Trails

The purpose of the ***City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trails Master Plan*** document is to establish a coherent, workable community trails plan, that includes objectives, planned policies, and information for decision makers and advisory boards, such as the city Planning Commission, City Council, Mayor, and the public in general.

The Non-Motorized Trails Master Plan should help coordinate the development of a walking/running and bicycling system. Primarily, this plan is a reference document for guiding the planning of a city-wide shared use trail system. It will present sound guidelines for policies, location, type, and construction standards for trails.

This plan is written to provide information that will be useful for real estate easement acquisition, new development, trail maintenance, and funding. In addition, it provides information regarding implementation priorities. This document does not address the development or maintenance of any privately owned trails or roads located on private property. As the City of Woodland Hills grows and develops there is an increasing desire in the community to better identify and develop pedestrian and bicycle access via trails. In addition, the current city Master Plan calls for trails in Woodland Hills, but a trails plan is lacking. The City of Woodland Hills is in a position to take a major step in providing a safe non-motorized trail transportation system. The ultimate result will create a community resource providing transportation alternatives, recreational opportunities, guidance for new development, open public space preservation, increased property values, and a broader sense of community connectedness.

In a City-wide survey completed in the spring of 2015, respondents were very supportive of trails in Woodland Hills. The results of those questions can be found at the end of this chapter.

System Benefits

Safe Routes to School: Trails provide excellent means for allowing kids to walk or ride safely to and from bus stops.

Transportation: Trails can increase the transportation mode split of bicycling and walking trips, and also improve safety and increase access.

Mobility for All Residents: Trails provide safe, comfortable routes for those who either are unable or choose not to drive: children, the elderly, disabled, and certain economically disadvantaged persons need the independence and choice afforded by a good non-motorized network.

Recreation: Trails provide an easily accessible outdoor resource for many forms of recreation, most notably bicycling and walking. Trails greatly increase community access to physical activity and fitness opportunities by providing more miles of safe, attractive bicycling, walking, and hiking facilities.

Reduction of Pedestrian/Bicycle/Auto Accidents: A good non-motorized system targets and eliminates key behaviors that cause accidents.

Economic: Walkable communities can produce income from shared utility leases, increase the value of real estate, and generate income from tourist, special events, and other users. Improved walking conditions improve the quality of life by making an area more attractive for business relocations and in-migration. Costs of developing and maintaining the road access infrastructure are also lessened as motor vehicle trips are reduced.

Land Use Planning: Trails and other green way corridors promote park and recreation development, wet land preservation, and buffered environmental protection. Trails preserve undeveloped lands in urban areas and serve to separate and buffer contradicting land uses.

Environment: Possible environmental benefits include wildlife preservation, water quality protection, storm water management, preservation of vegetation, and other benefits, such as firebreaks. They also reduce noise and visual pollution.

Education: A trail corridor often encompasses several different environments along its route and can be thought of as an outdoor classroom full of educational materials. The scientific community, educators and students can realize the value of trails through a wide range of studies, such as biology, geography, history, recreation management, and art.

Quality of Life: Increases in the quality of life associated with non-motorized trails are realized through expressions of community character and pride, aesthetics of the local environment, economic revitalization of the community, access to the outdoors, opportunities for casual socialization, and easy increase of mobility.

Goals

The benefits of the **City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trails System** can be achieved through meeting the following Goals and Objectives, and implementing the associated Policies:

1. Create a network of non-motorized trials that allow bicycles and pedestrians to reach important destinations easily.

   The City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trail Plan should provide safe non-motorized access along key transportation corridors, to the fire station and community center, to parks, to the mailbox areas, to current and future churches, and to other future gathering areas in the city. Some trails should be constructed to accommodate maintenance and pedestrian access year-round. To obtain rights-of-way in developed areas, the City of Woodland Hills should work with landowners to obtain public access to important existing and desired non-

motorized corridors. All new development (residential or commercial) should include non-motorized access - trail connections and public easements as shown on the master plan maps. When a trail route has been adopted and is represented in the city's general plan, a subdivision trail ordinance can protect and require proposed trail right-of-way as a public thoroughfare.

Identify trail corridors that safely connect neighborhoods with important destinations, including parks, the mailbox area, the community center, as well as future schools, commercial areas, recreation centers, etc.

1.1.1. Identify routes connecting residential neighborhoods with *at least* the following destinations:

Meadows City Park
Fire Station/Community Center
Mailboxes
Switchbacks
Emergency Escape Routes
Future Trail Systems Adjacent to the City
New Parks in Undeveloped Parts of the City
New Commercial Areas that Might be Developed in the City

1.2. Identify routes that provide safe, easy movement of bicycles and pedestrians to and from important destinations.

1.2.1. Identify and prioritize routes that minimize driveway and roadway crossings as impediments to ease of use and safety.

1.2.2. Utilize existing alignments such as utility easements along roads, natural paths (e.g. game trails on dirt path around city boundary), emergency exit routes, etc. that make trail development easier and take advantage of longer, uninterrupted alignments.

1.2.3. Identify trail types that will serve these routes best, and graphically represent them on the City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trails System Map.

2. Formalize the concept of the Non-Motorized Trails System

2.1. Make the trails system plan a part of the city structure of government, planning, and organization.

2.1.1. In a timely manner, adopt by the City of Woodland Hills Council action the Non-Motorized Trails System and Map into the City General Plan. Update this plan (and the map) as necessary, particularly as new development occurs in the city, to reflect constructed portions of the trails network.

3. The City should actively seek acquisition of trail properties and easements, and preserve identified trail routes in conjunction with development within the city.

Paths should be required in new developments to ensure access for pedestrians and bicyclists. Future subdivision development can institutionalize these facilities by providing narrow (16') public rights-of-way.

The city may require developers to provide trails or right of ways. Many appropriate avenues may be used to ensure trail alignments are provided. A trail review ordinance, located in the "subdivision" title of the city's code can ensure the preservation of a proposed trail route. Such an ordinance would require a developer to meet with Planning Commission and City Council Member that chairs the Parks, Trails, and Recreation Committee to interpret the city-wide trail master plan, and the plan's relationship to the proposed development. This includes the consideration and possible connection of any trail concepts within the proposed development to the citywide trail system.

3.1. Review of proposed development should take into account the needs of the Non-Motorized Trails System. Adoption of a Trails Element into the Subdivision Ordinance will help ensure that the Planning Commission properly reviews and are enabled to require route preservation and trails development**.**

3.1.1. In a timely manner, adopt by City Council action a Trails Element into the city subdivision ordinance.

3.2. Parks, Open Space, and Trails. Utah law allows cities to assess impact fees for the provision of parks, open space, and trails. (*Utah Code Annotated, Title 11, Chapter 35, Part 1*). The city should assess needed fees, and take advantage of opportunities to acquire parcels along trail routes through purchase or donation.

3.2.1. Include trails when considering a Parks and Open Space Impact Fee ordinance. Use these fees to purchase title or easement to trail routes.

3.3. Protect trail alignments and acquire trail right of way or easements when annexation requests are made to the city.

3.3.1. City staff should review all annexation requests in light of the Non-Motorized Trail System Map, and where trail alignments are proposed, include provision of relevant right of way or easements as part of the annexation requirements.

4. Encourage inclusion of cost-effective bicycle and pedestrian elements in all transportation projects.

4.1. Consider extending and enhancing the non-motorized system by including appropriate trails, and bike lanes whenever new roadways are designed, or when streets are rebuilt or resurfaced.

4.1.1. Direct city transportation engineer to review all city roadway projects, and include where possible and appropriate trails into those projects.

5. The City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trail System should be designed, built, and maintained for usability and safety. Properly designed and maintained trails greatly reduce potential liability for the city. Adherence to generally accepted standards and guidelines could provide protection by showing that conventional standards and best practices were used in design.

5.1. Design and construction of all trails within the system should be built according to common standards.

5.1.1. All trails for public use shall be designed and constructed in compliance with relevant guidelines set forth by the city engineer as approved by the city council.

5.1.2. The City of Woodland Hills Non-Motorized Trail System should be well maintained to enhance usability and safety. Proper maintenance is important and needs to be a planned activity along with trail development. A poorly maintained trail can become an eyesore, lose its attractiveness and usefulness, and is a liability rather than an asset

5.1.3. As with roads and other city infrastructure, the city should develop a comprehensive maintenance plan for trails that provides for regular inspection and maintenance. Keeping the trail surface in good condition, removing debris, and proper maintenance of support facilities such as trailheads, benches, and signage are all necessary. The trail manager should attempt to eliminate hazards quickly and with regularity, or warn of any hazardous situations before an injury occurs. Common hazards are potholes or damage to the trail surface caused by plants or tree roots, low overhanging branches from adjacent trees, erosion, improper signage placement, and debris.

5.2. Safe and appropriate use of the Trails System should be encouraged by regulation and policing. Such regulation should help protect both system users and neighboring property owners.

5.2.1. Adopt by City of Woodland Hills Council action a Non-Motorized Trails Use Ordinance.

6. Leverage city funds and resources for trail construction.

6.1. Actively seek trail planning, design, and construction grants from all appropriate sources.

6.1.1. Direct city staff to apply as appropriate for outside funding sources. Current sources include, but may not be limited to:

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways or non-construction projects (such as brochures, public service announcements, and route maps) related to safe bicycle use. Ten percent of Surface Transportation Program funds are used for "Transportation Enhancements," which includes a provision for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CM/AQ) program funds may be used for either the construction of bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways, or projects related to safe bicycle use.

Enhancement Section may be used to construct facilities to enhance the traveling experience including historical, cultural, recreation, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. This section is primarily focused on the provision bicycle facilities.

National Recreational Trails Funds may be used for a variety of recreational trail programs to benefit bicyclists, pedestrian, and other non-motorized users with an emphasis on bicycle facilities. Projects must be consistent with Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (Utah State Parks and Recreation) required by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

Section 402 Funding provides highway safety program funds, with an emphasis on pedestrian and bicyclist safety. Title II, Section 2002, of Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) addresses state and community highway safety grant program funds. The priority status of safety programs for pedestrians and bicyclists expedites the approval process for these safety efforts.

Federal Transit Funding-Enhancement Title III, Section 25 of ISTEA, continues to allow transit funds to be used for bicycle and pedestrian access to transit facilities and to provide shelter and parking facilities for bicycles in or around transit facilities or to install racks or other equipment for transporting bicycles on transit vehicles.

Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal fund managed by the Utah Division of State Parks and Recreation. This money has been used to purchase and construct city parks and trail systems.

State of Utah's Non-Motorized Trail Fund is appropriated from the general fund (State Parks) annually, and is used to construct motorized/non-motorized trail facilities, such as the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

Utility Easement Fees Trail right of way is often suited to use as utility corridors as well. Buried telephone, fiber optic, cable television, and power lines are examples of appropriate

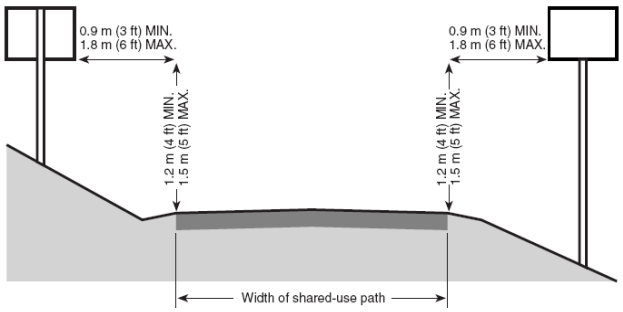
uses that easily co-exist with trails. As well, City of Woodland Hills can charge one time/and or annual fees to utility companies for use of the easements that can offset the expenses of trail development and maintenance. The City should also require that the trail be made whole and restored to good condition if damaged by utility company activities.
At times cities have required private developers to build trails as part of a subdivision's contribution to open space or recreation, and later take over the ownership and operation of trails. It is therefore vital that developers be required to build trails to these same standards, in order to afford trail users, and the city, that level of protection provided by proper design.

Design and location of the trail should take into account that obvious dangers are avoided, mitigated, or that proper warnings such as signs or barriers are provided.

BASIC STANDARDS

Trail Locations

Trails should be located to take advantage of existing facilities, natural drainages, utility right of ways, etc. The city should be careful to maintain trail right of way or easements when considering abandonment or sale of municipal properties.
Specific standards for trail construction should be set forth in the City of Woodland Hills Construction Standards Guide.



Trail Width

In already developed parts of the city, trail right of way for paved trails should be a minimum of 10 feet wide, to provide for an adequate trail surface of 6 feet and clear zones of 2 feet on either side. In undeveloped parts of the city (excluding the trail adjacent 11200 South), trail right of way for paved trails should be a minimum of 12 feet wide, to provide an adequate trail surface of 8 feet and clear zones of 2 feet on either side. In the undeveloped part of the city along 11200 South, trail right of way should be a minimum of 16 feet wide to allow for a 10 foot wide pedestrian and bicycle trail and clear zones of 3 feet on either side as recommended in the *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999.*

Trail right of way for footpaths should be a minimum of 7 feet wide, to provide for an adequate single track trail of 3 feet with 2 feet of buffer on either side.

Trail Surface

Unless otherwise approved by the City Council, paved trail surfaces will be asphalt. Other appropriate surfaces for non-paved trails include crushed limestone and untreated road base for more natural trail surfaces or where the intent of the trails is for single track hiking/recreational use. Some trails that ring the city could use natural surfaces (i.e. what's already there).

Slope and Grade

Slope – As possible, cross slopes should be a constant 2% across the entire width of the trail surface to provide for drainage.
Grade – Much of Woodland Hills occurs in steep terrain. Hence, trail grade in many areas will be dictated by the natural slope of the landscape. However, efforts should be made to minimize steep grades (except over short distances) and should be built according to safe standards recommended by an engineer retained by the city and approved by the city council.

Proper Maintenance

Trail building is a great undertaking, can be hugely satisfying to those involved, and is quite popular with residents. Proper maintenance is just as important, and needs to be a planned activity along with trail development.

Perhaps the best defense against liability a city has is a sound policy and practice for trail maintenance and usage. Developing and implementing a comprehensive management plan that uses risk management techniques provides solid protection against an injury-related lawsuit. Creating and following a risk management plan for trails is no more, and perhaps far less complex, than the plans already in place for other city owned recreation and transportation facilities. Within the realm of public facilities, trails are quite safe, often less risky than roads.

Policy 5.2.1 above describes steps to ensure proper maintenance and inspections.

Maintenance plans should address the following items, at the very least:

- Develop an inventory of potential hazards along the corridor.
- Create a list of types of users that will be permitted on the trail (walkers, bicyclists, etc.) and the risks associated with each.
- Regular inspection of the trail by a person who has the expertise to identify hazardous conditions and maintenance issues.
- Maintenance problems should be corrected quickly and documented. Proper documentation provides needed records and demonstrates the "due diligence" efforts taken in the case of a lawsuit. Where a problem cannot be promptly corrected, warnings to trail users should be erected.
- Procedures for handling medical emergencies should be developed and documented.
- Trail regulations should be clearly posted and enforced.
- Following these risk management techniques will help ensure that hazardous conditions are identified and corrected in a timely manner, preventing injury to trail users and

protecting the city from liability exposure. Showing that the city has been acting in a responsible manner can serve as an excellent defense in the event of a lawsuit.

Insurance

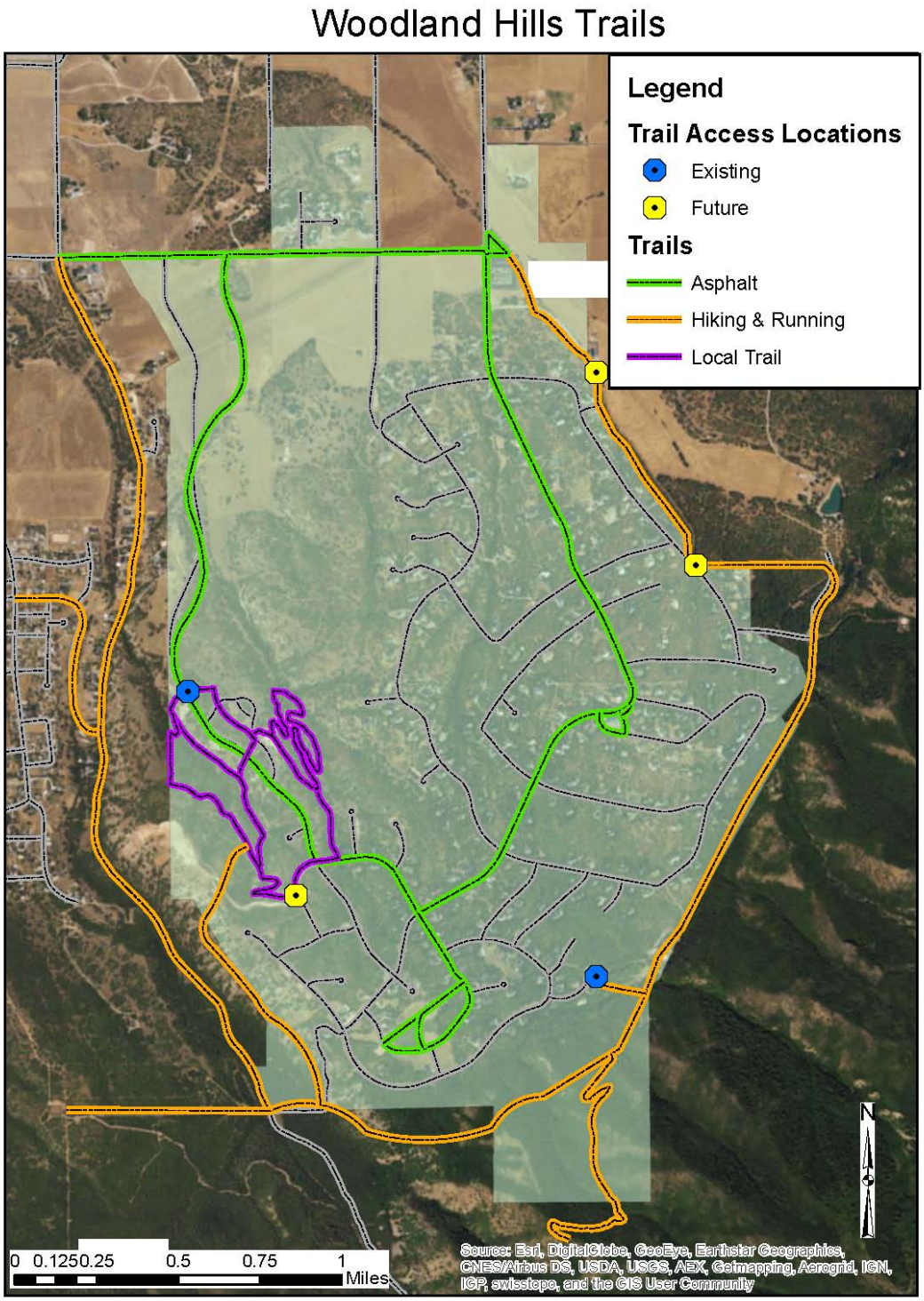
While these practices help immensely in case of a lawsuit, nothing can stop suits from being filed, and good liability insurance is the last line of defense. Insurance is necessary for the city in regards to trails. However, because most trails will be owned and operated by a public entity, the trail will likely be covered by an umbrella insurance policy that protects all municipal activities and facilities.

IMPLEMENTATION

The City of Woodland Hills currently has several pressing infrastructure needs. As with all projects in the city, implementation of the city's Master Trails Plan will have to occur within the framework of a variety of planned projects. To help aid city officials in the implementation of this trails plan, trails are prioritized into two categories (described below and depicted on the City of Woodland Hills Trails Master Plan Map).

Priority 1 Trails: Paved trails that will form the "backbone" of the larger system, that serve the larger share of the community, and could be underway without undue delay or as new development occurs in the city. These trails include the inner ring of paved trails, including Woodland Hills Drive trail, the trail to run adjacent to the new main collector road running from Thousand Oaks development to 12200 South, and the trail to run adjacent to 11200 South.

Priority 2 Trails: Trails that ring the city and trails that will serve as lateral connectors across east/west direction of the city.


Woodland Hills Trails
Legend
Trail Access Locations
Existing
Future
Trails
Asphalt
Hiking & Running
Local Trail
N
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Miles
Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community