City of Ojai General Plan

Circulation Element

Final

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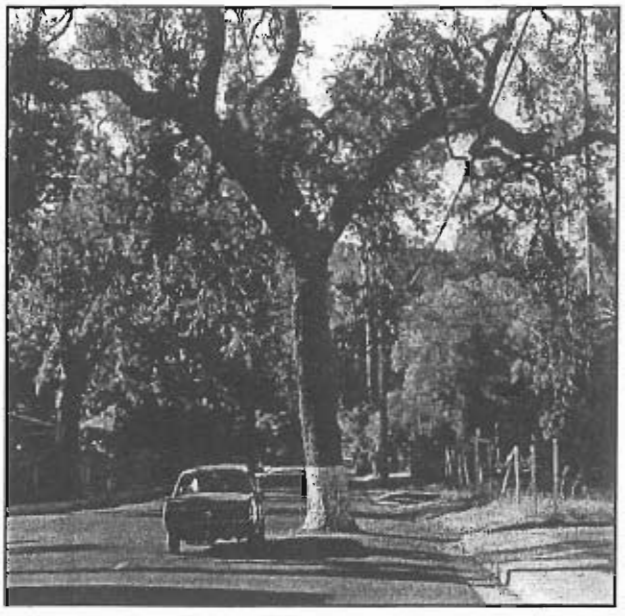
Circulation Element

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The Ojai Circulation Element addresses broad issues of physical mobility, how goods and people move about within the community, as well as how goods and people move between Ojai and the outside world. Circulation is one of the most pervasive issues of the General Plan, and is related to land use, community design, noise, air quality, and energy consumption. Transportation issues affect not only the local area, but also require coordination with the County and regional and State agencies.



Maintaining a high quality of life within a community is largely dependent upon careful coordination of land use and transportation planning. Highly desirable communities are those where residents are effectively linked with local social and cultural resources, as well as shopping and services by a transportation system that provides a high degree of mobility, supporting, but not dominating the visual character of the community. It is thus the purpose of the Ojai General Plan Circulation Element to establish a safe circulation system that is consistent with Ojai's character and needs in terms of the desired quality of life, sense of place, cost of maintenance, use of lands adjacent to roadways, and desired quality of traffic operations.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Balancing the need to protect Ojai's unique character and natural environment with the desire to eliminate traffic congestion is the primary challenge of the Circulation Element. The following goal and objectives outlined in the box on the next page discuss the priorities which Ojai will pursue in meeting this challenge.

City of Ojai Circulation Element Goal and Objectives

Goal

It is the goal of the City of Ojai to develop and maintain a transportation system that is protective of the community's unique character and living environment; maximizes freedom and safety of movement for pedestrians, bicycles, and automobiles; and that maintains a balance between mobility and the cost-efficiency of maintenance.

Objectives

In implementing this goal, it is the objective of the City to:

- *strengthen the link between the community's transportation system and its planned land uses such that traffic flows can be improved while maintaining Ojai's unique community character and livability;*
- *ensure that the area's roadway system is reflective of the City's commitment to environmental quality and preservation of its small town lifestyles;*
- *maintain a unified and functional street system;*
- *help reduce regional traffic growth;*
- *decrease dependence on single occupant automobile travel by providing a high level of pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit opportunities;*
- *preserve a sense of comfort and well-being throughout the community by reducing the intrusiveness of commercial, tourist, and regional traffic on residential neighborhoods;*
- *facilitate the efficient delivery of energy, water, and storm water, as well as the disposal of sewage in a manner consistent with protecting Ojai's environmental quality and small town character; and*
- *make efficient use of existing transportation facilities.*

Figure 1 - Circulation Element Goal and Objectives

LEGAL AUTHORITY

The State of California mandates that every city prepare a comprehensive General Plan for the long-term physical development of the City and any land outside its boundaries that is considered relevant to its planning. California Government Code Section 65302(b), pertaining to the required elements of the General Plan, states the general plan shall consist of a statement of development policies, and shall include:

> *"a circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan."*

Table I-2 *Index to the Location of State Mandated General Plan Issues within the Ojai General Plan* in the Introduction section of the General Plan provides an index reference of State General Plan requirements and under which section of the Ojai General Plan the State requirement is fulfilled.

ELEMENT ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT

To assist the reader in using the General Plan, the Circulation Element is structured around three general themes, which represent a summary of specific community characteristics and concerns that provide the framework for the policies included in the Circulation Element. These themes include: (1) balancing community character and circulation needs, (2) creating a safe environment for pedestrians and bicycles, and (3) providing valley wide solutions to traffic congestion. The Circulation Element is organized into the following sections.

Introduction: A brief overview of the background and purpose of the Element is provided. The Introduction also includes the Element's goals and objectives, which represent the first level of policy directives for the Circulation Element.

Policy Directives

Goal: *A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.*

Objective: *A specific statement of desired future conditions toward which the City will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal.*

General Plan Approach: *Discussion as to how the City will resolve relevant issues and manage its future.*

Strategies: *Actions, activities, priorities, and policy direction that, when incorporated with the General Plan approach, detail how goals and objectives will be accomplished.*

Figure 2 - Policy Directives

General Plan Approach and Strategies: The General Plan Approach and Strategies represent the directives that the City will use to manage its future, guide new development, ensure mobility, and protect the natural environment and the character of the community (see box at right, above).

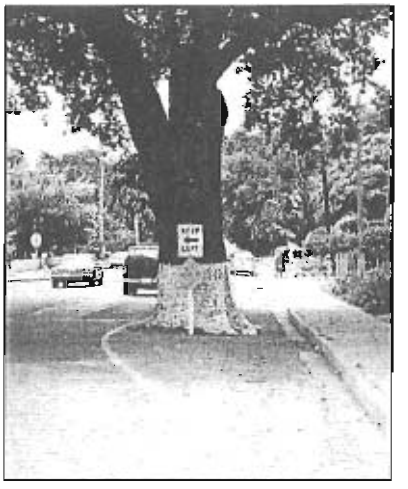
Implementation and Monitoring Program: The Implementation and Monitoring Program is the City's blueprint for action. The program includes a presentation of a specific set of actions designed to implement Ojai's goals, objectives, and strategies. The action program includes the full range of specific steps necessary to translate the vision described in the Circulation Element into reality.

GENERAL PLAN APPROACH

BALANCING COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND CIRCULATION NEEDS

As identified in the Land Use Element, Ojai's vision is to preserve its "small town" character by using the physical, environmental, and social aspects of the community that form its character as the criteria for testing whether new development and public works projects respects and enhances the City's small town feel. This approach utilizes a broad palette of community features, neighborhood characteristics, and design images to describe the "Ojai experience" as the benchmark for the future (Land Use Element Figures 8 through 12). An important determinant of Ojai's character is its roadway system.

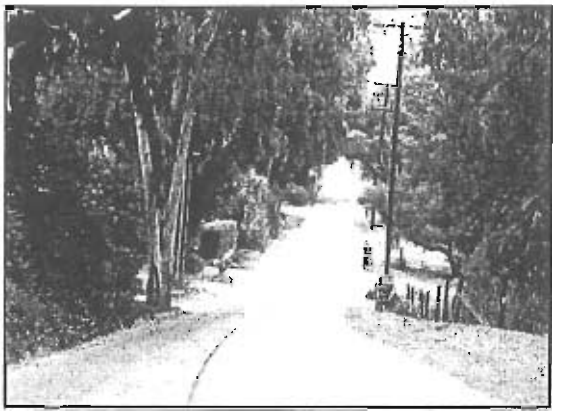
Probably the best example of Ojai's policy of preserving the natural environment and forcing man-made features to fit into that environment is oak tree preservation. Large oak trees, which would be removed as part of road construction or widening projects in most cities, remain within Ojai's streets and rights-of-way as ongoing reminders of Ojai's emphasis on development fitting around, rather than over the natural environment.



Oak Tree Preservation

The General Plan's approach to transportation is to balance community character and circulation needs to minimize the intrusiveness of the area's roadway system, and to provide physical improvements to the roadway system where it is physically and environmentally prudent to do so. In this concept, the roadway system will be designed to provide access and linkages between residences, community activity centers, and the outside world, but will not be permitted to visually dominate the surrounding landscape or impact the serenity of Ojai's residential neighborhoods.

Ojai's local roadway system is composed almost exclusively of two-lane, undivided streets. Four lane and divided street sections are limited to portions of State Highways 33 and 150. The area roadway system currently has only four traffic signals, located at the intersections of Highways 33 and 150 (where Ventura Avenue, Maricopa Highway, and Ojai Avenue come together), Ojai Avenue and Country Club Drive, Ojai Avenue and Bristol Road, and at Ojai Avenue and Signal Street. As part of the County's Congestion Management Plan, Fox Street as well as Bryant Street/Park Road will have traffic lights where each intersects with Ojai Avenue.



Local Rural Roadway

Ojai's historic development, is a contributing factor not only to its unique small town character, but also to its traffic congestion. When originally planned, the downtown district offered a wide boulevard that was based on the ability of a horse and wagon to turn around in the middle of the street. Parking was located in the front of commercial businesses to allow for convenient parking and access. Unfortunately, planning for the movement and volume of vehicles throughout the City is much more complicated today, yet the space in which to move in this area remains the same as in the horse and buggy era. As can be seen in the photo below, drivers in the downtown area are faced with a number of choices within a short distance. In this photo (which was taken during one of the City's larger community events), vehicles can be seen parallel parking, turning, merging and, in one case, making an illegal maneuver, all within a constrained street section filled with pedestrians.

Downtown Circulation

Complicating the downtown congestion issue is the fact that the same area is also a major commercial and tourist attraction in the Valley. During large community events, the downtown Arcade and Libbey Park area become congested with tourists, event participants, and shoppers all vying for parking near the event location or commercial business. Congestion also often occurs when larger community events at one of the area's two golf courses take place. Local residents have also cited local congestion occurs immediately following the dismissal of local schools.

Traffic congestion at the "Y" intersection of Highways 33 and 150 frequently occurs during peak commuting periods. Referred to as the "Y" due to its unusual configuration, the safety of the intersection of State Highways 33 and 150, has been the subject of much public debate. Due to the limited number of roadways serving the City, most of the traffic entering and exiting the City travels through this intersection, whose current geometrics provide drivers approaching from the south with little time to maneuver into the appropriate lane after crossing the intersection. Residents note that those not familiar with the area are often unsure of which

Circulation Conflicts at "Y" Intersection

lane to choose and have created unnecessary traffic congestion. The geometrics of this intersection are further compli-cated by the introduction of an Ojai Valley Trail, which crosses Ojai Avenue at this intersection. One intersection improvement option recently discussed involved the installation of a traffic circle at the "Y." Although the option was recognized as being physically possible and as facilitating the movement of large numbers of automobiles through the "Y," this concept was rejected because it would create a negative impact on pedestrian and bicycle circulation through the intersection.

As with many communities, Ojai has experienced a gradual acceptance and adoption of uniform improvement standards to be applied throughout the community. Although these standards bring a uniformity of design to the various components of community infrastructure, their implementation has also begun to erode the uniqueness of the community, especially in the realm of public improvements such as roadways. This is evident in areas where new development has encroached into older settings, imposing typical suburban development standards without a clear plan for the end product. The result is typified by a rural street edge, characterized by a dirt, gravel or asphalt path and soft street shoulder, suddenly interrupted by a portion of concrete curb and gutter with sidewalk. Since it is unlikely that the balance of the improvements will be made any time soon, the piecemeal implementation of such standards serves to disrupt the gentle small town, rural character that the residents likely found more appealing in the first place.

A key concept of the Ojai General Plan Circulation Element is that the community's roadway and transportation system is an integral part of the community's character, its quality of life, and its economic livelihood. Ojai's historic downtown, which is the center of the community's commercial and cultural focus, was developed along Highway 150 to enhance the City's accessibility to visitors. Therefore, while it is important to provide for the movement of traffic within, as well as through the City, this objective will not be permitted to compromise the more important objective of preserving the community's essential character and the area's natural environment which makes Ojai an attractive place to visit, live, and work.

Ojai believes that a constantly expanding circulation network and an endless sequence of programmed street improvements will not solve the problems of local traffic congestion, and may in fact result in an irretrievable loss of the essential qualities that make Ojai a desirable community. Expansion of the area's roadway system using traditional traffic engineering principles and standards will not fit well

with the varying design features that make up the character of the community, and will tend to preclude pedestrian and bicycle travel, which are a key component of community character.

The intent of the Circulation Element is that the area's transportation system should offer Ojai area residents not only reasonably efficient automobile traffic distribution, but also viable alternatives to automobile travel. The transportation program outlined in the General Plan thus seeks to increase the balance between various modes of transportation by increasing the desirability of transit, walking, and bicycling by providing mixed use land use opportunities which reduce the distance between home, work, and shopping and providing an enhanced system of bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Characteristics of a Livable Community include:

✓Well planned and designed transit: Livable communities involve careful coordination of transit planning with community development planning. Livable communities are neighborhoods where housing, schools, and parks are within easy walking distance of user friendly transit opportunities that effectively link residents with local social and economic services and jobs. In livable communities, transit service reflects the diverse needs of the community.

✓Transit, pedestrian and bicycle access: Land use planning, zoning and urban design encourage alternatives to automobile use. Such alternatives as walking, transit, and bike riding are designed and built into the community to ensure local mobility. In a livable community, use of the automobile is optional.

✓Mixed-use neighborhoods: Residential areas are complimented by the presence of office and commercial areas, recreational areas, and areas devoted to health, educational, and social service. Communities are planned and built on a human scale that emphasizes ease of access and community spirit. Business feel that they are part of a neighborhood.

✓Safe and secure: Streets are well lighted and designed to accommodate transit vehicles and pedestrians. Transit facilities and pedestrian walkways are designed to take into account the safety and security expectations of all passengers, including persons with disabilities. Traffic calming techniques are used to provide safety to pedestrians' lower traffic speeds.

✓Environmentally conscious: Well planned transit maximizes air quality. Parking is carefully managed to save space and to ensure that buildings are accessible to pedestrians and transit, and not isolated by large parking lots. Livable communities also contain sufficient parks and greenbelt to ensure a high quality of life for the residents.

✓Invite full community participation in the decision-making process: Residents have a voice in the future of their neighborhoods. Livable communities are committed to a planning and management process that includes a high level of participation by neighborhood organizations, small and minority businesses, and individuals who may not otherwise be heard.

Source: Livable Communities Initiative, Federal Transit Administration Program Description, 1994.

Figure 3 - Characteristics of a Livable Community

The General Plan and its various elements coordinate land use, transportation, air quality, and other environmental concepts and strategies. General Plan objectives are designed to improve traffic flow, local air quality, and energy conservation, as well as protect sensitive environmental resources by limiting the intensity and rate of new development to that which can be accommodated on area roadways; achieving a rational mix and organization of land uses which reduces, to the extent feasible, the need for automobile use and the length of individual trips; and promoting transportation demand management, systems management, and traffic calming programs. This balance

ensures that the City of Ojai maintains and enhances the characteristics that embody a truly "livable community" (see Figure 3 on previous page).

The provisions of the General Plan also ensure that the City will act responsibly in reviewing proposals for new development. The Circulation Element recognizes that new development cannot be permitted to exacerbate existing traffic congestion problems, and that new development must be responsible for contributing to appropriate solutions.

Traffic Calming

"Traffic calming" refers to programs designed to increase the compatibility of roadways with their surrounding environment, as well as increase their carrying capacity, by creating a steady flow of traffic at slower speeds. By calming (slowing) traffic, less space is needed between automobiles to maintain safe stopping distances, thereby allowing more vehicles to use roadways without requiring widening. The effect of traffic calming is to create a safer, quieter environment for adjacent land uses (Figure 4).

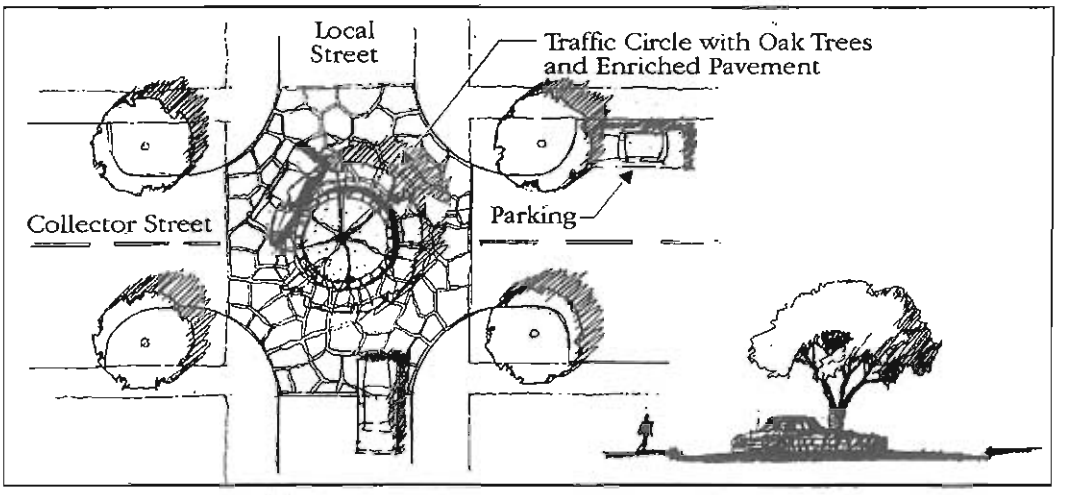


Figure 4 - Traffic Roundabout

Traffic calming techniques which may be incorporated into the City's circulation system include: speed humps, roundabouts, and neck-downs. Speed humps are raised roadway pavement areas running across the entire width of a street that normally have a height of 3 to 4 inches and a length of approximately 12 feet. Speed humps represent a lesser risk to vehicles than do traditional speed bumps, and have the advantage of being largely self-enforcing and or creating a visual impression, real or perceived, that a street is not intended for high speeds or "through" traffic. A roundabout is an at-grade intersection having a one-way circular roadway around a curbed central island. Sometimes called traffic circles or

rotaries, a ***small***, properly design roundabout provides for the safe and efficient movement of people and goods while preserving, enhancing, or reclaiming the adjacent neighborhood's livability.

Neck-downs consist of landscaped islands which are used to either narrow down a roadway, or to define a parking lane on either side of a roadway. They can be used to define entries into local residential neighborhoods, thereby discouraging through traffic. They can also be used to create subtle changes in direction along existing roadways by placing landscaping within existing parking lanes on one side of the street, and providing parking and neck-downs on alternating sides of the street (Figures 5a and 5b).

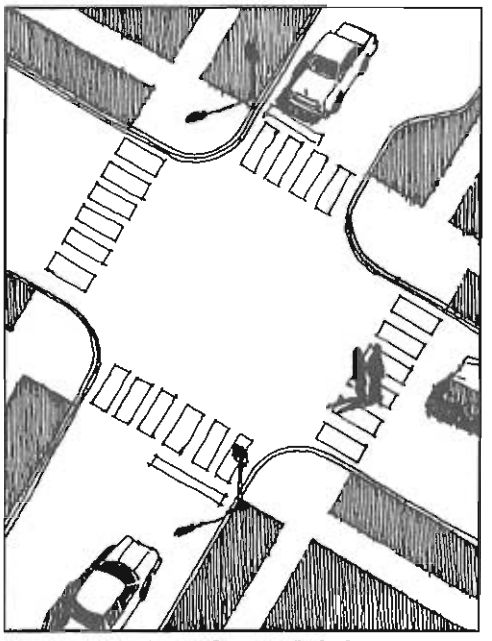


Figure 5a - Local Street Neck-downs

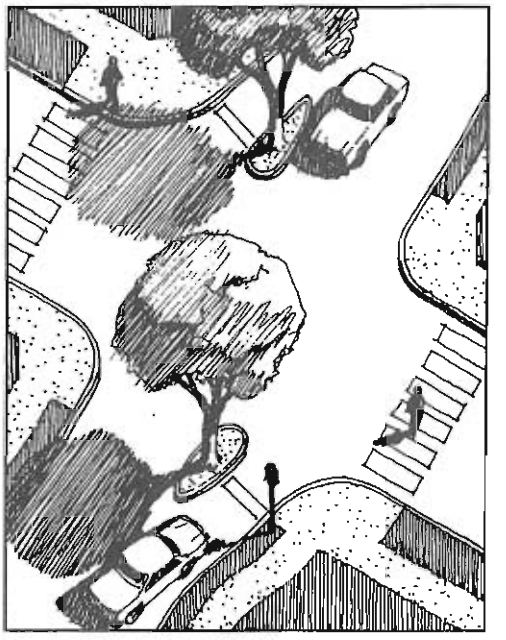


Figure 5b - Local Street Neck-downs

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES

Trails are an important component of Ojai's infrastructure; as important to the preservation of the community's character and health of its residents as are adequate streets, drainage, and utilities..

The City recognizes that Ojai's current "small town" character is largely due to local resident's ability to associate with one another at a pedestrian level. This is supported by the existing pattern of land use. The historic organization of the town (i.e., residential areas organized around a central downtown commercial core), is reminiscent of communities which measured most day-to-day activities with how long it took to walk from place to place. Ojai residents feel that the ability to safely walk or ride a bicycle throughout the community is an important characteristic which will need to be protected as the City grows.

The Ojai Land Use Element supports the development of a bicycle and pedestrian friendly transportation system by encouraging mixed-use and other live/work opportunities within the community.

Another component of the City's approach to local transportation planning is to build upon the existing level of pedestrian and bicycle activity, as well as existing and potential facilities in an effort to reduce congestion on local streets, promote energy conservation, and improve air quality, as well as make the community less dependent on the automobile as the primary mode of transportation within Ojai.

In keeping with Ojai's desire to maintain a small town feel, the General Plan provides for a hierarchy of equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian ways designed to make it easier for residents and visitors to move, congregate, and interact with one another. Building on the success of the Ojai Valley Trail, the City of Ojai will take advantage of the many utility corridors and natural drainage courses (Figure 6), as well as City streets to establish a comprehensive network of trails serving residents, commuters, tourists, and recreational users.

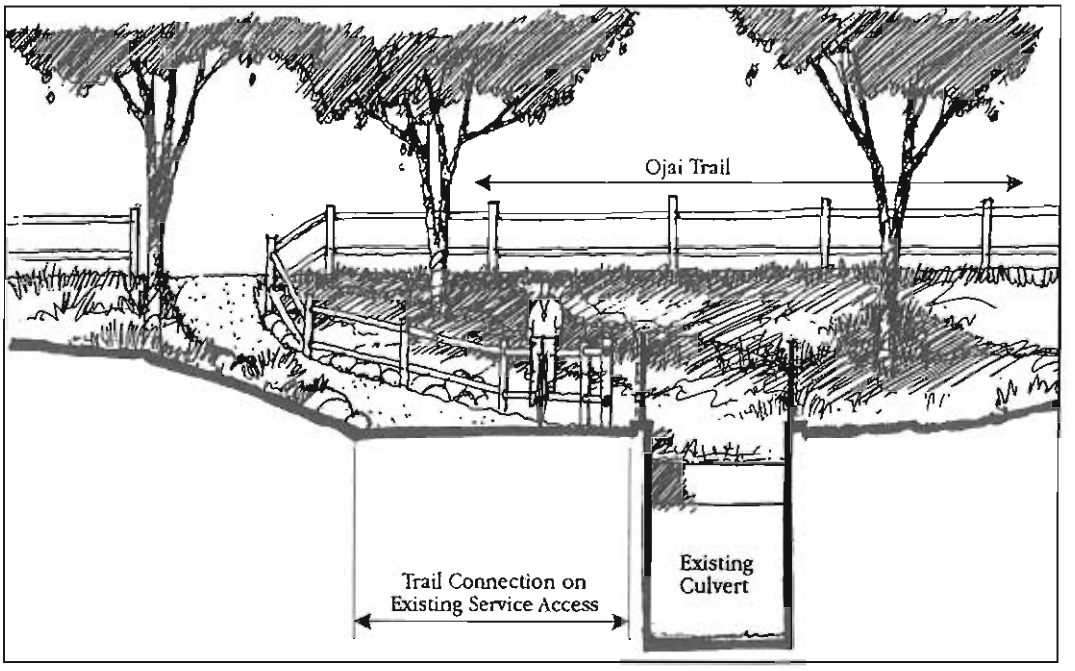


Figure 6 - Lateral Trail Access from Ojai Avenue at Existing Culvert Parallel to Canada Street

Ojai Master Plan of Trails

The Ojai Master Plan of Trails represents a comprehensive strategy to provide an extensive system of walking, biking, and equestrian trails that encourages residents to use alternatives to the automobile, and where possible, to use non-automobile travel as the primary mode of transportation. To accomplish this, the Ojai Master

Plan of Trails includes a combination of four different types of trail sections, a special pedestrian district, and various support facilities.

Ojai Valley Trail

The Ojai Valley Trail provides a shared off-street pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trail that connects to the Ventura County trails system. This trail provides recreation and commuter connections along Highway 150 and 33. Extensions of this trail also connect the Pedestrian Enhancement District, Ojai Village and Town Center, Libbey Park, and Soule Park (Figures 7 and 8).

Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails

The Bike and Pedestrian Trail system includes a number of specialized trail sections throughout Ojai. The trails denote where pedestrian and bicycle circulation is most appropriate. The Trail also provides access to the major recreation facilities, the Pedestrian Enhancement District, Ojai Village and Town Center, Ojai Valley Trail system as well as National Park and local hiking and walking trails. The trail system includes Class I, II, and III trails (Figures 7 and 8).

Trail Support Facilities

At strategic points in the trails system, facilities designed for the convenience of trail users are planned to be provided (Figure 7). Such facilities may include benches, drinking fountains, restrooms, picnic areas, interpretive and directional signage, community information kiosks, equestrian staging, and automobile and bicycle parking areas.

The type of facilities that will be provided at any particular location is dependent on the physical conditions of the site.

Trail Stop

Generally located at major junctions of the trails system, trail stops will include, at a minimum, directional signage depicting the Ojai trails system. Some trail stops may also include rest areas, benches and drinking fountains, or be combined with other trail support facilities (Figure 7).

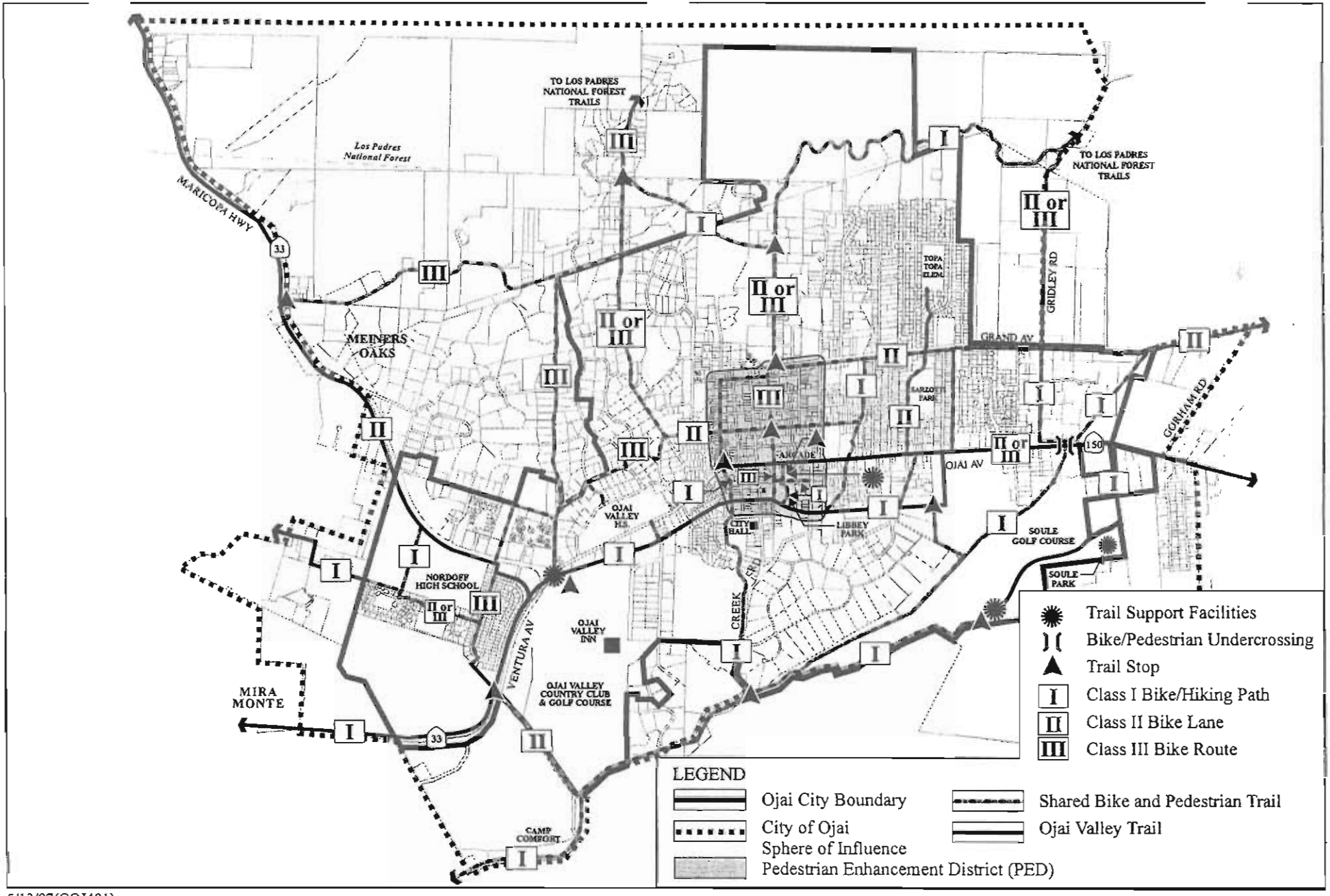


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Figure 7

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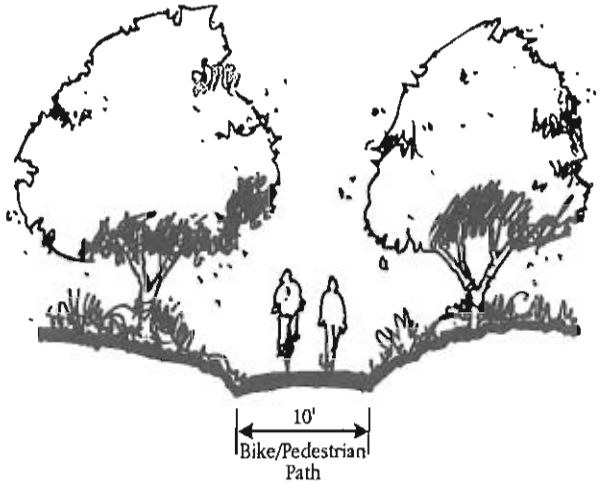
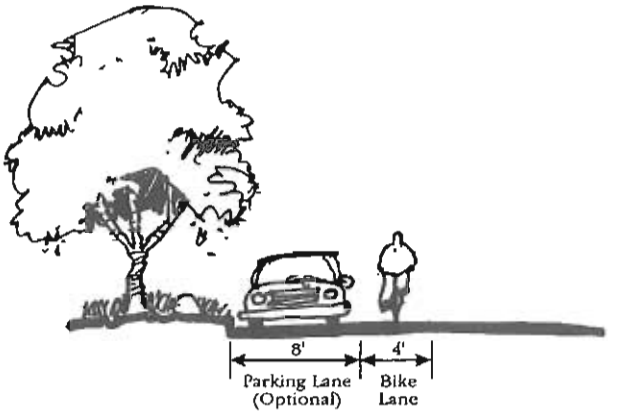
Trails Master Plan

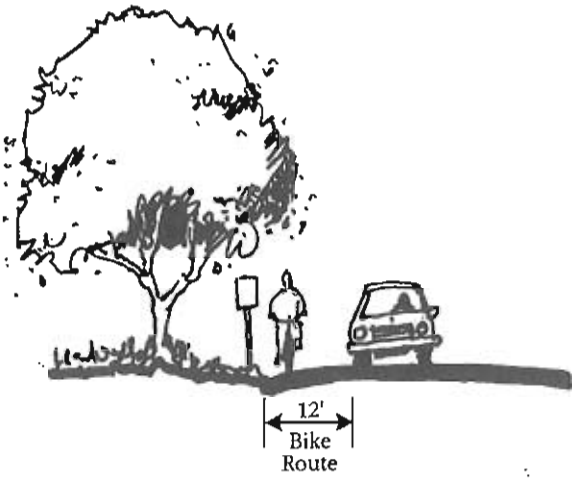
Figure 8 - Trail Classification System



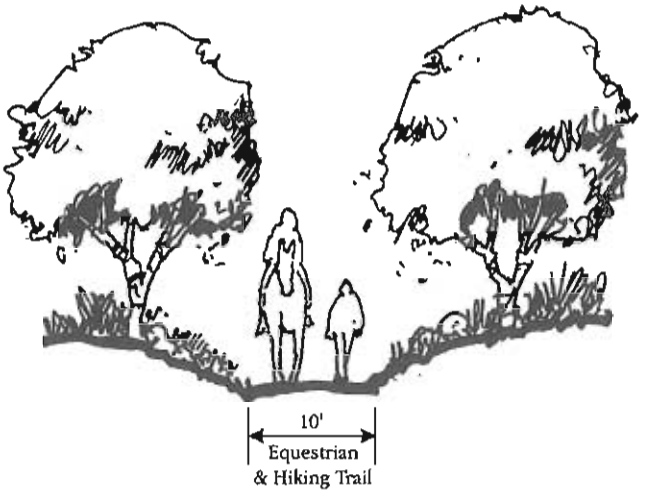
Bike/Hiking Path - (Class I) Bicycles and pedestrians use a paved or unpaved right-of-way that is completely separated from any street or highway.



Bike Lane - (Class II) Bicycles travel in a one-way striped lane on a street.



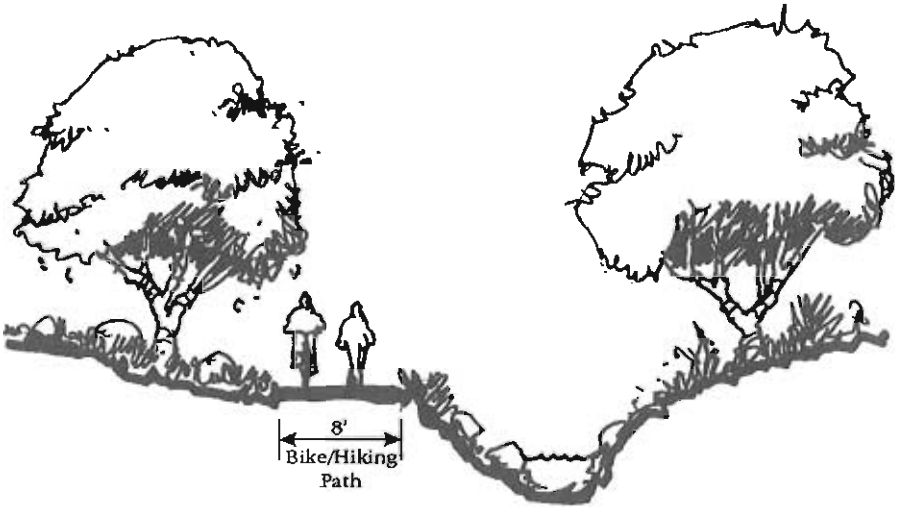
Bike Route - (Class III) Bicycles share the road with pedestrian and motor vehicle traffic.



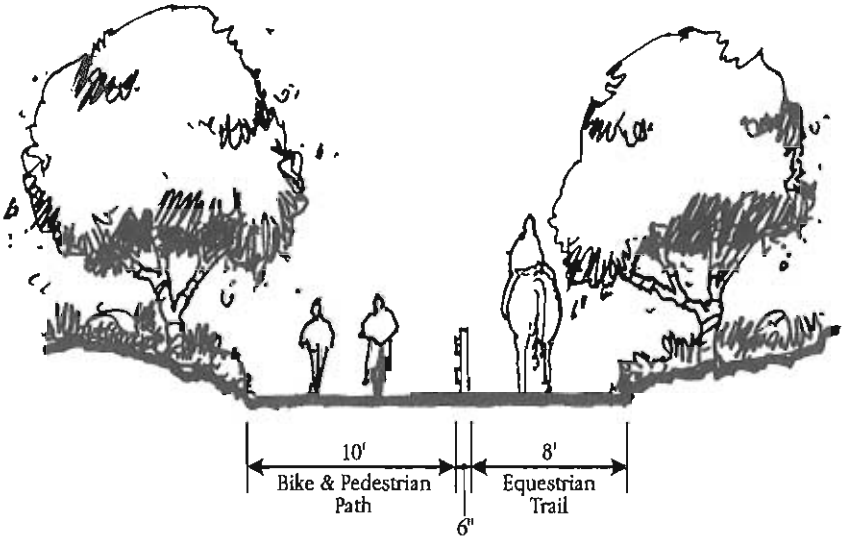
***Equestrian Trail** - Equestrian trails are reserved for the use of horseback riders, and may be combined with off-road biking and hiking uses.*

Source: Mainstreet Architects & Planners, 1995.

Figure 8 - Trail Classification System (Con't.)



Paths - Pedestrian paths tend to be less formal than sidewalks, and can be combined with bicycle and equestrian facilities.



***Multi-Use Trails** - Multi-use trails promote a combination of trail uses with a single right-of-way. The Ojai Valley Trail is a good example of such a trail.*

Source: Mainstreet Architects & Planners, 1995.

Planning for the Pedestrian

Sidewalks and Paths

Sidewalk Oak

The City of Ojai is dedicated to creating a pedestrian environment that is safe, efficient, and accessible to all residents. At the same time Ojai recognizes that different areas of the community require different sidewalk and pedestrian treatments consistent with the individual characteristics of the neighborhood. The City of Ojai, therefore, will strive to achieve a safe and comfortable walking environment by using a variety of sidewalk and path designs throughout the community. Due to the uniqueness of each street section, the City will analyze the physical characteristics of the street right-of-way prior to trail implementation to determine the appropriate sidewalk, path or other pedestrian facility is to be used (Figure 7). It is the City's intent to logically transition sidewalk and trail sections so as to achieve a safe, comfortable, and logical sidewalk and pedestrian path network.

Site Development Considerations

New developments will be required to be designed with pedestrians in mind, and thereby reduce pedestrian/auto conflicts and encourage people to walk. For example, buildings may be clustered along a pedestrian corridor or adjacent to a public walkway to reduce the distance for people to walk between buildings once they leave their cars, and to encourage drivers to leave their cars at home. The desirability of on-site pedestrian circulation, its connection to public sidewalks, trails, automobile circulation, and local and regional transit is an important factor in determining a new development's consistency with Ojai's character.

Pedestrian Enhancement District (PED)

The General Plan recognizes that, if walking is to be encouraged for both recreation and as an alternative form of transportation, pedestrians must feel safe and secure from adjacent street traffic; they must be provided with sidewalks and pedestrian paths that create logical and continuous connections between uses; and the over-all walking experience must be an enjoyable one. In order to meet these objectives, the General Plan makes a substantial commitment to pedestrian needs throughout the community. This commitment includes the creation of land use designations which focus on allowing residents to live and work at the same loca-

tion, implementation of a comprehensive trail system, and provision of efficient local transit network.

In addition, the General Plan designates an area within the City's Town Center and Village as a special "enhancement" district that will focus on making improvements to support pedestrian activities. This "Pedestrian Enhancement District" or PED delineates an area in the community where the movement of pedestrians is an important aspect of the area's character. New development and public improvements within this area will be designed to favor pedestrian circulation. Typical improvements are to include: pedestrian oriented signage, street furniture, and landscaping; wide and enhanced sidewalk paving; prominent pedestrian street crossings; and narrowed street sections.

Trail Design Principles

The trail system identified above is intended to create an integrated "system" that serves local commuter, recreation, and tourist needs as well as to provide connections to the regional trails system. In delineating the Master Plan of Trails, several principles were used to provide continuity, improve public access, provide logical transition and destinations, and ensure the safety of trail users. These design principles will be used as review criteria for all new projects which are adjacent to or may have an impact on the planned trails system, to ensure that continuity, access, logic, and safety considerations are maintained and/or enhanced.

Continuity

Using the Ojai Valley Trail as the backbone, each trail has been planned to be an integral part of an overall network. New development will be required to respect this continuity and ensure that existing and future trail through routes and access points are maintained.

Community Access

Continued, unrestricted use of the trail system for recreation and commuting, as well as providing alternatives to the automobile is an important contributor to Ojai's over-all character. It is thus Ojai's intent to retain and expand the public's access to the trail system and provide links between new development and the trail system.

Destinations

The Ojai trail system links neighborhoods, recreation, commercial and employment centers in the community, as well as other regional trail and open space systems. New development will be expected to integrate the utilitarian and recreational aspects of the trail system in project design.

Safety

Safety is a high priority for the trail system. Visibility of trails and trail crossings, as well as provision of appropriate security measures along trail routes are important considerations in the design of the system.

FACILITATING THE USE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

The City of Ojai sponsors a local transit service called the Ojai Trolley. The Trolley currently operates seven days per week from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., and serves popular shopping areas, the Ojai Community Hospital, Ojai Valley Inn, Whispering Oaks, the community center, and Meiners Oaks. Regional transit service is provided by South Coast Area Transit (SCAT), which operates a line connecting Ojai to downtown Ventura through Meiners Oaks and along State Highway 33. The SCAT line operates seven days per week from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Both lines run on an hourly basis. An express route for commuters from Ojai to Ventura was canceled due to lack of ridership.

As a means of reducing traffic and improving air quality, it is the intent of the General Plan to increase public transit ridership. This will be accomplished through a combination of public education, provision of transit amenities, and coordination of local Trolley and regional SCAT line schedules. A public education program will be undertaken to increase the public's awareness of area transit services. This education program will also be used to increase the public's understanding of the advantages of public transit, including its role in reducing traffic congestion and improving area air quality.

Within new developments that could generate significant amounts of transit ridership (e.g., shopping, schools, senior housing), bus turnouts and bus shelters will be required to be provided, if requested by SCAT or if needed to enhance Trolley services and ridership. Where such transit amenities are provided, new development will also be required to provide convenient pedestrian access between new uses and transit stops.

Currently, Trolley and SCAT services run independently. The City of Ojai will work with SCAT to coordinate Trolley and SCAT bus schedules to facilitate transfers

between the Trolley and SCAT. This will expand the range of potential services for both systems.

PUBLIC UTILITY CORRIDORS

In addition to roadways, trails, and public transit, municipal Circulation Elements are required to address the need for public utility corridors for the delivery of energy resources (gas and electricity), disposal of sewage, and provision of other public utilities (e.g., telephone, cable television). The General Plan intends that such utility corridors follow the same rules as for roadways, avoiding significant impacts on the natural environment, preserving oak trees, and fitting comfortably into the community's small town character. As a result, all such utilities are to be located below ground and within public street rights-of-way or dedicated utility rights-of-way or easements. New utility corridors are to be protective of the area's natural environment, and are to preserve mature oaks in place.

VALLEY WIDE SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Morning and evening commutes in and out of the City are a major concern for Ojai residents. Due to the narrow width of State Highway 33, which connects Ojai to Ventura, commuters are often forced to negotiate the two lane highway in a long line of vehicles. Without adequate width to handle turns or slow moving traffic, congestion is common, especially during the evening peak commute hour. Congestion problems are particularly acute in the communities of Casitas Springs and Mira Monte, where numerous driveways front along the State Highway.

Although residents are clearly frustrated with increasing congestion along State Highway 33, many have concluded that the commuter traffic is the price to be paid for living in Ojai and for protection of the rural character of the canyon connecting Ojai to Ventura. They feel that widening State Highway 33 would only result in temporary traffic improvements as it would also mean bringing additional development to the Ojai Valley.

County policies have limited the widening of State Highway 33 due to the impacts which would result on adjacent rural communities. A bypass around these communities is being proposed by the County and has been included in the State Transportation Improvement Program; however, funding for such a project is unlikely to occur within the planning horizon of the Ojai General Plan. In the absence of a comprehensive widening project, the County is proposing use of traffic controls, widening at critical intersections, and provision of acceleration and deceleration lanes, where feasible, to provide partial relief from congestion problems.

The Circulation Element proposes taking a valley wide approach to solving congestion problems along State Highway 33. This would include limitations on development within both the County and City to reduce traffic impacts on the Highway

until physical improvements and widening is in place, emphasizing transit alternatives, and establishment of an areawide financing mechanism for highway improvements.

The City of Ojai has adopted residential growth controls, and has tied the rate of commercial growth to population growth. Ventura County has adopted residential growth controls for the Ojai Valley area. In addition, Policy 4.2.2.4 of the Ventura County General Plan prohibits discretionary development that would add ***any*** traffic on State Highway 33 during critical weekday commuter traffic periods without appropriate mitigation.[1] The County has not established commercial growth controls.

The net result of these policies is a significant inducement for commercial development within the unincorporated portions of the Ojai Valley, where the vast majority of commercially zoned land actually fronts ***on*** the highway. While it may be argued that new commercial uses along State Highway 33 would not violate County policy because these uses would cater specifically to commuters during peak commute hours, and that provisions of acceleration/deceleration lanes would mitigate peak hour impacts, continuing commercial development along the State Highway will increase overall traffic on the highway and eventually result in significant ***off-peak*** congestion impacts by increasing the number of conflicting left turn movements.[2]

The Ojai General Plan proposes that the County link commercial growth to residential growth, thereby removing the advantage of developing commercial uses in the County.

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1 Policy AQ-P4 of the Ojai General Plan Air Quality Element prohibits approval of development projects that "do not mitigate their peak hour trips on State Highway 33 at the Edison curve through Castias Springs except for affordable housing projects."

2 Currently, Ojai commuters can stop at commercial uses along the east frontage of the highway on their way home without requiring a left turn movement. However, during off-peak hours and weekends, patrons would be required to make left turn movements either into or from commercial establishments.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT POLICIES

BALANCING COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND CIRCULATION NEEDS

CIR-1 Provide for the efficient movement of vehicles by designing, constructing, and maintaining a roadway circulation network which will function at an acceptable level of service (LOS). The City will strive to achieve and maintain LOS C, where it is economically and environmentally feasible to achieve that objective in a manner consistent with community character and the non-transportation provisions of the General Plan, but will accept lower levels of service where necessary to:

- protect Ojai's unique community character or the quality of the area's natural environment;
- provide for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists and to avoid gaps in the City's trails system;
- conduct major community events that are important to the City's cultural, community, and economic health.

The minimum acceptable LOS along State Highways 33 and 150 would be LOS D, except for any segments or intersection operating below LOS D as of the date of adoption of this Circulation Element, in which case, LOS E is considered to be acceptable.

At any intersection, the minimum acceptable LOS shall be C where the minimum acceptable LOS for each intersecting street is also C. In all other cases, the minimum acceptable LOS for an intersection shall be the lower of the acceptable LOS standards for the intersection roadway links.

CIR-2 Limit the intensity of future development to that which can be accommodated on area roadways through creation of a mix of land uses that realistically balances (1) community growth potential, (2) community character, environmental, and neighborhood protection needs, and (3) the desire for improving the performance of the City's roadway system.

Where (1) existing or (2) projected traffic volumes at general plan build out prevent a project from complying with this policy, limit development to the maximum peak hour volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio increases delineated in Table A, unless a greater increase is required to accommodate the following:

- Construction of a single family dwelling on an existing lot of record.
- An affordable housing project needed to achieve the City's Housing Element objectives for the production of low and moderate income housing.

- A project or event that is important to the City's cultural, community, and economic health.

CIR-3 Continue to protect oak, sycamore, and other mature trees located within existing and future roadway rights-of-way and avoid widening and construction of streets where such projects will result in significant impacts to historic structures or facilities within the community.

Table A - Allowable Project-Related Traffic Increases Where Roadway Performance Standards Are or Will Be Exceeded

Existing or Future Link/ Intersection LOS	Volume to Capacity (V/C) Ratio	Maximum Peak Hour V/C Increase
C	0.71 - 0.80	0.010
D	0.81 - 0.90	0.0060
E	0.91 - 1.00	0.0030
F	≥1.01	0.0030

Source: LSA Associates, Inc., 1995.

CIR-4 Facilitate the application of special design standards that recognize the inherent differences between urban and rural land uses (e.g., requirements for construction of curbs, gutters, and sidewalks in urban, but not rural areas), protect and incorporate existing oak and other mature trees located in or adjacent to the street right-of-way into overall street design, as well as standards that promote safety in areas of special circumstances (e.g., hillside and agricultural areas) and maximize the unique natural and manmade character of the community.

CIR-5 Achieve and maintain an organization of land uses which, to the extent feasible and consistent with community character and environmental protection, integrates places of residence, retail commerce, daily service needs, work, education, and recreation, and which minimizes the impacts of through traffic within residential neighborhoods.

CIR-6 Analyze the desirability of roadway widening projects, proposed new roadways, and proposed installation of traffic control devices in terms of their consistency with the General Plan's goal of preserving Ojai's unique character and its environmental quality.

CIR-7 Prior to commencing with new roadway construction, widening of existing roadways, or installation of traffic control devices, determine whether Transportation Systems Management, Transportation Demand management, and/or traffic calming techniques can be used to avoid the need for such physical improvements.

CIR-8 Because transportation capital, operation, and maintenance funds are severely limited, pursue transportation funding based on the following principles:

- Roadway improvements required by new development are to be paid for by those who generate the need and benefit from them.
- Roadway improvements necessitated by existing development should have needed improvements financed from transportation funds, such as gasoline taxes, Transportation Development Act funds, local transportation sales taxes, etc. Where funding sources prove inadequate, roadway funds should be augmented by assessment districts, impact fees, and related funding mechanisms.
- Existing excess road capacity should not automatically be granted to new users. In cases where existing developments have provided excess roadway capacity in order to serve future development, new development should pay for that existing capacity just as it would for new roads.
- To the extent permitted by law, road maintenance should be paid for by road users.

CIR-9 Promote the design of roadways to optimize safe traffic flow within established roadway configurations by minimizing turning movements, uncontrolled access, on-street parking, and frequent stops to the extent consistent with the character of adjacent land uses.

CIR-10 Maintain an adequate supply of parking to support the function of the uses it serves, and to facilitate transportation demand management programs.

CIR-11 Reduce the need for vehicular travel by:

- establishing and maintaining a comprehensive system of bicycle and pedestrian paths and trails, and providing appropriate facilities along these routes, paths, and trails;
- supporting the responsible expansion of public transit services, including connections between major destinations within the community and employment areas within Ventura;

- promoting the use of public transit and ride sharing through development of convenient and attractive facilities;
- promoting Transportation Demand and Systems Management Programs; and
- facilitating workplace alternatives such as teleconferencing and telecommuting centers, and facilitating the ability of residents to work at home.

CIR-12 Preserve and enhance the City's ability to hold community events that are significant tourist and local draws by:

- establishing a customized trolley schedule to be used during community events, connecting the "Y" Park-and-Ride and the downtown Park-and-Ride lots to the event;
- providing clear directional signage to the most popular locations related to tourist areas to help direct visitors who are unfamiliar with the community;
- working with event sponsors to establish special transit services connecting off-site parking areas to the event in order to reduce congestions in the downtown area during events; and
- permitting community groups to offer valet or shuttle service as fund-raising activities during community events.

CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLES

CIR-13 Provide a comprehensive multi-use trail system which:

- is safe and useful for everyday tasks such as travel to school, shopping, work, and recreational facilities;
- contributes recreational opportunities to the community, and serves as a partial alternative to automobile use;
- connects major destinations within the City; and
- provides appropriate connections to regional routes and the trail facilities within the National Forest.

CIR-14 Avoid roadway and intersection improvements construction which could compromise the integrity of Ojai's bicycle and pedestrian circulation systems. Prohibit roadway and intersection improvements which would create gaps in the community's bicycle and pedestrian trails systems.

CIR-15 Require that new commercial, industrial, institutional, and recreational uses be designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access, giving on-site pedestrian and bicycle access equal priority to on-site automobile circulation.

CIR-16 Enhance pedestrian safety by:

- providing four-way stops at heavily used trail/street crossings;
- constructing street "neck-downs" to narrow street crossings at key pedestrian crossing locations; and
- lengthening the "WALK/DON'T WALK" cycle or providing a dedicated pedestrian walk phase, including diagonal pedestrian crossings at signalized intersections.

CIR-17 Provide new pedestrian connections between Libbey Park and those uses which front Montgomery Avenue.

FACILITATING USE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT

CIR-18 Ensure public awareness of available public transit services through a community outreach program, which provides information on the availability of transit services, and provides information on advantages of public transit usage such as reduced traffic congestion and improved air quality.

CIR-19 Require the provision of transit amenities including, but not limited to, bus turnouts and bus shelters in new developments which can provide a significant source of transit ridership (e.g., shopping, schools, senior housing) when such facilities could improve Trolley service or ridership, and when requested by SCAT.

CIR-20 For uses located adjacent to transit stops, require the provision of convenient pedestrian access between the development and the transit stop.

CIR-21 Work with SCAT to coordinate SCAT and Trolley service schedules, increasing the feasibility of passengers transferring from one system to the other.

CIR-22 Work with SCAT to reinstate express commuter service on at least a trial basis following the community outreach program described in Policy CIR-18.

PUBLIC UTILITY CORRIDORS

CIR-23 Require all new utilities to be placed underground[3] and to be routed in a manner which protects Ojai's unique community character, preserves mature oak and sycamore trees, and maintains the quality of the area's natural environment.

VALLEY WIDE SOLUTIONS TO TRAFFIC CONGESTION

CIR-24 Ensure that new developments do not contribute to further deterioration of levels of service on the regional roadway system, particularly with regard to State Highway 33. Exceptions to this policy may be made for affordable housing developments needed to achieve adopted Housing Element objectives for the production of housing where no feasible mitigation measures exist consistent with the need for production of affordable housing.

CIR-25 Continue to tie the amount of Ojai's new commercial growth to the rate of population increase in the City, and work with Ventura County to achieve similar management of commercial growth within unincorporated areas, thereby providing for the rational management of new traffic-generating sources.

CIR-26 Work with Ventura County and Caltrans to establish a funding mechanism for needed improvements along State Highway 33.

CIR-27 Ensure that the provision of roadway carrying capacity improvements supports, rather than leads, the determination of desired land uses and land use character. While the absence of roadway carrying capacity presents a constraint to development, its availability should not be permitted to lead to development which is inconsistent with the desired character of the community or the need to protect the area's natural environment.

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3 Electrical lines in excess of 66kv may be placed above ground when necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Ojai General Plan Circulation Element Implementation and Monitoring Program describes the specific actions necessary to implement the Circulation Element's goals, objectives, approach, and strategies. The Implementation and Monitoring program is organized into three separate program components (see box at right).

Implementation and Monitoring Program Components	
✓	*Development Review*
✓	*Special Studies and Programs*
✓	*Implementation Monitoring*

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The Development Review portion of the Circulation Element Implementation Program is intended to ensure that new development is consistent with the General Plan. This portion of the Circulation Element outlines the criteria that will be used to determine development requirements, as well as the site-specific analysis that will be needed. To ensure consistency with the Circulation Element, the following fundamental questions need to be answered for each proposed development project:

- ✓ Is the project design consistent with Circulation Element policies?
- ✓ What roadway improvements need to be provided?
- ✓ What trail improvements need to be provided?

Is the Project Design Consistent with Circulation Element Policies?

All proposed discretionary development projects are to be consistent with the policies of the Circulation Element. Thus, the City will review policies CIR-3 through CIR-20 to determine what modifications, if any, need to be made to the proposed discretionary development project to make it consistent with Circulation Element policies.

What Roadway Improvements Need to Be Provided?

Individual developments will be reviewed to determine applicable roadway improvement requirements by comparing them to the Circulation Element Map (Figure 9) and the Roadway Classification Table (Table B). At a minimum, new developments will be conditioned to provide the following improvements:

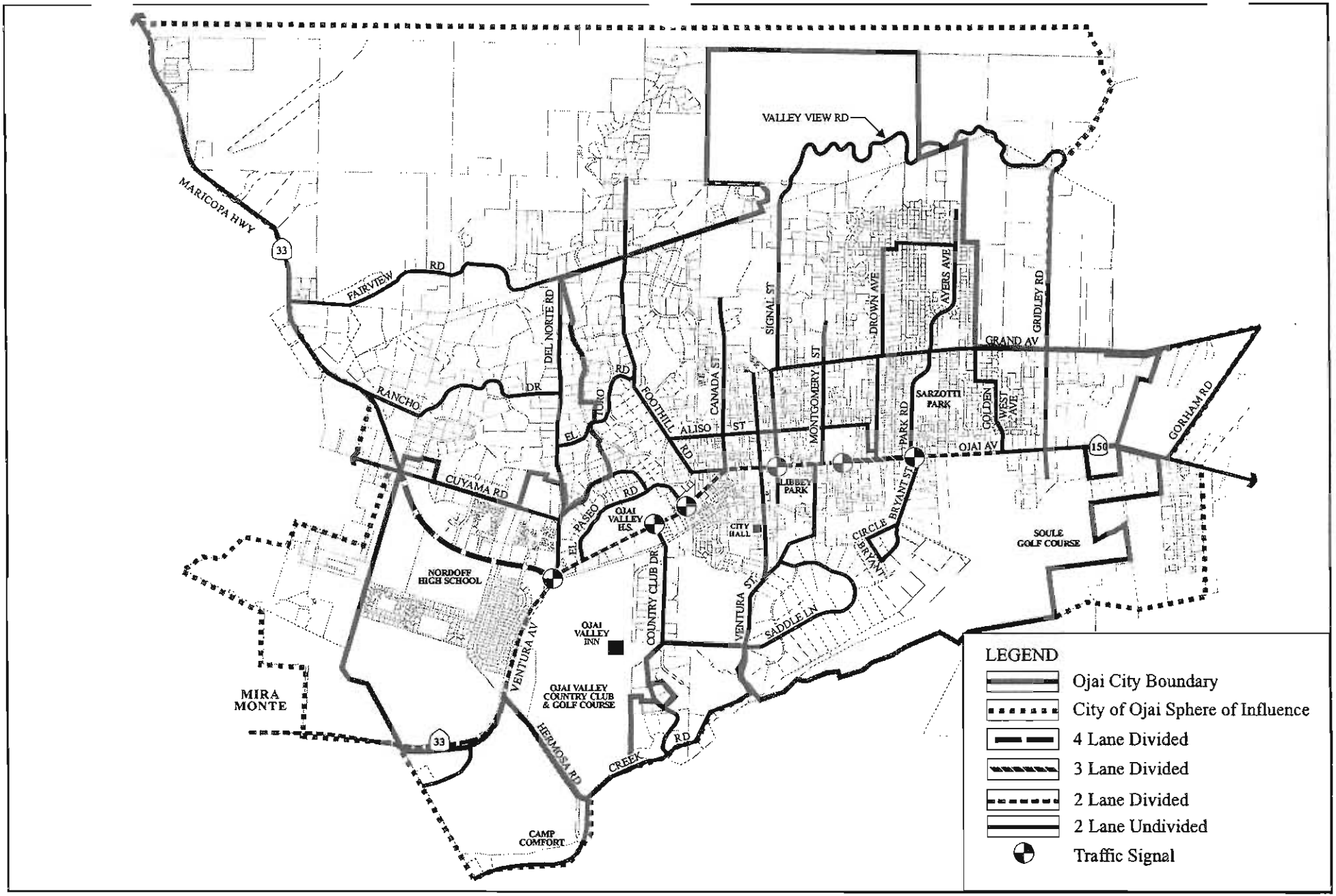

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Figure 9

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Planned Circulation System

- All internal roadways
- master planned roadways within the site to their ultimate planned configuration
- Master planned roadways adjacent to the project site to their ultimate half-width
- Other off-site roadways as necessary to maintain the roadway performance objectives outlined in policies CIR-1 and CIR-17.

If the performance of any street affected by a proposed project is below the standards outlined in Policy CIR-1 prior to project approval, the project shall be required to provide such improvements that are consistent with the General Plan to ensure that the project will not contribute to the further degradation of roadway performance, consistent with Policy CIR-2.

Planned Circulation System

Table B outlines the City's roadway classification system, and describes the primary purposes of the various types of roadways within the community. The City's planned circulation system is illustrated in the circulation map in Figure 9. Finally, Table C identifies planned roadway improvements.

Table B - Existing Roadway Classifications

Ojai General Plan Roadway Classifications		Location/Description
State Highways	State highway widths are established by the State. Maintenance levels and highway improvements (e.g., traffic signals, roadway widening) are controlled by the State Department of Transportation.	Two State highways serve the study area. These include State Highway 33[1] (Maricopa Highway) and Highway 150[1] (Ventura Avenue and Ojai Avenue).
Collector Streets	Roadways that serve abutting property and carry traffic to State highways. Collector streets are two to four lanes with widening at intersections.	Collector roadways include the following: **East/West Collectors** Fairview Rd. Rancho Dr. Cuyama Rd. Hermosa Rd. El Paseo Rd. Grand Ave. Aliso St.

Table B - Existing Roadway Classifications

Ojai General Plan Roadway Classifications		Location/Description
		North/South Collectors
		Del Norte Rd. Foothill Rd. Country Club Dr. Canada St. Ventura St. Signal St. Montgomery St.
Local Streets	Roadways that provide for neighborhood traffic movement. Local streets carry traffic from individual properties to Collector Streets and ultimately to the State highways. These streets are not encouraged to carry through traffic, and are typically two lanes.	Local streets represent roadways not listed as State Highways or collector roadways.
Couplet	A couplet may be a Collector, Local street, State highway, or a combination of these roadways designed to carry traffic in one direction. Special cross sections for any couplet will be designed based upon individual circumstances.	The potential to divert traffic around the historic downtown area has been a discussion issue for some time. Original efforts focused on diverting through traffic around the commercial area. A more recent Couplet Study provided a number of alternatives using a system of one-way streets.
Special Circumstances	Streets that abut historic structures, facilities or located with oak tree constraints.	There a number of examples within the study area that demonstrate this situation. The most visible include the preservation of oak trees within the street right-of-way throughout the Village Residential area. Other street sections, such as along Ojai Avenue at the Arcade are severely limited due to the existence of historic or commercial structures.

[1] Included as part of the Congestion Management Program roadway network.

Table C - City of Ojai Planned Roadway Improvements

Location	Recommended Improvement
Ojai Avenue (SR-33), between the "Y" and Country Club Drive	Upgrade to a two lane divided roadway section.
"Y" intersection Maricopa Highway (SR-150), SR-33, and Del Norte Rd.	Add a free right turn lane from northbound SR-33 to eastbound SR-33, along with appropriate transition lanes to the east of the "Y".
SR-33 between Signal St. and Montgomery Ave.	Install landscaped pedestrian crossing with enhanced pavement.
Intersection of SR-33 and Montgomery Ave.	Provide for an adjacent, protected east and westbound left turn pockets from Ojai Avenue to North and South Montgomery streets in character with Ojai's historic downtown area.
Intersection of SR-33 and Fox	Provide for signalized intersection and pedestrian crossing improvements.
Fulton Street	Extend approximately 600 feet to Bryant Circle to provide a second access to the business park.
Topa Topa Street/Willow Street connections	Provide an east/west connection by connecting either Topa Topa or Willow streets between Fox and Montgomery streets.
Mallory Way	Preserve right-of-way for a possible future roadway/bikeway improvement in connection with redevelopment of adjacent properties.
Santa Ana Street connection	Connect Santa Ana between Canada Street and Blanche Street to enhance east/west travel through this area.

Source: Robert Kahn, John Kain & Associates; LSA Associates, Inc., 1995.

What Trail Improvements Need to be Provided?

Individual developments will be reviewed to determine applicable trail improvement requirements by comparing them to the Trail Classification System (Figure 8). At a minimum, new developments will be conditioned to provide the following improvements:

- Appropriate physical improvements to link the site to the existing trail system;
- Appropriate easements/rights-of-way to link the site to the planned trail system;
- Appropriate easements/rights-of-way for planned trails through or adjacent to the site; and
- Directional signage and traffic controls to ensure trail safety.

Trail Standards

The basic trail standards to be used for implementation of the Trail Classification System are depicted in Figure 8, which identifies proposed location and width of each trail type depicted in Figure 7. It is recognized that these standards may need to be modified, revised, or adapted to site-specific physical or environmental constraints as each trail is constructed.

SPECIAL STUDIES AND PROGRAMS

The Special Studies component describes the long range implementation measures that the community will undertake to implement the Circulation Element. Because they are long range, these special studies are to be implemented at various times over the life of the General Plan Circulation Element. This program assigns priorities to each special study that can be coordinated over time with the City's budget process and capital improvement program (see on the right). As part of the annual General Plan review, the City Council will review and revise the priorities for individual studies. Upon completion of any study, specific implementation programs may be adopted as appropriate.

Special Studies Implementation Priorities

Priority	*Action*
One	*Program to be initiated within one year.*
Two	*Initiate within the next two to five years.*
Three	*Initiate beyond the next five years.*

Beginning with the first budget cycle following one year after adoption of the Circulation Element, the City Council will annually review the list of special studies listed in this section and to revise the priorities of these studies, based on available resources. Upon completion of each study, appropriate General Plan implementation programs may be added to the Implementation and Monitoring Program contained in the General Plan.

The funding sources for each action listed below will be assigned annually as part of the General Plan Review and Update and the City's annual budget process.

Downtown Ojai Parking Study (Priority One)

Analyze opportunities for enhanced parking within the Village Mixed Use (VMU) designation, including, but not be limited to:

- an inventory of existing on and off-street public and private parking;
- existing and future development intensities (based on the most probable build out within the VMU designation);

- an analysis of existing and future parking deficiencies that will identify the number and location of spaces needed to meet existing and future demand; and

- a detail action plan of both public and private parking improvements that will ensure an adequate supply of parking to support all uses within the City's downtown.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing Study (Priority Two)

Complete a study assessing the feasibility of, and preparing a detailed design for, a bicycle and pedestrian under crossing at State Highway 33 and the San Antonio Creek. Coordinate the design studies with the Land Use Element Design Concepts for a gateway treatment in the same location.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan (Priority Two)

As part of an ongoing policy for the enhancement of bicycle and pedestrian opportunities in order to achieve a more "livable" and sustainable community, develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan that includes the following:

- Appointing a City Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator to function as a liaison between the City policy makers and the biking and walking community

- Creating and soliciting community participation in a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee comprised of both professional City staff and citizens having an interest and/or expertise in bicycling and walking issues

- Developing a community bicycle and walking information and safety program designed to provide the general public with information regarding local and regional trail locations, bicycle and pedestrian events and safety programs, as well as an update on new trail system facilities development.

Pedestrian Enhancement District Guidebook (Priority Two)

Using the policies contained in the General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements, develop an illustrated guide for new and infill development within the Pedestrian Enhancement District (PED) designation. Include strategies, concepts, and examples of ways in which new and infill development can participate in the creation of a more bicycle-and pedestrian-friendly community.

CIRCULATION ELEMENT REVIEW AND UPDATE

California Government Code Section 65400(b) requires the planning agency of each city and county in the State to provide an "annual report to the legislative body on the status of the (general) plan and progress in its implementation." The following section details the contents of such a report, which will be prepared and delivered annually to the Ojai City Council regarding the implementation of the Circulation Element.

Circulation Element Review

On an annual basis, the Planning Department will report on the implementation of the General Plan Circulation Element and provide the following information:

✓ A summary of activities undertaken over the past year to implement the General Plan Circulation Element.

✓ A review of the General Plan Circulation Element Map and Master Plan of Trails Map to ensure that:

- adequate roadways are planned to support planned development, and that the Land Use and Circulation Element continue to be correlated;
- adequate trails are planned to provide a viable alternative to automobile travel; and
- appropriate interface is provided between planned land uses, planned roadways, and planned trails.

✓ A status of planned roadway and trail improvements, including adequacy of funding.

✓ An assessment of valley wide and regional transportation policies and physical improvements over the past year and their associated impact on Ojai's circulation policies.

✓ Recommendations for future Circulation Element Revisions. Upon adoption by the City Council, a copy of the Circulation Element will be provided for review to the County and regional agencies who have an impact on transportation planning with Ojai and its sphere of influence.

IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING

The following information provides an index of General Plan Strategies and related implementation programs along with a description of the responsibility, timing, and funding that is likely to be necessary to implement the Ojai General Plan.

Table D - General Plan Implementation Monitoring Matrix

Implementation Program	Responsibility	Timing	Funding Source
Development Review			
Review and Determination of project consistency	Planning Department Engineering Department	Implemented on a project by project basis	Department budget and development review fees
Special Studies and Programs			
Downtown Ojai Parking Study	Planning Department	Initiate within one year (1997)	Department budget
Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing Study Bicycle and Pedestrian Action Plan Pedestrian Enhancement District Guidebook	Planning Department Engineering Department	Initiate within the next 2 to 5 years (1997-2000)	Department budgets. ISTEA Grants FTA Grants included within the Livable Communities Initiative (requires 20 percent match form City) Program funding sources include: ✓Transit Capital Discretionary Grant of Loan Program ✓Transit Formula Assistance Block Grants ✓Planning and Research Program ✓Surface Transportation Program ✓Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

Table D - General Plan Implementation Monitoring Matrix

Implementation Program	Responsibility	Timing	Funding Source
Circulation Element Update			
Circulation Element Review	Planning Department Engineering Department	Annually in coordination with the City's budget process.	Department Budgets