

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
May 26, 2016

COASTAL TRAIL MAJOR MILE MARKER GRANTS

Project No. 16-022-01
Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) in grants of up to \$10,000 each to individual local public entities for the purpose of installing Coastal Trail Major Mile Markers in segments of the California Coastal Trail.

LOCATION: Coastal Counties

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Photographs](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400-31409 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public access to the coast:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (“Executive Officer”) to disburse up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) in grant awards of up to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) each to local public entities for the purpose of fabrication and installation of California Coastal Trail Major Mile Markers in the California Coastal Trail, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of Conservancy funds for each grant, the Executive Officer shall determine whether the particular proposed fabrication and installation of the Coastal Trail Major Mile Marker is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Any proposed fabrication and installation that is not exempt from CEQA shall not be funded under this authorization.
2. Prior to the disbursement of Conservancy funds for each grant, the grantee shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer a final work plan, including the names of any contractors to be used in the completion of the project, and a project schedule and budget.

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3. Prior to construction, each grantee shall submit evidence that it has obtained all necessary permits and approvals.”

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 authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code (Sections 31400 – 31409) concerning public access. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
2. The proposed project will serve greater-than-local public needs.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy delegate authority to the Executive Officer to enter in grant agreements with individual local public entities for amounts up to \$10,000 for the purpose of installing Coastal Trail Major Mile Markers (CTM), for a total amount not to exceed one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000).

As part of the Conservancy’s efforts to promote the California Coastal Trail, staff worked with a landscape architect to develop the CTM. A prototype was installed at Heisler Park in Laguna Beach in January, with great success (see Exhibit 1). The City of Laguna Beach is pleased with the CTM and other jurisdictions are interested in installing the CTM in their jurisdictions. Staff is eager to promote the CTM to other cities and counties, and to assist with the costs of installing the CTM. Staff anticipates that there will be at least one CTM in each coastal county, and in some counties as many as three. The design was created to generate excitement about the prospect of being able to hike or bike along the entire length of the coast by indicating the distance to Oregon and Mexico from each of the CTMs. Working with local grantees will be the most efficient way to procure local firms to fabricate and install the CTMs, which are designed to be about 5 feet in diameter and to be set into existing, paved California Coastal Trail segments.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$150,000
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The expected source of Conservancy funds for this project is the anticipated FY 2016-17 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006, Public Resources Code § 75001 et seq. (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 funds may be used for projects to promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state, provided that such projects are consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. (Public Resources Code § 75060.) The project will promote access to and enjoyment of the coast by

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heightening awareness of the California Coastal Trail. The proposed project is consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, as discussed below. Although the FY 2016-17 funds have not yet been appropriated to the Conservancy, the appropriation is likely to occur. If the Conservancy waits to obtain the proposed authorization until after the FY 2016-17 budget is passed, the proposed project will be delayed until October 2016, at the earliest, which will jeopardize installation of CTMs in connection with potential publicity around the 40th anniversary of the Coastal Conservancy.

Depending on the financial resources of the grantees, staff expects Conservancy funds would be used to cost share, and in some cases fully fund, the fabrication and installation of the mile markers.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

This project is consistent with the Conservancy's enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, specifically with Chapter 9 pertaining to public coastal access.

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 necessary to meet the objectives of Division 21. Consistent with this section, the proposed project will help cities and counties support public access to a trail system connecting coastal destinations within their jurisdiction.

Under § 31400.1, a grant to a local agency must serve more than local public needs. The proposed project will serve more than local needs because it will serve to inform visitors to popular coastal destinations and who come from beyond the local area, to the existence of the California Coastal Trail.

Under § 31408, the Conservancy is charged with coordinating the development of the California Coastal Trail. The proposed authorization will enable the Conservancy to help local governments enhance the California Coastal Trail in their jurisdictions by installation of the CTM. Installation of the CTM in various places will also increase public awareness of the California Coastal Trail.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), AS REVISED JUNE 25, 2015:**

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective 1A** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will promote awareness and use of the California Coastal Trail.

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective 1B**, this project will result in placement of California Coastal Trail signs on existing trails.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S
PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES:**

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

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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. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** *Coastal Act (1976)*, **Public Resources Code Section 30210** on public access and recreation calls for “maximum access, which shall be conspicuously posted, and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse,” and **Section 30214** calls for public access and recreation “takes into account the need to regulate the time, place, and manner of public access depending on the facts and circumstances in each case...”

Completing the California Coastal Trail 2003 states as a goal: “Foster cooperation between State, local and federal public agencies in the planning, design, signing, and implementation of the Coastal Trail.”

4. **Support of the public:** This project is supported by the California Coastal Trail Association and the cities of Laguna Beach and Huntington Beach. See letters of support in Exhibit 2.
5. **Location:** The proposed project sites would be located within the coastal zone.
6. **Need:** There needs to be more awareness of the Coastal Trail if the public is going to use it and support its completion.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** California’s coast receives millions of visitors annually, who come from far and wide to enjoy the beach. A Coastal Trail Major Mile Marker will raise the awareness of these visitors to the effort to complete the Coastal Trail.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The projects would be located on existing segments of the Coastal Trail, which should be evaluated for sea level rise vulnerability on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Criteria

13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.
17. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** Best management practices will be used during the installation process.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL ACT:

Sections 30210 and 30530 of the Coastal Act call for maximizing public access to and along the coast. The Coastal Trail will be part of an extensive trail network for several different types of recreational use. By raising awareness of the Coastal Trail, this project would help maximize public access along the coastline consistent with the purpose of the Coastal Act.

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COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project entails the fabrication of approximately 20 steel CTM frames and installation of each CTM frame with concrete in different segments of the California Coastal Trail through-out the Coastal Zone. Fabrication of the CTMs would occur in one or more existing facilities that create works of steel (each grantee would decide which facility to use for fabrication). Installation of the CTM in an existing paved segment of California Coastal Trail will consist of minor excavation of existing pavement, placement of the steel frame, and pouring of concrete into the frame. This work is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) under the CEQA Guidelines at California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15301, which exempts the operation of existing private facilities and the minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities and topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use. The fabrication of the steel CTM frame in existing facilities constitutes the operation of existing private facilities. The installation of each CTM in existing segments of the California Coastal Trail constitutes the minor alteration of existing public facilities or topographical features with no expansion of use. Staff will file a notice of exemption for each grant.

If the Executive Officer determines that the circumstances of any particular CTM installation are such that the particular installation does not qualify for a CEQA exemption, that installation will not be funded pursuant to the proposed authorization. Instead, staff will determine whether to seek Conservancy authorization to fund that particular installation and if so, it will ensure the preparation of the environmental analyses and documents required by CEQA.