

MEMO

Date: June 18, 2013

To: Water Trail Project Management Team and Advisory Committee

From: Galli Basson, Water Trail Planner

Subject: Consideration of \$135,000 Grant Request from the Petaluma Small Craft Center to install a low freeboard dock at the Petaluma River Turning Basin in Petaluma

Project Description

The Petaluma Small Craft Center (PSCC), a 501 (C)3, would like to construct and operate a dock-based small craft rental center located in downtown Petaluma's Turning Basin. The entire project, to be built in phases, consists of a low freeboard dock, a floating boathouse, restrooms, showers, parking improvements, and a boat washing station.

The entire project is expected to cost \$579,000. The PSCC is requesting \$135,000 for the purchase and installation of a 120-foot-long and 20-foot wide Connect-A-Dock only. Visitors with their own boat who wish to explore downtown Petaluma for the day or overnight may tie up their boat to the dock, provided there is space.

The applicant will be providing in-kind services for the dock installation and will be fund-raising for the boathouse, restrooms, showers, parking improvements, and a boat washing station with the hope that this grant will help with future fundraising efforts to complete the larger project.

Site Description

The Petaluma River Turning Basin is located in Downtown Petaluma. There is a large dock along two sides of the U-shaped Turning Basin. There are two gangways located on each of these sides of the "U" that lead to the docks. The docks are high freeboard docks. The proposed project would add a third, low-freeboard section of dock, completing the U-shape, and greatly expanding the versatility and usability of the dock in what is quickly becoming the "hub" of Petaluma. The site is currently popular with kayakers and stand up paddlers. Please see the attached Site Description Form for more details on the existing site.

The proposed project is consistent with local and regional plans, including the 1996 Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan and the Petaluma General Plan 2025. The Petaluma Station Area Master Plan, adopted in 2013, shows growth for the area surrounding the planned SMART station, located two blocks from the Turning Basin.

Support

The PSCC is supported by the City of Petaluma, boating clubs in the area, a local paddling company, and local businesses and business organizations, including Clavey Sports, the Petaluma Chamber of Commerce, and Petaluma Downtown Association. The project is part of the Petaluma Water Ways project, which plans to link the river through a network of water and land trails.

Timing and Review

The Water Trail Project Management Team (PMT), Advisory Committee (AC), and the public will have an opportunity to provide input on the suitability of the site for Water Trail designation and the grant request at the June 28, 2013 Water Trail Implementation Meeting. Water Trail staff will present the project to the PMT and AC for the PMT's official site designation during a future implementation meeting prior to awarding the grant.

The PSCC is expected to file an application with the City of Petaluma for approval of the project in July 2013, complete CEQA in August 2013, obtain permits in January 2014, and begin construction on the low-freeboard dock on April 1, 2014. The CEQA findings will need to be taken to the Coastal Conservancy board for approval before the site may be designated and grant funding awarded.

Staff Findings

The project is consistent with the goals and strategies of the Enhanced Water Trail Plan to increase use capacity at existing launches (*strategy 1*), link access points and trails (*strategy 2*), make improvements consistent with site characteristics and policies, plans, and priorities (*strategies 3 and 4*), provide restroom facilities (*strategy 9*), improve accessibility (*strategy 10*), promote and encourage on-site clubs and equipment concessions (*strategy 12*), and expand overnight opportunities (*strategy 13*). The project is consistent with local policies and plans, is supported by the City and community, and has the potential to increase tourism and bring economic benefits to the region.

The installation of low freeboard docks will increase the accessibility of the site to non-motorized small boat users, including those with disabilities. The rental center makes boating on the Petaluma River available to users that do not have their own craft. The rental center hopes to expand on its current

programs that provide camps and outings for youth, including disadvantaged youth.

The installation of the low freeboard dock, even without any of the other improvements proposed, is a desirable feature for non-motorized small boat users. Staff is inclined to approve the grant request of \$135,000, pending 1) completion of the grantee's CEQA work and approval of the CEQA work by the Coastal Conservancy board, and 2) PMT approval of site designation at a future Water Trail Implementation Meeting.