

Pedestrian Bridge Inspection Planning Process

Planning for long-term maintenance and public safety

San Jose's Trail Program staff set out to establish a comprehensive process for the biennial (every 2 years) inspection of pedestrian bridges. Insuring public safety is a top priority and the process provides the data necessary to guide regular maintenance and major improvements. The process is an important **Planning tool** to budget funds appropriately for on-going and long-term maintenance.

San Jose has 51 pedestrian bridges in its 54-mile trail network with some dating back to the early 1900's.

Trail Program staff contacted agencies around the country in search of an inspection process. Few were found. Of particular note, the Caltrans' Roadway Bridge Inspection Process was deficient in defining the unique elements of a pedestrian bridge structure and offered no specific guidance to ensure safety for the pedestrian and bicycle modes of travel.

Trail Program staff and their consultant, CH2M-Hill, developed a 65-point data collection and analysis planning process, focused on parameters such as:

- Location (Identification)
- Structure type and materials
- Age and Service
- Structural load issues
- Superficial issues
- Pedestrian rails and surfaces

The inspections are conducted by a licensed structural engineer who visits each bridge and documents conditions and provides recommendations. Results are shared with Maintenance Managers. The managers determine if areas of deficiency can be addressed as part of routine maintenance or if the work warrants a special budget as part of the Capitol Improvement Plan.

The formal process has permitted Trail Program staff to secure a recurring annual budget line item for services provided by the Department of Public Works' Structural Engineer.



Trail Network Bridges, circa 1913 and 1992

