

# Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan\*

**an Element of the Master Plan of the City of Los Angeles**

**Prepared by the Department of City Planning and the Department of Recreation and Parks  
\*Language transcribed verbatim from the plan December  
1, 2009 by the Los Angeles Equine Advisory Committee.  
(All illustrations and maps omitted.)**

# City of Los Angeles Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan

This plan consists of Statement of Policy, Features of the Plan,  
and Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails map

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# Statement of Policy

## Purpose and Use of the Plan

The Major Equestrian and Hiking Trails Plan is a portion of the Recreation Element of the Master Plan of the City of Los Angeles. It was designed to serve as a guide to governmental agencies concerned with the acquisition, construction and maintenance of equestrian and hiking trails in the City. It will be of assistance in the formulation and revision of other Master Plan elements which are affected by these facilities. Additionally, it provides information concerning the extent and location of needed and proposed equestrian and hiking trails, and their relation to, and effect upon, privately owned properties. The Plan designates general, rather than precise, locations for the facilities involved.

# Objectives of the Plan

## Equestrian Trails

- To provide a means for the promotion of horseback riding as a healthful and relaxing activity.
- To provide a guide that can be used to acquire or reserve land for a coordinated system of equestrian trails.
- To guide public and private decision makers in the development of new trails to form a system connecting City trails with County, State and Federal systems and connecting urban trails with wilderness trails.
- To provide a guide for the combination of equestrian and hiking trails where desirable.
- To illustrate the location of horsekeeping districts, major concentrations of horses and to indicate how these areas relate to the trail system.

*Well-equipped trail stops are proposed at convenient intervals.*

## Hiking Trails

- To provide policies and a plan which can be used in the promotion of hiking as a healthful and relaxing activity.
- To designate existing hiking trails in and adjoining the City of Los Angeles.
- To describe standards for the improvement of existing and proposed trails.
- To provide a guide for new trails where desirable, as segments, as separate systems, or in combination with equestrian trails.

*Public camping areas add to enjoyment of the trail system*

# **Standards and Criteria**

## **Equestrian Trails**

- **Trails should have a minimum tread width of ten feet and a cleared width of twelve feet**
- **Routes shown on the Major Trails Plan should be only backbone trails which connect the various equestrian areas together to form a major trails system. Connections with the other city trails and the major County, State and Federal trails surrounding the City should be included.**
- **Trails should be along interesting routes with varied features and scenery.**
- **Trails should be used by equestrians and hikers only. Bicycles, motorcycles, and other vehicles except maintenance vehicles should be prohibited.**
- **A maximum grade of 10 per cent is desirable. Steeper grades may be allowed in exceptional terrain, but the distance should be limited to a maximum of 500 feet.**
- **Trails should be aligned to eliminate the need for sharp switchbacks. However, if these are unavoidable, the trail should be reinforced and drainage provisions made to prevent erosion of the trail and properties adjoining it.**
- **Street crossings should be avoided where possible, but may be used if they are appropriately marked and controlled.**
- **Combined trail stops and assembly areas adjoining the trail should be provided at intervals of approximately 12 to 20 miles. Minimum parking should be available for ten vehicles plus stock trailers. Heavily used trails should have parking for up to eighty vehicles. Adequate holding stalls, hitching racks, water and toilets should be provided. Portions of some areas should also be improved as camps for overnight riders.**

## **Hiking Trails**

**Equestrian trails standards also apply to hiking trails, with the exception of the following:**

- **Trails should have a minimum tread width of five feet and a cleared width of seven feet except in unusual circumstances**
- **The grade of the trail should be related to the purpose for using the particular trail. The rock climber, as well as the beginning hiker, should be served by the various trails proposed.**

# Features of the Plan

## City Equestrian Trails

In 1968 the Department of Recreation and Parks owned and/or maintained approximately 63 miles of trails in four locations as shown on the Plan map. There were also several miles of City trails in residential areas, notably the Porter Ranch and Shadow Hills areas.

## City Hiking Trails

In addition to the equestrian trails, the City in 1968 owned and/or maintained some 81 miles of hiking trails. These were in approximately the same locations as the equestrian trails. They varied from paved pathways to unpaved canyon trails.

*Standards are necessary to ensure that trails are neither too narrow nor too steep.*

## Proposed Trails System

The proposed trails system includes City owned trails and an additional 81 miles of equestrian and hiking trails. Some 71 miles of the proposed trails are designated on the plan map for combined equestrian and hiking use. Forty-five miles of the combined trails would be located within City boundaries. The remainder are necessary to complete the system but are proposals on land of other jurisdictions.

## Other Trails

The Cities of Pasadena, Rolling Hills and Rolling Hills Estates own and/or operate their own city trails systems. Only the Pasadena City trail is shown on the Los Angeles City Plan. However, all are open for use by our City's residents.

Horsemen and hikers often use a number of unofficial trails in and around the City. These trails are mainly paths in the Santa Monica Mountains and in the hills fringing the San Fernando Valley. They follow natural routes across private and public property. Some of these trails in City parks are maintained by the Department of Recreation and Parks. There are no State or Federal trails in the City, but Los Angeles County operates a short trail in the City's Highland Park District and also has an extensive trails system outside the City.

## Trail Stops

There are three existing and eight proposed trails stops shown on the Plan map.

## Equestrian Centers

A proposed 65-acre center in Griffith Park will provide stables, show rings, an arena and various ancillary services. Other centers at Hansen Dam and Sepulveda Dam are under consideration.

## Special Features

The Plan shows five special features—existing Stony Point, proposed Mount Lukins hiking area, and the three proposed equestrian centers.

## **Background**

**Recreation and leisure activities are beginning to occupy a larger segment of people's lives. Current trends call for a future reduction in the work week and an increase in vacations. These changes will result in a corresponding increase in leisure time. The amount of this free time used for recreation increases with income. Steadily rising income levels are expected to result in an increased demand for recreational facilities. These increasing demands, combined with an already acute shortage of land available for all types of recreation in the Los Angeles area, create difficult recreation problems. Future urban growth will amplify the problem of providing adequate recreational facilities.**

*Hiking is enjoyed by all age groups.*

**There are a number of clubs and groups who have an interest in trails. Chief among these are the Sierra Club, Equestrian Trails Incorporated, and the Boy Scouts. In the Los Angeles area these clubs have a combined membership of about 225,000. Additionally, there are myriad other small groups including riding and hiking clubs, property owners associations, civic betterment groups and chambers of commerce with equestrians and hikers in their membership.**

**The Los Angeles City Zoning Code has special provisions for horsekeeping. It is presently permitted in the A1 and A2 Zones and in the RA, RE, RS and R1 Zones on lots with an area of at least 20,000 square feet with no more than one horse kept for each 5,000 square feet.**

**The Code also specifies a "K" Supplemental Use District. These districts are specifically intended for horsekeeping on large lots, in areas with few sidewalks and where riding is possible along the streets. Horses in "K" districts may be kept on 20,000 square foot lots (gross area including one-half of the street) or in 17,500 net square foot lots.**

**The estimated population of 100,000 horses in Los Angeles County is concentrated in certain areas: the Palos Verdes Peninsula, Torrance, Carson, South Pasadena and the San Fernando Valley.**

**Since the Plan Map shows trails outside the city limits of Los Angeles, close interjurisdictional cooperation will be needed to bring this plan to fruition. The proposed trail system crosses City, County and Forest Service boundaries and uses portions of existing and proposed trails of all three. Therefore, financing and construction of the system will be a joint responsibility.**