



# Santa Barbara County Trails Council

P.O. Box 22352, Santa Barbara CA 93121 • [www.sbtrails.org](http://www.sbtrails.org)

August 19, 2009

Valerie Olson, Chair  
Goleta Advisory Committee  
Santa Barbara County  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, Ca, 93101

Re: Goleta Community Plan Update; Trails System Expansion

Dear Chair Olson and members of the Advisory Committee:

The Santa Barbara County Trails Council ("Trails Council") is a broad based trails advocacy group consisting of hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. The Trails Council was formed in 1969 to advocate for planning and construction of new trails and to help organize work parties to maintain existing trails. Over the last 40 years, the Trails Council has worked cooperatively with the local, state and federal agencies to develop improve and maintain the County's trails system.

The Trails Council is aware that the County is currently updating the Goleta Community Plan, which will guide growth, development and public infrastructure for the area stretching roughly from the City of Santa Barbara, west Santa Barbara foothills and Hope Ranch west to Patterson Avenue and from the Pacific north into the Santa Ynez Mountains. The Trails Council is familiar with the existing trails component of the Goleta Community Plan adopted in 1993 and the status of major trails proposals in the planning area.

As you may be aware, the Community Plan and follow-up Goleta Trails Plan acknowledge that Goleta is underserved by foothill recreational trails and that residents have lost both formal (i.e. San Antonio Creek Trail) and informal foothill trail access that they enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s. In adoption of these plans, the County acknowledged the importance of expanding the Community's trails system. However, completion of such trails can be difficult and little progress has been made implementing the County's 1993 vision for providing new foothill trail access.

The Trails Council respectfully request that your committee work with staff of the County Parks Department and Office of Long Range Planning to ensure that planning for new trails and implementation of existing trails is a priority of the new Goleta Community Plan. To ease review of this matter, we have attached a map which depicts existing proposed trails and potential new routes. Acquiring easements and developing trails will require creativity and persistence from County staff. In particular, we believe that County staff should pursue the following:

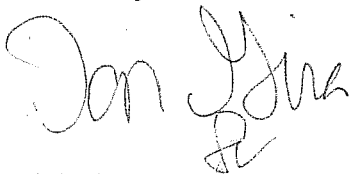
1. **New Policy Framework:** The County's existing policies for trail acquisition are passive and have not produced any new significant trails in the Goleta foothills since the adoption of the Goleta Community Plan 16 years ago. We urge the Committee to identify and consider new policies and actions to spur trail development in the foothills and elsewhere. These could include a policy that requires County consideration and exaction of appropriate trails as part of any rezones, especially from agriculture to other zones. Another policy which directs the County to consider incentives to encourage property owner dedication and construction of trails may be appropriate.
2. **Interagency Cooperation:** The Committee should request that County staff work cooperatively with the cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara and the Forest Service to expand the foothill trails system in areas where jurisdictions overlap. For the City of Santa Barbara, this could involve lands within its sphere of influence such as the San Marcos Foothills property or the San Antonio Creek Watershed. For the City of Goleta, this may involve foothill areas adjacent to the lower reaches of the Slippery Rock Trail. This would require funding for staff time and as such the Committee should recommend that it be a priority for inclusion in the County's next Five Year work Program for the office of Long Range Planning.
3. **Cooperation with Property Owners:** The Trails Council believes that implementation of major new foothill trails will require the active cooperation of foothill ranchers and property owners. In some instances, this may require the County exploring new options to actually acquire and build trails. For example, the County may want to consider discussing limited development of foothill properties in exchange for obtaining easements for new trails. The Trails Council would support the County considering such limited new developments that are consistent with existing zoning or considering limited rezones as part of the Community Plan update, consistent with protection of important resources, in order to obtain the needed trail easements. In either case, the Trails Council urges that the County actively reach out to property owners along currently proposed or potential future trail easements to assess property owner goals and interest in providing new trails in exchange for such limited development. Only with such active outreach will it be possible to obtain easements to support new trails.
4. **Proposed San Antonio Creek Trail:** Tucker's Grove Park currently provides trail access along the lower reaches of San Antonio Creek while the Arroyo Burro trail links to the higher Forest Service owned portion of the watershed. However, the Tuckers Grove Trail formerly extended under Highway 154 across private ranch lands through the San Antonio Creek watershed to Camino Cielo and is still shown on the County's adopted Parks Recreation and Trails Maps. While the current property owner cooperatively provides limited (primarily equestrian) access upon written request, this historic public trail access was closed in the 1980s after prolonged litigation. We believe that work with the existing landowner(s) along this proposed trail is an essential element of obtaining this trail easement and urge the County to reach out to these owners early in the plan update process. Again, this may require review of this ranches existing land use and zoning designations to provide incentives for provision of trail access.

5. **Potential San Marcos Foothills Trails and Connectors:** The County now owns 200 acres of the San Marco Foothills property which provides an extensive existing informal trail network along existing dirt roads. The Trails Council is currently assisting County Parks with planning a new trail system for this County Park. In addition, this 200 acre park immediately abuts the private ranch lands along San Antonio Creek to the west which may offer the potential of future connectivity between this property and a future San Antonio Creek Trail System. Additional options may exist for linking the San Marcos Foothills park land to the Arroyo Burro Trails System to the east. The Trails council urges that the Committee explore these options.
6. **Proposed Slippery Rock Trail:** The proposed Slippery Rock Trail was the proposed centerpiece of a new foothill trails system in Goleta. Implementation of this historic trail will require the cooperation of the owners of a number of smaller (5-20 acre) parcels along the border of the City of Goleta as well as the owners of larger ranches to the north. We believe that work with the existing landowner(s) along this proposed trail is an essential element of obtaining this trail easement and urge the County to reach out to these owners early in the plan update process. This may entail the County considering limited development options in this area in exchange for obtaining needed easements. This may require consideration of rezones as part of this community plan update. For example, where areas along the trail corridor are currently zoned for ten acre minimum parcel size, the Committee could consider an upzone to five acre minimum if portions of this trail are dedicated and developed.
7. **Maria Ygnacia Creek:** This watershed is currently developed with a mix of ranchettes, equestrian properties and limited agricultural uses and is designated for both agricultural use and other open lands. During the last Goleta Community Plan update, a number of property owners approached the County to consider limited ranchettes type subdivisions (5-20 acre parcels) in exchange for expanded trail access. Because these proposals were raised very late in the process, the County elected not to act upon them. The Trails Council believes that the County should work cooperatively with property owners in this area to review options for expanding the trails system. In particular, the lower reaches of this watershed between the east and west forks of Maria Ygnacia Creek may offer the opportunity for property owner support for creation of an equestrian only trail network. Such an equestrian only system may reduce property owner opposition to new public trails and offer a safe haven for equestrians displaced from other foothill trails due to user conflicts. We urge the County to explore options for creating a trail net work in this watershed through outreach to and cooperation with property owners.
8. **Potential Windy Gap/ West Fork San Antonio Creek Trail:** Up until the mid 1980s, the public enjoyed trail access into the beautiful West Fork of San Antonio Creek via a trailhead off on Hwy 154. However, this trail access was closed. The new Windy Gap fuel break may offer an opportunity to resurrect access to this watershed through a connection to the currently proposed San Antonio Creek Trail. We urge the Committee to consider this option.

9. **New Urban Trails and Neighborhood Connections:** The County should consider provision of new trails and connections to existing trails as part of any rezones or major new developments in the urban area. This would be important for development of major properties such as the 300 acre County campus along Calle Real and Cathedral Oaks and adjacent properties such as the 17 acre MTD agricultural area or the St. Vincent's properties to the east. In addition, the County should consider adoption of a policy requiring consideration of providing neighborhood connections to existing and proposed trails as part of development of properties along trail corridors.
10. **Protection of Trail Aesthetics:** The County's existing policy framework is silent on protection of views from existing and proposed trail corridors. The County should consider adoption of a new policy which requires consideration of measures to protect the aesthetic character of existing and proposed trails as part of any new development projects along or adjacent to trail corridors.
11. **Coordination with the County Riding Hiking Trails Advisory Committee:** We believe that this County advisory body could be of assistance to your committee in Trail planning issues and staff should consult with CRHATAC of options for new trails plans and polices and bring such recommendations back to your Committee for review.

Thank you for considering this input. The Trails Council hopes that the County can utilize this new Goleta Community Plan update to jump start efforts to expand the community's trails system. The Trails Council is ready and willing to assist the County in these trail planning efforts and plans to actively participate in the update of the Goleta Community Plan. We look forward to working cooperatively with the Committee and County staff to explore these issues.

Sincerely,



Otis Calef  
President




- cc. Claude Garcia-Celay  
County Parks Department  
Derek Johnson, Deputy Director  
Office of Long Range Planning  
Peter Imhoff, Supervising Planner  
Office of Long Range Planning







# LEGEND

## GCP BOUNDARY COUNTY PRT

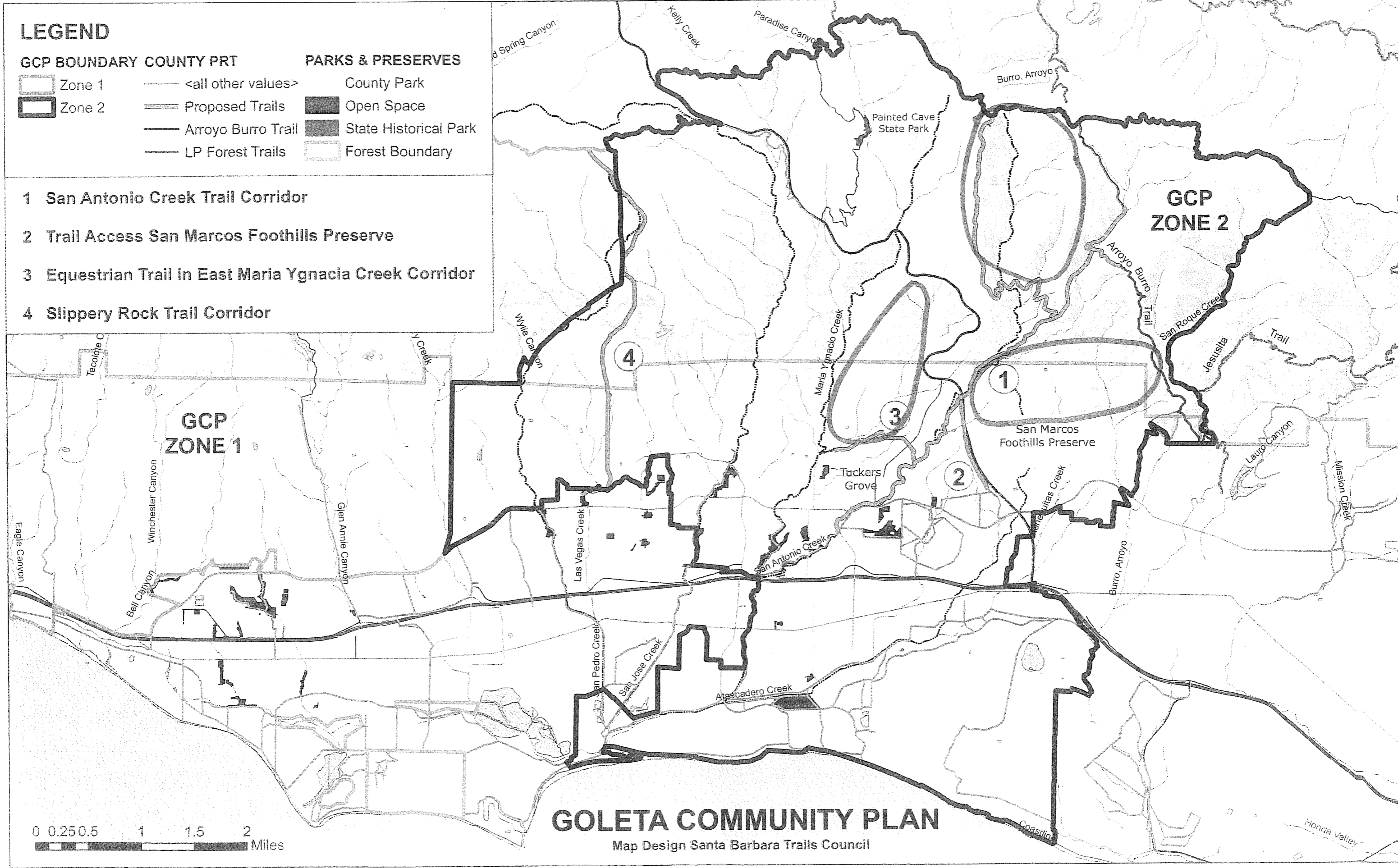
-  Zone 1
-  Zone 2

-  Proposed Trails
-  Arroyo Burro Trail
-  LP Forest Trails

## PARKS & PRESERVES

-  County Park
-  Open Space
-  State Historical Park
-  Forest Boundary

- 1 San Antonio Creek Trail Corridor**
- 2 Trail Access San Marcos Foothills Preserve**
- 3 Equestrian Trail in East Maria Ygnacia Creek Corridor**
- 4 Slippery Rock Trail Corridor**



# GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

Map Design Santa Barbara Trails Council