2.1 INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT SETTING

This study is the result of a directed effort on the part of the City of San Luis Obispo to carry out previously established goals contained in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan* to develop an extensive framework of bikeways for expanded transportation and recreational trail purposes. The purpose of this Preliminary Alignment Plan is to establish the continuous alignment and set of design standards for the multi-use Bob Jones City-to-Sea recreational trail that will work within the context of existing physical constraints along the San Luis Obispo and Prefumo Creek corridors. The plan is intended to identify the issues associated with the trail's construction and present feasible solutions for both its design and long-term operation and maintenance. The planning effort for the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail has been conducted within the framework of a public participation program, and designed to involve all those interested and affected by the proposed trail.

Project Study Area

The Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail project study area discussed in this document is located within the City of San Luis Obispo along the San Luis Obispo Creek corridor between Madonna and Los Osos Valley Roads, and the Prefumo Creek corridor between Calle Joaquin Avenue and Madonna Road. The County of San Luis Obispo is currently studying the continuation of the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail from Los Osos Valley Road to the existing bike trail staging area at Ontario Road in the Avila Valley. This continuation would effectively link the City of San Luis Obispo to the sea in Avila Beach. Figure 1 illustrates the project study area.

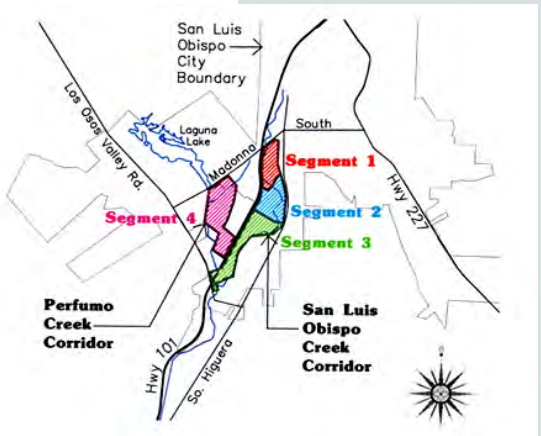

Figure 1. Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail Project Study Area

The Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail consists of the four segments described below and illustrated in the accompanying Segment Map (Figure 1).

- Segment 1: Madonna Road to Elks Lane
- Segment 2: Elks Lane to Prado Road
- Segment 3: Prado Road to Los Osos Valley Road
- Segment 4: Calle Joaquin Avenue to Madonna Road

The topography of the study area is generally level terrain along the San Luis Obispo and Prefumo Creek corridors. The trail crosses San Luis Obispo and Prefumo Creeks and one drainage channel. The trail corridor consists primarily of agricultural, commercial, and industrial uses. Zoning surrounding the bike trail consists of conservation/ open space, agriculture, commercial services, office/ planned development, public facilities, and residential areas.

Planning Process

Data Collection:

Environmental and planning documents, parcel owner information and development proposals, corridor mapping, and field visits formulated the set of working maps and corridor information used in design discussions. Data collected and reviewed include:

- City of San Luis Obispo's *Bicycle Transportation Plan* and existing Bicycle Route Maps
- City of San Luis Obispo's *Zoning Regulations* and Maps, *General Plan Circulation Element*, and *Open Space Element*
- City of San Luis Obispo's *Mid-Higuera Enhancement Plan*

- *Stream Corridor Management Plan for San Luis Obispo Creek, Phase 1 Study Area*, dated May 2, 1997. Prepared by Questa Engineering Corporation in association with Morro Group Biological Consultants
- *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the San Luis Obispo Creek Flood Control Modifications*, dated January 1982. Prepared by MDW Associates and George S. Nolte and Associates
- Caltrans *Highway Design Manual*, Chapter 1000 - Bikeway Planning and Design
- AASHTO's *Guidelines for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*
- Dalidio proposed Development Plan and Environmental Impact Report
- Caltrans Route 101 / Prado Road Interchange Plan
- Ongoing data review of Questa Engineering Corporation's Zone 9 Flood Study

Figure 2. Trail Tour with Design Team

Trail Corridor Tour:
City staff, environmental consultants, and design team members walked the entire length of the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail corridor. Armed with survey equipment, cameras, and field maps, the tour yielded critical information for the understanding of the existing conditions and potential problem areas while clearly illustrating areas most suitable for trail placement. Use of the survey equipment was particularly valuable, providing precise locations for the most promising alignments found in the field. This information played a key role in evaluating alternative alignments relative to actual field conditions.

Figure 3. Presentation of Preliminary Trail Alignment at Public Workshop

Key Person Interviews:
A series of personal discussions with property owners and their representatives, interest group representatives, Questa Engineering Corporation (Zone 9 Flood Study), Caltrans engineers, City staff, and public officials took place as an initial step for the proposed trail alignments.

Public Workshop:
A public workshop was held to present preliminary trail alignment and amenities, collect input on the trail alignment, and provide a forum for discussion. Public workshop notice letters were sent to property owners adjacent to the proposed trail, and an announcement was placed in the local newspaper. The notice letter described the trail planning process along with a brief project description. Property owners, local bike enthusiasts, SLO Bike Committee members, environmental activists, City facility operators, and City staff from various departments attended the workshop.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of San Luis Obispo is holding a public meeting to review the proposed Class 1 Bike Trail alignments for the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Bike Trail.

These alignments will primarily follow the existing creek routes along San Luis Obispo Creek between Madonna and Los Osos Valley Roads, and Perfumo Creek between Laguna Lake and Calle Joaquin Avenue.

The meeting will take place on November 9, 2000, from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM in the San Luis Obispo Veterans Hall located at 1661 Mill Street in San Luis Obispo, California.

Figure 4. Public Workshop Notice

Design Development:
Based on the review of all collected data, key person interviews, field tours, alternative path alignments, and connections to adjacent facilities were developed and evaluated. The planning team's biologists (City staff and consultants) studied several alternative alignments to evaluate potential impacts to the adjacent riparian habitat, categorized the primary biological constraints along the trail corridor, and identified agencies whose jurisdictional review and approval would be required. The consulting biologists documented these findings in the Preliminary Biological Constraints Analysis contained in Appendix A of this document.

This comprehensive process yielded a bike trail alignment that minimized impacts to the adjacent habitat, while providing high recreational value, and is attainable in both the near and long term. These alignments are discussed in further detail in Sections 2.3 and 2.5 of this document.

2.2 PROJECT GOALS

The Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail Preliminary Alignment Plan is intended to become the framework for a phased implementation of a Class I bike trail, ultimately linking to a continuous trail system that leads from the City of San Luis Obispo to the town of Avila Beach. The vision for the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail , as expressed in the Executive Summary, is further defined by a set of goals created as a result of the Planning Process. In response to the issue identification that occurred early on in the Planning Process, the following project goals were established:

A. Locate the trail outside creek setback areas wherever possible.
B. Minimize trail encroachment into creek setback areas. Encroachment should only occur where physical constraints prevent placement outside of the setback area, or where encroachment into the setback area is deemed the most appropriate location for the trail facility.
C. Protect and minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive habitats along the trail through fencing, landscaping, and appropriate trail placement.
D. Incorporate habitat restoration and enhancement provisions.
E. Provide a functional facility that serves major and minor destinations, provides relatively direct connections in the City, and follows routes already identified in the *Bicycle Transportation Plan*.
F. Provide an alternative to heavily traveled parallel roadways.
G. Design and plan for a trail that will serve both commuter and recreational cyclists (a Class I bikeway), walkers, and bladers.
H. Design and plan for a multi-use trail that will be affordable to implement.
I. Establish an alignment that connects with existing Class II and planned Class I and II bikeways wherever possible.
J. Minimize impacts to adjacent properties by appropriate design and operation of the facility, including fencing, landscaping, and other improvements.
K. Identify alternative alignments where constraints cannot be overcome in either the short- or long-term.
L. Design the facility to meet state and federal standards, and where feasible, the Americans with Disabilities Act.
M. Design grade crossings at roadways to maximize trail user safety and convenience, while minimizing negative impacts to traffic operations.
N. Integrate historical and educational elements into the trail design.
O. Provide for user needs by including rest stops, benches, staging areas, trail access points, and directional signage.
P. Collaborate with ongoing Zone 9 flood studies such that the trail can be integrated with flood protection improvements where possible.
Q. Maximize the user experience by careful alignment and avoidance of offensive visual, auditory, and other negative adjacencies.
R. Provide an attractive recreational facility that encourages community residents and visitors to use non-motorized forms of transportation.

2.3 EXISTING CONDITIONS/ OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

One of the first steps in assessing the feasibility of the trail's alignment and potential design character is to carefully review the existing physical characteristics of the trail corridor. Features such as topographical conditions, sensitive habitats, creek crossings, street and highway crossings, adjacent land use, and property ownership are just some of the factors that influence the trail's location and design. These physical constraints help determine the area where the trail should be located, and areas to avoid completely. Once mapping of the corridor was complete, an in-depth field tour was conducted by the project team to accurately record existing physical conditions along the trail corridor. Field notes were transferred onto a set of trail segment maps that combined information relating to topography, parcel lines, ownership, land use, building locations, and other improvements. All significant creek and drainage crossings and public street and highway crossings were identified. These maps were then used by the design team to discuss and confirm the existence and/or severity of the conditions in the field, and how those factors translated into a set of design criteria for trail alignment. The project's segment boundaries are illustrated in the accompanying Segment Map (Figure 5). A summary of the existing conditions along each segment of the Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail corridor is provided in the following sections and detailed maps (Figures 6 thru 10).

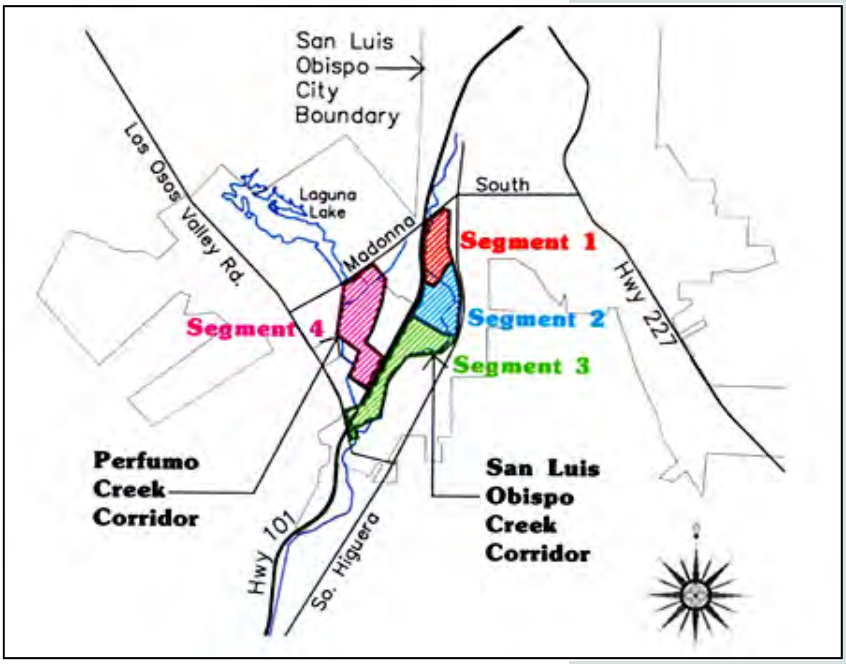

Figure 5. Bob Jones City-to-Sea Trail Segment Map