

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
September 20, 2007

COYOTE POINT BAY TRAIL CONSTRUCTION

File No. 04-053-08
Project Manager: Joan Cardellino

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse previously authorized Conservancy funds for the construction of the Bay Trail through a portion of Coyote Point Recreation Area.

LOCATION: Coyote Point Recreation Area, San Mateo County. (See Exhibit 1.)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Coyote Point Bay Trail Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31400 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse an amount not to exceed three hundred forty-eight thousand dollars (\$348,000) of the total Conservancy funds authorized on September 15, 2004, for construction of 1.2 miles of Bay Trail through Coyote Point Recreation Area.”

This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, ABAG shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy a final work program, schedule and budget, and a grant agreement between ABAG and the project proponent.
2. Posted signs resulting from these projects shall, where deemed appropriate by the Executive Officer, recognize the contribution of the Conservancy and display its logo.
3. ABAG shall require the County of San Mateo to assure implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program contained in the Mitigated Negative Declaration (attached as Exhibit 2 to the accompanying staff recommendation) for the Coyote Point Bay Trail

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Project, adopted by the County of San Mateo on August 17, 2007 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 San Francisco Bay Trail project authorization is consistent with the purposes and objectives of Public Resources Code Section 31400-31409, regarding public access to the coast.
2. The proposed authorization is consistent with the Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines adopted by the Conservancy on January 24, 2001.
3. The proposed authorization will serve greater than local needs for public access to the shoreline.
4. The Conservancy has independently reviewed the Coyote Point Bay Trail Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on August 17, 2007 by the County of San Mateo, attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 2, and finds that there is no substantial evidence that the project, as mitigated, will have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends authorization for the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse up to three hundred forty-eight thousand dollars of previously authorized Conservancy funds for the construction of Bay Trail through a portion of Coyote Point Recreation Area.

The Bay Trail within Coyote Point Recreation Area would undergo significant improvements under the proposed project. A 1.2 mile segment of existing Bay Trail needs to be realigned, reconstructed and/or resurfaced to improve safety for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists traveling through this heavily used park. Improvements to the Bay Trail at Coyote Point would enhance pedestrian and bicyclist access, experience, and safety on the trail by reducing both grades and opportunities for user conflicts. New signage and trail configurations at three intersections, the widening of the trail to 10 feet, and its re-alignment next to Coyote Point Drive would increase public safety. Crossing safety would be also be improved by Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant "ramps" or curb cuts, which would facilitate road crossing by wheelchairs and bicycles.

Coyote Point Recreation Area is a popular destination point for residents of San Mateo County and beyond. There is a wide variety of activities to be enjoyed there that appeal to all ages. Visitors to Coyote Point can gain access to the bay for swimming and windsurfing; there is a marina for boating activities (the Coyote Point Marina); a yacht club (Coyote Point Yacht Club) and a rifle range. There is also a large tot lot and natural history museum; and there are picnic facilities and trails throughout for hiking and biking. Immediately adjacent to the park is a golf course, which generates traffic into the park for entrance to the course. Safety improvements for bicyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair riders are sorely needed, as the existing road and trail alignments do not adequately accommodate the number of visitors.

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The proposed project would consist of two segments or reaches. Segment A – “Upgraded Reach,” would entail resurfacing the Bay Trail in the western portion of the existing trail alignment, (as identified in Figure 2). Segment B – “New Reach,” would involve constructing a slightly revised alignment parallel to the existing alignment along the eastern portion of the trail within the park, as illustrated in Figure 2. The trail would be widened to 10 feet throughout the park, from the existing 6-foot width in some portions and 8-foot width in others. Other improvements would include the addition of 2-foot wide gravel shoulders on either side of the trail, its resurfacing with asphalt to a minimum depth of two inches, and the installation of ADA-accessible ramps at intersections. The revised alignment in Segment B would be close to the current alignment, but would offer improvements to it, including -- 1) reduced grades (i.e., less than 4 percent), which would allow the trail to have enhanced accessibility to persons with disabilities, and 2) improved crossings, thus making it easier and safer at the trail’s crossings at three intersections. (See figures in Exhibit 2.)

Coyote Point Recreation Area is owned and managed by San Mateo County Parks Department.

Site Description: The proposed project is entirely within the Coyote Point Recreation Area, in San Mateo County. It is located at the edge of San Francisco Bay approximately 3.5 miles southeast of the San Francisco Airport. The park covers 149 acres of land and 538 acres of water.

Project History: Construction plans for this project were funded through a previous Bay Trail/Coastal Conservancy grant. Those plans were completed in 2004, and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopted the Coyote Point Master Plan in 2006, incorporating the trail improvements proposed here.

PROJECT FINANCING:

Coastal Conservancy (previously approved)	\$348,000
Other sources*	<u>\$1,423,987</u>
Total Project Cost	\$1,771,987

*Sources of matching funds include the City of San Mateo Golf Course and the City Redevelopment Agency; Bay Area Air Quality Management District; in-kind services from San Mateo County Recreation and Parks Department; and other Proposition 40 funds.

The anticipated source of 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.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 (regarding public access) of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. In Public Resources Code Section 31400, the Legislature charged the Conservancy with a principal

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role in implementing a system of coastal public accessways to and along the California coast, including San Francisco Bay. In working with ABAG to fund construction of new elements of the San Francisco Bay Trail the Conservancy is fulfilling its responsibility to implement a regional trail system around the bay.

Section 31400.1 of the Public Resources Code allows the Conservancy to award grants to any local agency for accessways that serve more than local public needs. The proposed project will serve more than local needs as it is located within a regional park that attracts visitors from San Mateo County and beyond.

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 and related functions. These funds will be used for construction of over 1 mile of trail.

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

This project is consistent with **Goal 11, Objective B** in that it will improve and construct a new segment 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:** This project is supported by the Poplar Creek Golf Course, the Coyote Point Museum, the Coyote Point Yacht Club, and others.
4. **Location:** This project is located within a park on San Francisco Bay.
5. **Need:** The County of San Mateo has raised about 80 percent of the funds necessary to complete this project. Without Conservancy assistance to complete the funding the project could not move forward in its entirety. As an important trail connection, it needs to reach existing trail segments on either end to maximize its value.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** Coyote Point Recreation Area is a regional-serving park, attracting visitors from the San Mateo peninsula and beyond.

Additional Criteria

9. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.

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- 10. Readiness:** The County is prepared to move the project forward and begin construction in the spring of 2008.

Consistency with Conservancy’s Access Program Standards:

This project is consistent with Standard No. 10 in that the bike path will be Class 1 and will be more than 8 feet wide. It is also consistent with Standard No. 13 as it will create wheelchair accessibility along the entire alignment of this trail segment.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

Promoting public access opportunities along the Bay shoreline is consistent with San Francisco Bay Plan policies. Bay Plan Public Access Policy Number 8 states “Access to and along the waterfront should be provided by walkways, trails, or other appropriate means and connect to the nearest public thoroughfare...” (San Francisco Bay Plan 2006, Part IV: Development of the Bay and Shoreline: Findings and Policies—Public Access, Policy No. 8.) This project will provide an important Bay Trail connection to and through a regional destination point.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code Sections 21000 *et seq.*, requires consideration of potential environmental effects of agency actions and approvals, unless exempt. In this case, the Conservancy, as a CEQA responsible agency, is contributing funds to a large construction project. A CEQA responsible agency considers potential environmental effects of project activities that the agency will approve. 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15096(d).

The County of San Mateo, acting as the lead agency for purposes of CEQA, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (“MND”) and a mitigation-monitoring and -reporting program (Exhibit 2) on August 17, 2007 finding that the proposed project, the Coyote Point Bay Trail, as mitigated, would not have a significant effect on the environment. The County filed a Notice of Determination on August 17, 2007.

The MND identifies potentially significant impacts on the following resources: vegetation and wildlife; air and water quality; and aesthetic, cultural and historic. The potential impacts and the proposed mitigations are discussed in more detail below.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The proposed project would be constructed within a stand of eucalyptus trees that include trees greater than 38 inches in diameter. Eucalyptus trees are not listed by the County as a potential heritage tree species; however, the County has a Significant Tree Ordinance that protects any species with a diameter of 38 inches or greater. The proposed project would be required to mitigate by complying with the County’s regulations for removal of significant trees and would therefore be a less-than-significant impact. No trees designated as “Heritage Trees” by the County of San Mateo are expected to be impacted by the proposed project, and any eucalyptus trees removed will be replaced by natives such as redwoods and oaks.

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There has been one recorded occurrence within the project site of the San Francisco Garter Snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*), which is a State- and Federally Endangered species, known to reside in wetland and riparian habitats. Potentially suitable habitat exists in the salt marsh habitat at the project site for the following special-status wildlife species: 1) the State- and Federally Endangered salt marsh harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*); 2) the State- and Federally Endangered California Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris obsoletus*); and 3) the State Threatened California Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis coturniculus*). Potential impacts to these species will be avoided by keeping the trail out of the arroyo riparian woodland adjoining it and instead widening the West Beach Road right-of-way. The riparian willow corridor should be flagged to avoid the removal or cutting of any willows during construction of the trail. Raptors that could potentially nest in the Eucalyptus grove adjacent to Segment B include red-tailed hawk, red-shouldered hawk, great horned owl, and American kestrel. In order to avoid impacts to nesting raptors, a nesting survey should be conducted by a qualified biologist 30 days prior to commencing any construction work if this work would commence between March 15th and August 31st. If raptors or other migratory birds are identified nesting in trees proposed for removal, tree removal shall be postponed until it has been determined by a qualified ornithologist that the young have fledged and left the nest.

Air, Water Quality and Sonic

The proposed project would generate short-term air emissions associated with construction activities. Dust emission would be a potentially significant impact on a localized level, however, adhering to established air quality standard practices should mitigate fugitive dust. Implementation of this measure would ensure that the proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact regarding this pollutant. Implementation of the proposed project would result in intermittent short-term noise impacts resulting from construction-related activities. Construction-related activities associated with the project would include demolition, grading, and paving. Operation of construction equipment shall be limited to the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and shall not occur during any time on Sundays and holidays, in compliance with San Mateo County Code.

Aesthetic, Cultural and Historic

Construction of the trail would include minor soil disturbance. Based on the evaluation of the environmental setting and features associated with known sites, and the ethnographic sensitivity of the area, there is a high likelihood that unrecorded Native American cultural resources exist within the park.

The Northwest Information Center has record of two archeological studies that include a small portion of the park. Review of historical literature and maps indicated historic-period archeological resources within the project area. Therefore, while there are no historic properties, there is a high possibility of encountering historic-period archeological resources. Prior to the initiation of construction or ground-disturbing activities, all construction personnel shall receive environmental training that will include discussion of the possibility of buried cultural and paleontological resources, including training to recognize such possible buried cultural resources, as well as the procedures to follow if such cultural resources are encountered.

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If potential historical or unique archaeological resources are discovered during construction, all work in the immediate vicinity shall be suspended and alteration of the materials and their context shall be avoided pending site investigation by a qualified archaeological or cultural resources consultant retained by the project sponsor.

Conservancy staff has reviewed the MND and the MMRP adopted by the County of San Mateo, and believes that there is no substantial evidence that the Conservancy's project, as mitigated, may result in any significant environmental effects. Under the Conservancy's resolution, ABAG will require the City of San Mateo to assure implementation of the relevant mitigation measures and the relevant portion of the mitigation monitoring and reporting program.