

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
March 27, 2014

PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA GRANT PROGRAM

Project Manager: Amy Hutzal

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Recommend to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission that thirteen resource protection and public access projects be included in the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program.

LOCATION: Projects are located in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Priority Conservation Area Grant Program Call for Proposals](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31113 and 31160-31165 of the Public Resources Code:

“The State Coastal Conservancy hereby recommends to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission that the following projects be included in the Priority Conservation Area Grant Program:

1. Five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust and Contra Costa Transportation Authority for acquisition of an easement over the Brentwood Wallace Ranch in Contra Costa County.
 2. One million dollars (\$1,000,000) to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of public access improvements at Breuner Marsh Restoration in Contra Costa County.
 3. One hundred nineteen thousand six hundred dollars (\$119,600) to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of the San Francisco Bay Trail from Pinole Shores to Bayfront Park in Contra Costa County.
 4. One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the Contra Costa Resource Conservation District for construction of the Pinole Creek Fish Passage project under Interstate Highway 80 in Contra Costa County.
 5. One million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the City of Berkeley for construction of a staging area and segment of San Francisco Bay Trail at the Berkeley Marina in the County of Alameda.
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6. Seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000) to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of a segment of San Francisco Bay Trail from Gilman Street to Buchanan Street in the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park in the County of Alameda.
7. Seven hundred twelve thousand seven hundred dollars (\$712,700) to the City of San Jose for construction of the Coyote Creek Trail from Brokaw Road to the Union Pacific Railroad in Santa Clara County.
8. Five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the San Mateo County Department of Parks for the acquisition of the 174-acre Loma Mar property to add to Memorial County Park in San Mateo County.
9. One million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission for the construction of an extension of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on Skyline Ridge in the Peninsula Watershed in San Mateo County.
10. One hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the City of Pacifica for the design and construction of a segment of Bay Area Ridge Trail through the Lower Milagra Site connecting the parking lot to Milagra Ridge in San Mateo County.
11. One hundred sixty seven five hundred eighty nine dollars (\$167,589) to the City and County of San Francisco to conduct a conceptual plan to determine how to best improve pedestrian and bicycle access along and across Twin Peaks Boulevard in the City and County of San Francisco.
12. Five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) to the City and County of San Francisco for the development of a conceptual plan for a new park at 900 Innes along the India Basin shoreline in the City and County of San Francisco.
13. One million dollars (\$1,000,000) to the Port of San Francisco for the construction of public access improvement at Crane Cove Park at Pier 70 in the City and County of San Francisco.”

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 recommendation is consistent with Section 31113 and Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the Conservancy’s authority to address the potential impacts of climate change and the resource and recreational goals of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program.”

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Conservancy staff request that the Conservancy recommend a set of projects that were developed with staff from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) over the past year. These projects are part of a Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Grant Program to support the Plan Bay Area (see Exhibit 2). Staff is seeking board approval of a recommendation to MTC identifying thirteen projects totaling \$7,449,889 for inclusion in the PCA Grant Program. If recommended by the Conservancy board, Conservancy staff will submit the resolution to MTC for their consideration.

The PCA Grant Program is a pilot program initiated by MTC with \$10 million of federal transportation funding. The North Bay Program (Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma Counties) is

managed by the four North Bay county congestion management agencies, with a total of \$5 million. The Peninsula, South Bay, and East Bay Counties Program (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara Counties) is administered by the Conservancy in partnership with MTC and ABAG. For the this phase of the program, MTC has made \$5 million of federal transportation funds available, and Conservancy staff offered to provide up to \$2.5 million in matching state bond funds for the program, contingent upon board authorization for the individual projects. This staff recommendation describes a set of projects and seeks a board recommendation to proceed with development of these projects. Any projects recommended for Conservancy funding will return to the board for funding authorization.

The PCA Grant Program is a component of the larger Plan Bay Area. Plan Bay Area is the integrated long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan for the San Francisco Bay Area, and grew out of The California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (California Senate Bill 375, Steinberg). SB 375 requires each of the state's 18 metropolitan areas to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is achieved through a Sustainable Communities Strategy to promote compact, mixed-use commercial and residential development. Plan Bay Area emphasizes growth in nearly 200 Priority Development Areas (PDAs) along the region's core transit network. It also emphasizes protection for the region's agricultural, scenic and natural resource areas, focused on Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs), over 100 regionally significant open spaces. The PCA program is the Plan's component designed to foster the protection of the agricultural, scenic and natural resources of the region. Participation in the PCA grant program thus furthers the Conservancy's statutory goal, expressed in Public Resources Code 31113(b), to "award grants to public agencies ...that maximize public benefits, including, but not limited to, reducing emissions of greenhouse gases,...preserving and enhancing coastal wetlands and natural lands, conserving biodiversity, and providing recreational opportunities."

A call for proposals to be funded through the PCA grant program (Exhibit 2) was widely distributed on May 1, 2013, followed by two public workshops for potential applicants. Letters of interest were due on July 19 and a total of 25 project ideas were submitted requesting over \$15.5 million in grant funding. Conservancy, MTC, and ABAG staff reviewed the letters and invited full proposals for the 16 projects that most closely met the guidelines in the call for proposal; many of the other projects were worthy and eligible. Thirteen full proposals were received requesting approximately \$8.4 million in funds; three applicants decided not to submit full proposals for various reasons. Conservancy, MTC, and ABAG staff reviewed the full proposals and recommend funding for 11 projects at their full funding request and two projects at a reduced funding level, for a total of nearly \$7.5 million. A map of all thirteen projects is attached as Exhibit 1.

In addition, Conservancy, MTC and ABAG staff assigned MTC and Conservancy funding among the projects based upon available funding and project management needs. Seven projects are being recommended for funding solely with MTC's federal transportation dollars, four projects are being recommended for funding solely with the Conservancy's state bond dollars, and two projects are being recommended for funding with both MTC and Conservancy dollars. All thirteen projects should be viewed as a package, however, implementing the goals of the Conservancy, MTC, and ABAG, with a mix of public access and trail improvements (with a strong focus on the Bay Trail and Ridge Trail), open space and agricultural land protection, and natural resource enhancement.

The seven projects recommended for funding solely by MTC with federal transportation funds are below. If recommended to MTC for funding, Conservancy staff will forward the Conservancy's recommendation to the MTC board for their review and possible approval of the projects. MTC staff will work with grantees to ensure the projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Program and then grantees will work with Caltrans' Local Assistance Program to meet the requirements of the federal transportation funds.

1. \$500,000 to the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust and Contra Costa Transportation Authority for acquisition of an easement over the Brentwood Wallace Ranch in Contra Costa County.
2. \$119,600 to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of the San Francisco Bay Trail from Pinole Shores to Bayfront Park in Contra Costa County.
3. \$712,700 to the City of San Jose for construction of the Coyote Creek Trail from Brokaw Road to the Union Pacific Railroad in Santa Clara County.
4. \$500,000 to the San Mateo County Department of Parks for the acquisition of the 174-acre Loma Mar property to add to Memorial County Park in San Mateo County.
5. \$1,000,000 to the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission for the construction of an extension of the Bay Area Ridge Trail on Skyline Ridge in the Peninsula Watershed in San Mateo County.
6. \$167,589 to the City of San Francisco to conduct a conceptual plan to determine how to best improve pedestrian and bicycle access along and across Twin Peaks Boulevard in the City and County of San Francisco.
7. \$1,000,000 to the Port of San Francisco for the construction of public access improvement at Crane Cove Park at Pier 70 in the City and County of San Francisco.

The two projects recommended for funding by both MTC and the Conservancy are below. If approved by MTC for funding, staff will work with grantees to ensure the projects are included in the Transportation Improvement Program and then grantees will work with Caltrans' Local Assistance Program to meet the requirements of the federal transportation funds. Separate staff recommendations for the Conservancy's share of each of these projects will be presented to the Conservancy for potential authorization of funding at future board meetings. These separate staff recommendations will describe the projects in greater detail; describe consistency with enabling legislation, strategic plan objectives, and project selection criteria; and include CEQA findings.

1. \$1,000,000 (evenly divided between MTC and the Conservancy) to the City of Berkeley for construction of a staging area and segment of San Francisco Bay Trail at the Berkeley Marina in the County of Alameda.
2. \$1,000,000 (evenly divided between MTC and the Conservancy) to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of public access improvements at Breuner Marsh Restoration in Contra Costa County.

The four projects recommended for funding solely by the Conservancy are below. Separate staff recommendations for each of these projects will be presented to the Conservancy for potential authorization of funding at future board meetings. These separate staff recommendations will describe the projects in greater detail; describe consistency with enabling legislation, strategic plan objectives, and project selection criteria; and include CEQA findings.

1. \$100,000 to the County of Contra Costa Public Works for construction of the Pinole Creek Fish Passage project under Interstate Highway 80 in Contra Costa County.
2. \$750,000 to East Bay Regional Park District for construction of a segment of San Francisco Bay Trail from Gilman Street to Buchanan Street in the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park in the County of Alameda.
3. \$100,000 to the City of Pacifica for the design and construction of a segment of Bay Area Ridge Trail through the Lower Milagra Site connecting the parking lot to Milagra Ridge in San Mateo County.
4. \$500,000 to the City and County of San Francisco for the development of a conceptual plan for a new park at 900 Innes along the India Basin shoreline in the City and County of San Francisco.

The PCA Grant Program is an innovative new pilot program in the Bay Area that can potentially become a recurring program to support resource protection and public access improvements and significantly leverage Conservancy funding in the nine-county Bay Area.

PROGRAM FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$2,450,000
Metropolitan Transportation Commission	\$4,999,899
Matching Funds from Grantees (various sources)	\$56,895,490
Project Total	\$64,345,379

The thirteen projects being recommended as part of the PCA grant program will cost in total just over \$64 million.

Conservancy funding totals \$2.45 million for six projects and will be described in greater detail in the staff recommendations for these projects to be presented at future board meetings. The anticipated source of Conservancy funds for the six projects is the “Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006” (Proposition 84). These funds are available for San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program for projects consistent with Public Resources Code, Division 21, Chapter 4.5.

MTC’s funding totals just under \$5 million for nine projects and is derived from federal transportation funding administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). MTC is responsible for approving the use of federal funds and placing approved projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), after which Caltrans’ Local Assistance Program assists local agencies in meeting the requirements of and accessing the federal transportation funds. FHWA has delegated to Caltrans many of their responsibilities under a Stewardship Agreement.

MTC required a 3:1 minimum match requirement for PCA funds, with Conservancy funds counting as part of the match. There is also a federal requirement that not less than 11.47 percent of total project costs come from non-federal sources. Both of these minimum match requirements have been met by the grantees and have resulted in a highly leveraged grant program, with a total of nearly \$57 million in matching funds applied to the thirteen projects funded by the Conservancy and MTC.