

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 14, 2023

66TH AVE BART TO BAY TRAIL PLANNING

Project No. 23-051-01
Project Manager: Virgilio Cuasay

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,233,315 to the City of Oakland to complete planning, design, and permitting for the approximately 0.6-mile off-street multi-use trail known as the 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project in Oakland, Alameda County.

LOCATION: 66th Ave between San Leandro Street and Oakport Street, Oakland, Alameda County

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
 - Exhibit 2: [Photos and Designs](#)
 - Exhibit 3: [BCDC Authorization](#)
 - Exhibit 4: [Letters of Support](#)
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RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed one million two hundred thirty-three thousand three hundred fifteen dollars (\$1,233,315) to the City of Oakland (“the grantee”) to complete planning, design and permitting for the approximately 0.6-mile off-street multi-use trail known as the 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project in Oakland, Alameda County.

Prior to commencement of the Project, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A detailed work program, schedule, and budget.
 2. Names and qualifications of any contractors to be retained in carrying out the Project.
 3. A plan for acknowledgement of Conservancy funding.
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In addition, to the extent appropriate, the grantee shall incorporate the guidelines of the Conservancy's 'Coastal Access Project Standards'.

Findings:

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

1. The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the public access goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
2. The proposed Project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes a grant of an amount not to exceed \$1,233,315 to the City of Oakland (City) to complete planning, design and permitting for the approximately 0.6-mile off-street multi-use trail known as the 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project (Project) in Oakland, Alameda County (Exhibit 1, Figure 1).

San Leandro Bay's shoreline features important public access resources including the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline (Exhibit 2, Figure 1), the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail), and the Tidewater Boating Center, providing a diverse range of recreational activities on both land and water. These resources are located less than a mile away from the cluster of neighborhoods around the Coliseum BART Station in East Oakland, where this Project is located. Due to the displacement caused by post-war construction of what is now the Oakland alignment of Highway I-880 as well as historic disinvestment in these neighborhoods, the communities who reside in this cluster lack safe, direct, multimodal access (Exhibit 2, Figure 2) to the shoreline to this day. This Project will implement a top priority project identified in three relevant planning documents, the East Oakland Neighborhood Initiative's East Oakland Community Plan, the 2022 East Oakland Mobility Action Plan, and the 2019 Oakland Bike Plan, and fill the gap that separates East Oakland communities from the shoreline.

The City has pushed forth initiatives that seek to address the aforementioned disparities by collaborating with the Alameda County Transportation Commission (ACTC) on the East Bay Greenway Project, which will connect the Lake Merritt BART Station to the San Leandro border through a multi-use trail (Exhibit 1, Figure 2). Phase II of the Greenway Project will span the length between Seminary Avenue and 75th Avenue on San Leandro Street, to the San Francisco Bay Trail. Once built, users of this multi-use trail will have access to an existing five continuous miles of Bay Trail (Exhibit 2, Figure 3) at the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline and its picturesque views.

The Project will establish the final missing link between the East Bay Greenway and San Leandro Bay's public access resources like the Bay Trail. The Project is envisioned as a traffic-separated off-street pathway along 66th Avenue between the northern terminus of San Leandro Street

(Exhibit 1, Figure 3; and Exhibit 2, Figure 4) and the southwestern terminus of Oakport Street (Exhibit 2, Figure 5). Signalized crossings will facilitate safe passage over Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks as well as the I-880 freeway on and offramps (Exhibit 2, Figure 6), which are currently major physical barriers to bike and pedestrian shoreline access. Improvements to the existing entrance to the Bay Trail at the southwest end of 66th Avenue will also be made through the Project.

The recommended grant is for planning, preparation of final designs, and obtaining permits for the Project. The grant tasks include advancing the Project design from the current 35% level to final 100% design, coordinating design and permitting activities, which include conducting studies and analyses, with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and UPRR, who both maintain right-of-way over their respective segments along the project site, community engagement, producing technical documents, and preparing environmental documents. The City expects to complete grant funded activities by mid-2027.

Site Description: 66th Avenue, located in East Oakland, is a high speed, industrial roadway varying from four to eight lanes which connects San Leandro Street with Oakport Street and is primarily used as a trucking route due to its proximity to Interstate I-880 or as an access point to the Oakland Coliseum site (Exhibit 2, Figure 7). The street is a key access point to the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline and Bay Trail, which includes an overpass (Caltrans right-of-way) over the I-880 and railroad tracks (UPRR right-of-way) close to the northern terminus.

The neighborhoods adjacent to the Coliseum are largely residential single-family homes with some multi-unit apartment complexes nestled between the streets and avenues. In this area due to its proximity to large industrial zones (Exhibit 2, Figure 8), life expectancy is 75 years compared to 86 years Citywide. While in close proximity to the Oracle Arena and Coliseum BART and near the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, more than 75% of the population use a vehicle to get around. The median household income is \$47,000 and transportation costs range from \$300 to \$2000 a month.

Today, there are no designated facilities for people biking, and people walking on the narrow existing sidewalks must cross unsignalized freeway on and off-ramps to reach the Bay Trail and Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline. Near the northern terminus of the proposed Project is the Oakland Coliseum BART station, which is a regional transit station that connects riders to the East Bay, San Francisco, and the wider Bay Area. Transit riders can connect to the Project via the East Bay Greenway Phase II, which will be complete by Summer 2024.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: The City has been the recipient of federal, state, and regional funding, including a federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity grant, Highway Safety Improvement Program grants, Caltrans planning grants, and funding from Alameda County Transportation Commission's Comprehensive Improvement Program. The City's Capital Finance team has several staff who are responsible for monitoring grant opportunities, developing grant applications, ensuring compliance with grant funding requirements, and submitting progress reports. Over the past few years, the City has planned and constructed many similar grant-funded safety improvements throughout Oakland. The City received a Caltrans planning grant to develop a community transportation plan for several East Oakland neighborhoods, and this was called the Laurel Access to Mills, Maxwell Park and

Seminary project. As a result of this planning effort, the City of Oakland designed and constructed an off-street, two-way, multi-use pathway on MacArthur Boulevard between High Street and Richards Road. In the immediate vicinity of this Project, the City is poised to begin construction on Phase 2 of the East Bay Greenway Project which will construct a two-way cycletrack on the north side of San Leandro Street between Seminary Avenue and 69th Avenue.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The Project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

Selection Criteria

1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section below.

2. Project is a good investment of state resources.

Once implemented, the Project will help address disparities stemming from historic disinvestment in East Oakland by connecting its communities to the nearby shoreline through a safe bicycle and pedestrian-oriented trail. The Project's siting near existing and planned transit and active transportation facilities will facilitate increased non-motorized vehicle travel, supporting the State's climate change goals; the Project also connects two regional trail/greenway systems, enhancing both recreation and active transportation. Preliminary planning work conducted by the City means that the Project has gained momentum and will continue to completion once this grant is approved and leveraged by other matching funds. Lastly, this Project is consistent with the 2019 Oakland Bike Plan, an element of the City of Oakland's General Plan, which includes this Project as one of its recommendations.

3. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.

The Project will be constructed using high-quality materials designed for at least a 20-year lifespan and sustained community benefits. The Project's connectivity to transit, local, and regional trail networks ensures that users will utilize the trail for active transportation purposes, reducing both vehicle miles travelled and greenhouse gas emissions. The Project will be built with landscaped areas and trees planted where feasible, increasing surface permeability, and improving stormwater infiltration. Lastly, the Project improves access to the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, giving users access to its aesthetic and health benefits.

4. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

This Project when constructed will provide multiple benefits with significant positive impact for the public:

- Improved public access for East Oakland communities who live near the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline, which is currently only accessible by motor vehicles.
- Improved access to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

- Improved public safety by creating an off-street multi-use pathway between transit, local, and regional trails, allowing pedestrians and cyclists safe access to and from the shoreline.
- Improved active transportation options in a district currently used as a trucking route or access point to the Oakland Coliseum.

5. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.

In 2022, the City partnered with East Oakland community-based organizations such as Higher Ground Development Corporation and the East Oakland Collective, which resulted in the 2022 East Oakland Mobility Action Plan, a plan that reflects the needs of the East Oakland communities who helped contribute to its outcome. The Project was identified as the highest priority recommendation through the plan and was shaped through its engagement process.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,233,315
Alameda County Transportation Commission	\$2,139,750
Local sources (includes Measure KK/Measure U funding)	\$295,735
Project Total	\$3,668,800

The above table shows the total cost to complete the designs and obtain permits for the Project. The Conservancy’s funding for the recommended grant will be derived from funds provided by Caltrans in fulfillment of mitigation conditions under two San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) development permits. These permits - BCDC Permit Nos. 3-05 and M2015.034.03- were issued for Caltrans roadway projects along the Interstate I-880. Special conditions imposed by those permits required that the mitigation payment be placed in an interest-bearing account that is currently managed and used by the Conservancy under agreement with BCDC. The permit conditions require that the funds be used to develop a public access connection to the shoreline, and a letter from BCDC (Exhibit 3) specifically authorizes the Conservancy to use these funds for the proposed 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project.

Unless specifically identified as “Required Match,” the other sources of funding and in-kind contributions described above are estimates. The Conservancy does not typically require matching funds or in-kind services, nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders or of in-kind services. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete a project.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Pursuant to Chapter 3, Section 31111 of the Public Resources Code, the Conservancy may fund and undertake plans and feasibility studies and may award grants to public agencies for these

purposes. The recommended authorization is consistent with this section because it will grant funds to the City of Oakland to undertake planning for the 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project.

The recommended grant is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31162 et seq. regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Program, which states the Conservancy may undertake projects and award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will help achieve the following goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program:

Section 31162(a) states that the Conservancy may undertake projects that improve public access to, within, and around the bay, coast, ridgetops, and urban open spaces, consistent with the rights of private property owners, and without having a significant adverse impact on agricultural operations and environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife. Consistent with this section, the grant will enable the City to plan for construction of an off-street multi-use pathway to improve access to, within, and around the bay, including other access elements such as the San Francisco Bay Trail and the San Francisco Bay Area Water Trail.

Consistent with Section 31163(c):

1. The Project is supported by adopted local or regional plans, including: (1) 2022 East Oakland Mobility Action Plan, a community-driven effort to identify actions and strategies to enhance transportation options for East Oaklanders and to address disparities due to the historical lack of investment in the community; and (2) 2019 Oakland Bike Plan, a part of the Land Use and Transportation of the City of Oakland's General Plan.
2. The Project serves a regional constituency by providing expanded recreation uses within the shoreline and creates an alternative to motor vehicle modes.
3. The Project can be implemented in a timely manner.
4. The Project provides benefits that could be lost if the Project is not quickly implemented, as there is current momentum built from the work already undertaken by the City.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):

Consistent with **Goal 1.1, Benefit Systemically Excluded Communities**, the recommended grant will allocate funding to a project that benefits systematically excluded communities by planning a trail that will improve regional recreational opportunities, improving alternative transportation options, and connect an East Oakland community to its shoreline.

Consistent with **Goal 2.4, Build Trails**, the recommended grant is for planning an approximately 0.6-mile connector trail to the San Francisco Bay Trail.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

Authorizing the recommended grant is exempt from environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21080.25, which exempts pedestrian and bicycle facilities that improve safety, access, or mobility, including new facilities, in a public right of way. The 66th Ave BART to Bay Trail Project will create an off-street bicycle and pedestrian route that will improve safety and access for cyclists and pedestrians along a stretch of 66th Avenue. The Project meets the criteria set forth at Section 21080.25(c) for use of this exemption: (1) the Project is being carried out by a local agency, the City of Oakland, that is also the lead agency; (2) when constructed, the Project will install a multi-use off street pathway, modify freeway on and off-ramps to facilitate safe pathway crossings, all with the intent of reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips; the Project will not add highway capacity or lanes, and (3) the Project will not require the demolition of affordable housing units.

Upon approval of the Project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Exemption.