

## IV: IMPLEMENTATION

### A. ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to facilitate consistent and informed management of the Village Trails System, this plan proposes four potential organizational structures for trail project administration and project management: 1. Create a Trails Coordinator position in the Village Administration or through a non-profit organization, 2. Assemble a Management Team for interagency coordination, 3. Convene a Trails Implementation Committee, and 4. Encourage the formation of an organized/registered non-profit trails group in Corrales.

#### TRAILS COORDINATOR

The Village of Corrales should establish a Trails Coordinator position to enable the consistent implementation of trails-related policies and trail development. The individual in this position would be responsible for coordinating the planning, design, funding, permitting, jurisdiction, and development-review of all proposed trail improvements. The Trails Coordinator would manage fund-raising and grant writing, advocacy, education, and implementation activities. If the Village is unable to support a Trails Coordinator as a paid employee, a non-profit trails group or trails advisory committee may be able to support a similar paid staff position through grants or other fund-raising. However, if the position is not housed within the Village Administration, the Trails Coordinator will not have the authority to allocate and administer Village trail funds or manage the permitting process.

#### MANAGEMENT TEAM

Previous trail planning efforts have been hindered by the multiple jurisdictions and land ownership of potential trail corridors. The Village of Corrales should establish a regularly convening group of representatives from stakeholder organizations to promote interagency coordination for trail development. One possible structure is a Management Team made up of members who have a central role and responsibility for developing trails in the Village of Corrales, as well as of representatives from other governmental stakeholder agencies. Members from within the Village of Corrales should include representatives from the Village Council, the Village Administration, the Village Planning and Zoning Commission, and Village Trails Advocacy Groups, such as The Corrales Horse and Mule People (CHAMP) and The Corrales Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CBPAC). Stakeholder agencies include the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, the Mid-Region Council of Governments, the Southern Sandoval County Flood Control Authority, Sandoval County, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Agency, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and the NM Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department.

#### TRAILS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

Should it prove too difficult to secure standing representation from the various agencies mentioned above, a Trails Implementation Committee could perform a similar function. SSCAFCA, MRGCD and NMDOT

have indicated a preference for consulting with the Village on a project by project basis, when the Village has specific development plans for review. The Village of Corrales could create a Trails Implementation Committee to gain public support throughout the community and with other governmental agencies and non-profit groups; to secure project funding; to review trail and land development applications; and to decide on funding priorities for projects and programs. The groups' members would ideally have expertise in real estate/title research, right-of-way acquisition and negotiation, grant writing and management, design, and construction. When necessary, the group should supplement their capacity with advisors and consultants in any of the above mentioned areas of expertise. This can be done on an as needed basis.

### **NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION**

The Village of Corrales should support the creation of a non-profit trails interest organization to manage land donations, right-of-way acquisition, planning, and grant writing. This organization could help coordinate volunteer labor and issue tax benefit certifications for easement donations. Though the Village Government is also a qualified organization to accept an easement donation, this assistance would benefit the Village of Corrales administration. Some communities use a Land Trust model to preserve areas from development, which could be one approach for providing a financial benefit to property owners who provide easements or dedications. However, a trails-specific group would be better suited to providing a range of services to compliment the Village administration of trails, including specific right-of-way expertise and trail-related grant writing.

## **B. ACTION PLAN**

Implementing a new trails plan from scratch can seem a daunting proposition at the start. To make the task more manageable, it is helpful to break the process down into five year increments. This is a manageable horizon for most administrations, and coincides with the recommended time frame for reviewing and updating the plan to accommodate changing conditions within the Village.

The following section reviews the steps that the Village should take over the next five years in order to implement the Trails Master Plan. This planning document can only be as useful as the Village Administration

and Village residents choose to make it. The purpose of this document is to be used as a guidance to promote the development of trail improvements. In order for it to serve as guidance, the Village Council must first formally adopt the plan through resolution. Once that critical step is completed, the following recommendations can guide the Village in its efforts to implement the trail system.

### **DEVELOP A FIVE-YEAR TRAIL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN THAT IS APPROVED BY THE VILLAGE COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION**

The Village should convene a Trails Stakeholder meeting to determine a working protocol for addressing the remaining Action Plan items listed below. This Trails Master Plan and its Action Plan Recommendations should serve as guidance in developing specific action items that are feasible for the Village to accomplish. The first order of business should be to determine the roles and responsibilities of a Trails Plan Coordinator or Trails Implementation Committee and work with the Village Administration to determine the most effective way to fill that role.

### **CREATE STAFF POSITION OR ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAILS MASTER PLAN**

This step can be accomplished through several different possible organizational structures:

- Create a part time Trail Coordinator position in the Village Administration through grant funding or special trail district taxation.
- If this is not feasible, a non-profit trails organization may be able to support a similar position. A Village staff member or non-governmental organization director could serve as a key contact point for coordinating between the Village departments, volunteer committees and advocate groups.
- If neither of these options is practical for the Village Administration, create a Trails Implementation Advisory Committee to provide guidance on trail issues from a pan-user framework. Creating one group to work on trail implementation could help unite the various trail user groups into one forum where they can work to achieve their collective goals.

## **FORMALIZE AND ADOPT A TRAIL EASEMENT DEDICATION PROCESS**

The Village of Corrales should develop a working process for accepting easement donations, including assistance on a land value appraisal as well as providing information and support for the donor to deduct the charitable contribution for conservation purposes (see the Trail Development Tool Kit for additional information). This process needs to be authorized by the Village Administration; however, it is possible for a non-governmental organization to provide this service for the Village.

## **FORMALIZE A VOLUNTEER TRAIL BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE PROCESS**

The Trail Development Tool Kit has sample agreements that the village can use as a model to develop its own Trail Volunteer Agreement Form. These agreements are typically contracts between the municipality and a group of trail volunteers. The agreement form outlines the roles and responsibilities of each party. Typically, a volunteer group agrees to provide a specified level of maintenance in exchange for being identified with an Adopt-a-Trail recognition sign on the trail. The Village would be responsible for providing the sign, potentially providing equipment for maintenance or construction, and inspecting the quality of the volunteer group's work. The specific terms must be set forth in the agreement form to ensure that both parties are conversant in their roles and responsibilities.

## **INCORPORATE TRAILS IN ALL NEW VILLAGE SUBDIVISIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS**

The Village of Corrales should amend the development review process to include participation of the newly appointed Trails Coordinator or Trails Implementation Committee in the review process to ensure compliance with trail-related ordinances and the Trails Master Plan. Before a project is accepted, require that the trail construction is inspected by a Village Administrator or designee of the Trails Implementation Committee. The Village should consider construction bonding as a possible strategy for ensuring the trail is developed to Village standards.

## INVENTORY EXISTING EASEMENTS; SECURE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENTS

The Village should hire a right-of-way agent/property title examiner to perform a thorough plat record and property title research to confirm the existing public right-of-way, trail easements, and private drainage and irrigation easements in the Village. Alternatively, this task might be accomplished through an internship position with limited oversight from a real estate or title expert. Plat records that are not on file in the Village Offices should be purchased from Sandoval County Maps and Records. The Village should consider digitizing the subdivision plat records and requiring digital submittals for future subdivisions for ease of review.

The Village should seek legal help to investigate the feasibility of modifying existing private access and drainage easements into public, non-vehicular access easements, as well as the possibility of securing additional trail access easements in narrow or dead-end road rights-of-way.

## SURVEY CORRALES ROAD

Because residents and user groups have consistently identified the development of non-vehicular routes along Corrales Road as a high priority action item, the Village should continue to pursue this opportunity. The Village should commission a survey of Corrales Road to determine the boundaries of adjacent properties (insofar as possible), prescriptive easements, and any recorded public access easements. The Village should work with a right-of-way agent to obtain Quiet Title to any property with unknown ownership, and work with adjacent landowners to seek easement donation to allow development of bicycle lanes and a pedestrian pathway along the corridor. The Village will have to work closely with property owners that have structures in near proximity to the road to determine a suitable course of action.

## C. TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS SUMMARY

The impetus for initiating a specific trail improvement can come from a trail-advocacy group organizing around a key need, or from the Village Administration identifying the importance of a specific improvement. The Trails Master Plan provides direction for the prioritization of trail improvement projects based on a set of prioritization criteria and

should serve as a guide to the selection of projects for implementation (see Prioritization Analysis in Chapter 3). There are several important steps in the successful implementation of a trail improvement project: determining the appropriate type of trail improvement, gathering public support, coordinating with outside agencies, securing funding and necessary permitting, design development, construction, and ultimately, ongoing maintenance.

The primary design decisions for built trail improvements are the type of trail surfacing and the typical trail width. For each of the trail routes proposed in the Master Plan Map, recommended trail surfacing and width have been identified (see Chapter 5 “Design Guidelines” for further detail). The alignment of paved roads within the public right-of-way was an important factor in assessing the appropriate trail type and width. In many locations where a desired route was identified through the public involvement process, but not included on the Master Plan Map, the available right-of-way was insufficient for a trail. In these locations, an overwhelming degree of neighborhood public support will be required before the Village can initiate an easement acquisition process. All trail design should follow the standards in Chapter 5 – Design Guidelines.

When developing new trails, the public involvement process is a critical component for overall success. The Village should make every effort to alert the public of trail implementation plans in the early stages of trail development. This will provide affected parties with the opportunity to comment on the proposed development. In most cases, the proposed trail improvements identified within this plan fall within the public right-of-way or on already platted easements and should not require additional easement donation or acquisition.

In addition to public support, inter-agency support will be essential to the implementation of many of the proposed trail improvements. The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD), and the Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) own and/or manage many of the key potential trail corridors throughout the Village. As with public involvement, agency involvement should occur in the early stages of the trail development process. While these

agencies have all indicated a general willingness to coordinate with the Village on trails projects, they will need to know the specifics of individual trail improvement proposals before approving them. In order to avoid misunderstandings or pitfalls, inter-agency coordination should be an on-going process throughout the development of each trail implementation project from inception to construction. Inter-agency coordination is discussed further under “Partnerships” below.

Depending on the specific trail improvement project, funding needs will vary greatly. Some projects may be implemented with relatively little funding due to dedicated volunteer labor sources or minimal materials costs, while others will require substantial engineering and professional construction services. Funding sources can come from private donors and volunteers, corporate donors, grants, and local, state and federal allocations. Trail funding options are discussed more extensively in Appendix E – Funding Sources. Trail improvements may also require local, state, and/or federal permitting.

The design development process begins with collecting the property records along a proposed trail route. Each plat along the corridor needs to be reviewed to verify that there is adequate space for the typical trail section. It is advisable to notify all affected property owners at this point in the process to prevent delays in the future. Broad support from the Governing Body, trails advocates, neighborhood associations, and trail related groups will greatly improve the chances for success in trail development. Design development can occur within the Village through coordination between Public Works, Planning and Zoning, and volunteer groups; or may require hiring outside design consultants.

When the funding and/or volunteer resources for implementing a trail improvement project are in place and design development is complete, the next step is trail construction. Most soft-surface trails can be constructed by volunteer groups with the guidance of an experienced trail builder. Paved trails require more construction expertise and specialized equipment, and will generally include sub-grade preparation, the installation of base course, and the laying and compaction of the all-weather surfacing. Paved trails can potentially be constructed by the Village’s Public Works Department or may need to be put out for bids by qualified contractors.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Forging partnerships with regional and state agencies to further common goals will be critical to the success of Corrales' Trail System. Agencies with compatible or overlapping jurisdiction include:

- The Cities of Albuquerque and Rio Rancho – regional trails
- The New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) – statewide trail system
- The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) – multi-modal transportation and trails
- The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) - Scenic Byways Program and Safe Routes to School Program
- The Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) – irrigation facilities
- The Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority (SSCAFCA) and the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA) – flood control facilities

The Management Team should accomplish inter-agency coordination regarding trail related issues on an ongoing basis. The Management Team would also convene to advise the Village on the development of new trails (see A. Administrative Recommendations, this chapter).

## PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are for trails-related programs and events that would complement the development of a Village-wide trail system:

- Trail Safety – Start a Neighborhood Trail Watch Program; Implement educational events and media outreach
- Shared Use Facilities Education – Host trail event days; Install trail etiquette signage; Conduct media outreach
- Resource Management – Monitor Bosque Preserve for increased use impacts; Develop management strategy to protect natural resources
- Trail Volunteer Maintenance – Organize an Adopt-a-Trail Program

## D. TRAIL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

### TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

**Policy 1: Update Action Plan.** Revise and update the trail project prioritization schedule and Action Plan every three to five years.

**Policy 2: Design Guidelines.** By the adoption of this plan, the Trail Design Guidelines will be accepted as the guidance on trail development, modifying Ordinance 07-016, Pedestrian Access.

**Policy 3: Enabling Volunteers.** The Village of Corrales shall provide a legal agreement for trail volunteers, which indemnifies the Village against claims arising from the volunteer activity as well as indemnifying the volunteers from liability arising from trail use. All volunteer trail work shall be inspected by Village after completion, and once accepted, the Village will accept responsibility for the trail improvements.

**Policy 4: Land Acquisition.** Enforce the existing subdivision trail dedication ordinance by requiring that any new land subdivision or development that occurs adjacent to a designated trail, in a trail study area, or adjacent to a regional destination or open space, as shown on the Trail Master Plan Map, shall provide a trail easement dedication as well as the construction of the trail (or equivalent monetary fee to Village for construction) in the accordance with the intent of the Plan.

**Policy 5: Drainage Easements.** If a trail is to be dedicated in conjunction with a drainage easement, that drainage easement shall include an additional minimum 10' width dedicated outside the floodplain on at least one side of the drainage way, to be used as a trail easement.

**Policy 6: Road Redundancy.** The Village shall pursue the consolidation of two abutting parallel roadways into a single public road right-of-way with a parallel trail.

### ADJACENT PROPERTY

**Policy 7: Encroachment.** Private encroachments into the public right-of-way are not permitted. Where such encroachments interfere with the use of or development of a designated trail, the property owner will

have 90 days from first notification to remove the encroachment. If the issue is not resolved, Village of Corrales Public Works will remove encroaching material and may seek reimbursement from the landowner, as appropriate.

**Policy 8: Privacy.** The Village of Corrales shall post and enforce “No Parking” zones at existing neighborhood trail access points to protect the privacy of residents, when requested by a neighborhood.

## SAFETY

**Policy 9: General Safety.** The Village shall provide a safe and interconnected trail system through construction and regular maintenance of trails.

**Policy 10: Enforcement.** The Village Police shall enforce appropriate trail use and motorist compliance with trail-related regulations adopted by the Village of Corrales.

**Policy 11: Signage.** The Village shall install appropriate signage and markings to identify constructed trails and designated trail routes, and repair the signs and painted street markings when faded or damaged.

**Policy 12: Preventing Illegal activity.** Neighborhood Crime-Watch activities are an effective way of preventing illegal activity related to trails. The Village will support the activities of such groups by placing standard “Crime Watch Community” signage when requested by an established neighborhood watch group.

## MAINTENANCE

**Policy 13: Maintenance Schedule.** The Village shall develop and implement a trail maintenance schedule that is feasible for the Village to accomplish and fund. The Village should perform an inventory of conditions of trails and update GIS database with new trail construction on a regular basis.

**Policy 14: General Maintenance.** The Village shall promote and fund trail maintenance activities, in conjunction with trails volunteers to the extent possible.

**Policy 15: Bicycle Lanes.** The Village shall sweep and maintain on-street bicycle facilities in conjunction with street maintenance to

provide a clean, safe riding surface.

## E. TRAIL USE POLICIES

The purpose of these policies is to establish rules for the use of the Village of Corrales Trails. These policies may need to be adopted into the Corrales Uniform Traffic Code in order to be enforceable by the Police Department.

**Policy 1: General.** Users shall be provided with posted trail etiquette rules and shall adhere to said rules. Camping, hunting, and the building of fires shall not be permitted. Users shall be provided with posted procedures for reporting vandalism and unsafe trail conditions to the appropriate agencies/authorities.

**Policy 2: Motorized/Electric Vehicles.** Motorized/Electric Vehicles including mopeds, scooters, and motorized skateboards are prohibited with the following exceptions:

1. All wheelchairs including electric wheelchairs shall be allowed on trails, including other electric vehicles for the mobility impaired, including “segway” type vehicles. The maximum speed for electric vehicles for the mobility impaired is 10 MPH, which shall be posted.
2. The following shall be permitted: fire, police, ambulance, or other emergency vehicle in emergencies or when needed for enforcement, emergency aid, fire suppression or other purposes of this nature.

**Policy 3: Bicycles on Roadways.** Bicycles shall be allowed on roadways except where explicitly prohibited. Prohibitions/exclusions may include heavily travelled automobile commuter routes during peak travel hours. However, the Village shall make every effort to provide parallel bicycle facilities where such exclusions are made. Bicyclists on roadways shall follow applicable traffic rules and always travel in the same direction as vehicular traffic.

**Policy 4: Animals on Trails.** Horses and leashed dogs are permitted on trails. Owners must retain complete control of their animals at all times. Owners must clean up after their animals. Rules regarding animals shall be posted at all trailheads, kiosks, and major intersections.

## F. MEASUREMENT OF SUCCESS

Focus Group members were asked to identify what they would need to see to know that the trail planning was successful. They came up with the following list of measurements of success:

- A resolution adopting the Trails Master Plan and Trail Map by the Village Council
- A Village commitment to budgeting and staffing for trail construction and maintenance; administrative structure
- Conservation easement taxation / trail development bonds
- A tax benefit for easement donations offered through non-profit group
- A trail map that has sufficient community and political support to be publicly displayed
- A schedule of and actionable items for trail development
- A supportive Village Council willing to implement the trail plan or willing to release authority to implement to a Trail Coalition advocacy group, volunteer commission, or non-profit organization
- The construction of a trail or trails that is/are multi-purpose and that address the needs of all user groups. A demonstration project for each trail type should be identified and built as soon as possible, with input and direction from the predominant user groups for each trail type