

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation

January 28, 2016

**BODEGA BAY COASTAL TRAIL
COASTAL NORTH HARBOR TRAIL DESIGN**

Project No. 07-047-02

Project Manager: Lisa Ames

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$100,000 to Sonoma County Regional Parks Department to prepare engineering designs, environmental analyses and other information needed for permit applications for the 0.32 mile Coastal North Harbor Trail segment of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail.

LOCATION: Highway 1/Eastshore Road, Bodega Bay, Sonoma County (Exhibit 1)

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Public Access

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Bodega Bay Coastal North Harbor Site Map](#)

Exhibit 3: [Bodega Bay Coastal Trail Segments](#)

Exhibit 4: [Project Letters](#)

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 an amount not to exceed one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department (SCRPD) to prepare engineering designs, environmental analyses and other information needed for permit applications for the Coastal North Harbor Trail segment of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, SCRPD shall submit for the written approval of the Conservancy’s Executive Officer a work program, including schedule and budget, and the names of any contractors it intends to retain for the project.
2. To the extent feasible, SCRPD shall incorporate the guidelines of the Conservancy’s ‘Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development’ and all

applicable federal and state guidelines for disabled access into the engineering designs for 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 authorization is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding public access to and along the coast.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. The proposed project will serve greater than local needs.”

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize the disbursement of up to one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) to the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department (SCRPD) to complete engineering designs, environmental analyses and other information needed for permit applications for the 0.32 mile Coastal North Harbor Trail component of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail. (Exhibits 1 & 2). Funding to proceed with designs and environmental review in 2016 will open opportunities for SCRPD to seek construction funding from other regional, state, and federal grant programs in 2017, with a goal of completing the Coastal North Harbor Trail in 2018.

The Coastal North Harbor Trail is a segment of the planned Bodega Bay Coastal Trail project that was initiated by the community seeking a safe path for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the narrow Highway 1 corridor in Bodega Bay. The Conservancy participated in funding both the “Bodega Bay Trail Feasibility Study and Conceptual Improvement Plan” and an associated environmental study (“Bodega Bay Trails Environmental Documents Project”) for the entire transportation corridor between Salmon Creek in the north to the southern edge of Bodega Bay (Exhibits 1 & 2). These planning documents break down the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail into phases or segments in order to facilitate implementation (Exhibit 3).

The Coastal North Harbor Trail segment will be designed to provide barrier-free access and open a coastal area that is currently inaccessible to public use, while protecting coastal dunes and riparian corridor habitat. The proposed project will fund civil, structural, and geotechnical engineering services for design plans and cost estimates, biological and cultural consultant services for review of engineering plans, surveys and preparation of mitigation and protection plans for protected species (including but not limited to California red-legged frog and monarch butterfly), preparation of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents and filing fees, and preparation of other information necessary for permit applications. The project will also include a community engagement component.

SCRPD successfully operates a network of parks and public access trails throughout the County of Sonoma and hosts over 2 million visitors along its spectacular coast each year. SCRPD has completed a number of coastal planning and implementation projects with public input and Conservancy support, and currently manages Stillwater Cove Regional Park, the connecting segment of the California Coastal Trail (CCT) to the north of the proposed project area and Doran Regional Park to the south.

Site Description: The Coastal North Harbor Trail segment of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail starts on County-owned parkland adjacent to Highway 1, near the Bodega Bay Community Center in southwestern Sonoma County. The proposed trail continues southwest, crossing into Sonoma Coast State Park, past an existing amphitheater, and south toward a set of existing campgrounds in the Bodega Dunes Campground area. (See Exhibit 2). The trail will be set back a minimum of 30' from the park access road to create a privacy and security separation. In addition, the trail will pass near a private residence at its south end. Fencing and/or vegetation, as well as separation will be used to minimize potential impact of the trail on the existing home.

The northern end of the trail corridor is located in upland grassland. Traveling south, it crosses a small riparian drainage dominated by California blackberry with an overstory of Monterey cypress. The trail corridor continues through upland briefly and then descends back into the riparian drainage dominated by blackberry, thimbleberry, and horsetail. The trail drops to follow a more developed stream channel, dominated by arroyo willow and follows this drainage to the intersection of Eastshore Road and Bay Flat Road.

Portions of the trail cross unstable and sensitive sand dunes and riparian habitat necessitating some boardwalk construction. SCRPD estimates approximately 1,600 linear feet of boardwalk will be needed along the pathway with stabilized surface to accommodate ADA accessibility.

Project History: The Bodega Bay Coastal Trail project was initiated by the community seeking a safe path for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the narrow Highway 1 corridor in Bodega Bay. In 2004, the Conservancy provided the SCRPD with grant funds to study various trail alignments along the Highway 1 corridor between Salmon Creek and Doran Beach Regional Park. The “Bodega Bay Trail Feasibility Study and Conceptual Improvement Plan” was completed in 2005 and identified a 3.4 mile pedestrian and bicycle trail corridor paralleling Highway 1 from Keefe Avenue through the town of Bodega Bay to the Bird Walk Coastal Access Trail. In 2007, the Conservancy funded the “Bodega Bay Trails Environmental Documents Project” which provided necessary CEQA evaluation and review of all the related trail segments designed in the Conceptual Improvement Plan.

The scale and complexity of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail necessitated a phased approach to implementation, with each segment requiring further site-specific CEQA analysis. SCRPD is the lead for developing the multi-use/Class 1 portions of the Bodega Bay Trail. Two segments of the trail have been constructed; another segment is currently under construction, while others are still in the planning stage (Exhibit 3). The Bodega Bay Trail has been phased into projects identified as:

- Cheney Creek Bridge and Trail (Segment 6B) - complete
- Coastal Prairie Trail (Segments 1B and 1C) – nearly complete
- Coastal North Harbor Trail (Segment 2B) – subject of this authorization

- Coastal Harbor Trail (Segment 3D-1 and 3D-2) - planning
- Smith Brothers Road (Segment 5B) – planning

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$100,000
Sonoma County	<u>\$ 20,000</u>
Project Total	\$120,000

The expected source for the Conservancy funds for this authorization is an FY 2010-11 appropriation to the Conservancy from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (“Proposition 84”) codified at Public Resources Code sections 75001 *et seq.* Subsection 75060(b) authorizes the use of these funds for projects that promote access to and enjoyment of the coastal resources of the state and that are consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation. The proposed project serves to promote access to coastal resources by developing engineering designs, environmental review and other information necessary for permit applications for a new segment of CCT, and is consistent with Chapter 9 of Division 21 as explained below. Therefore, this project is an appropriate use of Proposition 84 funds.

Funding to proceed with designs and environmental review in 2016 will open opportunities for SCRPD to seek construction funding from other regional, state, and federal grant programs in 2017, with a goal of completing the Coastal North Harbor Trail in 2018.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The Coastal North Harbor Trail Design will be undertaken pursuant to Chapter 9 (Section 31400 *et seq.*) of the Conservancy’s enabling legislation, Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding the implementation of a system of public access ways to and along the state’s coastline.

Section 31400 states that the right of the public to access and enjoy coastal resources should be effectively guaranteed, and that the Conservancy should have a principal role in the implementation of a system of public accessways to and along the coastline.

Pursuant to section 31400.1, the Conservancy may award grants to a local public agency to develop and manage lands for public access to and along the coast, so long as the accessway will serve more than local public needs. The proposed project is consistent with this section as the SCRPD is a public agency and the Bodega Bay area is recognized as a destination of regional, national and international interest to millions of people annually.

Section 31400.2 requires the Conservancy to consider a number of factors in determining the amount of funding for an access project. Consistent with this section, the proposed level of funding was evaluated relative to the total amount of funding available to the Conservancy for coastal access projects, the fiscal resources of the applicant, and the Conservancy’s project

selection criteria (see Consistency with Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria & Guidelines). Sonoma County has committed to provide funds to this project; however, the county does not have sufficient funds available for coastal trails to complete the project without Conservancy assistance.

Pursuant to 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 accessways, and related functions necessary to meet coastal access objectives.

Pursuant to Section 31401, the Conservancy has developed "Standards and Recommendations for Accessway Location and Development". In order to ensure that the proposed access study is consistent with these standards, as a condition of the grant, SCRPD will be required to incorporate Conservancy guidelines into the final design, as appropriate.

The proposed project is consistent with the Sonoma Local Coastal Program as described in the Consistency with Local Coastal Program Policies below.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S 2013 STRATEGIC PLAN
GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), AS REVISED JUNE 25, 2015:**

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective C** of the Conservancy's 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will complete design for an approximately 0.32 mile segment of new coastal trail.

**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 October 2, 2014, 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. **Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** The proposed project will lead to the construction of 0.32 miles of new coastal trail and thus implement a priority of the Coastal Conservancy's *Completing the California Coastal Trail Plan*.

In addition, this project is supported by multiple County and Regional Plans:

The *Sonoma County General Plan 2020*, adopted September 23, 2008, includes the Bodega Bay Trail as a Class 1 Bikeway.

The Bodega Bay Trail, Coastal North Harbor, is included as part of project number 197F and ranked as a high priority in the *2010 Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan*, adopted August 25, 2010.

The Coastal Zone in Sonoma County, which includes Bodega Bay, is identified as SN11 Coastal Access and Resource Protection. This is a Priority Conservation Area, adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments, September 17, 2015.

The Bodega Bay Trail is designated as a high priority regional project in the *2009 Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Sonoma County*, by the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA). SCTA acts as the countywide planning and programming agency for transportation related issues.

4. **Support of the public:** Along with the Conservancy, California State Parks, Caltrans, and Sonoma County Transportation & Public Works participated in the inter-agency approach to creating the feasibility study and conceptual improvement plan for Bodega Bay Trail. Planning included the local community participation on the Bodega Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. SCRPD continues to coordinate trail efforts with these agencies and receive their support of the project. SCRPD will re-establish the Citizens Advisory Committee for this project and has announced this opportunity on the Parks website. Letters of support are included in Exhibit 3.
5. **Location:** The proposed project is located within the coastal zone of Bodega Bay, Sonoma County.
6. **Need:** If awarded, this funding will allow SCRPD to undertake the engineering and environmental work necessary to make the project eligible for construction funding. Recently, SCRPD was successful at partnering with State Parks and securing federal funding for constructing a shovel-ready Coastal Trail project on their property. Without Conservancy funds, this project would likely languish in the planning stage.
7. **Greater-than-local interest:** The project area provides non-vehicular access in a highly congested and dangerous segment of Highway 1 used by those seeking recreation through bird watching, hiking, biking, beach visits and site-seeing in the harbor area of this Sonoma County coastal community. Bodega Bay as a whole, including its natural resources and fishing town character, attracts local families and visitors as well as regional and international tourists.
8. **Sea level rise vulnerability:** The Coastal North Harbor Trail section of the Bodega Bay Trail will be sited and designed to avoid significant adverse impacts from sea level rise and shoreline flooding. The trail will be designed as a perpetual non-motorized trail corridor with consideration of its adaptive capacity and with an ability to be relocated as sea level rises. This trail, with its 82' climb, could supplement tsunami escape corridors.

Additional Criteria

9. **Urgency:** If SCRPD is unable to complete the engineering and environmental work, it will miss the opportunity to secure construction grant funding from other regional, state and federal sources in the 2017 funding cycle.
10. **Resolution of more than one issue:** The project includes elements that will both extend the reach of the California Coastal Trail and close a gap between a community and recreation destination that is unsafe to reach by bicycle and foot along the narrow and highly traveled stretch of Highway 1 in Bodega Bay.
11. **Leverage:** See the "Project Financing" section above.

12. **Readiness:** SCRPD has completed two segments of the Bodega Bay Coastal Trail identified in the Conceptual Improvement Plan (September 2005). The department has the capacity and readiness to conduct and complete the proposed project in order to make it shovel-ready for implementation funding in 2017.

13. **Realization of prior Conservancy goals:** See “Project History” above.

14. **Vulnerability from climate change impacts other than sea level rise:** This project will design the Coastal North Harbor Trail segment of the Bodega Bay Trail with attention to sustain ecological functions in the trail corridor, and also focus on future climatic and ecological conditions rather than the past. SCRPD will incorporate the best available science by utilizing peer-reviewed and well-documented climate science, climate adaptation strategies, and management practices.

On site and/or nearby habitat mitigation will enhance the ability of natural systems to sequester greenhouse gasses. The resulting trail project will provide a no-cost non-motorized transportation corridor for the community and visitors, addressing the needs of low-income populations.

Lessons learned planning this trail will inform future Coastal Trail projects, and enhance understanding of adaptation to future climate change scenarios and effective management strategies.

15. **Minimization of greenhouse gas emissions:** This engineering and environmental review project will produce minimal greenhouse gas emissions. It is anticipated that the project design will incorporate reasonable measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions during construction. The project will provide on-site habitat mitigation and/or contribute to a local mitigation bank, as identified for the CEQA document.

The resulting trail project will create a non-motorized trail connecting neighborhoods and campgrounds to the town of Bodega Bay, reducing the need for vehicle travel for residents and visitors. Providing a trail option for pedestrians and cyclists will reduce energy consumption by reducing vehicle miles traveled.

CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES:

The Coastal North Harbor Trail is located within the Coastal Zone and subject to the jurisdiction of the County of Sonoma’s Local Coastal Program (Certified June 1982, Amended December 2001). The proposed project is consistent with the relevant sections of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) and the County of Sonoma’s General Plan.

Consistent with Section V (Recreation) of Sonoma County’s LCP and Section 30210 of the Coastal Act, “maximum access and recreational opportunities shall be provided for all the people, consistent with public safety needs and the need to protect public rights, rights of private property owners, and natural resource areas from overuse,” The proposed project will provide site specific environmental review for increased public access to the resources along Bodega Bay by adding to the California Coastal Trail and improving safe passage off Highway 1.

Consistent with Section VI (Harbor) and Coastal Act Section 30221, “ocean front land suitable for recreational use shall be protected for recreational use and development unless present and foreseeable future demand for public or commercial recreation activities that could be accommodated on the property is already adequately provided for in the area.” The proposed project will provide additional access for bird watching, hiking, biking and water sports by linking State Park, regional parks and recreational access areas around the harbor with the California Coastal Trail.

In addition, the proposed project is consistent with Sonoma County’s recently adopted *General Plan 2020*, which the County intends to incorporate into its LCP following Coastal Commission review. Located within a County of Sonoma Scenic Landscape Unit and along the Sonoma Coast Scenic Corridor, project area planning will comply with the Open Space and Resource Conservation Element’s Objectives OSRC-2.1 through 3.2 regarding the protection of scenic units and corridors. The project is also consistent with General Plan policy OSRC-17d regarding creation of the Sonoma Coast Trail as part of the countywide park and trails system, and all project planning will be consistent with the Plan’s policies (OSRC18a-v) with regard to designing bicycle facilities in unincorporated areas.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

The proposed project is statutorily and categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act, Public Resources Code section 21000 et seq. (“CEQA”). California Code of Regulations (“CCR”) title 14, § 15262 sets forth a statutory exemption from the requirement to prepare an environmental impact report or negative declaration for preparation of feasibility and planning documents for future actions that have not yet been approved or funded; environmental factors must be considered. 14 CCR § 15306 establishes a categorical exemption from CEQA for basic data collection and resource evaluation activities that will not result in serious or major disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed preparation of designs and environmental analysis entails the preparation of feasibility and planning documents as well as data collection and resource evaluation activities; these activities will enable a future action, the construction of a trail, that has not yet been approved or funded. The proposed project will not have an impact on environmental resources, and environmental factors will be considered during implementation of the proposed project. Accordingly, the proposed project is exempt from CEQA. Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.