

# COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
September 28, 2017

## **CARPINTERIA RINCON COASTAL TRAIL**

Project No. 10-032-01  
Project Manager: Rachel Couch

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Augmentation by up to \$150,000 of the Conservancy's December 2, 2010 authorization to disburse \$50,000 to the City of Carpinteria for additional design and environmental compliance documents for the Carpinteria Rincon Coastal Trail, Santa Barbara County.

**LOCATION:** City of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County (Exhibit 1)

**PROGRAM CATEGORY:** Public Access

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### **EXHIBITS**

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)
  - Exhibit 2: [December 2, 2010 Staff Recommendation](#)
  - Exhibit 3: [Photos](#)
  - Exhibit 4: [Final Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)
  - Exhibit 5: [Project Letters](#)
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### **RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400-31410 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby augments its December 2, 2010 authorization (Exhibit 2) to disburse \$50,000 to the City of Carpinteria (the City), by authorizing the disbursement of an additional one hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to the City to prepare design and additional environmental compliance documents for the Rincon segment of the California Coastal Trail in Santa Barbara County. Prior to the commencement of work and the disbursement of additional funds, the City shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a detailed work program, schedule and budget, and the names and qualifications of any contractors to be employed in carrying out the additional work.”

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 remains consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public access.
  2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
  3. The project will serve greater than local needs.
  4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the *Proposed Final Mitigated Negative Declaration Rincon Trail 15-1760-CUP/CDP* (MND) adopted by the City of Carpinteria on May 4, 2015 and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 4. The Conservancy finds that the proposed project as mitigated avoids, reduces or mitigates the possible significant environmental effects and that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment.”
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#### **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

Staff recommends that the Conservancy augment its December 2, 2010 authorization (Exhibit 2) to disburse an additional \$150,000 to the City of Carpinteria (the City) to prepare additional design and environmental documents for the construction of an approximately one-mile segment (“the Rincon segment”) of the Carpinteria Coastal Vista Trail (CCVT) in eastern Santa Barbara County. As part of the 1,230-mile California Coastal Trail (CCT), the Rincon segment will provide a hiking and biking connection between Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties and will improve safety and access to the Santa Barbara Channel shoreline. See Exhibit 2 for more information.

With the proposed augmentation, the City will complete environmental review of the project pursuant to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and prepare geotechnical and drainage design documents. The County of Santa Barbara and City of Carpinteria worked together to secure federal highway funds through the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for construction of the Rincon segment. However, a NEPA environmental review document is required before Caltrans can release these federal funds. The NEPA document is anticipated to be a Categorical Exclusion (CE). In addition, a drainage design report is required to document how water will be captured and contained and identify any drainage improvements that may be necessary. The geotechnical design report will support the design parameters to be used related to slopes and retaining walls and other structures as part of the project. Once NEPA review and final design and engineering is completed, the City can proceed to the construction phase.

**Site Description:** See Exhibit 2.

**Project History:** Capitalizing on the important environmental resources and recreational opportunities in the Carpinteria area, the City and its residents have rallied around open space preservation and trail efforts, resulting in the purchase of the Carpinteria Salt Marsh Nature Park and Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve properties and the enhancement of ecological and

recreational areas. The Rincon Trail Study, completed by the City in 2009, evaluated a preferred trail route and developed preliminary designs for the Rincon segment of the CCVT. In January 2010, the Carpinteria City Council approved the 2010 Parks Department Work Plan, which includes plans to complete the Rincon segment of the CCVT. To date, over three miles of the CCVT have been constructed.

In 2010, the Conservancy approved a \$50,000 grant to the City for environmental review of the proposed Rincon segment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City adopted the Mitigated Negative Declaration in 2015. In 2016, the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) received a \$6.8 million Active Transportation Program award in construction phase funding to complete the Rincon segment.

In April of 2017, the Conservancy awarded a \$350,000 grant to the City of Carpinteria to acquire the Carpinteria Bluffs III open space, a 21.2 acre property adjacent to the planned Rincon segment of the CCVT. Together the trail and open space will serve both passive and active non-motorized recreational uses and will connect with the nearby Carpinteria Bluffs Nature Preserve portion of the CCVT.

## PROJECT FINANCING

### *This authorization*

Coastal Conservancy	\$150,000
Caltrans (Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program)	\$25,000
SBCAG (Measure A Program)	\$290,000
California Transportation Commission (Active Transportation Grant Program)	\$321,000

### *Previous authorization*

Coastal Conservancy	\$50,000
County of Santa Barbara	\$50,000
City of Carpinteria	\$20,000
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$906,000</b>

The expected source for the Conservancy funds for this authorization is an appropriation to the Conservancy from the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (“Proposition 40,” Public Resources Code Section 5096.600 *et seq.*). Consistent with Section 5096.650 (b), Proposition 40 funds may be used for development of land resources in accordance with the provisions of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation. The proposed project serves to assist in the development of land-based public access along the coast. This project remains consistent with Division 21 as discussed in Exhibit 2. Proposition 40 also requires the Conservancy to give priority to grant projects with matching funds (Public Resources Code Section 5096.651). The City will be providing staff support for the completion

of the project, and the value of these services is estimated to be \$20,000. The County and SBCAG will provide additional in-kind services with an estimated value of \$45,000.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation as described in the December 2, 2010 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

**CONSISTENCY WITH THE CONSERVANCY’S STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCESSWAY LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development as described in the December 2, 2010 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

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

The Conservancy adopted a new Strategic Plan since the 2010 authorization. The project is consistent with the new plan as follows:

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective B** of the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan, as part of the proposed project, the City will install Coastal Trail signs along approximately three miles of existing Coastal Trail segments within the City of Carpinteria.

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective C** of the Conservancy’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project would complete plans for a one-mile link in the Carpinteria Coastal Vista Trail, part of the California Coastal Trail.

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

The project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines as described in the December 2, 2010 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2). In addition, it is consistent with the following criterion adopted on October 2, 2014:

**Required Criteria**

1. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** By funding plans for the Rincon Coastal Trail improvements, the proposed project will implement the following 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.”
- ***California @ 50 Million***: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report. The project meets “Goal 2: Build Sustainable Regions that Support Healthy, Livable Communities” by constructing a trail that will support increased bicycling and walking.
- ***The California Blueprint for Bicycling and Walking 2002***. The project will construct new sections of Class I bicycle route (separated path), which will help achieve the goal of increasing the number of bicycle and walking trips statewide by 50%.

#### **CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:**

The proposed project remains consistent with the Local Coastal Program Priorities of both the City of Carpinteria and the County of Santa Barbara as described in the December 2, 2010 staff recommendation (Exhibit 2).

#### **COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:**

As lead agency for the Carpinteria Rincon Bike Trail Project, which includes the proposed project, the City of Carpinteria adopted the *Proposed Final Mitigated Negative Declaration Rincon Trail 15-1760-CUP/CDP* (MND) on May 4, 2015. The MND identifies the potentially significant environmental effects of the proposed project and the adopted mitigation measures that will reduce these effects to a less than significant level. The potential effects and the mitigation measures are summarized below:

##### **Aesthetics**

Most of the proposed project’s potential aesthetic impacts are less than significant. However, the visual effect of removal of vegetation needed to accommodate the new trail has been determined to be potentially significant. This effect will be mitigated through implementation of a Coastal Scrub Restoration Plan that will provide for restoration or enhancement of coastal sage scrub and coastal bluff scrub communities in areas temporarily impacted by construction of the trail or off-site areas. Restored areas will be monitored for five years following planting, with annual reports and final report submitted to City and County.

##### **Biological Resources**

The proposed project could result in direct and indirect impacts to federal and/or state listed plant and animal species, including rare plants (Woolly seablite) and amphibians (silvery legless lizard), and nesting birds. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to special status plant species to less than significant include focused rare plant survey and avoidance, education program for construction workers, BMPs such as exclusion and silt fencing (to prevent runoff

and erosion impacts), biological monitoring during construction, project compliance with all state and federal permits. If it is determined that a Special Status Plant species will be directly impacted by the project, a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan will be prepared prior to the initiation of construction. Mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to silvery legless lizards prior to construction include capture and relocation. The loss of a large number of nesting birds would represent a potentially significant impact. Implementation of mitigation measures including seasonal avoidance, pre-construction surveys, and buffer zones will reduce potential impacts to nesting birds and Cooper's hawk to less than significant levels. Further, the project will need to comply with the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA; 16 U.S.C., §703, Supp. I, 1989) and California Fish and Game Code (§§3503, 2513, and 3800), which protect active bird nests from destruction. Lastly, two of four native scrub communities found in the proposed bike trail alignment and adjacent areas, are considered locally sensitive. Approximately .95 acres of these vegetation communities within the development footprint will be permanently removed, while .66 acres will be temporarily disturbed during construction, creating a potentially significant impact. These effects will be mitigated through implementation of a Coastal Scrub Restoration Plan prepared by a certified landscape architect or qualified restoration biologist.

### **Hydrology/Water Quality**

The project could result in significant impacts to water quality due to soil erosion and runoff during construction or pet waste contamination of water runoff during use of the trail. Implementation of the following mitigation measures will reduce to less than significant residual impacts to hydrology and water quality resulting from potential uncontained storm water runoff or soil erosion and sedimentation during construction: provision of a Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan, including the proposed location and design of structural and non-structural BMPs (e.g., vegetated bioswale, 5,000 gallon storm water cistern, permeable pavement and native plant restoration); an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan; and storage and disposal of construction materials in a manner which minimizes the potential for storm water contamination.

### **Noise**

The proposed project could result in a significant impact from project generated construction noise. This impact would be short term in nature, and construction hours and days would be limited to existing County standards. Additionally, to ensure that noise levels will be kept to a minimum and to reduce construction noise near the Rincon Point residential neighborhood, the hours of construction and days of the week in which construction may occur will be limited, construction equipment will be required to be maintained in proper working order and fitted with standard noise features, and loud stationary equipment will be buffered from adjacent sensitive receptors. With incorporation of mitigation measures, residual noise impacts on nearby sensitive receptors during construction will be reduced to less than significant.

### **Conclusion**

Conservancy staff have independently reviewed the MND attached to this staff recommendation as Exhibit 4. Staff recommends the Conservancy find that the project avoids, mitigates or reduces the possible significant environmental effects to a level of insignificance, and that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, may have a significant effect on the

environment, as defined in 14 California Code Regulations Section 15382. The City intends to prepare and adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, as required by CEQA, when it has completed all final designs for this project, prior to construction.

Upon approval, staff will file a Notice of Determination.