

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
December 8, 2005

BAY MARSHES TRAIL, SAN MATEO

File No. 05-090
Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to three hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$395,000) to the City of San Mateo to construct the Bay Marshes Trail in Shoreline Park.

LOCATION: City of San Mateo's bay shoreline, between Seal Point Park and Tidelands Park.

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: Conservancy staff recommendation of October 27, 2005: San Francisco Bay Trail Access Project Approval

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 disbursement of up to three hundred ninety-five thousand dollars (\$395,000) to the City of San Mateo (“City”) for construction of a boardwalk spur trail located between Seal Point and Tidelands Park.

This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of Conservancy funds, the City shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget.
2. Posted signs resulting from this project shall, where deemed appropriate by the Executive Officer, recognize the contribution of the Conservancy and display its logo.
3. The City of San Mateo shall implement the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program contained in the

Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Bay Marshes Trail, adopted by the City of San Mateo on November 20, 2000 pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”).”

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 Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31156, regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.
2. In all other respects, the proposed authorization is consistent with the Conservancy’s authorization of October 27, 2005.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

At its October 27, 2005 meeting, the Conservancy approved a grant of \$142,837 to the City of San Mateo for this project under a previously approved block grant to the Association of Bay Area Governments. At the time of that meeting it had not been decided whether additional Conservancy funding could be recommended, given the large number of project funding requests. However, staff is now prepared to recommend additional funding for this project from the Bay Conservancy Program. In all other respects this project is the same as that discussed in the staff recommendation attached as Exhibit 1.

The City of San Mateo needs the additional \$395,000 to complete construction of a 335-foot long boardwalk extending from the Bay Trail spine into and along a degraded wetland area. The boardwalk will be built over an existing berm, thereby providing improved public access without creating additional fill. The berm itself will be broken into sections to allow improved tidal circulation and movement of wildlife. An interpretive observation platform at the end will provide excellent views over the wetland. Combining wetland restoration and controlled public access provides benefits for both wildlife and visitors and offers a great opportunity for a spur trail off the main alignment of the Bay Trail.

Site Description: Please refer to the October 27, 2005 staff recommendation attached as Exhibit 1.

Project History: City of San Mateo staff submitted a project application to the Conservancy in March 2005, and to the Bay Trail Project in June. In October the Conservancy approved the use of previously approved block grant funds awarded to ABAG, and made the necessary findings for the project under the California Environmental Quality Act.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy (current)	\$395,000
ABAG/Bay Trail Project/SCC (previous)	\$142,837
City of San Mateo	<u>\$200,518</u>
Total Cost	\$738,355

The anticipated source of the additional Conservancy funds is the “California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002” (Proposition 40.) These funds are available for all the purposes of the Conservancy, including the San Francisco Bay Conservancy Program. This project is proposed to be funded from the fiscal year 2004 Bay Program allocation of Proposition 40 funds.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 4.5 (regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Program) of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. Under Public Resources Code Section 31162, the Conservancy may undertake projects in the nine-county San Francisco Bay area that will help achieve the goals of the Bay Program. The Goal in subsection (a) includes improving public access to and around the bay, without creating significant adverse impacts on environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife. This project is designed to improve tidal circulation and will enhance a tidal marsh simply by removing people and dogs from the marsh area itself. The project is further consistent with subsection (a) in that it will help implement part of the Bay Trail and is consistent with the master plan for the City of San Mateo’s Shoreline Parks.

Under Section 31163(c), the Conservancy is directed to give priority to projects that, to the greatest extent, meet the following criteria: (1) Are supported by adopted local or regional plans; (2) Serve a regional constituency; (3) Can be implemented in a timely way; (4) Provide opportunities for benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented; (5) Include matching funds from other sources of funding. This project meets all of these criteria in that it is identified as a project in the Shoreline Park Master Plan adopted by the City of San Mateo (criterion 1). Shoreline Park is a popular regional destination, and the project forms a spur trail off the Bay Trail, a regional trail (criterion 2). With the Conservancy’s additional funding contribution the City will have all the funding it needs to commence the project and will initiate construction in the spring of 2006 (criterion 3). The sooner the project is implemented, the sooner degradation of the tidal marsh will cease, thereby reducing greater impacts to the wetland and the sensitive species attempting to survive there (criterion 4). Conservancy funds, both direct and indirect through ABAG, contribute about 73 percent of the total project cost (criterion 5).

For all other discussion of the project, please refer to the staff recommendation attached as Exhibit 1.