

Preface

Throughout California, professionals and hard-working citizens are dedicated to improving the quality of their communities through the creation of trail networks for walking and bicycling to work, school, and shopping or for recreation, relaxation, and outdoor education. These community-based initiatives are reinforced by policies, legislation, and successful projects that lend strong support and provide a variety of tools for the planning and implementation of a local trail.

Trail Planning for California Communities offers planners, builders, advocates, developers, and trail managers a comprehensive approach for transforming their vision into reality. Based on the premise that successful trail development depends on initiating and sustaining community involvement throughout the life of the project, the book also assumes that every component of design, construction, maintenance, and funding must be considered during the early stages of the process and reassessed as the project moves from planning to implementation. The primary topics covered in each chapter are outlined below.

Chapter 1. Purpose and Value of Trails

Setting the stage, this chapter highlights the significance of trails for a community that includes education, recreation, health, social interaction, environmental protection, alternative transportation, and economic benefits.

Chapter 2. Policies and Regulations Authorizing Trails

Summaries of numerous regulations and public policy documents at the local, state, and federal level illustrate the array of tools available to integrate trails into a community's transportation and park systems. The chapter also outlines the

process for developing planning documents and the public process needed to create and ultimately fund their construction.

Chapter 3. Building the Trail Community

At the time the planning process is initiated, community partnerships should be cultivated to support the effort. This chapter defines the community, describes the framework for building a community partnership, and highlights outreach strategies. The process for formalizing agency and citizen partnerships and the role of nonprofit trail alliances are also discussed.

Chapter 4. Legal Rights and Responsibilities

This chapter covers the legal framework for implementing trails, ways that public agencies can hold or acquire land, laws governing land dedication as part of the development process, and legal rights and responsibilities of private property owners and public entities who own the trail corridor in fee or own land adjacent to the trail.

Chapter 5. Trail Design

Design is a fundamental stage in implementing a successful trail corridor. This chapter outlines basic design principles, identifies different types of users, and defines trail types and their settings. It also addresses how design can help manage trail conflicts and outlines specific design parameters that make up the corridor and adjacent environment. In addition, the chapter reviews federal and state transportation guidelines and summarizes the standards for trail design spelled out in the Americans with Disability Act.

Chapter 6. Environmental Review and Permitting of Trails

This chapter describes the environmental review process and the types of permits that may be required for trail projects. In addition, it outlines the legislative framework under which planners work with CEQA and NEPA requirements and regulatory permitting agencies, and discusses environmental conditions that affect trail development and how to mitigate specific adverse impacts a trail may cause.

Chapter 7. Funding Trail Development

The importance of developing a strategic implementation plan, creating funding partnerships, and the need for a multi-faceted funding strategy are the primary elements of this chapter. Strategies for capturing the full range of funding opportunities, determining construction costs, generating revenues directly from the trail, and tips for developing successful grant applications are identified.

Chapter 8. Trail Maintenance and Operations

This chapter reiterates the importance of maintenance and management as the trail design is developed. It defines a “Standard Level of Care” that serves as the

basis for creating a maintenance and operations program to fit the unique circumstances of an individual trail. Using this approach, the framework is established for managing a trail system in a manner that will strive to balance users' safety, accessibility needs, and desired experiences with protection or even enhancement of the setting, whether the trail traverses urban, suburban, or open space lands.

Trail Planning for California Communities includes several tools to help the reader find the resources needed to successfully undertake and complete a trail project. While every project is unique, and not all steps identified will be relevant, the tools highlight important issues to consider at specific points in the process. The book primarily focuses on planning, developing, and managing non-motorized land trails. While water trails and all-terrain motorized trails and their use are considered viable under section 5070.7 of the California Public Resources Code, the issues involved in planning, designing, and maintaining these trail types are extremely specialized and are considered beyond the scope of this book.

Contributing Authors

In the same way that a successful trail is the product of many partnerships, this book was co-authored by a number of our “trail partners.” The contributing authors of this book have provided their expertise and helped us to shape our values and find solutions to numerous planning, legal, environmental, design, funding, and maintenance challenges during our tenure as trail planners.

Julie Bondurant is a licensed landscape architect and certified planner. She has over twenty years of experience specializing in trail, bicycle, and pedestrian issues, regional park and open space policy documents, feasibility studies, master plans, and management plans. She is a Senior Park Planner with the East Bay Regional Park District. Ms. Bondurant received her Masters degree in landscape architecture from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a B.A. in History/Art History from the University of California at Irvine. She has served on the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors since 1990, and the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council Board of Directors from 1990–1999.

Laura Thompson is the manager of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project, a nonprofit organization that coordinates the effort to complete a 500-mile continuous shoreline trail around San Francisco Bay. With 300 miles in place, the trail passes through 47 cities and nine counties, connecting communities to each other and to the shoreline. The Bay Trail Project is administered by the Association of Bay Area Governments, the Bay Area's regional planning agency. Ms. Thompson received her Masters of Urban Planning and Policy from the University of Illinois in Chicago.

Michelle DeRobertis is a licensed Traffic and Civil Engineer in California specializing in bicycle and pedestrian transportation issues. She has been a transportation

engineering consultant for over twenty years, and has authored bicycle design guidelines and bicycle master plans for communities throughout California. She is currently the bicycle program manager for the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, and is also an Instructor for U.C. Berkeley's Institute of Transportation Studies Technology Transfer Program. Ms. DeRobertis received her Masters in Transportation Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley.

Winter King is an associate at Shute Mihaly & Weinberger LLP in San Francisco, where she represents public agency and community group clients on matters involving California land use and environmental law. Ms. King attended Yale Law School, and is licensed to practice in California and New York.

Joe LaClair is a licensed landscape architect and an urban and regional planner. He has more than 20 years of experience, specializing in public space design and planning, land use, recreation and trail planning, and wildlife and recreation compatibility. He is Chief Planning Officer with the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission in San Francisco. Mr. LaClair received his Masters of Landscape Architecture and Masters of City and Regional Planning from the University of California at Berkeley. He has served on the San Francisco Bay Trail Project Board of Directors since 1992.

Bill Long is a retired chemical engineer who is actively involved in Bay Area trail development. He serves as the Chair of the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council Board of Directors, is a member of the Marin County Park and Open Space Commission, and a Board Director for the San Francisco Bay Trail Project. Mr. Long is chair of the newly created Marin Open Space Trust.

Judith H. Malamut is a certified planner and principal with the Berkeley office of LSA Associates, Inc., a full-service planning and environmental consulting firm. With more than twenty years of experience, Judy assists public and private clients and serves as a project manager for resource management and recreation planning, CEQA and NEPA documents, policy planning, and environmental analysis. She has served on the San Francisco Bay Trail Board of Directors since 1994. Ms. Malamut received her Masters in City and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania, and her Bachelors in Conservation of Natural Resources from the University of California at Berkeley.

Jane Elizabeth Miller is a certified horticulturist and partner in the design firm of 2M Associates, Berkeley. She has over twenty-five years of experience as a team member in plant selection, planting design, and outreach programs relating to trails in California.

Patrick Tormay Miller is a licensed landscape architect and recreation planner with over thirty years of experience planning and designing trails throughout the west. He is a partner in the design firm of 2M Associates, Berkeley. His work experience includes all aspects of regional and area-wide trail system planning, resource

analysis, facility design, interpretive design, and resolving public access and wildlife compatibility issues.

Richard Taylor is a partner at Shute Mihaly & Weinberger LLP in San Francisco. He represents public agencies and community groups in connection with a wide range of land use matters, including open space preservation and trails and recreation planning. He received his law degree and an M.B.A. from the University of California at Berkeley, and received his degree in Environmental Policy Analysis and Planning from the University of California at Davis.

Jim Townsend is the Trails Development Program Manager for the East Bay Regional Park District in Oakland. The East Bay Regional Park District is one of the nation's largest local open space districts, with almost 100,000 acres of parkland, and over 1,000 miles of paved and unpaved trails, under management in its two-county jurisdiction. Mr. Townsend attended the University of California, Santa Barbara, and holds a California Real Estate Broker's license and a Certificate in Project Management from U.C. Davis.

Acknowledgments

In addition to the contributing authors, we would like to acknowledge the assistance we received from many of our colleagues. They provided their valued expertise, volunteered their time to review drafts of the book, and gave us ongoing support throughout the development of this project.

Gary Austin, Associate Professor,
University of Idaho

Carleen Bedwell, Managing Principal,
Applied Development Economics

Kathryn A. Berry, Senior Assistant City Attorney,
City of Sunnyvale, a municipal corporation

Laura R. Cohen, Director, Western
Region Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

Andrea Ferster, General Counsel,
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

David Wm. Hansen, Retired Manager
at three Bay Area Open Space Districts
(34 years); currently LandPaths Board Chair
(Sonoma County stewardship nonprofit)
and Chair of BAOSC Stewardship Committee

Cecily Harris, Trails Advocate,
Development Consultant

Brett Hondorp, AICP, Principal,
Alta Planning + Design

Deborah Hubsmith, Advocacy Director,
Marin County Bicycle Coalition; Director,
Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Meredith Kaplan, Retired Superintendent,
Juan Bautista de Anza National
Historic Trail, National Park Service

Michael G. Jones, Principal,
Alta Planning + Design

Mark Kimbrough, Executive Director,
Tahoe Rim Trail Association

Sara LaBatt, EMC Research

Jane Mark, Senior Park Planner,
County of Santa Clara County Parks
and Recreation Department

Shani McElroy, EMC Research

Ian Moore, Principal, Alta Planning + Design

Ken Moy, Legal Counsel,
Association of Bay Area Governments

Steven Musillami, Statewide Trails
Manager, California State Parks

Jan Palajac, Senior Landscape Architect,
City of San Jose, Department of Public Works,
City Facilities Architectural Services Division

Jamie Perkins, Senior Office Assistant,
East Bay Regional Park District

Mike Sallaberry, P.E., Transportation Engineer,
San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency/DPT

Steve Singer, Environmental consultant,
Environmental and Ecological Services

Doug Svensson, President,
Applied Development Economics

Stephan Vance, Senior Regional Planner,
San Diego Association of Governments

Holly Van Houten, Environmental
planning consultant

Beyond these direct contributors, this book references the work and organizations of many trail planners, pedestrian and bicycle coordinators, and environmental resource consultants and scientists, who have blazed the trail ahead of us through their research, public advocacy, policymaking, and on-the-ground experience. We thank you for the contributions, which have made this book possible.