

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Need

The Elk Grove General Plan states that the City shall adopt a comprehensive Elk Grove Trails Master Plan (EGTMP). The EGTMP is the expression of the City's desire to have an exemplary off-street multi-use trail system that provides connectivity throughout the City and the wider Sacramento region in order to offer recreational opportunities and an alternative method for transportation for Elk Grove residents. In order to achieve this exemplary trail system, the City acknowledges that it is necessary to provide direction on where trails should be located, design standards and guidelines to describe the desired characteristics of trails, identify funding sources for trail planning, construction and maintenance, establish prioritization criteria for which trail projects to implement first, and to describe the City and inter-agency collaborative actions required to create the trail system. The Elk Grove Trails Master Plan (EGTMP) was adopted by the City Council in January 2007, but it will be continually updated as goals are achieved, as new funding sources become available, and in order to ensure consistency with the Elk Grove General Plan.

1.2 Relationship to Existing Plans and Policies

The Elk Grove Trails Master Plan (EGTMP) bears relation to numerous other Elk Grove plans, policies, and codes.

- **City of Elk Grove General Plan.** The City of Elk Grove General Plan contains basic trail policies and an initial location map of where trails should be built within the City. This EGTMP is consistent with, builds upon, and refines these General Plan policies and initial map.
- **City of Elk Grove Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP).** The City of Elk Grove Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in July of 2004. It is a sister document to the EGTMP that addresses on-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- **City of Elk Grove Transportation Capital Improvement Program (TCIP).** The EGTMP lists projects that can be included within the TCIP, which is regularly updated by the Elk Grove City Council.
- **City of Elk Grove Specific Plans and Approved Development Guidelines.** There are numerous Specific Plans and approved development guidelines that cover large areas within the City of Elk Grove. Many of these Specific Plans and approved development guidelines were in existence prior to Elk Grove's incorporation. In instances where they provide direction for the development of off-street, multi-use trails, those plans and guidelines take precedence over the standards contained in the EGTMP. However, given its comprehensiveness, the EGTMP provides additional policies, refinements, and implementation actions

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that should be implemented within those areas covered by Specific Plans and approved development guidelines.

- **The City of Elk Grove Municipal Code.** The City of Elk Grove Municipal Code, which includes Zoning Ordinances, contains many requirements viewed as central to trail implementation and increasing trail usage. For example, zoning ordinances establish the development project approval process and require that development projects include the installation of bicycle parking spaces.
- **Elk Grove Community Services District Master Plan.** The EGTMP calls for a collaborative relationship between the City and the Elk Grove Community Services District for the construction and maintenance of trails and calls for the construction of trails additional to those that are shown on the CSD's Master Plan Map.

The development of off-street, multi-use trails is subject to other regional, California, and Federal regulations, codes, and planning documents. As such, these documents have been reviewed, consulted, studied for consistency, and where appropriate, folded into the EGTMP. There may be instances where trail designers should reference these specific documents to clarify site-specific trail design requirements. A brief list is included below:

- The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways (MUTCD) Part 9 Traffic Controls for Bicycle Facilities and the 2003 MUTCD California Supplement as put forward by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration.
- ADA Standards for Accessible Design and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) as put forward by the U.S. Dept. of Justice/U.S. Dept. of Transportation and the U.S. Access Board, respectively.
- Chapter 1000 of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual as put forward by the California Department of Transportation.
- The Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trails Master Plan as adopted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments in November 2004 and as amended in September 2005.
- The 2010 Sacramento City/County Bikeway Master Plan as adopted by Sacramento County in November 1993 and by the City of Sacramento in April 1995.

Lastly, it is important to note that the EGTMP provides a well-defined framework that supports City of Elk Grove collaboration and planning regarding the creation of regional trails, such as those proposed for Upper Laguna Creek and the Central California Traction Railroad alignment.

Please refer to **Appendix A** for a further list of specific Elk Grove and regional policies that are related to Elk Grove trail planning, design, and implementation.

1.3 Elk Grove Trails Master Plan Planning Process

Active participation of the Elk Grove Trails Committee and City staff has facilitated the Elk Grove Trails Master Plan planning process, which began in July 2005. The EGTMP is also the continuation of multiple community dialogs occurring in the context of the City of Elk Grove General Plan and the Elk Grove Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) processes.

In 2003, the City of Elk Grove conducted an on-line survey which examined, among other items, whether respondents currently commute via bicycle and how the amount of cycling could be increased. Residents responded that currently most cycling in Elk Grove is for fitness and recreation (29 percent of those who responded said this is the type of cycling they do most), fun and recreation (23 percent), and riding with children (15 percent). At that time, "not enough safe routes" was also the most common reason cited by respondents as limiting their cycling—65% of persons responding to the survey selected this as the most significant impediment to increasing their cycling. Providing more off-street bicycle trails was ranked the most important bicycling improvement.

Public workshops were held during the fall of 2005 in order to solicit information on the performance of the existing trails in Elk Grove, understand goals for trail development, identify the locations of priority trail improvements and examples of successful trail implementation, and receive recommended implementation strategies.

The most frequently mentioned best examples of trail implementation included those existing trails that offered longer continuous mileage, offered direct and/or scenic access to natural areas, offered access to popular destinations, and were well maintained, especially those trails along Elk Grove Creek, trails in the Stonelakes neighborhood, trails along Poppy Ridge Road, and trails in Camden Park.

The major themes mentioned most frequently during the Public Workshops regarding trail system improvements included:

- The desire for more off-street trails in order to increase recreation opportunities for all types of trail user groups, especially along the creeks within the City,
- The desire for more off-street trails in order to provide safe transportation corridors for bicyclists, pedestrians, and equestrians away from roadways – especially for children and around schools,
- The desire for more off-street trails that lead to popular destinations within Elk Grove, such as major commercial centers, employment centers, schools, and parks,
- The desire for filling in gaps within the existing trail system so that trails can be as long and continuous as possible,

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- The desire for an off-street means of crossing Highway 99 in multiple locations,
- The desire for more off-street trails that connect to alternative transportation modes and that connect to regional trails to promote regional connectivity,
- The desire for trail signage that clarifies trail etiquette and increases the ease of navigating the trail system,
- The desire for continual maintenance of the trails in order to remove debris, remove hazardous landscaping, and maintain trail surface quality, and
- The desire for trail education and publicity programs to increase trail safety and usage, respectively.

The ideas contained in the above-mentioned best examples of trail implementation and themes for trail improvements were directly incorporated into the EGTMP vision and goals.

According to the recent "Envision Elk Grove" public outreach results, more than two-thirds (69%) of the on-line survey respondents said they considered community planning projects that incorporate elements such as open space and walking trails to be very important in determining a community's quality of life. Another 25 percent considered this type of project to be somewhat important to determining quality of life. When given the opportunity to list top priorities for quality of life, "Envision Elk Grove" phone survey participants cited community parks, open spaces, outdoor recreation opportunities and walking trails. "Envision Elk Grove" public workshop participants cited that having increased opportunities for recreation, walking, and bicycling were important to their conception of a high quality of life within Elk Grove.

The Elk Grove Trails Committee has hosted opportunities for public comment on interim versions of the EGTMP throughout the entire planning process at regular Trails Committee meetings and at a Fall 2006 Public Workshop. Members of the public contributed comments on the EGTMP goals, trail system map, trail standards and guidelines, prioritization criteria for trail construction projects, funding sources, and implementation strategies. These comments were directly incorporated into the body of the EGTMP and Appendices. Providing interim versions of the EGTMP for public comment allowed for feedback that was more specific in nature. Comments often pertained to:

- identifying further opportunities to increase trail connectivity throughout the City,
- identifying ways to increase recreational and transportation opportunities,
- ensuring that the trail system was accessible to people with disabilities,
- identifying the desired trail tread widths and surface materials/quality,
- the design of at-grade and grade-separated trail crossings,

- the desired content for signage,
- identifying additional implementation strategies, and
- the need for City staff time to pursue trail project funding and coordinate implementation.

1.4 Elk Grove Trails Master Plan Contents

The Elk Grove Trails Master Plan contains a brief introduction and a description of existing off-street, multi-use trails in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively. Chapter 3 provides direction on where trails should be located and provides design standards and guidelines to describe the desired characteristics of trails. Chapter 4 identifies funding sources for trail planning, construction and maintenance, establishes prioritization criteria for which trail projects to implement first, and describes the City and inter-agency collaborative actions required to create the trail system.