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## New trail markers, potential dog-leash rules coming to San Jose

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New trail markers and signs are expected to sprout on San Jose trails this summer, and a new law that would shorten dog leashes will be considered in the fall.

The changes come in response to the death in September 2009 of a 62-year-old Almaden Valley woman who succumbed to injuries she received on Los Alamitos Creek Trail. While walking with her husband, the woman was tripped by a man riding a bike with two dogs on leashes.

Led by District 10 Councilwoman Nancy Pyle, several community meetings were held after the incident to gather input on potential trail changes. The Los Alamitos Trail is in Almaden Valley. On June 2, San Jose trail manager Yves Zsutty presented several proposed changes to the city's parks commission.

Cyclists who run dogs on leashes would have to use leashes 6 feet or shorter, according to the proposal; it is intended to discourage biking with dogs because of potential accidents. The earlier incident involved a biker with a longer leash, trail officials said.

City leaders said they decided not pursue a total ban on cycling with dogs on leashes because they feared it would complicate rules that allow leashed dogs in San Jose parks.

The proposal also would limit cyclists to using one headphone rather than two—which is already state law on streets—and it would reiterate a Santa Clara County speed limit of 15 mph on trails.

Trail leaders are expected to bring the proposal to the city council

in the fall.

Separately, city staff plan to install 3-foot tall mile-marker posts every quarter mile on the Los Alamitos Creek Trail starting this summer. The markers are useful for runners and walkers who track their distance, and when trail users report incidents to police, they will be easier to locate.

City trail leaders said San Jose is the first city in the nation to mark an entire trail system in a Geographic Information System database, and they are coordinating with police so they will know the best entries and exits to trails. The mile markers will be graphics-based, with an icon such as a frog or other animal to indicate the trail.

Current San Jose trail signs with rules and other directions use an array of symbols, and those signs are expected to be replaced with uniform ones.

New graphic signs are also planned to indicate that bikers must yield to pedestrians. New dashed center lines, arrows and "Keep Right" markings are also to be painted on paved trails to help separate walkers from cyclists and other trail users.

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Parks commissioner Melanie Richardson applauded the new center lines and signs because she said walkers often walk four astride on trails and are difficult to pass.

"Some people really don't understand trail etiquette," Richardson said at the parks commission meeting.

The trail updates are expected to cost \$350,000, and funding comes from the state's 2002 Resources Bond Act, which funds parks and recreation projects, according to Zsutty. Work will begin on the Los Alamos Creek Trail in summer. The rest of San Jose's major trails—including Los Gatos Creek Trail, Coyote Creek Trail and Guadalupe Creek Trail—are expected to be done by February.

The final part of the proposal would initiate a Trail Watch program where frequent trail users could volunteer to report incidents, maintenance issues and rule violations on a hotline.

For more information on San Jose trails and rules, visit [www.sjparks.org/trails](http://www.sjparks.org/trails).

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