

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

September 20, 2007

SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL PROJECT BLOCK GRANT #4

File No. 07-063-01

Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to provide \$3 million in funding to the Association of Bay Area Governments for a variety of projects to extend the San Francisco Bay Trail.

LOCATION: Various locations around San Francisco Bay

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Conservancy Program; Public Access Program

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Letters of Support](#)

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 a grant of three million dollars (\$3,000,000) to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) for the San Francisco Bay Trail Project (BTP), its associated nonprofit organization, to develop individual San Francisco Bay Trail projects. The funds shall be used to establish criteria for potential Bay Trail access grant projects, to solicit and evaluate grant proposals, to recommend to the Conservancy the award of grant funds to selected projects, to implement selected projects, to monitor implementation of funded projects, and for related matters including administrative costs.

Prior to the execution of an agreement with each individual project grantee, ABAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a work program, schedule and budget for each project. No Conservancy funds shall be disbursed toward implementation of any proposed project that is not exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act, until the Conservancy authorizes the project.”

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 project is consistent with Public Resources Code Sections 31160-31165 regarding the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program; and with Sections 31400-31409 regarding public access.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends a grant of \$3 million to ABAG for the purpose of funding and managing a variety of individual projects that will further the development of the San Francisco Bay Trail. This grant will provide funding for further steps toward the completion of this important regional trail, accessible to the densely populated urban areas of the nine Bay Areas counties. Through this grant, over the next few years, thousands of Bay Area residents and visitors can expect to gain many miles of new Bay Trail and improved destination points along the trail. This same effective relationship between the Conservancy and the Bay Trail Project, matched by the funds of others, has resulted in 35 new miles of Bay Trail that are now heavily used.

By making a “block” grant to ABAG, which will be administered and managed by the Bay Trail Project, the Conservancy reduces its own staff involvement in the daily management tasks of the individual projects, while providing valuable oversight and guidance to Bay Trail Project staff. BTP staff will be able to administer the grants and perform many of the project management duties, and Conservancy staff will assist in the pre-project analysis activities and in other areas as needed. This level of cooperation will help ensure the efficient and effective use of these funds. This arrangement has worked well over the past seven years to provide efficient allocation and management of nearly \$14 million in block grant funding.

BTP staff and Conservancy staff will work together to decide on the best method of distributing the grant funds. In previous years the BTP has undertaken competitive grant rounds and evaluated the project proposals according to established criteria. Other projects have been initiated outside of the grant round process by either Conservancy or BTP staff. Grant rounds may not be needed for this particular block grant because of the preliminary work already done, which is now ready for implementation. For example, numerous alignment studies and feasibility analyses were funded with the previous block grants, and many of those projects are now ready to be constructed. Additionally, BTP staff has completed a detailed analysis of remaining gaps in the trail, and this analysis provides a helpful guide to the strategic use of the new funds. However, if a grant round appears to be the best mechanism to use to solicit new projects with a portion of the available funds that would be appropriate.

The BTP board of directors is made up of representatives from local governments around San Francisco Bay, including the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Conservancy and members of trail advocacy groups. The steering committee meets on a bimonthly basis, and will have input into the project evaluation process. BTP is a nonprofit organization supported by ABAG and dedicated to completing the San Francisco Bay Trail. ABAG is a council of

governments consisting of the nine San Francisco Bay Area counties and 101 cities. Its primary purpose is to provide region wide planning and local government services.

Site Description: The projects will be located along the Bay Trail spine (primary) alignment, as well as spur (shoreline point-access) and connector trails (to regional destinations located inland of the shoreline.)

Project History: In the fall of 1999 the Conservancy authorized a grant of \$2.5 million to ABAG/BTP. In December 2000 a second grant of \$7,387,500 was provided from the “Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Fund” (Proposition 12). In September 2004, the Conservancy granted \$3.8 million from the “California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act” (Proposition 40). A total of 86 projects have been undertaken through these three previous grants. Thirty construction projects and 37 planning and feasibility studies have been completed, and another 19 projects are currently in progress and rapidly nearing completion. Several projects funded through this successful Conservancy/Bay Trail partnership are highlighted below:

San Francisco’s Pier 14

The Port of San Francisco applied a \$230,000 Bay Trail grant to public access improvements on Pier 14, a 600-foot public pier connecting to the Embarcadero Promenade. As a new destination point along the Bay Trail, the pier was opened to the public in June 2006 with trail amenities including railings, lighting, benches, public art and interpretive signage. Total project cost: \$1,200,000.

San Mateo Shoreline Park

In June 2005, the City of San Mateo completed trail construction and improvements to Shoreline Park with a \$500,000 Bay Trail grant. As part of a larger park renovation project, funding was used to install a dramatic new pedestrian and bicycle bridge across San Mateo Creek and construct over two miles of new shoreline trail. Total project cost: \$13,850,000.

Breuner Marsh Feasibility Study

In September 2005, the East Bay Regional Park District completed a focused engineering and feasibility study for one mile of trail between the Richmond Parkway and Point Pinole Regional Shoreline in Richmond. Using an \$85,000 Bay Trail grant, the study analyzed several design and engineering approaches to complete this gap and also conducted a biological assessment for each alternative. The Park District is now negotiating with the landowner for purchase of the land to complete this important Bay Trail gap. Total project cost: \$85,000.

Central Marin Ferry Connection

In 2004, the City of Larkspur conducted a feasibility study to identify a preferred trail alignment across Corte Madera Creek. When completed, the one-mile segment will link existing trail in Corte Madera to the Larkspur Ferry terminal and across Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to the proposed trail through CalPark Tunnel. Since this initial analysis was completed, the project has received an earmark of \$2,000,000 from the Marin County Nonmotorized Pilot Program for the next phases of engineering and construction. Total project cost: \$89,000.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy	\$3,000,000
Other sources (e.g., grantees and other grantors)	\$12,720,000

The anticipated source of Conservancy funds is the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84.) Consistent with Proposition 84, the proposed project will promote access to and enjoyment of resources through the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program contained in the Conservancy's enabling legislation.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

Increasing public access to the San Francisco Bay Trail is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, sections 31400 *et seq.* regarding public access; and with Chapter 4.5 sections 31160 *et seq.* regarding San Francisco Bay projects.

With respect to public access, Section 31400 states that the Conservancy shall have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the state's coastline, including San Francisco Bay. By providing \$3 million for Bay Trail projects, the Conservancy will be helping significantly to implement the comprehensive San Francisco Bay Trail. Section 31400.1 allows the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies and qualified nonprofit organizations. ABAG is an association of governments and the Bay Trail Project is a nonprofit organization administered by ABAG to promote the Bay Trail in all nine San Francisco Bay Area counties. Under Section 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, which includes San Francisco Bay. Granting funds to ABAG not only provides needed cash to construct trail projects, but also helps to ensure that environmental review will be completed in an appropriate manner. Providing this oversight function is an important role for the Conservancy to play.

With respect to the San Francisco Bay Area, Section 31162(a) states in part that the Conservancy may undertake projects that will improve public access to and around the bay, through completion of regional trail systems. Consistent with Section 31163(c), the proposed grant will be used for funding projects that, to the greatest extent, are supported by adopted local or regional plans; serve a regional constituency; can be implemented in a timely way; take advantage of opportunities that would be lost if the project is not quickly implemented; and include matching funds from other sources of funding or assistance.

Finally, Section 31111 authorizes the Conservancy to fund plans and feasibility studies in implementing Division 21.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):

Consistent with **Goal 11, Objectives A and B** of the Conservancy's 2003 Strategic Plan, projects funded through the block grant will increase the amount of land that is accessible to the

public, and will very likely result in the construction of more than 10 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail.

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

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted January 24, 2001, in the following respects:

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. **Support of the public:** Past block grants from the Conservancy to the Bay Trail Project have been very successful, with many local governments and special districts benefiting from the program. Letters of support are attached in Exhibit 2.
4. **Location:** Projects proposed for funding with this grant will be located on the Bay Trail alignment along the Bay shoreline and connecting to it.
5. **Need:** Without Conservancy assistance it is likely that the only portions of the Bay Trail to be funded over the next few years would be those portions required by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission as a condition of development permits. The need for trails along the Bay continues to grow as the population grows and as the interest in nearby places to recreate and experience nature continues to gain popularity. The Bay Trail is in close proximity to millions of residents in the Bay Area, and fulfills both recreational and some commuting needs as well.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Bay Trail is a regional trail network that will be approximately 500 miles in length when completed. This grant program will help further the completion of the trail, of which some 230 miles have been completed to-date

Additional Criteria

9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above. The BTP has established the provision of matching funds as a criterion for evaluating projects, and nearly every project funded through the block grant program has had significant matching funds. On average, Bay Trail grantees have matched the Conservancy grants at a ratio of \$4.24 for every \$1.00 in Conservancy funding.

12. **Readiness:** BTP staff is ready to begin allocation of these funds within the calendar year.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

Promoting public access opportunities along the bay shoreline is consistent with the San Francisco Bay Plan Public Access Policies. Policy number 8 states that access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare where convenient parking or public transportation may be available. Diverse and interesting public access experiences should be provided which would encourage users to remain in the designated access areas to avoid or minimize potential adverse effects on wildlife and their habitat. Projects funded through this proposed grant will be consistent with this policy.

Policy number 10 states that federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions, special districts and the Bay Commission should cooperate to provide appropriately sited, designed and managed public access, especially to link the entire series of shoreline parks, regional trail systems and existing public access areas to the extent feasible without additional Bay filling and without significant adverse effects on Bay natural resources. Projects funded through this proposed grant will be consistent with this policy, as regional and local jurisdictions and special districts, and eligible nonprofits, are the presumed grantees under this program. Closing gaps between existing public access areas is a high priority for funding.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed authorization does not have the potential to result in any physical changes to the environment and therefore is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15378. However, any projects later proposed for funding will be evaluated as required by CEQA.