Master Inventory in 2019, the City adopted a Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan recognized that Corona is an active, vibrant, and family-centered community that values sound infrastructure, and a sense of community and space. To further these goals, the Strategic Plan identified various objectives which included developing and implementing a Trails Master Plan. Corona staff began working towards this goal by beginning the Trails Master Plan - Phase I project in 2020 with the continued help of KTUA. The purpose of Trails Master Plan - Phase I is to build upon the data gathered in the Trails Master Inventory process to create a document to be used as a foundation for further development of trails and connectivity within the City, and it will help to preserve access to existing and future trails as development continues.

ANALYSIS:

Creating an environmentally sensitive, inclusive, equitable, and diverse plan for the Corona community has been the critical focal point for the City in building its image as the "City of Trails." This overarching objective of becoming the City of Trails is outlined in the four separate chapters of the Trails Master Plan - Phase I document. Chapter 1 reviews the purpose of the study, the study area, and provides key definitions of multi-use paths, recreational paths, multi-use trails, recreational trails, and nature trails. Chapter 2 documents the existing conditions of both trails and pathways, the opportunity for trails and pathways, and the multi-modal connectivity to open space, which will lay the foundation for programs such as "Rails to Trails," a programmatic concept that provides more opportunities for the creation of trail systems for safe community connectivity such as visiting Corona via the Metrolink and being able to plan a day of hiking or biking on Corona's trails. Chapter 3 outlines the plan's community engagement activities, both through electronic and survey feedback, in addition to two outreach events. This is an area which will be the primary focus of the next phase of the Master Planning process. Finally, Chapter 4 outlines recommendations for urban corridors, and trail connectivity and looks to the continued exploration of how to best utilize newly acquired open space, landscape maintenance district property, and adjacent properties such as flood control channels within Corona to help meet the communities needs for equitable, available outdoor space.

The Trails Master Plan identifies the locations of key trails in the City of Corona and trail access. The goal of the Plan is to better plan for trail access and connections in conjunction with any development that may occur in areas with nearby trails. Further, it is designed to provide an appropriate interface between nature and the built environment. As City staff and KTUA conclude Phase I of the Trails Master Plan, the Community Services Department will seek requests for proposals to take the foundational pieces developed in Phase I and will move forward to develop Trails Master Plan - Phase II. Phase II will complement the Trails Master Inventory and Phase I work by providing a roadmap and standards for both short term actions such as key data comparisons of similar situated cities and branding and signage on trails for identification and markers, as well as

long-term actions such as policy considerations on topics such as parking, permits, pets, and enforcement and guidelines to help standardize and promote Corona's trails while also considering and minimizing the impacts to those residents that are adjacent to the trails.

Furthermore, Phase II will also analyze properties that are directly within the City of Corona's jurisdiction and control for potential impacts, conduct surveys and outreach, create branding, explore recently acquired open space for accessibility, and take a fresh look at existing parks and landscape maintenance district properties, as well as properties owned by cooperative agencies such as the Riverside County Flood Control District to further develop easily accessible and connected trail experiences throughout the Corona community.

The goals and next steps for building a "City of Trails" will require City staff and the awarded consultant to not only standardize Corona's trails but emphasize in the Trails Master Plan - Phase II a culture of inclusivity, equitability, and diversity in the City's trails system that provides safe options for access to the outdoors and nature, promoting a happy a healthy community in the City of Corona.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

The Trails Master Plan - Phase I document was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on August 2, 2021 at a Special Meeting. The Parks and Recreation Commission received and filed the report and made the following suggestions:

- Parks as Rest Stops / Trail Heads - The utilization of parks as potential trail heads and rest stops, taking advantage of existing facilities, many of which have ample parking and restroom facilities that can help reduce the impact of building new facilities.
- Circuit Trail Maps - Addition of 3-4 maps to show ideas regarding the creation of loops/circuits for urban trail systems as well as language with respect to trails as another great option for exercise.
- Recommendations / Corridors Section - Provide detailed maps of individual corridors, addition of existing trails and paths to the maps in the recommendation, particularly to Corridor #1 so users can visualize why the corridor is important for connectivity.

In addition to the points above, one of the primary discussion points was available parking at or near trail heads. An example brought forth included a discussion of vehicular traffic at the Skyline Trail. As a follow-up to the discussion, City staff was able to confirm that there are approximately 185 spaces on Foothill Parkway, however, the proximity of the parking to the actual trail is not the most ideal situation.

On August 11, 2021, City staff presented the Trails Master Plan - Phase I to the City Council at the Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting. It was recommended by the COTW that staff work bring together a working group of interested community members, which not only includes stakeholders and impacted high user groups but also works closely with the Parks and Recreation Commission, which plays an integral role to represent users of all walks of life that come to Corona and utilize our trail system. Another suggestion provided at the COTW was the inclusion of a virtual tour of the Butterfield Stage Coach Trail to emphasize the historic nature of the area and its trails.

City staff worked closely with the consultant, KTUA, to integrate the discussion points from both the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council into this final draft of the Trails Master Plan - Phase I.. In Section 4 of the report that includes recommendations, the Parks Commission was added to the list of the Trails Master Plan Working Group members. Also in Section 4, a map that includes the historic Butterfield Stage Coach Trail has been added along with the desire to include a virtual tour in future information and wayfinding materials.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no cost impact associated with the acceptance of this report. The estimated replacement costs of the various amenities will be evaluated and brought forth in future budgetary requests for City Council 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 common sense 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 provides a Trails Master Plan as a result of physical site visit and assessment, and there is no possibility that the acceptance of this report will have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: VIOLA VAN, MANAGEMENT ANALYST II

REVIEWED BY: ANNE K. TURNER, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

Attachments:

1. Exhibit 1 - City of Corona Trails Master Plan Phase I