

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
June 20, 2013

**SANTA ANA RIVER PARKWAY TRAIL:
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CLASS I BIKEWAY DESIGN**

Project No. 13-015-01
Project Manager: Moira McEnespy

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to the County of San Bernardino for planning and feasibility analysis of a Class I bikeway with pedestrian shoulders over a segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail in the City of Redlands, San Bernardino County.

LOCATION: Along a segment of the Santa Ana River, City of Redlands, San Bernardino County (Exhibits 1 and 2)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: 1.1: [Project Location Map for entire Santa Ana River Parkway Trail](#)
 1.2: [Project Location Map for this authorization](#)
- Exhibit 2: 2.1: [Project Site Map - "Phase IV" segment: California Street to Garnet Street](#)
 2.2: [Project Site Map - "Phase IV, Reach A," segment: California Street to Orange Street](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Coastal Conservancy Staff Recommendation No. 07-097, "Santa Ana River Parkway" \(December 13, 2007\)](#)
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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 disbursement of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the County of San Bernardino (County) for planning and feasibility analysis for construction of a Class I bikeway with pedestrian shoulders over a 3.5-mile segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail corridor from California Street to Orange Street, City of Redlands, County of San Bernardino, specifically:

- Appraisals of access easements over real property (County Assessor’s Parcel Nos. 016702111; 016702119; 016702120; 016702124; 016704101; 016704104; and 016704120);

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- Final engineering design; and
- Applications for construction permits.

This authorization is subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to disbursement of funds, the Conservancy’s Executive Officer shall review and approve in writing the County’s final work program, including a budget and schedule, and any contractors the County proposes to employ for the project.
2. The County shall appraise property at fair market value for possible future purchase only from willing sellers.”

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 Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the establishment of a system of public accessways to and along the California coast.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The proposed project will serve greater-than-local needs.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

The Santa Ana River Parkway will connect the Inland Empire from the crest of the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean near Huntington Beach. The parkway concept is that of a linear park that is centered by a Class I bikeway, hiking, and riding trail (or trails) and includes a series of parks connected by the trail. When completed, the parkway will include an approximately 100-mile continuous multi-use trail that connects three counties, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino, and multiple cities. See Exhibit 1.

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize disbursement of funds to the County of San Bernardino (County) to prepare pre-project analyses for a 3.5-mile segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail corridor from California Street to Orange Street (also referred to as “Phase IV, Reach A”; see Exhibit 2.2¹), City of Redlands, County of San Bernardino, including:

- Negotiate and appraise access easements over real property (County Assessor Parcel Nos. 016702111; 016702119; 016702120; 016702124; 016704101; 016704104; and 016704120 (See specific properties depicted in gold in Exhibit 2.2));
- Complete the engineering design, including design of a pre-fabricated clear-span bicycle and pedestrian bridge over a drainage immediately east of the I-210 corridor); and

¹ Note that the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail preferred alignment is shown by a solid purple line. The other alignments shown in red and blue solid and dashed lines represent potential future connections with the City of Redlands’ bikeway system.

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- Apply for construction permits.

These activities will prepare for construction of a Class I bikeway comprised of a ten foot-wide asphalt trail with adjacent graded, unpaved decomposed granite shoulders to accommodate pedestrians and non-motorized modes of transportation. Work is anticipated to be completed by the end of this calendar year.

The San Bernardino County Regional Parks Department, a division of the county government, will manage this project and work with the County Public Works Department and County Real Estate Services Division to carry out all tasks. The Regional Parks Department operates and maintains nine regional parks, a wildlife preserve, and over 18 miles of recreational trails. The County was the Conservancy’s previous grantee for Santa Ana River Parkway Trail planning and design work. (See Exhibit 3).

Site Description: The site description of the Santa Ana River Trail area remains consistent with the “Site Description” section of Exhibit 3. The specific segment of corridor under this proposed authorization (“Phase IV, Reach A;” See Exhibit 2.2) is a 3.5-mile segment along the southern bank of the river from California Street to Orange Street, and is bisected by the I-210 corridor. Phase IV, Reach A is located on 2.77 miles of publicly-owned corridor (running along established County flood control levees when available) and 0.73 mile of privately-held parcels.

Project History: On December 13, 2007, the Conservancy authorized funds to Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties to conduct planning, design, engineering, and environmental review for various segments along the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail corridor (See Exhibit 3). The Conservancy-funded portion of the San Bernardino segment extended from Waterman Avenue east to California Street (the segment the County refers to as “Phase III”) and subsequently from California Street to Alabama Street (a portion of the segment the County refers to as “Phase IV;” see Exhibit 2.1). The County conducted similar activities for the remainder of the Phase IV segment (east to Garnet Street) using other funds. The proposed authorization will address further needs identified in the previous planning effort. Additional history can be found in the “Project History” section of Exhibit 3.

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$100,000
Project Total	\$100,000

Forty-five million dollars is allocated to the Conservancy in Proposition 84 for projects to “expand and improve” the Santa Ana River Parkway. These projects must be developed “in consultation with local government agencies participating in the development of the Santa Ana River Parkway.” Proposition 84 further specifies that at least \$10 million of these funds should be spent in each of the three counties, specifically San Bernardino, Orange and Riverside Counties.

Consistent with the funding source, the recommended action is to provide funds to expand and improve a segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail located in San Bernardino County. The proposed project was developed in partnership with the local governments, particularly the

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County of San Bernardino, the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, and the City of Redlands.

Although there are no matching funds identified for this particular suite of tasks, the County has secured over \$10.4 million from other funding sources for planning, design, and construction of segments of the Parkway Trail, specifically from the Riverside County line to the National Forest in the San Bernardino Mountains, including support from the Bureau of Land Management, Transportation Enhancement Act funds (Federal Highway Administration/Caltrans), California River Parkways funds (administered by the California Natural Resources Agency), County, Wildlands Conservancy, and Southern California Edison.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project would be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 of the Public Resources Code Sections 31400 *et seq*, regarding public access.

Section 31400 states the Legislature's intent for the Conservancy to have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to the state's coastline, and Section 31400.1 states that the Conservancy may award grants to a public agency to develop lands for public access to the coast that will serve greater-than-local needs. Consistent with these sections, the proposed authorization will enable the Conservancy to award funds to the County of San Bernardino, a public agency, to design and plan the purchase of rights-of-way for a segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail, a regional river parkway that will link the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, serving greater than local needs. When complete, this trail will be one of the longest urban recreation river parkways in the United States. Just under one-fifth of all the people in the state (approximately seven million people) live in the three counties served by this trail.

Section 31409 states that the Conservancy may award grants to public agencies to establish and expand inland trail systems that may be linked to the California Coastal Trail. Consistent with this section, the proposed authorization will enable the Conservancy to award funds to the County of San Bernardino, a public agency, to design and secure rights-of-way for a segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail, a regional river parkway that will link the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean and to the California Coastal Trail.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013
STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

Consistent with **Goal 2, Objective E** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will design a new segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail, a regional river parkway that will connect inland populations to the coast.

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

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on November 10, 2011, 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:** The Santa Ana River Parkway Trail and this recommended authorization is supported by the following agencies: Orange County; Riverside County; Cities of Colton, San Bernardino, Highland, and Redlands; The Wildlands Conservancy; the San Bernardino County Flood Control District; the Redlands Water Boggle Transit Company; and the Inland Empire Bicycle Alliance. See letters of support in Exhibit 6 of Exhibit 2.
4. **Location:** The proposed project is located along the Santa Ana River, and will help create a river parkway connecting inland communities from the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. Specifically, this proposed project is a 3.5-mile segment of the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail corridor from California Street to Orange Street (also referred to as “Phase IV, Reach A;” see Exhibit 2.2) in the City of Redlands.
5. **Need:** The proposed project will not occur without the funding allocated within Proposition 84 to the Conservancy for this specific purpose.
6. **Greater-than-local interest:** The Santa Ana River Parkway Trail will run approximately 100 miles and will link the San Bernardino Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. When complete, it will be one of the longest urban recreation river parkways in the United States. Just under one-fifth of all the people in the state (approximately seven million people) live in the three counties served by this trail. Portions of the trail received National Recreation Trail status in November 1976, and the National Park Service has indicated its interest in designating the entire trail as a National Recreation Trail once completed.
7. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The proposed project is located in the City of Redlands, part of the Inland Empire, which is approximately 1,300 feet above sea level and therefore not vulnerable to future sea level rise.

Additional Criteria

8. **Urgency:** The proposed project consists of activities that will inform and enable trail construction, and that must be conducted as soon as possible in order to adhere to the overall trail construction schedule.
9. **Leverage:** See the “Project Financing” section above.
10. **Readiness:** The County of San Bernardino is poised to begin project activities as soon as funds are authorized.
11. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” section, above.
12. **Cooperation:** In July 2006, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority, and the nonprofit Wildlands Conservancy adopted a

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Memorandum of Understanding to create a regional partnership and formal mechanism to complete the Santa Ana River Parkway Trail. There are two main groups to guide trail development: A policy advisory group consisting largely of elected officials, and a Technical Advisory Committee consisting largely of agency staff. This is a unique and successful model of regional coordination and collaboration.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project consists of activities that constitute feasibility and planning studies and is therefore statutorily exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act under Title 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 15262. The planning activities are for possible future actions which the Conservancy has not approved, adopted or funded and does not require the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) or negative declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. Upon approval, staff will file a notice of exemption for the project.