

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL:
GAP CLOSURE TO MARTINEZ INTERMODAL STATION**

Project No. 23-083-01
Project Manager: Virgilio Cuasay

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,000,000 to the East Bay Regional Park District to implement the San Francisco Bay Trail: Gap Closure to Martinez Intermodal Station Project, consisting of constructing 0.5 mile of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop, in Martinez, Contra Costa County; and the adoption of findings under the California Environmental Quality Act.

LOCATION: Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail, between the Carquinez Strait Regional Park and the Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline, City of Martinez, Contra Costa County

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Project Photos](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Martinez Bay Trail Phase II Project](#)
- Exhibit 4: [Addendum to the Previously Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration Martinez Bay Trail Project, Phase II](#)
- Exhibit 5: [Project Letters](#)

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 dollars (\$1,000,000) to the East Bay Regional Park District (“the grantee”) to implement the San Francisco Bay Trail: Gap Closure to Martinez Intermodal Station Project (“the project”), consisting of constructing 0.5 mile of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop in Martinez, Contra Costa 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.
4. Evidence that all permits and approvals required to implement the project have been obtained.
5. Evidence that the grantee has entered into agreements sufficient to enable the grantee to implement, operate, and maintain the project.

To the extent appropriate, the East Bay Regional Park District 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 goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.
3. The Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Bay Trail Phase II Project adopted by the City of Martinez on May 7, 2003, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") and the "Addendum to the Previously Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration Martinez Bay Trail Project, Phase II" prepared by the East Bay Regional Park District, both attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibits 3 and 4. The Conservancy finds that the proposed project as designed and mitigated avoids, reduces, or mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects to a less-than-significant level, and that there is no substantial evidence based on the record as a whole that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize a grant of an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to undertake the San Francisco Bay Trail: Gap Closure to Martinez Intermodal Station Project (project), which consists of constructing 0.5 mile of the San Francisco Bay Trail (Bay Trail) on the Union Pacific Railroad's right-of-way to close a critical gap in the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail connecting Carquinez Strait Regional Park to Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline in Martinez, Contra Costa County (Exhibit 1).

The San Francisco Bay Area's rapid urbanization over the past several decades has transformed the entire region into an innovation center, spurring economic growth, but at the cost of increased traffic and its associated negative health outcomes. For low-income residents of the downtown Martinez district, walking, cycling, and public transportation offer healthy and

affordable options. However, the Downtown Martinez Community-Based Transportation Plan identifies key mobility gaps that prevent these residents from accessing these transportation alternatives—gaps including the need for safe bicycle infrastructure and improved local and regional connectivity. EBRPD seeks to address these gaps by undertaking the project.

The project will close a 0.5-mile gap (Exhibit 1, Figure 2) in the 23-mile Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail (CSSLT) and the 500-mile Bay Trail. The project has been a long-standing priority project of EBRPD and aligns with community-identified needs in the City of Martinez’s 2020 Downtown Martinez Community-Based Transportation Plan and with EBRPD’s Green Transportation Initiative, an initiative that has developed over 200 miles of paved trails as alternatives to motorized transportation.

The project consists of constructing a shared-use path within the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way (Exhibit 2, Figure 1). Pursuant to a 2016 agreement between EBRPD and Union Pacific Railroad, the Railroad will grant a trail easement to EBRPD for construction and operation of the trail within the Railroad’s right-of-way. The trail will be constructed on an at-grade segment between the Nejedly Staging Area in EBRPD’s Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline (Exhibit 2, Figure 2) and Berrellesa Street in Martinez (Exhibit 2, Figure 3). Construction activities include concrete removal, clearing, grading, building an aggregate base, storm water and drain improvements designed to mimic natural systems through bioswales and native plantings where possible, paving, striping, hydroseeding the trail shoulders, installing fencing, and installing wayfinding signage. EBRPD anticipates completing construction by the end of 2027.

This segment is part of two larger trails systems that will connect residents of Martinez to nearby cities (Exhibit 1, Figure 3), such as Benicia and Vallejo, as well as the rest of the Bay Area. Users of the new Class I shared-use path will be able to connect (Exhibit 2, Figure 4) to Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline, the Martinez Intermodal Station, and the City’s 28-acre Waterfront Park. This will enable active transportation connections westward into the jurisdictions of Port Costa, Crockett, Benicia, Vallejo, and over 10,000 acres of parks and open space in Contra Costa County including Crockett Hills Regional Park and the Benicia State Recreation Area. As people travel along the new path eastbound into Martinez, crossing improvements at Berrellesa Street will connect them to an existing pedestrian path leading directly to the Martinez Intermodal Station and Downtown Martinez. From here, they can connect to transit at the Martinez Intermodal Station to take regional rail trips all across the Bay Area via buses, Capitol Corridor commuter rail service, and Amtrak. Trail users can also continue east on the CSSLT and Bay Trail, or visit destinations in Martinez including the shoreline, Contra Costa Community College, and local restaurants and businesses. Once complete, direct bicycle access to this major regional transit amenity will open the possibility for higher rates of bicycling and multi-modal trips in the region, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and lower vehicle miles travelled in Contra Costa County.

This project will improve upon the existing work done to complete both the Bay Trail and the CSSLT. Upon completion of this gap closure project, Martinez residents will have interconnected, safe, separated bicycle and pedestrian access to continuous trail and park connections directly in Martinez and the ability to bicycle or walk to jobs, employment

opportunities, commercial destinations, and parks around the Carquinez Strait and the Greater Bay Area.

Site Description: The project site is owned by the Union Pacific Railroad, which intends to grant a trail easement to EBRPD pursuant to a 2016 agreement between EBRPD and the Union Pacific Railroad. This proposed 0.5 mile of Bay Trail runs from the City of Martinez Nejedly Staging Area to Berrellesa Street along the Union Pacific Railroad Corridor (See Exhibits 1 and 3). The trail will start in the Carquinez Strait Regional Shoreline’s Nejedly Staging Area before making its way down toward the railroad tracks. At this point, it will parallel Union Pacific’s railroad tracks before crossing them at Berrellesa Street to connect to an existing pedestrian path near the Intermodal Station. Currently, the surface of the project site consists of gravel and dirt which offers no safely accessible recreational benefit to the public.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: EBRPD manages 73 parks in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, 1,330 miles of trails, and 55 miles of shoreline. EBRPD is a critical partner in the implementation and maintenance of the Bay Trail and has substantial experience in managing many types of projects funded by grants from state and regional public agencies, including planning, design and building previous Class I Bay Trail projects. Examples include the recently completed Pinole Shores to Bayfront Park section of the Bay Trail in Pinole, and the Albany to Buchanan portion of the Bay Trail in Albany. EBRPD has raised a significant amount of additional funding to execute this project (see Project Financing Section below).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed 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.

The Bay Trail is a planned recreational and alternative/active transportation corridor that, when complete, will encircle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays with a continuous 500-mile network of bicycling and pedestrian trails. It will connect the shoreline of all nine Bay Area counties, link 47 cities, and cross the major toll bridges in the region. Since 1989, the Conservancy has authorized six Bay Trail block grants to the Association of Bay Area Governments to manage these grants and authorized many other grants directly to entities such as EBRPD to undertake Bay Trail planning and construction projects.

The project will construct a key 0.5-mile gap in the Bay Trail, making multi-modal work and recreation trip options safer and more convenient for both residents and visitors of the area. 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 by

reducing vehicle miles travelled. Lastly, this project is consistent with the 2020 Downtown Martinez Community-Based Transportation Plan.

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

The project incorporates design features to maximize the longevity of the trail while minimizing the need for upkeep. Sustainable design elements incorporated into the final designs include:

- Planning for current and future use while minimizing the impact on natural resources. Most of the segment will be built in a previously disturbed corridor that currently offers no recreational access and few ecosystem services. The trail will improve both of these things by opening up previously inaccessible recreation while also improving the adjacent, degraded seasonal wetlands that parallel the railroad tracks.
- Improved drainage – The project includes upgrades to the drainage system that will mimic natural systems by using bioswales and native plantings where it makes sense for the project. These improvements will also help improve the seasonal wetlands and help improve groundwater quality.
- Surface materials to maximize environmental benefits - Construction contractors will build the Class I trail atop an aggregate base. It will have an outslope toward the soft shoulder, which will allow water to percolate slowly rather than sheet flow into nearby water sources. The permeable surfaces will help reduce heat island effects, reduce runoff, and promote ground water infiltration.
- Fencing to channelize trail users - To keep trail users on the trail and discourage off-trail travel, the planning team also included fencing to channelize traffic. The fencing will also keep people off sensitive habitats and discourage trespassing onto Union Pacific’s railroad tracks.

4. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.

The project will deliver multiple benefits with significant positive impact. The new trail segment will help connect a mosaic of green infrastructure in Martinez. The trail will run between Carquinez Regional Shoreline and existing pedestrian walkways leading directly to the Martinez Intermodal Station, Downtown Martinez, Radke Martinez Regional Shoreline, and the green infrastructure at the 28-acre Waterfront Park adjacent to the water. Amenities at the Waterfront Park include indoor and outdoor ball fields, a dog park, and the Martinez Marina. With these connections, local residents will be able to safely walk and ride their bikes to and across hundreds of acres of open space to reap the positive health benefits of nature. By closing a key gap in the trail network, the system will facilitate connectivity between the cluster of cities in the area, including Martinez and Vallejo, and provide direct access to the Martinez Intermodal Station, which connects to Amtrak’s Capitol Corridor, a route that runs from Sacramento to San Jose. Bus and BART connections from stations along the Capitol Corridor route create connections to destinations throughout the Bay Area.

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

The 2020 Downtown Martinez Community-Based Transportation Plan (Plan) paid special care to engage members of several specific population groups, including but not limited to, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents. The Plan’s outreach efforts

included five project working group meetings, three steering committee meetings, nine stakeholder interviews, intercept, paper, and electronic surveys, a community open house at the Martinez Senior Center, and focus groups. Outreach was conducted in both Spanish and English. The project survey collected 40 responses between July and October 2019. Information about the plan and the survey was distributed in person at St. Catherine of Siena School, Martinez High School, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Martinez Junior High, Creekside Montessori, and the Kiwanis Youth Center. The survey was also publicized on the City of Martinez’s official website, social media pages, and NextDoor. EBRPD participated in the Community Based Transportation Plan’s stakeholder interview process. This project is part of the vision to close a gap in the Bay Trail to provide continuous, direct, and safe access for active transportation users. Project concepts are anchored in community priorities and expertise.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,000,000
California Natural Resources Agency, Urban Greening Grant	\$1,400,000
California State Parks, Recreational Trail Grant	\$917,784
Contra Costa County Transportation Authority, Department of Transportation Safe Streets for All Grant	\$925,000
Project Total	\$4,242,784

Conservancy funding is anticipated to come from a Fiscal Year 2023/24 appropriation from the General Fund to the Conservancy for the purpose of “urgent sea level rise adaptation and coastal resilience needs using nature-based strategies and other solutions” (Budget Act of 2023, Chapter 12, Statutes of 2023 (SB 101) as amended by Chapter 38, Statutes of 2023, AB 102). The coastal resilience funds are available as described in Section 52 of Chapter 258 of the Statutes of 2021, which sets forth a detailed description of the purposes of the climate resilience funds and includes projects for the purposes of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program established pursuant to Chapter 4.5 (commencing with Section 31160) of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. The proposed project is consistent with this funding source because it is a project for the purpose of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program (Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Government Code), as described further below.

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:

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 Conservancy Program, which

states the Conservancy may undertake projects and award grants in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area that will help achieve the goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.

Section 31162(a) authorizes the Conservancy to make grants for 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 recommended authorization is to grant funds to EBRPD to construct a 0.5-mile segment of the Bay Trail in a location that will not adversely impact agricultural operations, environmental sensitive areas, or habitat.

Consistent with Section 31163(c):

1. The project is supported by the City of Martinez 2020 Downtown Martinez Community-Based Transportation Plan and part of EBRPD's Green Corridors Initiative.
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 EBRPD.

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 constructing a trail that will improve regional recreational opportunities, improving alternative transportation options, and connect communities in Contra Costa County to its shoreline.

Consistent with **Goal 2.4, Build Trails**, the recommended grant is for constructing approximately 0.5-mile of Bay Trail.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

On May 7, 2003, the City of Martinez adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Martinez Bay Trail, Phase II ("Phase II Project") and approved the Phase II Project (Exhibit 3). The proposed project is analyzed in the MND as a component of the Phase II Project. On October 15, 2024, EBRPD adopted the "Addendum to the Previously Adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration Martinez Bay Trail Project, Phase II" ("the Addendum" – Exhibit 4). The Addendum indicates that although the Phase II Project was approved in 2003 and some refinements of the proposed project have occurred, there are no substantial project changes that would result in previously unidentified significant impacts or require substantial revisions to the 2003 MND. The Addendum verifies that the analyses and the conclusions in the 2003

MND remain valid. Staff concurs that there is no substantial evidence that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment.

The MND identified potentially significant environmental effects in the area of biological resources. With the project's incorporated mitigation measures, summarized below, these environmental effects will be less than significant.

Biological Resources

The project will traverse existing wetlands, that have been determined as jurisdictional wetlands by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on the south edge of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way for approximately 800 feet, beginning approximately 400 feet west of Berrellesa Street. The wetlands formed due to poor drainage along the right-of-way and are fed by runoff from the property to the north. Trail construction, which includes clearing, grading, constructing drainage improvements, paving, and planting, may affect approximately 11,000 square feet of the wetlands. Realignment of the trail to an alternate location is not possible due to right-of-way and zoning restrictions. However, use of a boardwalk and narrowing the trail reduced the wetland impact to approximately 2,000 square feet.

The MND included the plan for mitigating these wetland impacts on EBRPD property within the Martinez Regional Shoreline. The site is located 200 feet north of the railroad right-of-way, 1900 feet west of Berrellesa Street. An EBRPD maintenance road bisected an existing wetland, crossing a tidal slough channel with a culvert. The mitigation plan called for the road and culvert to be removed and the road relocated onto an existing trail nearby. This would create 3-4,000 square feet of new wetlands along the old road alignment and enhance 20,000 square feet of existing wetlands south of the old road. The mitigation plan was implemented in 2007 and is considered adequate mitigation for the project's wetlands impact. The project may also impact two rare plant species and three sensitive natural communities. Although the MND does not include specific mitigation measures, the Addendum notes that these resources will be protected through standard permit conditions, which typically require pre-construction surveys and monitoring, avoidance or establishment of buffers should a sensitive species or habitat be located, and coordination of species relocation and replanting if avoidance is not feasible.

Staff recommends that the Conservancy find that the project as mitigated avoids, reduces or mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects to a level of less-than-significant and that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Determination.