



THIS PLAN IS STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

# **OV Trails Connect: Planning Future Trails and Paths**

90% Complete DRAFT

Disclaimer: This document is organized and formatted to be a web-based plan. Graphics, photos, maps, and illustrations are posted separately on the website for 90% public review. See all materials at:

<https://engagekh.mysocialpinpoint.com/orovalleytrailsmasterplan>

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## THE BASICS

### VISION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Vision Statement of this plan serves as its foundation and represents the values and desires of our community. The Guiding Principles provide a high-level view, building on the vision and establishing the foundation for the plan's priorities and implementation plan. Together, they guide the intent of the plan by ensuring a reflection of community values and needs, promoting consistency in development and maintenance, and facilitating strategic planning.

The Vision Statement and Guiding Principles were created directly from conversations with residents and user groups on the existing conditions of OV's paths and trails system and hearing about how it could better serve the community. Drafts of these concepts were workshopped with residents and stakeholders, all regional partners such as Catalina State Park, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and reviewed by Town Council to ensure a cohesive and unified direction for the future.

#### **Vision:**

Oro Valley residents value a comprehensive and inviting trails and paths network that brings users of all abilities into the beautiful desert environment and throughout the community. Through thoughtful planning and design, the network is increasingly safe, interconnected, maintained, and accessible for all abilities. The trail and path routes provide transport to destinations, outdoor recreation, social interaction, physical and mental well-being, and a deeper connection to nature for generations.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

### **REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSESTS**

1. Provide amenities to support a broad spectrum of users:
  2. Add restroom facilities and drinking fountains to highest use and appropriate trailheads
  3. Add bicycle racks and support amenities like bike repair stations to highest use and appropriate trailheads
  4. Add benches and points of respite along appropriate trails and paved paths
  5. Increase shade opportunities where appropriate to encourage year-round use

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6. Attract complementary businesses (e.g. cafes) near paved path routes
7. Encourage provision of cellular/Wi-Fi coverage along all paved path routes
8. Maintain high-quality trails and paved paths:
  9. Assess trail and multi-use path surface conditions and prioritize improvement and repairs such as pavement cracks
  10. Implement a preventive maintenance schedule
  11. Implement a program to routinely monitor trail and multi-use path conditions and upkeep
  12. Coordinate trail maintenance on Pima County land within Oro Valley
13. Ensure resources and funding are available to maintain and improve trails and paved paths:
  14. Support consistent funding to provide for maintenance and incremental improvements and expansion
  15. Seek federal, state, and regional grants and partnerships
  16. Formalize and promote a formal volunteer program to help maintain trails
  17. Create a volunteer program to clean and report issues
  18. Partner with businesses and external groups for maintenance, monitoring, and fundraising opportunities
  19. Create and market the ability to provide donations for site furnishings and amenities like benches, etc.
  20. Work with resorts, the OV Tourism Board, and Town Council to promote paths and trails in the tourism plan

## *ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY*

21. Provide increased opportunities for local and regional connectivity:
  22. Prioritize connections to trails and paths from neighborhoods
  23. Ensure connections to trails, schools, parks, and places of interest (e.g., cafes, restaurants, shopping, resorts)
  24. Plan connections between existing trails and paths
  25. Engage with local (homeowners association [HOA]), regional, state, and federal land owners to identify and create an interconnected network
26. Uphold the scenic beauty and natural environment:
  27. Maintain scenic views along major trail corridors

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28. Ensure that development along trail and paved path corridors conserves scenic views and the adjacent trail environment with appropriate buffer areas
29. Educate trail and paved path users on their surroundings and the natural habitat
30. Identify wildlife corridors and natural washes to prioritize sensitive placement of new unpaved trails and paved path alignments within open space conservation areas
31. Provide and maintain trash receptacles in appropriate locations
32. Provide wildlife sign notice to users when entering habitat areas
33. Identify and address unauthorized trails, especially in areas with significant habitat or cultural resources

## *GROW A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK*

34. Secure new trails for all users of all abilities
  35. Identify and implement Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parking and unpaved trail loops at key trailheads
  36. Engage with Arizona State Land Department in coordination with Pinal County, Pima County, and Town of Marana to identify and secure formal trail easements in the Arroyo Grande area, prioritizing existing high-use trail corridors in the Big Wash, Honeybee Canyon, Edwin Road, and Badlands areas
  37. Coordinate with and assist Pima County to expand County trails to create more opportunities for regional connectivity
  38. Prioritize adding trails where easements already exist and secure pending easements
39. Ensure a safe trails and paved paths network and educate users on trail and path etiquette
  40. Improve safety and etiquette through design, policies, standards, and rules, including the use of e-bikes
  41. Ensure rules address the safety of the diverse spectrum of users
  42. Clearly communicate policies, rules, safety caution areas, and etiquette through signage
  43. Investigate how the Town and Pima County should enforce adopted rules through programs such as a volunteer bike patrol
  44. Facilitate emergency response efforts by adding locational mile markers
  45. Host an annual campaign to educate residents and promote trail and path etiquette, leash laws, safe speeds, etc.

## THE BASICS

46. Consider lighting in isolated, high-traffic paved path areas in a sensitive manner to conserve dark skies
47. Seek provision of cellular coverage along all paved path routes
48. Ensure accessible parking and access to trails and paved paths
  49. Establish clear points of access and associate signage to trails
  50. Coordinate with Pima County, other government agencies, and private landowners as appropriate to ensure sufficient parking at designated trailheads
  51. Ensure ADA accessibility at key trailheads and all paved paths
  52. Ensure adequate parking for equestrian use where applicableWork with businesses and shopping center owners to enable parking adjacent to paved paths
53. Acknowledge that e-bikes increase accessibility for all ages and abilities and pedal-assist e-bikes should be accommodated accordingly

## *IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING*

54. Sign and clearly designate trailheads and paved path access
  55. Ensure signage lends itself to the clear designation and formalization of trails
  56. Add wayfinding signage and surface markings to assist in trail and paved path navigation
  57. Balance need for signage with desire to maintain natural environment setting
  58. Add signage that clearly delineates policies, rules, safety caution areas, and etiquette
  59. Signage design should be clean, concise, and oriented toward a first-time visitor or resident user
60. Provide a variety of map resources for all users
  61. Provide map resources for all users
  62. Provide electronic map files for download into popular apps
  63. Map amenities, slopes, surface types, and difficulty level for user reference
  64. Erect ground-mounted maps at key trailheads and other heavy-use areas
  65. Increase access to digital maps by providing QR codes on signage
  66. Promote trail and path network information and digital maps by reaching out to area businesses and resorts
  67. Integrate maps with networks beyond Oro Valley limits in concert with adjacent regional, state, and federal jurisdictions

## THE BASICS

### NAVIGATING THE PLAN

#### INSERT HELPFUL TIPS ON MOBILE DEVICE VS. WEB EXPERIENCE

The plan is comprised of four primary sections, focusing on the main components of the Oro Valley trails and paths network. These include:

- Paved Multi-Use Paths
- The Loop
- Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve
- Unpaved Trails

Each section includes information and maps about the component, proposed improvements, and identifies component-specific actions to implement. These sections are accessible from the navigation menu at the top of the screen.

Each section includes the following information:

- What is a Multi-Use Path/The Loop/Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve/Unpaved Trail?
- Existing conditions of that path or trail system
  - Technical analysis (mileage, physical form, quality/condition)
  - Current map
  - Focused community guidance
- Proposed improvements and actions
  - Narrative of improvements
    - Alignment of priorities to guiding principles and community comments
  - Implementation table
  - Future map

### FOUR FOCUS AREAS:

Currently, Oro Valley boasts 79 miles of bikeable streets and pathways (33 miles of signed bike routes, 24 miles of bikeable paved shoulders, and 22 miles of multi-use separated pathways along major streets) and 44 miles of natural trails (both cultivated and primitive trails). The current system caters to cyclists, mountain bikers, hikers, walkers and runners, equestrians, inline skaters, and baby strollers.

The four main trail and path types include:

## THE BASICS

- Paved multi-use paths adjacent to and separated from roadways
- Paved paths that are part of Pima County's Chuck Huckelberry Loop system (The Loop)
- Paved paths within Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve
- Unpaved trails

### **Paved Multi-Use Paths:**

Oro Valley's extensive 30 mile network of multi-use paved paths offers residents and visitors a safe and scenic way to explore the area's natural beauty. These pathways are designed to accommodate a variety of activities, including walking, running, cycling, and rollerblading, making them accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

These primarily asphalt paved paths wind through picturesque landscapes, with stunning views of the surrounding mountains and desert flora, and typically run along roadways with a vegetated buffer between cars and users. They connect key parts of the community, linking neighborhoods, parks, recreational facilities and other key destinations, and providing a seamless travel experience without the need for motor vehicles.

LINK: [MUP\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

### **Chuck Huckelberry Loop:**

The Chuck Huckelberry Loop, often simply referred to as "The Loop," is a renowned multi-use pathway system that spans over 138 miles throughout Pima County, Marana, Tucson, South Tucson, and Oro Valley. The Loop offers a network of mostly paved multi-use paths perfect for cyclists, pedestrians, runners, and horseback riders. Winding through scenic landscapes, river parks, and urban areas, it connects key regional destinations and provides a safe, enjoyable way to experience the diverse natural beauty of the region.

LINK: [Loop\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

### **Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve:**

The Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve is a 200+ acre park with over six miles of eight-foot-wide concrete paths in north Oro Valley. The improved paths are open to walkers/hikers, dog-walkers, strollers, and bikers from dawn to dusk. The former private golf course now acts as a nature corridor for native wildlife to move through and provides visitors stunning views of the Catalina and Tortolita mountain ranges and desert flora. Pedestrian tunnels beneath roadways offer safe crossings for users on former cart paths. A conservation easement was placed on the property to ensure its permanent protection as open space, habitat space, and paths.

## THE BASICS

LINK: [VTNP\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

### **Unpaved Trails:**

The Town's 45 miles of unpaved trails immerse users in the rugged beauty of the Sonoran Desert, offering a more natural and adventurous experience for hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and equestrian enthusiasts. Many of the more "groomed" unpaved trails are within natural spaces within housing subdivisions or remote public lands.

The more "primitive" trails are natural dirt trails that can contain rocks, steep slopes, and rough terrain, and run along washes or through the town's natural open space. These trails link parks and neighborhoods within Town and connect to larger trail networks beyond.

LINK: [Unpaved\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

## MAPS & RESOURCES

The full collection of maps and resources featured within the Plan are consolidated below:

[LINK](#)

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

### **Plan For Action**

A proper plan for action is key in transforming a community's vision into reality. The implementation plan sets priorities and clear action steps that reflect the values and needs of the community demonstrated in the Plan's vision and guiding principles. During the public outreach process, online survey respondents were asked to rank a list of priorities for future improvement, from continued maintenance of existing trails to installing new amenities or new routes through Town and beyond.

Listening to residents' opinions and needs, prioritizing changes that improve public safety, and weighing what could have the biggest impact with cost efficiency and ensuring progressive improvements were all major factors in the implementation plan. The implementation plan and deeper breakdown on funding can be found in the Implementation section [\(LINK\)](#).

## THE BASICS

Improvements are intended to be realized incrementally over time, with respect to the many demands on the Town's budget resources. Securing adequate and sustainable funding is essential to maintaining and improving OV's paths and trails network. A diversified revenue strategy from sources like the general fund, municipal bonds, impact and capital improvement fees, corporate sponsorships, government grants, taxes, philanthropy, and volunteerism can help the Town find unique strategies for securing funding needed. A comprehensive approach helps ensure successful implementation and long-term sustainability of paths and trails projects.

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# IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND TABLE:

The implementation plan balances potential impact, cost, opportunities, need, and community desire to create action items for the future. Priorities span each of the Plan's guiding principles, and suggest improvements for everything from continued maintenance and planning, greater connectivity network-wide and beyond, increased amenities and accessibility for all, and improved signage, mapping, and wayfinding.

#### INSERT PDF

The implementation table includes timelines for work as follows:

- Short-Term goals and actions should take place within 1-3 years, and would address safety goals like installing signage and maintaining areas, quick wins like mapping an inventory, trailheads, path/trail conditions, minor amenities, and new easements.
- Mid-Term goals and actions should take place within 3-6 years, and would address larger maintenance actions, implementing new trails and paths, installing restrooms and water fountains, and implementing a staff position.
- Long-Term goals and actions should take place in 6-10+ years, and would include long-term goals such as maintenance and new trails and paths.

Goals and corresponding actions may shift between timelines and categories based on changing needs and funding priorities of an evolving community.

This implementation table shows the overall action items for the Town's future paths and trails network. It also contains a breakdown of each trail/path type, which can also be explored with greater context within each individual section. Priority rankings are based on a blend of community input and priority levels, "quick wins," and funding level required (1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest).

#### INSERT LINKS TO EACH TRAIL AND PATH TYPE MATRIX

### FUNDING STRATEGIES:

As trails and path networks grow and become highly utilized, diversified revenue source options must also be identified and developed. Nationally, a growing number of municipalities have developed policies and partnership agreements for regional trail and

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

path networks provided regionally. They have also developed strong partnerships that are fair and equitable in delivering services and maintenance.

In the Town of Oro Valley, some of these policies and management practices are in place or being considered, while others should be considered for future implementation. Some of these sources can potentially be examined as a revenue option to support the Town's capital and operational needs. The Town will need to continually track trail and path network utilization and conduct an in-depth assessment of the existing system to create a detailed asset management and lifecycle replacement schedule. Managing good data is crucial to making good decisions on revenue development and funding opportunities.

- **ADOT:** ADOT Transportation Enhancement Funds, grants, and programs help fund eligible transportation projects within Arizona. Working with ADOT to fund certain improvements or extensions such as multi-use paths or Loop segments will be examined for possibilities. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **General Fund:** The Town's general fund is a key source of financing for incremental improvements such as signage. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Bond Financing:** Municipal bonds can be issued to finance trail and path projects. These bonds are backed by the government and typically repaid using tax revenues or user fees associated with the facility. Bond financing allows for large-scale projects that may require significant upfront investment that address needs identified as unmet community priorities. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Capital Improvement Fees:** Many parks and recreation systems add a capital improvement fee onto an existing user fee when they develop or enhance major recreation facilities. This is usually applied to amenities like trailheads and special-use facilities. The dollars gained either offset the cost of the capital improvement or the revenue bond that was used to develop or enhance the special use facility. Once the capital improvement is paid off, the fee typically expires and is discontinued. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Corporate Sponsorships:** Parks and recreation projects can seek corporate sponsorships to secure funding. In exchange for financial support, sponsors may receive branding opportunities, advertising exposure, or other promotional benefits. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

- **Developmental Exactions:** When future subdivisions and developments are built, a trail or path will be required to be built, including dedication and construction. (Note: Examples of this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Government Grants:** Parks and recreation projects can often qualify for government grants from federal, state, and local agencies. These grants are typically awarded based on the project's alignment with specific criteria, such as connectivity, safe routes, community impact, environmental sustainability, or economic development. The Town can continue to seek additional grant funding opportunities. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Impact Fees:** Impact fees are charges imposed on new developments to mitigate the impacts they have on the community, such as increased demand for parks and recreation facilities. These fees are typically collected by the Town and used to fund the construction or expansion of infrastructure like trails and paths. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Maintenance Endowment Fund:** This is a fund dedicated exclusively for a park system's maintenance and is funded by a percentage of user fees from programs, events, and rentals. The fee is paid by users and is added to a dedicated fund for facility and equipment replacement. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Partnerships:** Partnerships are joint-development funding sources or operational funding sources formed between separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit, a public agency, or a private business and a public agency. Partnerships with Pima County, Catalina State Park, and the State Land Department are ongoing with Oro Valley. Partners jointly develop revenue-producing parks and recreation facilities and may share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths of each partner. In this approach, entities may provide funding or resources in exchange for specific benefits, such as naming rights, advertising opportunities, or revenue-sharing agreements.
  - Existing partnership agreements should be updated regularly to ensure the purpose of the partnership, what is being provided, and the terms of the agreement are accurate.
  - New partnerships should be forged as the Town continues to evolve and modernize the parks and recreation system to align with community needs.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

- Ensure that partnerships are fair and equitable to the Town and to the partner with the best interests of the community prioritized.  
(Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Preservation Tax:** A preservation tax could be put in place to help fund the acquisition of land around scenic vistas and natural resources. Oro Valley's open space and natural resources were continuously cited as a priority during the community engagement portion of this plan. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Philanthropic Donations:** Non-profit organizations, foundations, and individual donors can contribute funds to support parks and recreation projects. These donations are often made in the form of grants, sponsorships, or endowments. Philanthropic donations can be essential for funding projects that benefit specific communities or have a social or environmental focus. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Regional Transportation Authority:** This state-established taxing district within Pima County recently finalized a new 20-year regional transportation plan called RTA Next. This plan will improve the transportation network within the greater Tucson region and will support "reduced congestion, improved mobility, enhanced and expanded transit, environmental protections, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and pavement rehabilitation." RTA Next will provide funding for transportation improvements within the region. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **User Fees and Charges:** Parks and recreation facilities often generate revenue through user fees, membership fees, rentals, concessions, or program charges. These user fees can help offset the operational and maintenance costs associated with the facilities. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).
- **Volunteerism:** This is an indirect revenue source consisting of individuals donating their time to assist the Town in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces the Town's cost to provide services and builds department advocacy and civic involvement. (Note: Examples of how this funding opportunity is used currently will be included in the final plan).

## WHY PLAN?

# WHY PLAN?

## INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

### **Introduction: Why Plan for Paths and Trails?**

Growing an excellent paved path and unpaved trail system can be a daunting task when not properly planned. With Oro Valley's last path and trail-focused planning effort in 2010, this new plan is necessary to ensure clear development strategies and planned systematic improvements, creation and extension of a network that connects parks, outdoor and cultural/shopping destinations, and provision of a satisfactory outdoor experience for residents.

A robust trails and paths network can spur economic development and visitor spending, increase transportation options, improve health and wellness for residents, increase property values, and provide conservation and green resiliency benefits. Oro Valley, with a growing population and breathtaking natural features surrounding it, has an incredible opportunity to cement its paved path and unpaved trail system as a true jewel of the region.

With the continued implementation of this plan, the Town is interconnected through trails and paths that tie together neighborhoods, serve as a gateway to Catalina State Park, the Santa Catalina and Tortolita Mountains, and state lands, and provide access to the Loop and regional routes. Nearby connections include Coronado National Forest, Catalina State Park, State lands, Honey Bee Canyon, and Dove Mountain.

LINK: [All Proposed and Existing Small.pdf](#)

The Oro Valley Trails Master Plan is a comprehensive, long-range strategy for the creation, optimization, and maintenance of the Town trails and paths network. The Master Plan and the planning process enables the Town to identify the community's vision, goals, and necessary actions to meet resident expectations. It enables decision makers to prioritize resource allocation decisions for existing and new facilities as well as programs, services, and overall maintenance. This Master Plan includes direction that provides the following for the community:

- Incorporation of the Town residents' vision, goals, and tasks outlined in the General Plan (OV's Path Forward) [OVPathForward](#) and the OV Parks and Recreation Master Plan [oro-valley-parks-and-recreation-final-draft-master-plan-4.13.21.pdf](#).
- Documentation of priorities, trends, and demands of the OV residents and charts a long-range plan for accommodating anticipated needs and increased usage

## WHY PLAN?

- A developed plan for strategic placement of trails and paths to maximize connectivity, link key destinations, and improve accessibility and convenience for users
- Access to ongoing digital and app-based mapping showing current and proposed networks with trails, paths, and trailheads, and beginning inventory of existing signage and other amenities
- Information about the needs of the Town's unpaved trails and paved paths systems
- Help to identify and mitigate environmental impacts of path and trail alignments, ensuring they are designed in ways that protect natural habitats, water resources, and minimize ecological disruption
- Information and mapping highlighting trailheads with parking and amenities identified, as well as ADA accessible points and routes, highlighting accessibility points throughout the systems
- A developed prioritized implementation plan that outlines projects, anticipated costs, potential funding sources, and operation and maintenance implications based on community needs
- A guide for critical decisions about trails and paths facilities, infrastructure, programs, and services

### **Importance of Trails and Paths**

Pathways and trails are an important asset to OV residents and the area as a whole due to their multifaceted benefits. Comprehensive planning of trails and paths systems allows the Town to prioritize connectivity and routes to places users most want to visit, plan for future easements and land usages to maximize strategic use and preservation of resources, increase user safety through proper mapping and planning, and more easily secure grants and funding opportunities.

The 2021 Parks and Recreation Master Plan [oro-valley-parks-and-recreation-final-draft-master-plan-4.13.21.pdf](#) identified “desire for a connected, accessible recreational trail system that also supports active transportation and safe routes to school” as a key community theme. The top potential improvement priorities for the parks and trails system without a tax increase were:

- General repair and increased maintenance
- Improve existing trail systems
- Purchase land to preserve open space
- Add/expand trails/walking loops in existing parks.

## WHY PLAN?

This process also identified restroom buildings as a top unmet need throughout Oro Valley's parks and trails system.

74% of participants in the OV's Path Forward (the Town's new general plan effort) outreach process believed that the Town should be known as an "outdoor/recreational community." This identity can blossom as part of the Town tourism plan and have positive economic impact. With public and Town support in place, as well as an existing reputation as a cycling mecca and outdoor hotspot, the path and trails network can only improve with additional planning and standardization in place. As identified by participants in OV's Path Forward, and this plan, paths and trails contribute to the livability, sustainability, connectivity, and vibrancy of the Town in several impactful ways:

- **Community:** These spaces serve as communal areas where residents can interact and engage in various activities. They foster a sense of community, promote social interactions, and provide venues for gatherings of any kind. These spaces enhance civic engagement and allow people to feel a sense of place in their communities.

Respondents during the public outreach process frequently reported just how important utilizing trails and paths were for frequenting local businesses, exploring their own neighborhoods, and making memories with their families.

- **Connectivity:** Pathways and trails enhance connectivity by linking various neighborhoods, parks, and key locations. Improved connectivity makes it easier for residents to access services and destinations such as school, work, and shopping, cultural sites, and recreational areas. This fosters greater integration and cohesion within the Town and has a positive effect on local economies by boosting tourism and foot traffic to nearby businesses.

Many comments from the public requested greater connectivity around Town and beyond, and ranked increased connectivity to other paths/trails and cultural/shopping destinations as the number two and three top priorities for path and trail improvement.

- **Health Benefits:** Pathways and trails greatly contribute to public health by promoting physical activity. They provide convenient and accessible areas for exercise, such as walking, jogging, and cycling. Engaging in these activities can lower the risk of chronic illnesses, enhance mental well-being, and support a healthier lifestyle for people of all ages in the Town.

## WHY PLAN?

This is supported by residents as follows:

- 81% of online survey respondents use paths and trails for walking, 55% for road biking, and 53% for hiking.
- 67% reported tracking outdoor activities with health apps like Strava, showing how many residents utilize these networks for fitness.

- **Transportation Alternatives:** Pathways and trails provide important alternatives to driving, offering safe and convenient routes for walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation. This shift helps alleviate traffic congestion to and from key destinations, contributing to better air quality and a lower overall greenhouse gas emission level. Providing alternative modes of transportation is more equitable and improves access to opportunities by connecting various parts of the Town and bridging gaps between different neighborhoods.

Approximately 30% of residents during the public outreach process reported using paths and trails to connect to parks, other trails, and other multi-use paths, and another 20% utilize them to connect to shopping destinations. Users asked for greater connectivity to be able to bike to work and school instead of drive.

- **Environmental Benefits:** Green pathways and trails integrate natural elements into urban settings, which can mitigate the heat island effect, manage stormwater runoff more effectively, and support local flora and fauna. This contributes to a healthier urban ecosystem and promotes sustainability while providing an enjoyable way for people to get around.

Many users praised the separation from roads and traffic for many routes throughout town, for a greater feeling of nature and safety. Others asked for increased signage educating about native plants and animal habitats.

- **Economic and Tourism Benefits:** A quality paths and trails system can have real financial benefit for Oro Valley. The draw of a solid network can increase property values and attract new residents, boost visitor numbers and extend stays, enhance the Town's reputation and branding, and create opportunities for hosted events and programming and eco-tourism educational programs. An economic analysis of impact of paths and trails is recommended, and can parlay directly into the Town's tourism plan and vision as an outdoor community.

## WHY PLAN?

### USING THE PLAN

This plan reflects ideas and suggestions from residents, user groups, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Town Council, and knowledge of current conditions and systems to create the vision and guiding principles [\(LINK\)](#). These values and principles shape the Plan's goals, implementation plans, and priorities for the future. OV Trails Connect is meant to be a living document, guiding the development and growth of Oro Valley trails and paths over the next 10 years and beyond. However, as demographics, technologies, and community priorities evolve, it will become necessary to update the plan to ensure its relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with current and future needs.

Looking ahead, this Plan will help guide decisions, implement actions, and maintain a united vision:

- Residents and community members will reference the plan to advocate and hold the Town accountable for meeting its goals, policies, and actions.
- Developers will reference the plan to help guide the dedication of easements, construction paths, and trail/path connections on future projects.
- Regional partners including Pima and Pinal Counties, Catalina State Park, Arizona State Land Department, Town of Marana, US Forest Service, and Pima Association of Governments will use to plan and ensure exploration of connections and collaboration in the future.
- Town staff will use the plan to guide their recommendations, actions, and work plans.
- Boards, commissions, and the Town council will use the plan to guide their decisions and actions.

## COMMUNITY

### PUBLIC OUTREACH IMPORTANCE AND PROCESS

Community engagement and direction are critical to the master planning process. Opinions and ideas received from the community are the foundation for the vision, guiding principles, and action items for OV Trails Connect. Direct communication from the community provides the Town with current opinions of existing trail and path offerings, reveals opportunities to improve, and offers a glimpse into the needs for all network users.

Building on OV's Path Forward General Plan outreach findings, derived from the largest and most successful community engagement in the Town's history, OV Trails Connect utilized a focused process to further engage the community, understand needs, and analyze results of opinions and ideas. The General Plan's robust outreach process gathered values and recommendations from thousands of residents, stakeholders, and user groups, to obtain diverse and well-rounded comments on Oro Valley's current trails and paths as well as what opportunities exist for the future.

### Trail Side Chats

Town staff visited multiple popular path and trail locations to hear directly from users and gather ideas and suggestions as part of Trail Side Chats. Staff asked participants to leave sticky notes with things they liked best, challenges to use, and what could be improved. The Town received approximately 230 comments from participants. Events were held at the following locations:

- Big Wash Trailhead
- Camino Rancho Feliz Parking Area – Loop
- Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve
- Steam Pump Village
- Linda Vista Trailhead

### Project Dedicated Website

The interactive, project-dedicated website is OVTrailsConnect.com. The website included updates on the project, events where residents can provide input, and interactive tools that allow for one or multiple methods of participation. Over 700 respondents contributed their opinions through the website. Visitors were encouraged to provide input utilizing the following website tools:

## COMMUNITY

- An electronic survey
- Interactive mapping tool to identify issues, assets, and improvements
- Online forum where users were asked to “Share your big idea”
- Interactive trails and paths budgeting tool to help determine priorities
- Form to submit general comments or inquiries

### Focus Groups and User Groups

Touch points with the community occurred via pop-up events, social media, online stakeholder groups, website visits, and intercept data. Signs were also placed around the community, specifically near popular paths/trails and trailheads, that encouraged users to go online and share their feelings and suggestions.

Stakeholder groups contributed nearly 200 more comments directly about the OV Trails Connect project. Nearly 250 comments relating to paths and trails were also recorded during the OV’s Path Forward public outreach process. Other groups that provided input include, but are not limited to, the following:

- OV’s Path Forward Resident Working Group
- Regional Agencies Group, including:
  - Arizona Department of Transportation
  - Arizona State Land Department
  - Arizona State Parks and Trails
  - Golder Ranch Fire District
  - Pima County
  - Pinal County
  - Town of Marana
  - US Forest Service
- Oro Valley Town Council
- Oro Valley Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Town of Oro Valley Tourism and Local Resorts
- Trails Stakeholder Group including residents and various user groups
- Youth Advisory Council

### OVERVIEW OF WHAT WE HEARD

With a multi-faceted public outreach process strategy, the Town was able to receive balanced comments from many different resident and user groups. A few major themes were derived from the community engagement, which became the core pillars of the vision

## COMMUNITY

and guiding principles of this plan. These repeated themes showed up both in praise of the current system and when identifying opportunities to improve in the future, and include:

- Reinvesting in Existing Assets
- Enhancing Community Connectivity
- Growing a Safe and Accessible Network
- Improving Signage and Wayfinding

For more information on the vision and guiding principles, please visit The Basics [\(LINK\)](#).

Other key findings included:

- Residents value and frequently utilize the Town's current network. Approximately 9 out of 10 respondents noted that both paved paths and unpaved trails close to home were "important" or "very important," with approximately 8 out of 10 saying the same for Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve and the Loop. An amazing 44% of respondents reported using multi-use paths at least once a week, with another 38% and 37% reported the same for unpaved trails or the Loop respectively.
- Performing preventative upkeep and regular maintenance was by far the top improvement priority desired by users. Increased connectivity to other trails and paths, cultural destinations, and places like school, work, parks, or shopping, followed closely behind.
- Nearly 70% of respondents reported using apps or devices to track their outdoor activities (even with 75% of respondents being over the median OV resident age of 55). This shows how important digitally tracking fitness can be for all age groups. Mapping that can be plugged into outdoor apps and accessed from cellular devices will cater to how residents utilize the system and can bridge the gap many noted with current mapping and wayfinding/signage conditions.
- The majority of outreach participants (81%) use the paths and trails system to walk, and over half use it to hike or road-bike.
- Unpaved trails had the most perceived barriers to use, with surface conditions, insufficient trailhead parking, lack of wayfinding and mapping, and safety and accessibility concerns being more prevalent than with other trail types.

### [PDF OF PUBLIC OUTREACH SUMMARY](#)

For a detailed breakdown of all data received during the public outreach process, comments from Trail Side Chat and stakeholder participants, and key insights gained from it for each trail/path type, please see the public outreach summary (link below).

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[Full\\_Outreach\\_Results\\_05082025.pdf](#)

### BUILDING ON OTHER TOWN PLANS

#### **OV's Path Forward**

The 2026 Oro Valley General Plan, titled "OV's Path Forward," is a comprehensive framework designed to guide the Town's decisions over the next 10 years. It focuses on preserving the community's unique character while addressing future challenges and opportunities. The plan emphasizes stakeholder engagement and collaboration, ensuring that decisions reflect the values and priorities of Oro Valley residents. Over 10,000 comments were provided during the outreach process to guide OV's future. 74% of participants believed that the Town should be known as an "outdoor/recreational community."

OV's Path Forward includes recreation, trails, connectivity, and accessibility; some of the key guiding principles overlap with goals and interests focused on in this plan. Areas of overlap include:

- Improve traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian safety, especially at major intersections
- Provide accessible recreational options for all ages and abilities
- Support a variety of sports and activities
- Expand biking, hiking, walking, running, and equestrian trails and connectivity
- Conserve the natural desert and mountain views
- Protect significant native vegetation, especially heritage saguaros and established ironwood trees
- Maintain and create wildlife corridors
- Expand open space conservation areas
- Prioritize environmental resource conservation and restoration when considering development

OV Trails Connect responds to the identified priority of a strong trails and pathways network in OV's Path Forward, and seeks strong alignment with the general plan's community dialogue, relevant goals, policies, and action items.

#### **2021 Oro Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

The purpose of Town of Oro Valley's Parks and Recreation Master Plan (PRMP) is to create a roadmap for future renovation and expansion of parks, trails, open space and facilities and programming for the Town over the next 10 years following publication. This plan is

## COMMUNITY

based on recognized park planning principles and standards, and reflects input from residents and stakeholders in Oro Valley, Town staff, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Town Council.

OV Trails Connect incorporates resident comments and priorities from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan data. “Trails and Connectivity: Desire for a connected, accessible recreational trail system that also supports active transportation and safe routes to school” was a main theme of community input.

During that plan’s public outreach process, 61% of participants indicated a need for multi-use paved paths, and selected them as their top important facility to their household. Multi-use paved paths were identified most strongly as a high-priority amenity Town-wide.

### Other Documents

This plan also pulls data and insights from:

- Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve Master Plan, including the ongoing Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve Desert Ecosystem Restoration Project
- Pima Regional Trail System Master Plan
- Pinal County Open Space and Trails Plan
- Santa Catalina Trail Plan
- Catalina State Park Master Plan
- Town of Marana Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2020-2030
- Arizona State Trails Plan 2025

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

### WHAT IS A PAVED MULTI-USE PATH?

Multi-use paths within Oro Valley are paved asphalt or concrete surfaces. The majority run along roadways and are separated from the road itself (typically with a landscape buffer with vegetation and/or decomposed granite) for easy access to destinations throughout town and the region. Paved paths are frequented by cyclists, pedestrians/walkers, families with strollers, people on roller skates or scooters, and beyond. These routes provide a safe, accessible and user friendly alternate mode of transportation.

This area is known as a top retirement destination for cyclists. The Town of Oro Valley was again named as a "Gold" level Bicycle Friendly Business by the League of American Bicyclists for the period 2022-2026 for its amenities, facilities and programs offered to its employees and visitors. OV is also known as a premier training location for cyclists and multi-sport athletes, and having quality multi-use paths plays a big part in that.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### **Technical Analysis**

With nearly 80 miles of bike-friendly routes within the town, including 33.5 miles of signed bike routes, 24.5 miles of paved shoulders, and 30 miles of multi-use paths, plus access into Pima County's paved Loop network, cycling is a booming activity in town. Paved multi-use paths are an extremely valuable piece of Oro Valley's outdoor recreation system. Of survey participants, 90% noted that paved multi-use paths were "important," or "very important."

Strava is a popular fitness monitoring app; approximately 25% of survey respondents reported using it to track their outdoor fitness routes. Examining Strava data of users within Oro Valley reveals frequently used routes and hot spots of current paths and trails, as well as popular current sidewalks or "desire paths" that could be formally incorporated into OV's paths and trails network. While not perfect and not a complete picture of every user, the data is a helpful guide.

**INSERT STRAVA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MAPS**

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

The most popular multi-use paths for pedestrians within Oro Valley according to Strava data include along Rancho Vistoso Boulevard (5,065 trips in 2024) and Naranja Drive (4,455). For cyclists, the multi-use paths along Tangerine Road (5,380) and Rancho Vistoso Boulevard (4,810) are most visited. These multi-use path sections were the third and fourth most frequently visited areas within OV by pedestrians and the fourth and fifth most frequently visited areas by cyclists.

While the majority of streets are often used for fitness and connectivity is crucial throughout Town, sections of key thoroughfares that are currently sidewalks stand out as heavily trafficked enough that warrant major examination for transition to multi-use paths.

These include the full length of:

- Rancho Vistoso Boulevard
- Tangerine Road
- Lambert Lane
- Oracle Road
- Ina Road
- Magee Road
- La Cañada Drive

### **Current Map**

[MUP\\_Existing\\_Small.pdf](#)

Multi-use paths currently along Lambert Lane, Naranja Drive, La Cañada Drive, First Avenue, and Tangerine Road (the paths along Cañada del Oro Wash and Big Wash are part of Pima County's Huckelberry Loop System [[LINK](#)]). Many paved multi-use paths run parallel to streets and connect neighborhoods, parks and other path/trail systems, and other destinations around Town. The multi-use path system currently connects to five Level-1, two Level-2, two Level-3, and two Level-4 trailheads.

The trailhead classifications are as follows:

- Level-1: Restroom, Water, Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-2: Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-3: Parking and Info
- Level-4: Amenities and Info

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

### **Focused Community Feedback**

Community engagement was a major part of the OV Trails Connect process. Full public outreach results from the online survey, Trailside Chats, and meetings with stakeholder groups and regional agencies can be found in the Public Outreach Summary [Full\\_Outreach\\_Results\\_05082025.pdf](#). Some key multi-use path-related findings from the OV Trails Connect public outreach process were as follows:

- When asked to rank 10 choices for paved path improvements, 71% of respondents chose “performing preventive upkeep and regular maintenance” as their top priority, by far the most significant and popular choice.
- 95% reported that surface conditions were “okay,” “good,” or “excellent.” This is especially noteworthy when respondents also ranked surface conditions as their most important topic/amenity within the multi-use path system.
- Current connectivity and access are working for many people, with 90% of respondents finding connectivity to places and proximity and ease of access to be “okay,” “good,” or “excellent,” with 85% reporting the same about connectivity to other trails and paths.
- Of survey respondents, 81% said they used Oro Valley’s path and trail system for walking. As the second most popular choice, 55% said they use it for road biking (paved surface).
- 86% of respondents classified etiquette and courtesy of other users as “okay” or better.
- Nearly 80% reporting that published maps and guides as well as wayfinding signage was “okay” or worse.

Many of the comments in the Trailside Chats and stakeholder groups praised the “connectivity to local businesses and other trails and paths.” Common requests centered around reinvesting in existing assets through maintenance and increased comfort amenities such as shade or seating areas, as well as adding safer road crossings where necessary.

## **PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES**

### **Future Map**

[MUP\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

Future paved paths within Oro Valley should follow the same high-quality design and construction standards that users expect for safety, uniformity, and ease of maintenance. New paved paths should follow the standard sections found here [\(LINK\)](#).

- **Design** should consider pedestrian and cyclist safety, including issues like adjacency to vehicular traffic and landscape buffer elements, radii of turns, site visibility of oncoming cyclists, and signs to notify of potential hazards. Design should also consider safe road crossings where applicable (including weighing visibility, flashing beacons, and accessibility).
- **Proposed improvements** include two additional Level-2 trailheads (one along E Ina Road and the other along N Rancho Vistoso Boulevard where it connects with Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve) with parking, amenities, and path information.

Many proposed multi-use paths take the place of existing landscape-separated sidewalks, while others are entirely new segments where there is currently landscape area. As each segment is developed, creating a site-specific master plan and studying relationships with ADOT, HOAs, developers, and other landowners will be critical. Utilizing easements, sharing funding with developers, and other ways of getting creative to construct future segments may be necessary at certain portions of the path.

### **Priorities**

**INSERT PDF**

As multi-use paths get extended or developed across town, the most optimal routes may cross private property, future development areas, HOA land, or dip into other jurisdictions like ADOT. Care should be taken to fully research and develop these opportunities as these routes are optimized and present themselves. As the Town and the paved multi-use path network expand, care should be taken to preserve fragile desert habitats and specimen plantings, incorporate landscape buffers between the path and roadway for increased habitat value and user safety, and bring users into the natural world in a safe and conservation-minded manner.

Maintaining current routes and expanding new routes were consistently ranked higher by residents than tasks like installing mile markers and wayfinding, public art, or etiquette signage. These may be lower cost improvements or opportunities for partnerships with non-profits, so should still be examined as part of the path/trail maintenance and expansion plan in the future.

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

With the CDO Shared Use Path and Big Wash Shared Use Path being funded with a combination of ADOT Transportation Enhancement Funds, Pima County bond funds, Town funds, and by developers, the Town will explore grants, use fees, taxes, and donations for future expansion funding possibilities.

The implementation table includes timelines for work as follows:

- Short-Term goals and actions should take place within 1-3 years, and would address safety goals like installing signage and maintaining areas, quick wins like mapping an inventory, trailheads, path/trail conditions, minor amenities, and new easements.
- Mid-Term goals and actions should take place within 3-6 years, and would address larger maintenance actions, implementing new trails and paths, installing restrooms and water fountains, and implementing a staff position.
- Long-Term goals and actions should take place in 6-10+ years, and would include long-term goals such as maintenance and new trails and paths.

Goals and corresponding actions may shift between timelines and categories based on changing needs and funding priorities of an evolving community. Priority rankings are based on a blend of community input and priority levels, “quick wins,” and funding level required (1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest).

### Connecting to the Community’s Principles

#### *REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSESTS*

Many comments from the OV’s Path Forward public outreach process referenced potentially dangerous spots where paths narrow across washes or going downhill and sand accumulates so more regular sweeping is needed—this can be a big safety hazard for cyclists especially. Maintaining current routes, making sure that repairs to asphalt don’t create new cracking or bumps, and investing in increased comfort and aesthetic amenities improve the experience for current and future users.

Increased shade from trees or fabric/metal structures, restrooms, water stations, picnic areas and ramadas, and lighting can all improve the experience and well-being of paved multi-use path users. Increasing public art and other aesthetic amenities can add cultural value, tie into Loop artwork and make the Town’s trail and path system as a whole feel more cohesive, and add a sense of place and local flavor to different areas. These pull-off areas can provide tourism value with “instagrammable” moments of recognizable art or views.

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

### *ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY*

This plan proposes adding the following multi-use path segments in the future (see map for full graphic representation of proposed segments here: [MUP Proposed Small.pdf](#)):

- W Moore Road from N Gibson Trail to N Rancho Vistoso Boulevard
- N La Cañada Drive from W Moore Road to Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve
- Connection between N Moore Loop and Existing multi-use path
- N Rancho Vistoso Boulevard from E Tangerine Road to N Oracle Road
- N Oracle Road from N Rancho Vistoso Boulevard to N Innovation Market Drive
- N Oracle Road from Rams Pass to E Orange Grove Road
- E Tangerine Road to Loop Path by Oro Valley Marketplace
- Connecting existing proposed unpaved path with Loop under Oracle, near Rams Canyon (two segments)
- N 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue from the Loop to N Oracle Road
- W Naranja Drive from N La Canada Drive to N 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue
- N La Cañada Drive from W Naranja Drive to W Lambert Lane (two segments)
- N La Canada Drive from Saddle Valley to W Orange Grove Road
- W Lambert Lane from N Thornydale Road to N La Cholla Boulevard
- N Shannon Road from W Tangerine Road to W Magee Road
- W Overton Road from N Thornydale Road to N Oracle Road
- W Magee Road from N Thornydale Road to Iris Dewhirst Pima Canyon Trailhead (two segments)
- W Ina Road from the Loop to N Campbell Avenue
- N La Cholla Road from W Old Magee Trail to W Orange Grove Road
- Connection from Cañada del Oro Riverfront Park to the Loop
- Connection from the Loop to Oro Valley Aquatic Center and Linda Vista Trailhead (two segments)
- W Calle Concordia from Oro Valley Aquatic Center to N Calle Buena Vista
- N Calle Buena Vista from W Calle Concordia to Tohono Chul
- N Westward Look Drive from E Ina Road to proposed trailhead

### *GROW A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK*

During the public outreach process, certain segments and intersections of the Town's multi-use path network were identified as uncomfortable or potentially hazardous.

Proposed pathway links that would address these problems include:

## PAVED MULTI-USE PATHS

- Extending the existing multi-use path south along the west side of E Rancho Vistoso Boulevard to connect to a traffic light crossing at E Vistoso Commerce Loop Road
- Converting the existing detached sidewalk on the east side of E Rancho Vistoso Boulevard to a true multi-use path from N Oracle Road all the way around to E Tangerine Road

Beyond adding pathway extensions that would improve safe circulation, the Town may consider adding flashing beacons or grade-separated/protected crossings at key areas as warranted. Paved multi-use paths also provide an opportunity for accessible routes for users of all abilities (vs. narrow, steep, or rocky back-country trails that have reduced access). Where possible, slopes should be kept to ADA standards to allow for universal access around town.

### *IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING*

During the OV's Path Forward public outreach process, many comments were received about wanting more directional signage pointing to major destinations like Catalina State Park, the OV Country Club, or shopping areas like OV Marketplace. Of survey respondents for OV Trails Connect, 30% found that wayfinding signage was "not good" or "terrible," and 44% found it to be "okay." Improved directional signage and wayfinding points should be an evolving effort both for existing and future routes. "Branding" important intersections with public art, or theming certain routes/segments of the path with colors or desert plants or animals could help increase notoriety and usability.

About a third of residents also called published maps and guides availability "not good," or "terrible." Providing map data that can be utilized within common fitness and hiking apps like Strava and All Trails will benefit many path users. Installation of wayfinding, mile markers, and educational signage will take funding priority over etiquette signage, with the exception of speed limit signage on multi-use paths heavily frequented by cyclists that could pose issues sharing with pedestrians. Etiquette and speed limit signage, as well as highlighting which areas are appropriate and accessible for e-bikes, would help the community have improved experiences on multi-use paths.

## THE LOOP

### WHAT IS THE LOOP?

#### **Introduction**

The Chuck Huckelberry Loop is a paved pathway system that is part of Pima County's cooperative partnerships with multiple jurisdictions. The Loop first began to take shape in the 1980s. After severe floods in 1983, Pima County constructed regional flood control improvements, including soil-cement bank protection along the Rillito and Santa Cruz rivers. These improvements included maintenance access paths, which residents began to use as an informal trail system. Within the next few years, the County installed paved paths for residents to utilize instead, and it has continued to grow through the region ever since.

Today, the Loop brings significant value to the area: it has increased transportation efficiency, increased home and real estate value, brought more tourism to the area, and has even helped Oro Valley become a top destination for cyclists within the United States. The Loop was also rated as number one on USA Today's 2022 reader's choice list of best recreational paths/trails. Within Oro Valley specifically, the multi-use paths along the Cañada del Oro Wash and Big Wash are part of the Loop system.

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### **Technical analysis**

The Loop is a renowned multi-use pathway system that spans over 138 miles throughout Pima County, Marana, Tucson, South Tucson, and Oro Valley. The Loop offers a network of mostly paved multi-use paths perfect for cyclists, pedestrians, runners, and horseback riders, with some short segments of buffered bike lanes. Winding through scenic landscapes, river parks, and urban areas, it connects key regional destinations and provides a safe, enjoyable way to experience the diverse natural beauty of the region.

The 8 miles of Loop paths in Oro Valley (with ~4 more miles within OV's Planning Area) are typically asphalt surfaces with dashed lines for two-way traffic. These routes exist along CDO and Big Wash edges atop existing bank protection. Stakeholders during the public outreach process described the Loop as "pretty," "safe," and "scenic," and reported that it "goes to meaningful places." The Tucson Loop Authority describes the Oro Valley portion of the Loop as the most scenic section, and also states that it is "the least congested, and very family friendly," making it one of the best starting points to access the Loop network.

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

Strava is a popular fitness monitoring app; approximately 25% of survey respondents reported using it to track their outdoor fitness routes. Examining Strava data of users within Oro Valley reveals frequently used routes and hot spots of current paths and trails, as well as popular current sidewalks or “desire paths” that could be formally incorporated into OV’s paths and trails network. While not perfect and not a complete picture of every user, the data is a helpful guide.

### INSERT STRAVA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MAPS

The data shows how truly heavily utilized the Loop is, as well as potential multi-use path segments that can help add more connections to the Loop. The Loop was the top area visited by pedestrians within Oro Valley (15,375 trips in 2024—nearly three times the visits of the second highest area) and the second most frequently visited area by cyclists (8,835). The data also reveals how extending it in the future and adding trailheads can increase access to other destinations and paths/trails, and allow more residents to easily utilize it.

### **Current Map**

[Loop\\_Existing\\_Small.pdf](#)

The Loop extends beyond the Oro Valley Town Boundary through the OV Planning Area (per map) to connect to existing Loop segments, starting near the intersection of W Ina Road and N Thornydale Road and running along Cañada del Oro Christina Taylor Green Memorial River Park. Along this stretch through the Town to the north, the Loop goes past many casual dining options and coffee shops, hotels, big-box stores like Home Depot and Target, grocery stores, and the Steam Pump Farmer’s Market.

The Loop also connects to Catalina State Park, containing Sutherland Wash, Montrose and Alamo Canyon, group areas and campgrounds, and the Ranger Station and gift shop. Farther south, the Loop ties into Steam Pump Ranch and Cañada del Oro River Park. The route along Innovation Park Drive runs adjacent to the Oro Valley Marketplace (which contains multiple dining and shopping options, medical offices, Walmart, and a cinema), and connects to the Oro Valley Hospital and an assisted living center.

The newest segment, added in 2023, extended the existing pathway farther north to connect to Rancho Vistoso Boulevard, separating users from the road along Big Wash and allowing for more direct floodplain management and monitoring.

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

Along the way, users encounter five trailheads (one Level 1, one Level 2, two Level 3, and one Level 4) with various amenities and parking availability.

The trailhead classifications are as follows:

- Level-1: Restroom, Water, Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-2: Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-3: Parking and Info
- Level-4: Amenities and Info

### **Focused Community Feedback**

Community engagement was a major part of the OV Trails Connect process. Full public outreach results from the online survey, Trail Side Chats, and meetings with stakeholder groups and regional agencies can be found here [Full\\_Outreach\\_Results\\_05082025.pdf](#). Some key findings from the OV Trails Connect public outreach process regarding the Loop were as follows:

- Of survey respondents, 37% report using the Loop at least once a week (or more!).
- Surface conditions, connectivity, wayfinding, and availability of maps were all ranked as “important” and “very important” topics to respondents. Most online survey respondents during the public outreach process reported existing surface conditions to be “okay” (30%), “good” (47%), and “excellent” (17%). Performing preventive upkeep and regular maintenance is by far the most important improvement priority for respondents. There were some comments made from stakeholders about greater maintenance needs (picking up litter and sweeping sand off the path) and too many bumps in their ride due to thermal expansion repairs.
- After preventive upkeep and maintenance, connectivity to more places/destinations as well as other paths/trails were ranked as the second and third highest priorities for improvement. With the majority of respondents saying that connectivity was okay or better, and 92% saying that proximity of access is okay or better, residents who utilize (or want to utilize) the Loop would love increased opportunities to use it even more.
- 83% of respondents reported that etiquette and courtesy of other users was “okay” or better, but 68% reported that wayfinding signage and surface markings were “okay” or worse.
- Of respondents, 92% described aesthetic amenities along the Loop as “okay,” “good,” or “excellent.” Aesthetic amenity improvement was ranked lowest on the improvement priority list, with the most neutral responses. This reveals that the

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

need for aesthetic amenities along the Loop is being mostly met and other improvements can be prioritized.

Many comments within the stakeholder groups and Trail Side Chats asked for increased maintenance and accessibility (both to connect to even more residents and destinations/trail networks, and to avoid crossing busy roads to get to where they need to be). Many residents praised the Loop as an asset for the Town, both in natural beauty and a connection to the desert and in getting residents around town to valuable destinations. Stakeholders also praised the safety component for cyclists especially. During outreach in OV's Path Forward, 60% prioritized improving sections of the Loop with shade, public seating, and recreational opportunities.

### PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

#### **Future Map**

[Loop\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

The plan proposes a 5 mile continuation northward from where the Loop currently terminates near E Innovation Park Drive. A new Level 2 trailhead with parking, amenities, and path info would sit just west of E Rancho Vistoso Boulevard. Then, the proposed path would head northeast to cross underneath the street, and continue past the Oro Valley Town Boundary all the way to W Edwin Road and into Pinal County. The proposed route would wind through Sahuarita Wash, extending the Loop network northward.

#### **Priorities**

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Expanding the Loop path within and outside of Oro Valley would involve working with Pima County and coordinating with Pinal County at its termination point to the north. The proposed route runs through wash land, so working within easements or with future developers would not be required at this time.

A proposed alternate route would run along Oracle Road through Catalina State Park, Pima County, and ADOT lands, and would require significant coordination with those other agencies.

As part of a partnership with Pima County, and along the Big Wash where segments are co-managed with the Pima County Regional Flood Control District (Flood Control District), the

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

Loop network within Oro Valley requires collaboration with other agencies for maintenance, monitoring, and funding.

For trailhead development, a site-specific master plan will be created to optimize access and parking points. New Loop segments in the future should follow the Town's standard multi-use path section and include all necessary signage for both the Town and County.

The implementation table includes timelines for work as follows:

- Short-Term goals and actions should take place within 1-3 years, and would address safety goals like installing signage and maintaining areas, quick wins like mapping an inventory, trailheads, path/trail conditions, minor amenities, and new easements.
- Mid-Term goals and actions should take place within 3-6 years, and would address larger maintenance actions, implementing new trails and paths, installing restrooms and water fountains, and implementing a staff position.
- Long-Term goals and actions should take place in 6-10+ years, and would include long-term goals such as maintenance and new trails and paths.

Goals and corresponding actions may shift between timelines and categories based on changing needs and funding priorities of an evolving community. Priority rankings are based on a blend of community input and priority levels, "quick wins," and funding level required (1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest).

### **Connecting to the Community's Principles**

#### ***REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSETS***

Comments from stakeholders highlighting these current issues included, "Fix the roads and make it smooth," and "the area on the business side of the bike path needs to have the litter picked up much more often." Monitoring and maintenance will be vital to the future of the Loop. Regular upkeep like pavement repairs and replacement, removing debris and litter, and monitoring for potholes or cracking will be important. Asphalt upkeep and ensuring hazards like tree limbs, root heaving, sand washout, and potholes are addressed quickly will help ensure safety on the pathways.

Making existing routes more comfortable for users is key. Seating nodes with shade and water were frequently requested during the public outreach process, and lack of comfort and aesthetic amenities were reported as potential barriers to use. Adding an additional trailhead and examining spots along the Loop where a few comfort amenities could be added without a formal trailhead will improve comfort for all users.

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

### *ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY*

See the proposed segments graphically represented here: [Loop\\_Existing\\_Small.pdf](#)

Extending the Loop path north all the way to the Town Planning Boundary increases connectivity for the community inside and outside Oro Valley, allowing residents to more easily access new outdoor spaces, and bringing visitors into Town. The addition of a new trailhead also allows users to use vehicles to get to an access point, which lets more residents and visitors other than those who live nearby or bike/hike long distances easily access the Loop.

The expanded route would run past Sun City and could entice more users from that neighborhood, and would cross one proposed multi-use path, one existing unpaved trail, and multiple proposed unpaved trails. These connections bring greater access and connectivity across Oro Valley and the region as a whole.

The alternate expansion which would run along Oracle Road and through Catalina State Park, Pima County, and ADOT lands is being currently discussed by regional partners, and is seen by the County as being more of a realistic potential route than heading north along Big Wash. This route would be subject to many agreements and work with multiple agencies to bring to fruition, but would bring more connectivity to an extremely popular route and area with major benefits for the community.

### *GROW A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK*

A frequently praised factor about the Loop pathways is that it is separated from the road with a vegetated landscape strip—this adds to the visual aesthetic, feeling of natural immersion, and safety to have a buffer from speeding cars. Loop extensions in the future should take care to continue to keep users separate from the roadway while providing natural buffer along sensitive areas like washes, helping to protect important wildlife areas at the same time. At key points where users cross heavily-utilized roads, planning for pedestrian bridges or grade separated crossings, traffic signals, or flashing beacons is important to keep users safe.

### *IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING*

Mile markers do not exist in many areas along the Loop as a whole; these can help improve both user experience and overall safety for residents and visitors. Etiquette signage especially geared toward cyclists could make the Loop experience feel safer for everyone. Increased safety signage (speed limits, mile markers, rules and regulatory explanations)

## THE HUCKELBERRY LOOP

and informational signage (educational content about flora and fauna or the site's history) would improve the user experience. Etiquette and speed limit signage, as well as highlighting which areas are appropriate and accessible for e-bikes, would help the community have improved safety and communication on multi-use paths.

The entire Loop system is captured in the Pima County Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Loop interactive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map. Town maps online and digital data that can be shared with hiking apps will help create better standardization and usability.

DRAFT

# VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

## WHAT IS THE VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE?

### **Introduction and History**

The Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve is a former private golf course turned Town-owned park featuring a conserved open space landscape with focused and passive recreation opportunities on and immediately adjacent to the planned pathways. The area acts as a nature corridor for native wildlife to move through and provides passive recreation restricted to the improved paths. The paths within are open to walkers/hikers, dog-walkers, strollers, and bikers from dawn to dusk. Pedestrian tunnels beneath roadways offer safe crossings for users on former cart paths.

The Town worked with Preserve Vistoso, a local non-profit group of residents intending to protect the land, and the Conservation Fund, a national non-profit who assists in preservation by purchasing at-risk land on behalf of conservation partners that cannot act as quickly. The land was purchased and is now owned by Oro Valley, with a conservation easement overlaid that is controlled by the land trust. The Town and trust work together to implement improvements within the Preserve.

Today, the Preserve is a beloved natural space (adjoining 17 neighborhoods directly adjacent to the parcel, with another 13 in walking distance) providing focused recreation opportunities and access to this unique outdoor environment for all residents. This includes approximately 6,000 residents who live in close proximity.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### **Technical Analysis**

The Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve is a 200+ acre parcel with 6.2 miles of eight-foot-wide pigmented concrete paths in north Oro Valley. Existing facilities include three restroom buildings, a maintenance yard, and a pond (pond restoration is planned). Some benches have been donated by the community and were installed by the Town, and additional improvements respecting the conservation easement are planned.

Concrete underpasses cross under existing roadways: West Vistoso Highlands Drive, North La Cañada Drive, and West Pebble Creek Drive. While these underpasses provide safe pedestrian and cyclist crossing due to separation from vehicular traffic, they are

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

susceptible to flooding and sand accumulation and are so narrow that it makes it difficult for users to pass each other.

The draft Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve Master Plan noted that sections of the path were cracked, missing expansion joints, or showing signs of erosion or undercutting where cutting through washes. Other portions are quite close to residential fencing, while sightlines into and out of cart path tunnels are narrow with low heights.

Due to constructed slopes in the existing path, the paved routes are not ADA accessible. Natural shifting, heaving, and separation over time, as well as cracking and crumbling from age, have added challenges, especially around washes and drainage paths. A renovation project in July 2024 demolished and replaced 10 colored sidewalk panels, and it is worth exploring where sidewalk conditions could be brought up to ADA standards as they are repaired over time.

“Volunteer” mountain bike trails were noted as a non-permitted use seen during the inventory and analysis portion of the 2024 Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve Master Plan process, and have been seen through January 2025 in police reports and maintenance staff rut-smoothing.

Improvements are ongoing:

- The former golf course clubhouse parking lot and former maintenance yard parking lot are currently being used as trailheads (plans exist to close the private property clubhouse parking lot and replace it with a Town-owned trailhead nearby).
- The maintenance building roof was replaced in March 2025. Some signage exists throughout, but increased educational and enforcement signage, especially around potentially tricky areas such as under-road crossings would be beneficial to fill in these gaps.
- The Town has continued to add trash receptacles and benches throughout 2025.
- A grant approved from Arizona State Parks contains funding for path repair, adding an ADA decomposed granite trail, and increased signage.

Strava is a popular fitness monitoring app; approximately 25% of survey respondents reported using it to track their outdoor fitness routes. Examining Strava data of users within Oro Valley reveals frequently used routes and hot spots of current paths and trails, as well as popular current sidewalks or “desire paths” that could be formally incorporated formally into OV’s paths and trails network. While not perfect and not a complete picture of every user, the data is a helpful guide.

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

### INSERT STRAVA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MAPS

The Strava data around Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve shows how popular the paths within are and the many ways users enter the Preserve—it was the second most frequently visited area for pedestrians (with 5,680 trips in 2024) and third most frequently visited area by cyclists (6,055). Many of these routes are not formal entrances. Increasing access through more clear entrances with signage, parking, and wayfinding can help make the Preserve safer and easier to utilize.

### **Current Map**

[VTNP\\_Existing\\_Small.pdf](#)

The paths within the Preserve are mostly isolated, internal networks without much connection to outside its borders. The communities, subdivisions, and neighborhoods that surround the Preserve include Vistoso Resort Casitas, Fairfield, Stone Village, and Center Pointe, among others. Many of these subdivisions contain access points to the Preserve, but these act as private entry points and are not intended to be part of this plan. The Preserve also connects directly to Innovation Academy, an elementary school. The paths network links to Hohokam Park. Sunset Park is just out of reach of the paths.

The Preserve ends at E Rancho Vistoso Boulevard to the northeast; it is extremely close to Honey Bee Canyon Park and Honey Bee Canyon Loop trail. It is also not far from the Honey Bee Canyon Petroglyphs. On the southeast side, the Preserve ends close to the Honey Bee Village Archaeological Preserve.

### **Focused Community Feedback**

With nearly 2,000 members of Preserve Vistoso nonprofit community group and 6,000 residents living directly nearby, a history of local involvement to purchase and help care for the land, and even a public contest to name the Preserve, community involvement has been paramount to Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve from the beginning.

Full public outreach results from the online survey, Trail Side Chats, and meetings with stakeholder groups and regional agencies can be found here

[Full\\_Outreach\\_Results\\_05082025.pdf](#). Some key findings from the OV Trails Connect public outreach process were as follows:

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

- Surface conditions were by far the most important topic, ranked as “very important” more than two times any other response category. Of respondents, 9% felt that surface conditions were “excellent,” 37% said “good,” and 40% said “okay” (with only 12% total describing them as “terrible” or “not good”). Preventive maintenance and upkeep were ranked as top improvement priority.
- Common asks included more comfort amenities such as trash cans and dog stations, water fountains, benches, and shade (Increasing these amenities was the number two improvement desire by survey respondents). Of respondents, 43% described these amenities as “okay” in their current state and availability.
- Connectivity to other trails and paths or places and destinations was also ranked highly as an improvement priority. Of respondents, 88% described connectivity as “okay,” “not good,” or “terrible.”
- Of respondents, 44% described published maps and guides as “not good” or “terrible,” and 55% described wayfinding signage and surface markings to be “not good” or “terrible.”

Comments from the Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve trailside chat were frequently about funding concerns or questions about ongoing improvements, as well as safety and access concerns about needing increased parking, traffic slowing, and overall desirability about connecting to the larger OV paths and trails network.

These comments demonstrate the ownership that Oro Valley residents feel over the Preserve, and as well as the desire to keep it safe; communication with the public will be key as future improvements are made by the Town. With increased connectivity to other trails ranked as the second-highest improvement priority in the online survey, Oro Valley residents want access and a better trail network—it will just have to be done sensitively, with open communication among adjacent homeowners, the Town, and other stakeholders.

## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

### **Future Map**

[VTNP\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

Proposed future improvements to pathways and trailheads to Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve include three Level-2 trailheads and one Level-3 trailhead. Extending current unpaved trails and proposing new multi-use paths in the area will bring much-needed connectivity to the Preserve, while funding efforts inside Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

itself will go toward maintaining and improving existing path routes rather than creating new ones at this time.

The trailhead classifications are as follows:

- Level-1: Restroom, Water, Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-2: Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-3: Parking and Info
- Level-4: Amenities and Info

Coordinating with adjacent HOAs, the conservation easement holder, homeowners, and community stakeholder groups like Preserve Vistoso will be important as improvements are made, parking is added and vehicular traffic patterns could change, and certain entrances into the Preserve become formalized. Because the Preserve is land-locked by housing developments, coordinating with adjacent stakeholders will be most critical when attempting to connect overall regional networks to a route that includes the Preserve.

### **Priorities**

**INSERT TABLE**

Ultimately, what residents of Oro Valley want most for the future of Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve is maintenance of what already exists that will also ensure quality paths for the future; increased comfort amenities like water, benches, and shade; and increased connectivity to other portions of the surrounding trail network. Goals of longer ADA-accessible trail loops can be folded together with maintenance or revegetation goals and funding opportunities to stretch funding and tackle multiple priorities within one project. Continuing great projects like the Desert Ecosystem Restoration Project to revitalize existing underperforming portions of the Preserve (while adding parking and new trails at the same time) will be key.

Eventually, the remnants of the former private golf course will be replaced by Sonoran Desert beauty, and the Preserve will continue to thrive as a natural wildlife corridor and cherished paved path network. Currently, the Town is pursuing multiple grant opportunities to help fund improvement projects. Continuing to pursue new grants such as for revegetation and improving the Sonoran desert environment could be leveraged to help fund major path improvements over time.

The implementation table includes timelines for work as follows:

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

- Short-Term goals and actions should take place within 1-3 years, and would address safety goals like installing signage and maintaining areas, quick wins like mapping an inventory, trailheads, path/trail conditions, minor amenities, and new easements.
- Mid-Term goals and actions should take place within 3-6 years, and would address larger maintenance actions, implementing new trails and paths, installing restrooms and water fountains, and implementing a staff position.
- Long-Term goals and actions should take place in 6-10+ years, and would include long-term goals such as maintenance and new trails and paths.

Goals and corresponding actions may shift between timelines and categories based on changing needs and funding priorities of an evolving community. Priority rankings are based on a blend of community input and priority levels, “quick wins,” and funding level required (1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest).

### **Connecting to the Community’s Principles**

#### **REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSETS**

With preventive maintenance and upkeep ranked as the number one improvement priority by survey respondents during the public outreach process, monitoring and maintenance of paths will be vital to the next phase of Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve.

The Preserve has a standard path section to match the existing colored-concrete cart pathway. If a stabilized decomposed granite loop is added as part of the pond improvements, that design and method should also become a standard path option for the Preserve.

#### **ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY**

See proposed additions graphically here: [VTNP\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

Three level-two trailheads are proposed for future development (one along N. Rancho Vistoso Boulevard, one along W Vistoso Highlands Drive, and one along W Pebble Creek Drive). A level-three trailhead is proposed along W Desert Fairways Drive across from Innovation Academy, where a proposed unpaved trail would connect the Preserve with Hohokam Park and an existing unpaved trail network that leads south to W Moore Road and beyond. These new trailheads will provide parking, amenities, and path route info, and can increase connectivity from beyond the adjacent neighborhoods by allowing more visitors arriving by vehicle to access the Preserve.

## VISTOSO TRAILS NATURE PRESERVE

Another proposed unpaved trail would connect the West side of Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve to existing unpaved trails running just East of N Kingair Drive. Extending the existing multi-use path North along N La Cañada Drive to connect to the Preserve could create a popular access point, especially for cyclists.

With Honey Bee Canyon Park's main entrance only half a mile from the northeast edge of the Preserve, a new path connection would be a great step toward increased connectivity. Turning the current detached sidewalk that exists on the north side of E. Rancho Vistoso Boulevard to multi-use path, as proposed, can provide connections to Honey Bee Canyon Park and Honey Bee Preserve. A flashing beacon to get from the north side of the road to the south should be explored as that project develops.

### *GROW A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK*

Formalizing Preserve entrances, adding parking where it makes sense, and creating trailhead amenities in key locations would help visitors utilize the Preserve better and more safely. The Desert Ecosystem Restoration Project will also add new walking loops and greater access to the Preserve.

As segments are replaced and added, opportunities are created to add more ADA accessible portions of the path. ADA standardization and access is proposed at the existing trailhead along W Vistoso Highlands Drive and the proposed trailhead to the East provide easier access to the outdoors for all segments of Oro Valley's population.

### *IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING*

An existing collection of artist-created petroglyph pieces are scattered throughout the Preserve. Educational and wayfinding signage could make this more of a true amenity. Increased safety signage (speed limits, mile markers, rules and regulatory explanations) and informational signage (educational content about flora and fauna or the site's history) would improve the user experience. Mile markers and pathway waypoints could help orient users and increase safety in case of emergency.

# UNPAVED TRAILS

## WHAT IS AN UNPAVED TRAIL?

### Introduction

Oro Valley's trail network includes rugged backcountry routes, smooth trails within and along washes, and more developed trails that can be accessed from nearby subdivisions or neighborhood parks. It also connects beyond Oro Valley to the Tortollita Mountains, State Lands, Catalina State Park (with an extensive trail system for hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers), and the Coronado National Forest. Unpaved trails have natural surfaces such as native earth, decomposed granite, or stabilized decomposed granite.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

### Technical analysis

Oro Valley boasts about 45 miles of natural trails that provide escapes into nature, linkages to parks and neighborhoods within Town, and connect to larger trail/path networks beyond Town such as within Catalina State Park and the Coronado National Forest. They provide key access into the desert for residents to enjoy, allow for habitat space for animals and the natural ecosystem, and offer fitness, wellness, and educational outlets for residents.

Interestingly, unpaved trails seemed to have the most barriers to entry and reasons that have prevented respondents using them in the past, ranking higher than all other trail/path types on the following issues: surface conditions, insufficient parking at trailheads, inadequate access for a person with ADA accessibility needs, amount of wayfinding signage and surface markings, personal safety, and availability of published maps. Some of these are a factor of being a more rugged outdoor trail type that is more impacted by weather (especially poorly defined routes), the elements, slopes, and a remote nature.

Strava is a popular fitness monitoring app; approximately 25% of survey respondents reported using it to track their outdoor fitness routes. Examining Strava data of users within Oro Valley reveals frequently used routes and hot spots of current paths and trails, as well as popular current sidewalks or "desire paths" that could be formally incorporated into OV's paths and trails network. While not perfect and not a complete picture of every user, the data is a helpful guide.

**INSERT STRAVA PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE MAPS**

## UNPAVED TRAILS

The Strava data shows the popularity of routes into larger open spaces such as Catalina State Park, Pima Canyon, and Coronado National Forest, as well as the multi-use path and sidewalk network throughout Town. Linda Vista trailhead and Big Wash trailhead were highlighted as very popular connection and access points. Naranja Park area and Big Wash Trail were the fifth and sixth most frequently visited areas within OV (2,913 and 2,610 trips within 2024, respectively) by pedestrians. The Big Wash Trailhead area was the most popular area for cycling (10,715) with Naranja Park area in sixth place with 2,720 trips in 2024.

The data also highlights many of the “desire paths” residents are utilizing where routes cut through desert or wash space but are not formally maintained and recognized by the Town. The frequently utilized desire routes are incorporated into the proposed new unpaved trails below.

### **Current Map**

[Unpaved\\_Existing\\_Small.pdf](#)

Unpaved trails exist throughout Town, often winding through desert space between home developments, and at the Town’s boundaries where they connect to larger networks.

Notable routes include:

- Linda Vista Trailhead (Level-3) and trail loop
- Big Wash Trailhead (Level-1) and associated trails into State Land and Pima and Pinal Counties
- Honey Bee Canyon Park Trailhead (Level-1) and Trail, and Honey Bee Canyon Trail
- Catalina State Park Trails and Bridle Trailhead (Level-1)
- Iris Dewhirst Trail through Pima Wash and Pima Canyon
- W Calle Concordia and N Calle loma Linda, connecting the Loop and Oro Valley Aquatic Center/James D. Kriegh Park
- Between The Villages of La Cañada and Cañada del Oro
- Within West Lambert Lane Park and Level-3 Trailhead
- Within Naranja Park and Level-1 Trailhead
- Through the wash between Monterra Estates and Hills, Coyote Ridge, Sunset Ridge, and Vistoso Village
- Through the open space just west of N La Cholla Boulevard
- Through the wash near N La Cañada Drive and W Tangerine Road
- From N Rancho Vistoso Boulevard east to the wash

## UNPAVED TRAILS

- Through open space east of N Vistoso Park Road
- Through the wash north and south of E Palisades Road

The trailhead classifications are as follows:

- Level-1: Restroom, Water, Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-2: Parking, Amenities, and Info
- Level-3: Parking and Info
- Level-4: Amenities and Info

### **Focused Community Feedback**

- Public outreach was a major part of the OV Trails Connect process. Full public outreach results from the online survey, Trail Side Chats, and meetings with stakeholder groups and regional agencies can be found here [Full\\_Outreach\\_Results\\_05082025.pdf](#). Some key findings from the OV Trails Connect public outreach process were as follows:
- When asked how users tended to utilize the Town's path and trail network, 81% reported walking, 53% reported hiking, and 24% reported mountain biking. Of online survey respondents during the OV Trails Connect public outreach process, 38% said that they utilized unpaved trails at least once a week.
- Of respondents, 61% said that surface conditions had prevented them from using trails in the past, though 87% of respondents rated unpaved trails' surface conditions as "okay" or better.
- Navigating may be a challenge. Over 40% of survey respondents rated wayfinding signage as "not good" or "terrible," with 42% stating that published maps and guides were the same. Having clear wayfinding signage (66% of respondents) was marked as top importance, and a lack of maps was marked as a barrier to use for 69% of respondents.
- When asked to rank 10 choices for unpaved trails improvements, 57% of respondents chose the same number one choice: performing preventive upkeep and regular maintenance. This is a solid directive from the public that residents appreciate and want to continue to utilize existing routes for years to come, and expect a certain level of quality conditions.
- Many stakeholders and Trail Side Chat participants praised the unpaved network and diversity of trails and opportunities to get outside, from "What I like best are trails in close proximity to my home," to "What I like best about trails is that they are typically away from roads and traffic, so it's a more quiet and peaceful experience."

## UNPAVED TRAILS

- Many asked for more clear mapping and signage, with better clarity over what routes are “real” public routes managed by the Town and more clear information about dog-friendly areas.
- A number of comments also desired greater connectivity and access to other trail networks, especially State Lands north of Rancho Vistoso. During the OV General plan outreach, 58% of residents also prioritized increasing the number of trails.

## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

### **Future Map**

[Unpaved\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)

Future trail routes should consider pedestrian, cyclist, and equestrian safety, weigh potential issues of land ownership and/or management, provide convenience of access and connection for users, and aim to protect the delicate desert environment they will flow through. Extra sensitivity will be required to ensure safety of archeological and culturally significant sites. The Town will need to coordinate with Pima and Pinal Counties, Arizona State Land Department, Catalina State Park, US Forest Service, and HOAs to maximize success.

Proposed improvements include segments that bridge gaps in the existing network, expand and extend well-loved loops and routes, and provide new outlets into the natural landscape. Others will formalize trails that have sprung out of use rather than planning, and were revealed through the examination of Strava data. Trailheads have also been proposed to bring more users to the trails, provide parking and comfort amenities, and direct users to the proper entrances to the network.

### **Priorities**

**INSERT PDF**

As trails get extended and developed throughout Oro Valley and surrounding areas, opportunities should be fully researched and developed as potential routes are optimized. Care should be taken to preserve sensitive desert habitats and specimen plantings, plan for safety and management with multiple user groups using one network, and maintain the beloved trails the Town already has. Examining and master-planning future segments as opportunities develop, and planning long-term care and funding plans, will be key.

## UNPAVED TRAILS

The implementation table includes timelines for work as follows:

- Short-Term goals and actions should take place within 1-3 years, and would address safety goals like installing signage and maintaining areas, quick wins like mapping an inventory, trailheads, path/trail conditions, minor amenities, and new easements.
- Mid-Term goals and actions should take place within 3-6 years, and would address larger maintenance actions, implementing new trails and paths, installing restrooms and water fountains, and implementing a staff position.
- Long-Term goals and actions should take place in 6-10+ years, and would include long-term goals such as maintenance and new trails and paths.

Goals and corresponding actions may shift between timelines and categories based on changing needs and funding priorities of an evolving community. Priority rankings are based on a blend of community input and priority levels, “quick wins,” and funding level required (1 being the highest priority, and 10 being the lowest).

### Connecting to the Community’s Principles

#### *REINVEST IN EXISTING ASSETS*

With such a strong and singular response from the public that preserving and maintaining the existing trail system should be the number one improvement priority for the future, the Town plans to ensure proper staffing, funding, and monitoring to continue to provide a quality unpaved trails network and experience for users. Most public commentary about maintenance was positive. Responding to resident-reported problems like graffiti or washed out trails after rain could be more of a targeted, reactionary approach, while general maintenance and upkeep for usability and safety will be an ongoing planned effort. Invasive plant inventory and mitigation will be an ongoing challenge, but will help preserve Oro Valley’s natural habitat and lands.

#### *ENHANCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY*

This plan proposes adding the following unpaved trail segments in the future (see map for full graphic representation of proposed segments here: [Unpaved\\_Proposed\\_Small.pdf](#)):

- Extend trails loop within Honey Bee Canyon Park
- Extend trails south from Big Wash Trailhead and connect with Loop and multi-use paths
- Extend trails northwest from Big Wash Trailhead to connect to other trails and E Rancho Vistoso Boulevard
- Extend trail winding around N La Cañada Drive north to Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve and beyond, near Leman Academy, and south to Naranja Drive

## UNPAVED TRAILS

- Extend the trail near Vistoso Village to connect to Vistoso Trails Nature Preserve's proposed trailhead
- Develop trails in the open space south of Panorama Trails Park
- Connect the Loop to existing unpaved trails and Cañada del Oro Riverfront Park
- Formalize the routes between The Villages of La Cañada, Vista Del Oro Estates, Monterra Hills/Estates, Coyote Ridges, the Overlook, and Vistoso Hills (three segments)
- Formalize routes near Painted Sky Elementary School
- Connect Moore Loop to Honey Bee Village Archaeological Preserve
- Create trails through the open space south of Rooney Ranch Shopping Center across Oracle Road
- Connect Linda Vista Trailhead to Pusch Ridge golf course and tennis courts
- Develop trail along N Calle Buena Vista between W Linda Vista Boulevard and W Calle Concordia
- Connect Iris Dewhirst Trail to the multi-use path located to the southwest
- Develop trails near Rams Canyon
- Connect Catalina State Park trailhead to proposed multi-use path
- Connect Tangerine Road and Canda del Oro River Trail around the east side of Catalina Shadows
- Extend unpaved trails north past the Oro Valley Town Boundary and through the OV Planning Area and beyond, connecting routes on State Land into Pima and Pinal Counties as well as Marana via the Tortolita Mountains (creating multiple loops, and proposing three Level-2 and one Level-4 trailheads).

### **GROW A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE NETWORK**

40% of respondents ranked amenities along unpaved trails as “not good” or “terrible.” Providing additional comfort amenities such as benches, shade, ramadas, restrooms, water, and lighting will be key at heavily trafficked trail entrances. Improvements can make it easier for young families, the elderly, and other groups access trails more comfortably.

This plan proposes a Level-2 trailhead expansion at Linda Vista trailhead, a new Level-4 trailhead at E Palisades Road, and three Level-2 and one Level-4 trailheads in the greater planning and state land area. These additions will make unpaved trails more accessible, both by increasing comfort for more groups of users, and allowing more users to actually reach the trails by vehicle. While many residents reported frequent use at trails closest to their homes, adding trailheads and parking allows many more residents (and visitors) to share the trails and experience Oro Valley's natural beauty.

## UNPAVED TRAILS

### *IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING*

During the public outreach process, residents asked for signage within the Big Wash, Honeybee, and Innovation trail systems specifically. Sign types needed include habitat and educational signage, orientation/wayfinding signage, etiquette and regulatory signage (especially regarding dogs, horses, and speed limits) and mile markers. With so many respondents rating signage/wayfinding and mapping poorly, this is a major opportunity for improvement to trails function, safety, and user satisfaction. Equestrians, hikers, cyclists, and e-bike users all share these trails; etiquette and speed limit signage help the system function better for all.

Mile markers and wayfinding signage will help users track their fitness goals and allow first responders better ways of finding lost hikers, educational signage would provide cultural value, and regulatory signage could help multiple types of users utilize the same trail peacefully. Improved signage will also make it more clear to users which trails are Oro Valley managed (vs. “cow paths” or “desire paths” formed organically that are not rated or maintained) and where their entrances are located. Adding phone-friendly mapping resources (for the approximately two-thirds of survey respondents who use apps or mobile devices to track their outdoor activities) as well as clear maps at trailheads and key points will improve user experience.