

Sheila de la Guerra **General Public Comment**

LATE
DIST

From: Otis Calef <crahtac@explore-santa-barbara-county.com>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 4:52 PM
To: Jeffrey Lindgren; Wilson, Jeffrey
Cc: sbcob; Villalobos, David; Eva Camarena
Subject: Countywide Recreation Master Plan Preliminary Recommendations for Policies and Trails
Attachments: CRAHTAC-Preliminary-Recommendations-Policies-and-Trails-08-19-24.pdf

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To: Jeff Lindgren and Jeff Wilson,

The Santa Barbara County Riding and Hiking Trails Committee (CRAHTAC) is writing to provide preliminary recommendations on two issues. While we understand that the Recreation Master Plan and related policy and ordinance amendments will be before CRAHTAC in the early fall, we wanted to offer this early input to address these issues in upcoming plans and amendments.

Please see the attached letter with our two recommendations.

Sincerely,



Otis Calef
Chair

CRAHTAC | County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee

805.708.5009 | [website](#)

The County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC) was established by the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors in an advisory capacity to review programs, policies, and procedures affecting county recreational riding and hiking and their use.



CRAHTAC

COUNTY RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



August 19, 2024
Submitted via email

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Otis Calef

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Robin Dunaetz
Debbie Smith
Lee Steinmetz

5th DISTRICT

STAFF
Jeffery Lindgren

Mr. Jeff Lindgren, Assistant Director, Parks Division
Community Services Department
Mr. Jeff Wilson, Assistant Director
Planning and Development Department
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Countywide Recreation Master Plan Preliminary Recommendations for Policies and Trails

Gentlemen,

The Santa Barbara County Riding and Hiking Trails Committee (CRAHTAC) is writing to provide preliminary recommendations on two issues. While we understand that the Recreation Master Plan and related policy and ordinance amendments will be before CRAHTAC in the early fall, we wanted to offer this early input to address these issues in upcoming plans and amendments. We request that the County Parks Division and Planning and Development Department ensure that the draft Countywide Recreation Master Plan and associated Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance amendments include:

- CRAHTAC understands that the amendments to the County’s Comprehensive Plan will include policies to protect the County’s existing and planned trails from adverse impacts of new development on trail access, aesthetic character, and natural resources, which are central to and enhance the recreational trail user experience.** Such policies should identify trails within natural open space areas such as those in foothill areas, along rivers and creeks, and other natural open spaces as providing public access to scenic natural resources and views, which are key elements of the recreational trail user experience. Based on recent development projects that proposed extended trail closures, substantial damage, or changes to trail character, such as paving over natural surface trails, allowing inappropriate development that damaged natural resources along trails, and trail aesthetic character the user experience, CRAHTAC believes such new policies are essential. Based on how the County approaches the permit processing of such development project requests, there appears to be a need for clear, firm policies that prioritize the protection of trails from serious alteration or damage. Because many projects may include homes along or near trail corridors, such as those providing new trail easement, we understand there is a need for a balance that permits projects near or along trails that are consistent with protecting the trail values described above, as opposed tom those that severely damage such values. Such a policy is essential as the public so highly values trails. Therefore, CRAHTAC recommends that the Recreation Master Plan and associated Comprehensive Plan

amendments identify trails as significant public resources and require their protection from adverse impacts of new development. We recommend consideration of a policy such as:

- *New development shall be sited and designed to protect the recreational, aesthetic and natural resource values along existing and planned trail corridors from substantial adverse impacts to such values from new development.*

2. **CRAHTAC understands that the Recreation Master Plan will include at least some proposals for new trails and that the accompanying Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will provide a general analysis of the impacts potentially created by new trails.** We recommend that the County use the Master Plan, EIR, and accompanying zoning ordinance amendments to help advance and streamline permitting of new trails. CRAHTAC hopes to consider a number of specific proposals for the inclusion of **new** trails within the Recreation Master Plan and wishes to ensure that the Plan and EIR at least consider, but not limited to, at least the following trails:

- Realigning the Bill Wallace Trail within El Capitan State Park and adjacent private lands to provide an improved trail user experience, as the trail segment on the west side of the canyon often follows old, extremely steep ranch roads. We also recommend that the Master Plan and EIR identify and assess the impacts of linking this trail to the currently closed Gato Trail within the National Forest and provide as detailed an analysis as possible of this issue to facilitate trail realignment and reopening of and links to the Gato Trail. We believe this offers one of the best opportunities to provide residents of the nearby Goleta Valley with access to the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Los Padres National Forest. We would also like to recommend that the master plan include parking and a trail link to state-owned lands on the east side of the canyon. We understand the Trails Council can provide a detailed map of these proposals.
- A new Tunnel Trail loop system along the top of the ridgeline east of Inspiration Point could provide a new trail user experience in this popular watershed. We understand that the Los Padres Forest Association can provide a conceptual map of this proposal.
- A new Santa Ynez River Trail should extend from west of Buellton as far east (e.g., to Hwy 154) as possible. We understand that the City of Buellton can provide a detailed map of this proposal.
- The Foxen Canyon Wine Trail should extend from Los Olivos to the Santa Maria Valley. We understand that the Trails Council can provide a conceptual map of this proposal. It will be important to acknowledge that this trail would be completed in coordination with property owners as a public-private partnership with the County focusing efforts on willing landowners using the Recreational Benefit Program.
- Guadalupe to Santa Maria Levee Trail: this trail would run largely along the Santa Maria River Levee from the City of Santa Maria to the City of Guadalupe. County Public Works should have access to maps depicting this trail.
- Guadalupe to Beach Multi-Use Trail: This trail would connect the City of Guadalupe with the County's Rancho Guadalupe Dunes Park. We believe that conceptual plans for this trail can be provided by the City of Guadalupe.

- Orcutt Creek Trail: While this trail already exists on the PRT Maps for the Orcutt Community Plan, it would seem helpful to depict segments already completed such as that on Key Site 8 and east of Bradley Road with those recently approved for Key Site 3 or proposed for areas adjacent to old town Orcutt. Similarly, it would be helpful to depict and note the status of the trail on Key Sites 10 and 11, which were approved for rezone by the County as part of the Housing Element, and describe how these developments, in coordination with the County, could facilitate completion of a link between these two segments which we believe would largely traverse existing public and private open space areas.
- Bonny Property: The Master Plan should depict the proposed 6 miles of trails on this County-owned property and emphasize possible links with the Rice Ranch and Key Site 3 trail systems.
- Gaviota / California Coastal Trail: While this trail already exists on the County's Gaviota Coast Plan PRT Maps, it would be helpful for the Master Plan to discuss the status of various segments, such as the Paradiso del Mare site, which is in design and permitting, and the El Capitan to Refugio segment, which is largely open but in disrepair along a short segment, and include goals or actions to facilitate the reopening of the trail segment.
- Mariposa Reina Trail System: We believe that the County is in the process of acquiring the old Gaviota Marine Terminal Site north of US Hwy 101, which has substantial potential for new trails, trailhead parking and possible connections with the planned trail system on the Gaviota Springs property to the west.
- Point Sal Reserve Trail Network: This proposed trail network is already shown on the County's Point Sal Reserve Plan but is unclear if it is on the County PRT maps. One note: the old cliff trail, which was previously challenging, has now been severely eroded in places and may not be feasible to maintain.
- Jalama Beach County Park Blufftop Trail: While this trail already exists on the County's Gaviota Coast Plan PRT Maps, it would be helpful for the Master Plan to discuss the status of this trail segment which has complete preliminary design sufficient for permitting and the need for the County to work with the Coastal Conservancy to extend this trail south into the Dangermond Preserve.
- Los Alamos to Los Olivos Trail: This trail is already proposed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Plan, and it would seem that the Master Plan should be consistent with the regional plan and depict this trail.
- Bodger Trail Network: This proposed trail system would provide several miles of new trails in the Lompoc Valley and greatly interest local citizens. We understand Lompoc Trails can provide a detailed map of this proposal.
- McMenemy Reroute Trail: The Montecito Trails Foundation is planning this reroute, which may be worth depicting in the Master Plan. Montecito Trails Foundation could be contacted to determine their interest.
- Goleta Foothill Trails: Although several trails are currently shown on the County's PRT maps, the Recreation Benefit Program or future long-term developments such as the Bishop Ranch may open new opportunities. It would be important for the Recreation Master Plan to discuss these potential opportunities and perhaps somehow depict them on a map.
- Live Oak Equestrian Camp: This is a high priority for the equestrian community, and such a camp would include equestrian campsites, paddocks, and other facilities.

Thank you for considering this request. We look forward to reviewing and providing more detailed comments on the draft Countywide Recreation Master Plan and associated Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinance amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Otis Calef". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "O".

Otis Calef
Chair, CRAHTAC

cc: County Board of Supervisors
County Planning Commission
County Parks Commission