



STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: June 9, 2025

PRESENTER: Jerry Jones, Community Development Director

SUBJECT: Presentation and Discussion on City Pedestrian Trails

RECOMMENDATION: Planning Commission receive presentation, discuss, and provide any comments as desired.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Kerman has always placed an emphasis on having a complete bicycle and pedestrian network within the City. This is reflected in the goals, policies, and implementation measures established in the City's 2040 General Plan Circulation Element, Section 4.5 "Alternative Transportation". The overall goal for alternative transportation as listed in the General Plan is CIRC-5, "To promote bicycling, walking, and using public transit, as functional alternatives to single-passenger automobile travel". In accordance with this goal, the City has constructed a sidewalk network for pedestrian use that has minimal gaps, allowing residents to easily commute to and from all areas within the City. In addition, the City has created a network of bicycle lanes and signed bike routes (when space is not available to provide full bicycle lanes) along primary travel routes within the City.

The City has also included a proposed trail network in the General Plan and has constructed, required the construction of, and planned the construction of, trail segments when opportunities become available. These opportunities typically consist of City owned properties (areas too small for any other use, vacated rights-of-way, easements, etc.), abandoned railroad rights-of-way, Fresno Irrigation District canal and pipeline easements, and other utility easements. Recently, the Planning Commission and City Council have expressed a desire to have further discussion about policies and requirements for the inclusion of trails within new developments. This report is being presented to provide background information to aid in any desired discussion and possible direction to Staff.

BACKGROUND:

2040 General Plan

As discussed above, the City's 2040 General Plan includes a Circulation Element, as required by law. As part of the Circulation Element, the Active Transportation section discusses the City's goals and policies to promote bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the City. Although there are no specific goals or policies related to the construction of trails, Figure 4-4 (Attachment A) shows the location of existing (at the time of the preparation of the General Plan) and proposed Class I Bikeways (Bike Paths), which can be considered trails. The primary trail shown is a loop around the City, with the backbone of the concept first started by the fact that there is a Fresno Irrigation District (FID) canal and pipeline (Houghton Canal) along Nielsen Avenue that will

provide an opportunity for the construction of a trail. The general segments of the trail loop are as follows.

1. Modoc Avenue – From California Avenue to Nielsen Avenue
2. Nielsen Avenue – From Modoc Avenue to Sycamore Avenue
3. Sycamore Avenue – From Nielsen Avenue to the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)
4. North side of the UPRR – From Sycamore Avenue to Goldenrod Avenue
5. California Avenue – From Goldenrod Avenue to Modoc Avenue (further discussed below)

The last segment (#4 above) may be open for reconsideration as the City has acquired property on the south side of the UPRR from Hart Ranch Park to Howard Avenue for a future trail. It may be more appropriate for the east segment of the proposed trail loop to go from the terminus of the trail from Hart Ranch Park at Howard Avenue, north along Howard to Nielsen Avenue. Since the City's developed limits are not close to Sycamore Avenue, and Howard Avenue for that matter, this is a topic that can be discussed in the future.

Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR)/California Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan

In 2015, the Planning Commission recommended, and City Council approved Resolution No. 15-04 which approved the Union Pacific Railroad/California Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan. The Master Plan, included as Attachment B, provides for a bicycle and pedestrian route along the UPRR and California Avenue, from Siskiyou Avenue to Goldenrod Avenue. The goal of the Master Plan is to link the future westside park (City owned 40 acres at Siskiyou Avenue south of the UPRR) and the eastside park (now known as Hart Ranch Park), with Plaza Park and City Hall located at the midpoint of the route. Although, there is not sufficient space for a traditional trail within the developed portion of the City along this route, it is considered a logical route for a mix of quasi trail configurations. This was also driven by State and Federal funds available to the City for such purposes, which would have been lost without implementation of construction projects for segments of this route. The route includes the following segments.

1. UPRR Trail – Siskiyou Avenue to Park Avenue; Traditional trail along the UPRR consisting of a 10-foot wide paved trail and landscaping; Completed
2. Bike Lane and Sidewalk – Park Avenue to Del Norte Avenue; Completed
3. California Avenue Shared Use Sidewalk (Trail) – Del Norte Avenue to Madera Avenue; 10-foot wide sidewalk, signed as “Shared Sidewalk, Bikes Yield”; Completed
4. California Avenue Shared Use Sidewalk (Trail) – Madera Avenue to UPRR; 10-foot wide sidewalk, signed as “Shared Sidewalk, Bikes Yield”; Portion in progress
5. UPRR Trail – UPRR to Goldenrod Avenue (Hart Ranch Park); Along south side of UPRR; Traditional trail consisting of a 10-foot wide paved trail and landscaping; Planned, contingent on acquisition of land from UPRR

As listed in the 2040 General Plan Discussion above, this Master Plan route is intended to “close the loop” for the trail loop included in Figure 4-4 of the General Plan.

Existing and Approved Trail Segments

The location of existing and approved trail segments are shown on Attachment C. In addition, Figures 1 through 3 below provide photos of the existing trail segments shown on Attachment C. The sole approved, not yet constructed, trail segment shown is a part of the recently approved Del Norte Estates Subdivision, which is currently going through the final map and improvement plan review process.

Figure 1. California Avenue Trail – Del Norte to Madera



Figure 2. UPRR Trail from Siskiyou to Park – Siskiyou to Park



Figure 3. Tract 6236 Trail



Benefits and Challenges

For the purposes of discussion and possible direction regarding policies and requirements for the construction of trails with new developments, Table 1 below provides some benefits and challenges associated with the requirement and construction of new trails.

Table 1. Benefits and Challenges	
Benefits	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Space for exercise and recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Maintenance and repair costs (landscaping)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Space for neighbor/community interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Preventative maintenance and rehabilitation costs (sealing and repaving) or repair costs if concrete or other surface
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Improve the aesthetic of neighborhoods and/or underutilized areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Opportunity for criminal activity (out of sight) and increased police patrolling costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Landscaping provides urban greening and reduction in “heat island” effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Opportunity for homeless activity and costs associated with abatement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Air quality improvement (from tree planting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Impact on new development; Decrease in lot yield (land used for trails reduces land available for lots)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Reduction in vehicle trips (minimal reduction if only located in neighborhoods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Impact on new development; Development may not “pencil out” based on added construction costs; Construction costs likely will be passed on to the homebuyer

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. General Plan Figure 4-4: Active Transportation Facilities
- B. UPRR/California Avenue Bicycle and Pedestrian Route Master Plan
- C. Existing and Approved Trail Segments