



Making Connections

Because they are pieced together incrementally, they're often overlooked. But go to places like Raleigh, North Carolina; Lawrence Township, New Jersey; Allen, Texas; Davis, California; Scottsdale, Arizona; and dozens of other communities across the U.S. and Canada. When you get there, take a step back. What you'll see are remarkable networks of trails, bikeways, and walking paths. And they're all the more remarkable because they often represent a linkage between public and privately owned lands.

Scottsdale has developed a 300 mile network of graded but unpaved (and non-motorized) trails, which link many of the city's major residential developments. The trails also provide access to the 12,060 acre city-owned McDowell Sonoran Preserve. See photo below.

The Scottsdale Trails Master Plan pinpoints desired trail locations. As trails planner Scott Hamilton notes, "the trail plan is like an official map," so everyone knows in advance where the city is looking to provide trails. City staff work with developers – typically first meeting when a conceptual site plan is submitted – to go over (among other things) the city's trail specifications and requirements. Details of



Many Davis, California, residents make use of the city's extensive network of bike paths.

trail locations and easements are hammered out. Trails often follow wash corridors or power line routes, so they have limited impact on readily developable land.

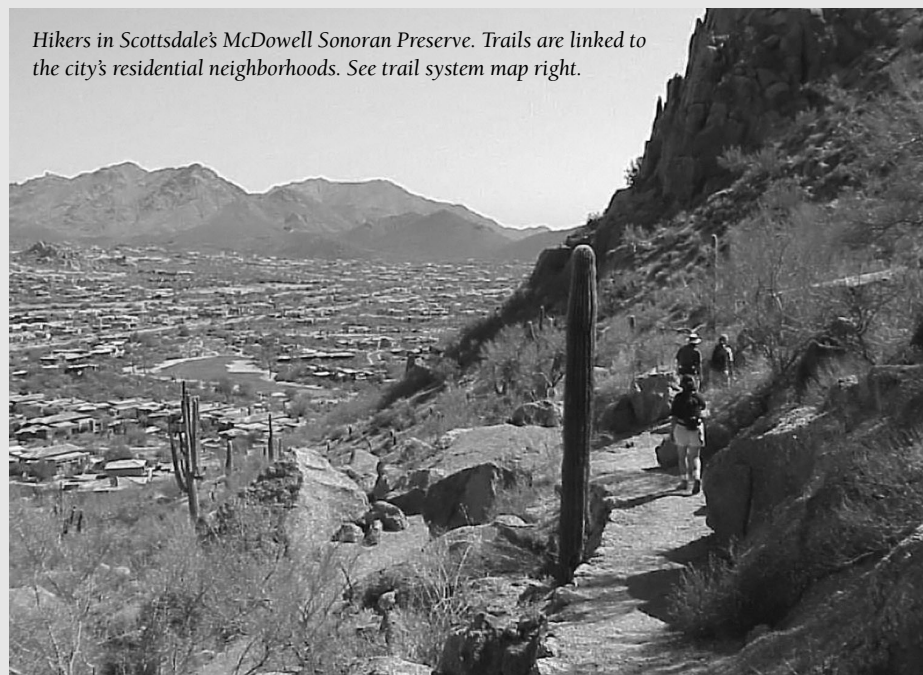
But isn't it a burden when developers are called on to provide trail corridors through their property? In Hamilton's experience, most developers recognize that connections to the trails system are a major selling point. Residents value this easy access to the area's natural landscapes.

Some neighborhood groups have raised concerns about trails facilitating access for criminals. But the city has used its GIS system to map out crime reports and trail locations and has found no correlation. "And once a trail is built, this

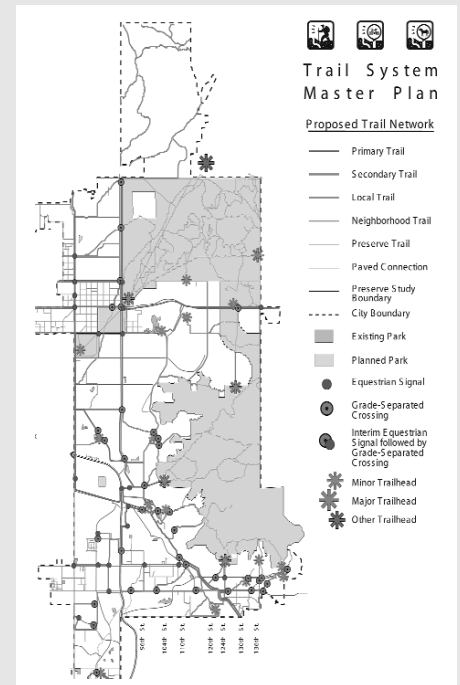
concern invariably disappears," Hamilton reports.

In Davis, California, greenbelt corridors have been part of the city's general plan since 1987. Plan policies call for ten percent of a proposed residential subdivision to be dedicated for greenbelts. All greenbelts include bicycle paths, designed to be connected to a citywide network. According to Community Development Administrator Katherine Hess, the city will waive the greenbelt requirement for smaller developments where there is nothing to connect to and the greenbelt requirement doesn't make sense.

Over time, the Davis greenbelt system has grown to more than 150 acres, including 53 miles of bike paths. But these bike paths are just one component of a much more extensive bike network, which also includes more than 52 miles of on-street bike lanes. In fact, Davis can boast that more than 80 percent of all its collector and arterial streets have bike lanes or adjacent bike paths. Not bad for a 10.5 square mile city of 64,000 people. ♦



Hikers in Scottsdale's McDowell Sonoran Preserve. Trails are linked to the city's residential neighborhoods. See trail system map right.



For more information, contact Scott Hamilton at: shamilton@ScottsdaleAZ.gov; Katherine Hess at: Khess@ci.davis.ca.us.

Information on the Scottsdale Trails Plan can be found at: www.scottsdaleaz.gov/trails/plan/, while details on Davis' Bike Plan are at: www.city.davis.ca.us/topic/bicycles.cfm.