

For Immediate Release

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San Jose Trail Usage Shows Nearly 10% Increase

Trail Count 2009 Figures Show Jump in Bike, Pedestrian Travel

San Jose, CA –The City of San Jose’s *Trail Count 2009* shows city trail usage up by 9.6% in both bike and pedestrian traffic with the highest increase found on the Guadalupe River Trail at Coleman Avenue. The *Trail Count*, the third annual survey of city trail users, was conducted on Wednesday, September 23, 2009. The Count provides data to support further development of integrated trail network.

531 trails users were tallied representing a 24% increase from last year’s Count. The results prove overall usage of the trails at the Count locations was up 9.6% from last year’s count. These figures are consistent with US Census report, the 2008 Annual Commuter Survey, which shows San Jose area residents bike to work two-and-a-half times more than the national average (1.2% versus 0.5%)

“San Jose’s Green Vision puts San Jose on the path to being a cycling-friendly city. Trails are a critical component of our efforts to create livable neighborhoods where residents have easy access to transit and the ability walk or bike to work, school, shopping, and dining,” says Mayor Chuck Reed.

The 2008 Annual Commuter Survey reported the following data on bicycling in the San Jose metropolitan area (includes City of Santa Clara and City of Sunnyvale):

- 71% annual increase in work trips by Bike (from .7% of all work trips in 2007, to 1.2% of all work trips in 2008). “Work Trips” represent commutes to and from work, and do not measure bicyclists that are shopping, exercising or recreating.
- 300% increase in bicycling between 2006 and 2008 (0.4% to 1.2%)

The Trail Count serves as more than an assessment of user opinions. Data from last year’s Trail Count was used secure \$1,377,000 in grant funding. Grant providing agencies directly link the awards to the well-documented high usage and the commuting aspect.

“The high gas prices in 2008 appeared to be a great motivator for people to use their bikes more often. We anticipated a possible drop in usage this year without that economic factor, but were pleasantly surprised by the increases we’ve seen.” said Trail Program Manager Yves Zsutty. Zsutty noted that the usage increases may be attributable in part to expansions of the City’s trail network in the past few years.

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Trail users were also polled on their opinions of the quality and safety of trails, motivations for usage and what they wish to included as more trails are constructed. The online survey produced the following findings:

- 69% of respondents reported that their usage of the trail network has increased over the past two years.
- 48% were on the trail for purposes of commuting to work.
- The Guadalupe River trail—which now extends from Downtown to North San Jose and beyond—was the single most popular trail, with 64% of survey respondents using it on the day of the count.

How is it Done?

The Trail Count was conducted during peak hours of usage, from 7:00 to 9:00 am and 4:00 to 6:00 pm. Volunteers were deployed to six count stations along the Guadalupe River (2 stations), Los Gatos Creek (2 stations), Coyote Creek (1 station) and Highway 87 Bikeway (1 station). This process follows the national survey standards published by the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project. The annual Count is conducted in partnership with the Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition and the Friends of the Guadalupe River Park & Gardens.

Green Vision Goal #10

Goal #10 of the City's Green Vision sees the trail network growing from its existing 53 miles to 100 miles by 2022. Development of trails in San Jose results largely as the result of partnerships with public agencies. Trails along the Coyote Creek and Guadalupe River make use of existing Santa Clara Valley Water District maintenance roads, which create the platform for enhanced trail development over time.

For a copy of the *Trail Count 2009* overview please visit www.sanjoseca.gov/prns. For more information a copy of on the San Jose Trail Network visit sjparks.org/Trails or call Yves Zsutty at 793-5561.