

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
March 25, 2004

SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL BLOCK GRANT APPROVAL

File No. 00-109
Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization for the Association of Bay Area Governments to disburse previously authorized Conservancy funds for the Trestle Glen Boulevard Pathway and the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail.

LOCATION: Trestle Glen Boulevard in Tiburon (Marin County) and between the Ohlone Greenway and Creekside Park in El Cerrito (Contra Costa County)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Project Location and Site Map—Trestle Glen Boulevard Pathway

Exhibit 2: Project Location and Site Map—Cerrito Creek Connector Trail

Exhibit 3: CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for Trestle Glen Boulevard Pathway

Exhibit 4: CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring Program for Cerrito Creek Connector Trail

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31000 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the Association of Bay Area Governments (“ABAG”) to disburse an amount not to exceed three hundred ninety-seven thousand fifty-eight dollars (\$397,058) of the total Conservancy funds authorized on September 22, 1999 and December 7, 2000, for two San Francisco Bay Trail projects, as follows:

\$205,700 to the Town of Tiburon for final construction drawings and construction of pedestrian improvements along Trestle Glen Boulevard.

\$191,358 to the City of El Cerrito to construct a connector trail between the Ohlone Greenway and the City’s western border.

This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds for each project, ABAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget, and an agreement between ABAG and the project proponent.
2. Publications and posted signs resulting from these projects shall, where deemed appropriate by the Executive Officer, recognize the contribution of the Conservancy and display its logo and comply with the signage requirements of Proposition 12, the Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000.
3. With respect to the access improvements along Trestle Glen Boulevard in Tiburon, and the improvements proposed for pedestrian and bicycle access in the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail, ABAG shall require the Town of Tiburon and the City of El Cerrito to assure implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program contained in the Mitigated Negative Declarations (attached as Exhibits 3 and 4, respectively, to the accompanying staff recommendation) for the Trestle Glen Bikeway Project and the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail, adopted by the Town of Tiburon on January 21, 2004, and by the City of El Cerrito on March 3, 2004 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed San Francisco Bay Trail project authorizations are consistent with the purposes and objectives of Public Resources Code Sections 31400-31409, regarding public access to the coast.
2. The proposed authorizations are consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. Each of the proposed authorizations will serve greater than local needs for public access to the shoreline.
4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on January 21, 2004 by the Town of Tiburon for the Trestle Glen Bikeway Project, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 3, and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.
5. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on March 3, 2004 by the City of El Cerrito for the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 4, and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

ABAG and the Bay Trail Project are requesting authorization to fund two projects using funds previously designated for San Francisco Bay Trail projects. The Town of Tiburon needs \$205,700 to construct pedestrian improvements along Trestle Glen Boulevard. Trestle Glen

Boulevard is currently unimproved for either pedestrian or bicycle use, although it is a designated alignment of the Bay Trail. It intersects with Tiburon Boulevard, which is an improved Bay Trail segment, and heavily used. The proposed improvements will extend along approximately one-half mile of Trestle Glen Boulevard and will provide a pedestrian pathway on the north side of the road. Trestle Glen Boulevard is narrow and windy and hazardous for pedestrians and bicyclists who would otherwise use this direct route to reach the eastern shoreline of the Tiburon peninsula. Funding is not currently available to construct the necessary bicycle improvements, although the Town of Tiburon has grant applications pending.

The City of El Cerrito needs \$191,358 to construct nearly one mile of trail along Cerrito Creek and the adjacent neighborhood. The proposed Cerrito Creek Connector Trail will implement a 4,600-foot bicycle/pedestrian route between the Ohlone Greenway, a regional trail, and the city's western boundary. Pedestrian improvements are proposed for the northern side of Cerrito Creek, and bike lanes will be striped on city streets in the safest feasible route through the busy commercial area. The Cerrito Creek Connector Trail will ultimately reach the Bay Trail; however, this project is only a portion of that total alignment.

Site Description: Trestle Glen Boulevard in Tiburon is the only road connecting one side of the peninsula with the other. As a result, it is a popular throughway for people living in the area, or for visitors who do not wish to traverse the full length of the peninsula along Tiburon Boulevard and Paradise Drive. Cerrito Creek forms the border between the cities of El Cerrito and Albany and it is daylighted along the proposed trail route. Ultimately, a greenway will be developed along the creek with park facilities and pedestrian and bicycle paths on either side.

Project History: In September 1999 and December 2000 the Conservancy approved block grants to ABAG for San Francisco Bay Trail Projects. The 1999 block grant totaled \$2.5 million, and the subsequent block grant totaled \$7.5 million. The Conservancy has been authorizing the use of the funds for specific projects on a regular basis since the initial grants were approved, and now the \$2.5 million grant has been completely allocated. All of the funds will be spent by June 30, 2004. The larger block grant has also been allocated to projects, but there is approximately \$750,000 left that will need to be allocated and spent by June 2005.

Both of the projects proposed for authorization today were preceded by feasibility studies funded by the Conservancy/ABAG block grant. The Trestle Glen Boulevard Pathway project emerged from an engineering feasibility study of pedestrian and bicycle improvements for the 0.6-mile-long road. That study identified a series of specific improvements that could be made along the road for bicyclists and pedestrians. The study recommends separated bicycle lane and pedestrian pathways along both sides of Trestle Glen Boulevard between Paradise Drive and Tiburon Boulevard.

The Cerrito Creek Connector Trail had a similar history, in that the Conservancy and ABAG funded a feasibility study to analyze opportunities for creating an uninterrupted trail between the Ohlone Greenway and the Bay Trail spine at either Central or Buchanan Street. The "Cerrito Creek Bay Trail Connector Feasibility Study" was completed in November 2003. It identifies a long-term preferred alignment and a short-term interim route. Significant portions of the preferred alignment can be built immediately. The study also identifies six specific locations in Albany that will require use of an interim alignment.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$397,058
Other sources	<u>100,525</u>
Total Project Cost (2 projects)	\$497,583

The expected source of funds is the Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000, and FY 1999/2000 General Fund monies designated for the San Francisco Bay Trail and previously designated by the Conservancy for San Francisco Bay Trail projects in its authorizations of September 1999 and December 2000.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 (regarding public access) of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. In Public Resources Code §31400, the Legislature charged the Conservancy with a principal role in implementing a system of coastal public accessways to and along the California coast, including San Francisco Bay. In working with ABAG to fund construction of new elements of the San Francisco Bay Trail the Conservancy is fulfilling its responsibility to implement a regional trail system.

Section 31400.1 of the Public Resources Code allows the Conservancy to award grants to any public agency or nonprofit organization for accessways that serve more than local public needs. The proposed projects, both of which are sponsored by public agencies, will serve more than local needs because the Bay Trail is intended to serve members of the public from all over the Bay Area and beyond.

Section 31400.2 states that the Conservancy may provide up to the total cost of the initial development of public accessways by any public agency or nonprofit organization. By this authorization, Conservancy funds would be matched with \$100,000 from the local public agencies.

Under §31400.3, the Conservancy may provide such assistance as is required to aid public agencies and nonprofit organizations in establishing a system of public coastal accessways and related functions. These funds will be used for construction of trail segments.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objective B**, the proposed projects will together construct over one mile of the San Francisco Bay Trail.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

Required Criteria

1. **Promotion of the Conservancy's statutory programs and purposes:** See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section above.

2. **Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
3. **Support of the public:** The Marin County Bicycle Coalition, the Tiburon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the Tiburon Parks and Open Space Commission support the Trestle Glen Boulevard Pathway project. The Cerrito Creek Connector project is supported by State Senator Tom Torlakson, Assemblymember Loni Hancock, and the City of Albany.
4. **Location:** Both proposed projects are part of the alignment for spine and spur connections to the Bay Trail.
5. **Need:** Both of these projects constitute the beginning phases of important trail connections. In both cases, significant funds from Caltrans and other grant sources have been requested but have not yet been awarded. In order to leverage the additional funds to complete later phases of these projects, Conservancy funds are needed now.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The San Francisco Bay Trail is a regional trail system that will encompass San Francisco Bay when it is complete.

Additional Criteria

9. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
11. **Innovation:** The Trestle Glen Boulevard project will include innovative design treatments to construct the pedestrian pathway in a very narrow corridor. An elevated boardwalk structure will be constructed along a portion of the alignment.
12. **Readiness:** Both projects are ready to move into construction as soon as funding is approved.
13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See the “Project History” section above.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ACCESS PROGRAM STANDARDS:

The Trestle Glen Boulevard pathway is consistent with Access Standards 1 and 4. It will be designed for maximum public safety while ensuring the privacy of adjoining residences and minimizing the impact to the natural setting. The Cerrito Creek Connector Trail is consistent with Standards 1, 5 and 10 in that it will be designed for maximum public safety (Standard 1), will be designed to minimize any impacts on the riparian area along the creek (Standard 5) and will create Class I, II and III bikeways along various segments of the on-street route of the trail.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

Promoting public access opportunities along the Bay shoreline is consistent with San Francisco Bay Plan policies. Bay Plan Public Access Policy Number 8 states that “Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare.” Both of these proposed projects will provide important Bay Trail connections to regional destination points.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq.*, requires consideration of potential environmental effects of agency actions and approvals, unless exempt. In this case, the Conservancy is funding two construction projects.

Tiburon Pedestrian Improvements, Trestle Glen Boulevard

The Town of Tiburon, acting as the lead agency for purposes of CEQA, approved the Trestle Glen Bikeway Project and adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration and mitigation-monitoring and reporting program (Exhibit 3) on January 21, 2004, finding that the proposed project, as mitigated, would not have a significant effect on the environment. The Town filed a Notice of Determination on January 22, 2004.

The Conservancy, as a CEQA responsible agency, would be contributing funds via ABAG for construction of a portion of the project. The potential environmental effects of the construction project, and the corresponding mitigations—which are discussed at length in the accompanying Mitigated Negative Declaration—are as follows:

Aesthetics. The project is in a highly scenic area. Any retaining walls, site furnishings, or other structural elements needed to create the trail are required to be constructed of materials designed to blend with the adjacent hill slopes. Where possible, retaining walls must be less than three feet high to avoid visual impacts. Appropriate fencing will be used where necessary to screen views of the pathway from adjacent residences. All tree and shrub pruning will be done under the direction of a licensed arborist.

Biological Resources. The trail will be designed to minimize impacts at the existing creek crossing. The design will utilize the existing paved surface, or provide a separate pedestrian/bicycle bridge structure to avoid impacts to the perennial creek. Any incremental impacts associated with trail construction will be mitigated by improving the existing rock slope/creek channel north of Trestle Glen and east of Juno Road, or by planting replacement trees and shrubs for screening. Trail design will avoid disturbing existing mature trees wherever feasible.

Geology and Soils. All retaining walls and other infrastructure required to construct the trail will be designed in consultation with a California Registered Engineering Geologist, Geotechnical Engineer, and/or Structural Engineer to minimize potential geologic hazards.

Noise. Construction will occur week days between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. All equipment used on site will be muffled, and care shall be taken to utilize machinery as far from residences as possible.

Conservancy staff has reviewed the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration and mitigation monitoring plan adopted by the Town of Tiburon, and recommends that the Conservancy, as a CEQA responsible agency, find that there is no substantial evidence that the Conservancy's project, as mitigated, may result in any significant environmental effects. ABAG will require the Town of Tiburon to assure implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Trestle Glen Bikeway Project adopted by the Town of Tiburon on January 21, 2004 pursuant to CEQA.

The Town of Tiburon also found no evidence that this project will have a potentially adverse effect on wildlife resources, as defined in California Fish and Game Code Section 711.2.

El Cerrito Connector Trail

The City of El Cerrito, acting as the lead agency for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), approved the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail Project and adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration and mitigation monitoring plan (Exhibit 4) on March 3, 2004, find-

ing that the proposed project, as mitigated, would not have a significant effect on the environment. The Conservancy, as a CEQA responsible agency, would be contributing funds via ABAG for construction of a portion of the project. The potential environmental effects of the construction project, and the corresponding mitigations—which are discussed at length in the accompanying Mitigated Negative Declaration—are as follows:

Air Quality. During construction, contractors will implement dust control measures based on Bay Area Air Quality Management District guidelines.

Biology. A certified engineer will inspect the reinforced creek bank prior to initiation of construction to determine any impacts on the stability of the bank. If necessary, the pathway will be re-engineered to the City Engineer's satisfaction, and in compliance with California Dept. of Fish and Game and Regional Water Quality Control Board requirements.

Cultural Resources. A qualified archaeologist will be contacted to evaluate any cultural resources that are found on-site. Appropriate reports will be made to the California Archaeological Inventory and the Native American Heritage Commission.

Geology. A storm water pollution prevention plan and stormwater runoff best management practices will be adopted to ensure that construction on the trail will not cause erosion or instability of the stream bank.

Noise. Work will only be done weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. All motorized equipment will have appropriate mufflers and temporary noise control barriers will be used to prevent disturbance to adjacent neighborhoods.

Transportation/Traffic. A detailed traffic and design analysis will be done during the final design phase to determine the feasibility of reconfiguring the traffic lanes approaching and departing the intersection of Carlson Boulevard and Lassen Street to accommodate a landscaped median and refuge island for bicyclists making turns through the intersection.

Conservancy staff has reviewed the attached Mitigated Negative Declaration and mitigation monitoring plan adopted by the City of El Cerrito, and recommends that the Conservancy, as a CEQA responsible agency, find that there is no substantial evidence that the Conservancy's project, as mitigated, may result in any significant environmental effects. ABAG will require the City of El Cerrito to assure implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Cerrito Creek Connector Trail Project adopted by the City of El Cerrito on March 3, 2004 pursuant to CEQA.

The City of El Cerrito also found no evidence that this project will have a potentially adverse effect on wildlife resources, as defined in California Fish and Game Code Section 711.2.