

4.0 Policy Review

This chapter summarizes currently adopted policy and planning documents and programs that have an on-going effect on the pedestrian environment in the City of Carlsbad. Currently adopted policies and programs provide an important framework for efforts to improve the pedestrian environment within the City of Carlsbad.

4.1 Carlsbad General Plan Circulation Element

The General Plan serves as the blueprint for the City's future development. Improving pedestrian circulation is given considerable attention in multiple elements of the Carlsbad General Plan. The City's General Plan Circulation Element, for example, contains 24 implementing policies and action programs directed at improving non-vehicular travel. These implementing policies and action programs can be classified into three main categories – infrastructure improvements, land use policy, and program development. The pedestrian-related General Plan Circulation Element implementing policies and action programs are described below.

4.1.1 Infrastructure Improvements

Seven Circulation Element implementing policies explicitly address the expansion and improvement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These policies recommend construction of new facilities in built out areas of the City, in newly developing areas, in areas requiring improved connectivity, and in areas where facilities require improved amenities. Circulation Element implementing policies and action programs related to pedestrian infrastructure and improvements are listed below:

- 1) Encourage the construction of sidewalks along all public roadways with special emphasis given to collectors, arterials, and areas with high pedestrian traffic generators such as schools, commercial centers, transportation facilities, public buildings, beaches, and parks.
- 2) Link public sidewalks to the network of public and private trail systems.
- 3) Provide for handicapped access to and along public sidewalks and along as much of the trail system as feasible.
- 4) Install sidewalks and trail systems within existing and new industrial developments.
- 5) Prepare and maintain an inventory of all missing and incomplete sidewalk segments within the City for the purpose of prioritizing future sidewalk construction.
- 7) Provide linkages to bus, pedestrian and bicycle routes from any new light rail commuter transit facility.

- 8) Design public trails in accordance with the Open Space and Conservation Element including multi-use and equestrian segments where appropriate.

4.1.2 Land Use-Related Policy

Land use-related implementing policies in the Carlsbad General Plan Circulation Element are directed toward increasing the mix of complementary land uses, encouraging pedestrian-friendly building designs, and providing adequate parking facilities. Circulation Element policies related to land use considerations are listed below.

- 1) Encourage pedestrian circulation in commercial areas through the provision of convenient parking facilities, increased sidewalk widths, pedestrian-oriented building designs, landscaping, street lighting and street furniture.
- 2) Design pedestrian spaces and circulation in relationship to land uses and available parking for all new construction and redevelopment projects.

4.1.3 Program Development

The Carlsbad General Plan Circulation Element also suggests adoption of programs that monitor and increase pedestrian safety, and encourage pedestrian activity. Program development implementation policies from the Circulation Element are listed below.

- 1) Encourage school districts to implement safety programs for pedestrians and bicyclists within the public school system.
- 2) Maintain a Traffic Safety Commission composed of Carlsbad citizens for the purpose of studying matters of traffic and pedestrian safety and making recommendations to the City Council regarding measures to promote and improve traffic and pedestrian safety.
- 3) Employ improved traffic control devices and monitor police accident reports to increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- 4) Encourage passive and active use of the railroad right-of-way for trail linkages and bicycle pathways.

4.2 Other General Plan Elements

4.2.1 Land Use Element

The Carlsbad General Plan Land Use Element gives considerable attention to improving and expanding the City's pedestrian network. Pedestrian-related policies, for example, are found in three of four land use development goals for the Village. Overall, the General Plan Land Use Element recommends policies emphasizing improved linkages between land development and provision of pedestrian networks, as follows.

- 1) Encourage development proposals which are designed to provide safe, easy pedestrian and bicycle linkages to nearby transportation corridors.
- 2) Require new residential development to provide pedestrian and bicycle linkages, when feasible, which connect with nearby community centers, parks, schools, points of interest, major transportation corridors and the proposed Carlsbad Trail System.
- 3) Ensure that all commercial development provides a variety of courtyards and pedestrian ways, bicycle trails, landscaped parking lots, and the use of harmonious architecture in the construction of buildings.

4.2.2 Open Space and Conservation Element

The City of Carlsbad has a Citywide Trails Program to support its open space and conservation goals while also enhancing recreational opportunities as well as non-motorized forms of travel. The City published a Citywide Trails Report (2001) outlining the ultimate trail vision and associated implementation goals. The City's General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element includes the following trail/pedestrian-related policies.

- 1) Establish a Carlsbad Trail System, primarily pedestrian-oriented, but for bicycles where feasible, provided that a financing mechanism for the trail system is approved. Until such financing mechanism is in place the trail system shall be considered proposed.
- 2) Participate with other North County communities to establish an intercommunity open space linkage program and regional trail network.
- 3) Design the trail system to serve both recreation and non-motorized transportation purposes.
- 4) Provide greenway linkages from major recreational/open space areas to other areas of activity, including, but not limited to, residential neighborhoods, places of employment, parks, schools, libraries, and viewpoints.

- 5) Address the citywide greenway system and the Carlsbad Trail System when considering and reviewing Local Facilities Management Plans, major development applications and applications involving potential greenway and trail linkages, as shown on the Conceptual Open Space and Conservation Map.

4.3 Existing Carlsbad Programs

The City of Carlsbad currently has several programs in place that support improvements to the City's pedestrian environment and encourage increased pedestrian activity. These programs are summarized below.

- The ***Carlsbad Residential Traffic Management Program*** is in place to implement traffic calming strategies that will reduce excessive vehicle speeds and high traffic volumes in residential neighborhoods.
- The ***Carlsbad Street and Sidewalk Policy Committee*** was established in 2000 to bring streets and sidewalks in the older, northwest section of Carlsbad up to standard, and to support the implementation of alternative street design criteria for streets with 'special character.'
- The ***Citywide Trails Program*** is an effort to preserve open space, while enhancing recreational opportunities and expanding the pedestrian and bicycle networks.

In summary, the City's Pedestrian Master Plan planning process should strive to find common ground with currently adopted policies and programs, and build upon this existing institutional framework to bring about positive change in the City's pedestrian environment.