

*Endorsed by Mid Peninsula Action for Tomorrow,  
Stanford Open Space Alliance,  
Committee for Green Foothills and  
People for Access to Trails in the Hills at Stanford (PATHS).*

### **Executive Summary**

We endorse the C1-B (Optimal San Francisquito Corridor) and S1-B (Optimal Dish Route) or S1-E (Cherry Stem/Stanford Periphery) alignments for the two trails that Stanford University is required to provide under the terms of the Stanford General Use Permit (GUP). These trail alignments are required as mitigation for Stanford's 5 million square feet of development over the next ten years and are required to be safe and recreational as specified through the conditions of the GUP and Countywide Trails Master Plan.

Trail alignment C1-C (Sand Hill/Alpine Road) is unacceptable because of its documented risk to public safety and because of its minimal recreational value. In addition, it crosses land that is the subject of litigation between private homeowners and San Mateo County. The S1-D (I-280/Caltrans) alignment also has serious safety issues and reduced recreational value. S1-D is subject to approval by Caltrans, which has expressed opposition, as has Los Altos Hills. Trail alignments that cannot be implemented in a timely manner and would not result in safe, recreational trails are not in accordance with the GUP and the Countywide Trails Master Plan and should not be accepted.

### **Background**

On December 12, 2000, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisor approved Stanford University's General Use Permit (GUP) and Community Plan, granting the University approximately 5 million square feet of development over the next ten years. In exchange for this development entitlement, Stanford agreed to meet all the conditions of the GUP as set by the County. One such condition is that "Stanford shall dedicate easements for, develop, and maintain the portions of the two trail alignments which cross Stanford lands shown in the 1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan (Routes S1 and C1)..."

We, the organizations listed above, remain committed to the successful implementation of the trail dedication required under the Stanford General Use Permit (GUP) and support the careful and systematic trail alignment selection process pursued to date by County Parks and Recreation staff, under the guidance of Supervisor Liz Kniss and the Board of Supervisors.

At its April 30, 2002 meeting, the Board agreed unanimously to direct staff to go forward with environmental review as required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for two alignments for the C-1 trail (C1-B, C1-C) and three alternatives for the S-1 trail (S1-B, S1-D, S1-E). We are encouraged that the Board narrowed the options, eliminating some inappropriate alignments. However, we are concerned about alternatives that remain in consideration for the C-1 and S-1 trails that, if implemented, would result in trails with reduced recreational value and documented safety issues. The trail dedication requirement of the GUP specifically refers to the Countywide Master Trails Plan, which specifies safe, recreational trails. (Countywide Trails Master Plan Update, 1995, D-1.1.5, page 63, Design and Management Guidelines)

### **C-1 Trail Alignments: We endorse the C1-B alignment.**

#### **C1-B Optimum Route Desirable Features:**

- Has "Medium to High" recreational value as assessed by County staff
- Has low environmental impact as determined by County staff
- Requires no negotiation with San Mateo County or other landholders
- Has no impact on private property owners in Stanford Weekend Acres/Happy Hollow
- Avoids unsafe crossings with roadways and driveways
- Avoids the entrance and exit ramps of I-280 by utilizing a service tunnel under the freeway

- Provides recreational opportunities to the residents of proposed new faculty housing development adjacent to the Stanford Golf Course, as intended by the GUP mitigation

**C1-C Stanford Proposed Sand Hill/Alpine Route Undesirable Features:**

- Unsafe conditions as two-way trail traffic negotiates vehicle traffic from numerous driveways and roads in Stanford Weekend Acres/Happy Hollow area
- Minimal recreational value due to its close proximity to busy roadways for the entire length of the trail
- Pending litigation between private property owners and the County of San Mateo makes implementation of this alignment doubtful

We note that our concerns about the C1-C alignment are shared by Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation staff. In its report to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors dated April 30, 2002, staff noted that the C1-C alignment would have “High impacts” on private homeowners in the Stanford Weekend Acres/Happy Hollow area. Staff also characterized the C1-C alternative as having “Medium to High” risks to public safety as a result of close proximity to Alpine and Sand Hill Roads. Palo Alto, Portola Valley, Menlo Park, and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District have also expressed concerns about the C1-C alignment.

**S-1 Trail Alignments: We endorse the S1-B and S1-E alignments.**

**S1-B (Optimal) and S1-E (Alternate, Cherry Stem) Route Desirable Features:**

- Low risk to public safety, as confirmed by County staff in its study of S-1 alternatives
- Superior recreational value, as confirmed by County staff in its study of S-1 alternatives

**Concerns with the S1-D Caltrans Alignment:**

- “High” risk to public safety, as assessed by Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation staff
- Opposition from Caltrans, from which approval is necessary for this alignment
- Opposition from Los Altos Hills
- High expense to the County, because Stanford has not agreed to pay for the portion of the trail on state land

Caltrans staff has indicated that prior to submitting a formal application for use of the Caltrans right-of-way, Stanford must justify that there is no other alternative route for the trail other than within the State's right of way. This justification cannot be made because the two other alignments under study by the County, S1-B and S1-E, are feasible and Caltrans has indicated that these two alignments would be acceptable.

**Trail Standards**

The trails C-1 and S-1 should conform to the standards for an unpaved multi-use trail 8-12 feet in width as set forth in figure G-3 of the Countywide Trails Master Plan in the areas south of Junipero Serra Boulevard to accommodate hikers, joggers, mountain bikers and equestrians. The Countywide Trails Master Plan designates the trail segments in the Stanford Dish area as "hiking" and "off-road bicycle" in table D-1.

**Timing**

While we are encouraged by the progress to date on this issue, as well as the careful and systematic approach taken by the County, we are concerned by suggestions that the trail mitigation requirement of the GUP be suspended indefinitely. We believe it is appropriate and necessary for the County to advise Stanford that acceptable trail agreements should be brought to the Board within 2 months after the end of the CEQA process. The CEQA review should be done in a reasonable amount of time and not drag on significantly past the decision date of August 2002. If Stanford does not comply with the conditions established in the GUP and Countywide Trails Master Plan within this timeline the County should proceed with sanctions for noncompliance as detailed in the GUP, including monetary fines and/or the blocking of building permits.