

# APPENDIX C: COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The County of San Diego has committed to a long-range (five year) Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan outlines how the County will accomplish its mission – to serve the residents of San Diego County. Strategic planning assist in evaluating existing conditions, resources available and assessing the needs, challenges and risks for the future. This planning effort directs the development of goals and action plans to meet the future needs in advance of their demand.

The County’s Strategic Plan has identified three key “initiatives” or broad goals that help prioritize specific County efforts and programs. They are:

- **Kids** – *“Improve opportunities for children”*
- **The Environment** – *“Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development”*
- **Safe and Livable Communities** – *“Promote Safe and Livable Communities”*

These initiative driven objectives are clearly integrated in the development of the County Trails Program. The benefits that trails provide to communities and the County have a direct correlation to these three goals and support the County Strategic Plan.

## **Kids**

Trails improve opportunities for children:

- Providing “quality time” with family in a safe and close to home environment
- Encouraging and facilitating opportunities for exercise
- Providing access to “outdoor” classrooms for learning and community service
- Creating positive life-long experiences
- Teaching respect and stewardship of the environment

Many in the health community have begun promoting trails and other such facilities as one answer to the critical problems facing children–childhood obesity. Studies show that childhood health and behavior problems can lead to life-long consequences. Trails also are being

incorporated into the Safe Routes to School programs, which help to encourage healthy exercise habits at an early age. It is obvious that trails and health communities will be working closely together in the coming years to increase opportunities for exercise through trail development and promotion.

In addition to the health benefits, trail corridors can become outdoor classrooms where children can observe and learn about their natural and cultural environment. Planned community trails will connect to local parks, open space areas, schools and other public lands.

---

*“We do not want in the United States a nation of spectators.  
We want a nation of participants in the vigorous life.”  
President John F. Kennedy*

---

## **The Environment**

Trails promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life and economic development:

- Providing a “buffer” between the built and natural environments
- Allowing passive recreational use and educational access to protected areas
- Increasing the value open space to the public by providing access
- Enhancing property values of communities by connecting them to open space areas
- Providing an alternative mode of transportation
- Encouraging cleaner air by decreasing air pollution by automobiles
- Supporting communities and businesses through eco-tourism
- Preserving culturally and historically valuable areas

Trails are an integral part of our natural environment and can be used as a tool for conservation. Trails assist with preserving important natural landscapes, providing necessary links between fragmented habitats and providing tremendous opportunities for protecting plant and animal species. Increased development has contributed to the creation of habitat “islands”—isolating wildlife, reducing their natural habitats and survival. Trails provide that important link between these island populations and habitats and increase the available land to many wildlife species.

Trail corridors assist in providing natural buffer zones from pollution run-off and become important tools for improving water quality. They can also improve air quality by protecting the plants that naturally create oxygen and filter out air pollutants.

One way to measure the economic impact from trails is from the purchases by trail users on durable goods, equipment and maintenance related to their recreation. Often the purchases are in areas near the trails. Local hotels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, gas stations and other businesses also benefit from tourist spending. Studies show that long trails (regional), which attract users from far away, represent the most spending per user. Shorter, urban (community) trails generally get more users, so they also have a high economic impact.

## **Safe and Livable Communities**

Trails promote safe and livable communities:

- Providing convenient, safe, non-motorized travel throughout the community
- Reducing crime and illegal activity through regular use and high visibility of users
- Connecting communities to parks, schools, shopping and other recreational facilities
- Providing affordable exercise and recreational opportunities within the community
- Encouraging opportunities to meet and interact with neighbors
- Providing emergency routes

Trails can provide a sense of place and a source of community pride. When integrated with features such as historic sites, commercial or residential areas, and parks, they can improve the overall character of a community or the region. They provide community residents the opportunity to enjoy the diverse environments and the natural beauty of our County.



In nationwide studies, development projects near or adjacent to trails show property values increase from 1% – 6% over properties further removed from trail locations. Trails also provide a unique facility to serve a diverse population of a community that may otherwise have limited opportunities to access natural areas due to financial or transportation constraints.

Several studies have been conducted that show the use of trails and their proximity to the users, that is close to where users live and work (community trails), appears to increase the rate of regular physical activity. Trails can help reduce physical and mental health risks by providing pleasant places to exercise, which help control weight, blood pressure and cholesterol levels, build strength and endurance, and help prevent depression. There is scientific evidence that supports providing convenient access to places for physical activity, such as trails connecting to parks or other recreational facilities, increases the level of physical activity in a community.

<b>County Trails Programs Meeting County Goals</b>			
<b>Benefits Trails Provide</b>	<b>County Strategic Plan Initiatives</b>		
	<b>Kids</b>	<b>Environment</b>	<b>Safe and Livable Communities</b>
Recreational	X	X	X
Economic	X	X	X
Educational	X	X	X
Environmental	X	X	X
Transportation	X	X	X
Historic	X	X	X
Access	X	X	X
Health	X	X	X
Quality of Life	X	X	X

*(More details on the benefits of trails are outlined in “The Need for Trails” section of the CTMP)*