

# Railroad Safety Trail

## 1.1 Executive Summary

### 1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Railroad Safety Trail Preliminary Alignment Plans establish the preferred alignment and design of Class I bicycle trails within the City of San Luis Obispo. The trails and multi-use pathways for bicycling, walking, and roller-blading are intended to promote alternative forms of transportation and provide new recreational opportunities consistent with the goals set forth in the City's *Bicycle Transportation Plan*.

The Railroad Safety Trail spans 2.3 kilometers (1.4 miles) and is primarily located within the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. The trail will serve as a direct north / south commuter route improving user safety along this established corridor between Santa Rosa Street and the intersection of Foothill, and California Boulevards near Cal Poly. The Railroad Safety Trail will eventually link to the southern portions of the City via the existing (phase 1) and future (phase 2) Railroad Recreational Trail extending along the Union Pacific Railroad, north of Orcutt Road.

In 1993, the City of San Luis Obispo completed and adopted the *Bicycle Transportation Plan*, which formally established the framework of goals, policies, procedures, and standards for the development of a citywide bicycle transportation network. That document is the impetus behind the preparation of these Preliminary Alignment Plans.

The planning effort for these Preliminary Alignment Plans has been conducted within the context of a public outreach program designed to involve all those interested and affected by the proposed trail. Interviews with key City staff, public agencies, advisory committees, adjacent property owners, and public workshops were used to fully engage and explore issues important to interest groups and the public at large.

This document, in tandem with the Preliminary Alignment Plans, identifies the most promising trail alignments and serves as the framework for the phased implementation of the multi-use trails. The Trail Design Standards contain clear standards for trail design on a wide range of topics which meet the practical, recreational, and operational requirements of the trails.

### 1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

Over the past 25 years, the City of San Luis Obispo has been planning and installing bike-ways. To date, the City has created over 25 miles of Class II bike lanes extending along both sides of most arterial streets. In general, a Class I trail is completely separated from any roadways, and a Class II trail shares the travel routes with automobiles. The City has begun to construct Class I bikeways that are separated from streets and traffic. A recent example of a Class I bikeway is the path that extends along the east side of the Union Pacific Railroad, north of Orcutt Road.

In 1993, the City adopted the *Bicycle Transportation Plan (BTP)* that calls for the completion of a rich network of bikeways that link all parts of our community and serves people using bicycles for everyday transportation and for recreation. The BTP identifies a network of off-street bike paths that adjoin selected creek corridors and the Union Pacific Railroad. These paths are intended to link neighborhoods with major destinations in San Luis Obispo and provide opportunities for recreational bicycling, walking, and roller-blading, free from conflicts with motor vehicles.

This plan presents goals, policies, standards, and maps that direct the installation of parts of the Class I bikeway network, including the Railroad Safety Trail. This specific bikeway segment is consistent with the adopted Bicycle Transportation Plan. Their installation is also supported by the *General Plan Circulation Element*, which states:

*The City will complete a continuous network of safe and convenient bikeways that connect neighborhoods with major activity centers and with county bike routes as specified by the Bicycle Transportation Plan (reference page 14, policy 3.3).*

In May 2000, the City of San Luis Obispo hired a team of consultants, headed by the RRM Design Group, to identify opportunities and constraints, evaluate alternative alignments, and prepare specific recommendations for the paths' design and location. This plan presents the results of that 11-month consultant and City-staff effort.