

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
April 27, 2017

GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE SOUTH VISITOR PLAZA IMPROVEMENTS

Project No. 08-110-01
Project Manager: Anna Schneider

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Modification of the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 grant authorization for the "Golden Gate Bridge South Visitors Plaza Improvements" project by amending the project scope to allow the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District to use \$258,852.17 of the grant for construction and improvement of visitor-serving amenities at the South Visitor Plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge.

LOCATION: South Visitor Plaza at the south foot of the Golden Gate Bridge, City and County of San Francisco.

PROGRAM CATEGORY: San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [December 4, 2008 Staff Recommendation "Golden Gate Bridge South Visitor Plaza Improvements"](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31160 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby modifies its December 4, 2008 grant authorization for the "Golden Gate Bridge South Visitors Plaza Improvements" project by amending the project scope to allow the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (District) to use \$258,852.17 (two hundred fifty eight thousand eight hundred fifty two dollars and seventeen cents) of the remaining grant balance for construction and improvement of visitor-serving amenities at the South Visitor Plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge, City and County of San Francisco, subject to the following conditions:

1. Prior to the disbursement of funds, the District shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy:
 - a. An updated work program, schedule and budget.
 - b. The scopes of work and the roster of contractors to be employed in the project.

- c. A sign plan acknowledging the Conservancy and displaying its logo in a manner approved by the Executive Officer.
 - d. An agreement between the landowner of the project site (the National Park Service) and the District that is sufficient to permit the construction of the project improvements and protect the public interest in the project.
2. Prior to initiating construction, the District shall provide written evidence to the Executive Officer that all permits and approvals necessary to the implementation and completion of the project under applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations have been obtained.

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 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, regarding access-related facilities.
2. The proposed project is consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy modify its December 4, 2008 authorization of a grant for the “Golden Gate Bridge South Visitors Plaza Improvements” project (the project) to allow the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District (the District) to use \$258,852.17 of the remaining grant balance to improve visitor-serving amenities at the South Visitor Plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge by replacing and upgrading the existing restroom sewer line. The Golden Gate Bridge is acclaimed as one of the world’s most beautiful and recognized bridges, receiving an estimated 10 million visitors each year. The South Visitor Plaza is a landmark destination stop providing public services such as parking, tour bus stop, restrooms, a restaurant and a gift shop for the residents and visitors viewing or crossing the Golden Gate Bridge on foot, bike, or car.

The original December 4, 2008 Conservancy authorization provided \$500,000 in grant funding to design improvements to visitor-serving amenities at the South Visitor Plaza. For a complete project summary, please see the December 4, 2008 staff recommendation, Exhibit 1.

The District has now completed the initial design tasks and there is a remaining balance of \$258,852.17 from the original Conservancy grant funding of \$500,000. The District is ready and prepared to commence final design and construction of improvements to the existing restroom sewer line. The proposed modification of the December 4, 2008 authorization would allow the use of the grant balance of \$258,852.17 for the complete replacement of the existing sewer line, which has been a problem-ridden, forced main system that relies on mechanical pumps. This pumping system breaks down often and requires constant monitoring and maintenance by

District staff. The new line would be a simpler gravity system that would confer immediate benefits to the existing facility and be in place for the future installation of the new restroom.

The original staff recommendation (Exhibit 1, “Project Summary” section) supported construction of the restroom facility upgrades, but noted that, if deemed appropriate, Conservancy staff would return to the Conservancy to request authorization to fund construction activities related to the restroom upgrades at the South Visitor Plaza. Additional funding has not been requested for this grant, as \$258,852.17 remains under the current grant agreement for this task. Should the Conservancy approve amending the scope to allow for construction activities, this funding will be used to initiate this very important part of the restroom upgrade. Upgrading the sewer line will have immediate benefits for the existing facility and be able to support the new restroom facilities when constructed, without creating any increase in capacity at the sewage treatment plant (City and County of San Francisco).

Site Description: See Exhibit 1, “Site Description” section.

Project History: The District, utilizing Conservancy funds, produced Design & Construction Plans, an Environmental Compliance Review, Topographic Survey/Mapping, and Geotechnical Reports for the planned new restrooms at the South Visitor Plaza at the Golden Gate Bridge. The consultant completed the design project based on time and materials instead of fixed fees, so the design project was completed with a substantial remaining balance. The project is construction-ready and with an approval to amend the project’s scope, can move forward to utilize the remaining grant funds for construction and replacement of the existing restroom sewer line.

For additional project history: See Exhibit 1, “Project History” section.

PROJECT FINANCING:

The funding source has not changed. See Exhibit 1, “Project Financing” section.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The project has not changed; additional projects tasks are proposed by this modification. See Exhibit 1, “Consistency with Conservancy Enabling Legislation” section.

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

Consistent with **Goal 1, Objective F** of the Conservancy’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will improve support facilities at an existing coastal accessway where the California Coastal Trail, San Francisco Bay Trail, and the Bay Area Ridge Trail converge.

Consistent with **Goal 12, Objective B** of the Conservancy’s 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, the proposed project will implement and provide improvement to a restroom at a recreational facility (South Visitor Plaza of the Golden Gate Bridge).

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

The 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 Exhibit 1, "Consistency with Conservancy's Enabling Legislation" section.
- 2. Consistency with purposes of the funding source:** See Exhibit 1: "Project Financing" section.
- 3. Promotion and implementation of state plans and policies:** By improving public access facilities the project serves to promote and implement the following state plans:
 - a. *"California @ 50 Million: The Environmental Goals and Policy Report (Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2013 Draft): The Environmental Goals and Policy Report"* Section: Build Sustainable Regions that Support Healthy and Livable Communities, Goal 1: Invest in sound infrastructure that is consistent with the state's long-term environmental goals through the construction and upgrade of a recreational facility.
- 4. Support of the public:** The South Visitor Plaza at the Golden Gate Bridge is heavily used by hikers, bikers, park enthusiasts, and U.S. and international tourists (See Exhibit 1: Project Letters)
- 5. Location:** The proposed project would be located at the south foot of the Golden Gate Bridge, which serves as the division between "coast" and "bay." The proposed project would be located on the waterfront of the City and County of San Francisco, which is within the nine-county Bay Area, and would be located within the coastal zone of the City and County of San Francisco
- 6. Need:** The proposed change of scope to allow replacement of the restrooms sewer line is a necessary first step of the overall construction project to replace the aging restroom facility with a new restroom. Without this change of scope, the project would not be able to commence as scheduled and would need a new funding source.
- 7. Greater-than-local interest:** The Golden Gate Bridge is arguably the most defining feature of the San Francisco Bay Area, and is an internationally-recognized landmark. The Golden Gate Bridge receives approximately ten million visitors from around the world each year, as well as serving as a local recreational and transportation feature.
- 8. Sea level rise vulnerability** Improvements made to the restroom sewer line will not be vulnerable to sea level rise due to the high elevation of the project site.

Additional Criteria:

12. Readiness: The grantee stands ready to begin the implementation portion of project as soon as the Conservancy approves this proposed modification.

13. Realization of prior Conservancy goals: See Exhibit 1, “Project History” section.

15. Cooperation: The proposed project offers the first opportunity for the Conservancy and the District to collaborate on a project where their interests and goals overlap.

CONSISTENCY WITH SAN FRANCISCO BAY PLAN:

See Exhibit 1, “Consistency with San Francisco Bay Plan” section.

COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA:

As lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the District has concluded that the proposed project is exempt from the provisions of CEQA. In addition, triggered by the proposed project site’s location on federal property, the NPS has made a concurrent finding that the proposed project qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Per an independent review, Conservancy staff concur that the proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA under the following sections of the CEQA Guidelines, Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations:

The proposed construction project is categorically exempt under Section 15301 (Class 1), “Existing Facilities,” because the proposed project consists of upgrading an existing facility (public restroom) by replacing its sewer line and pump station. The proposed project will require an upgrade of the existing on-site sewage pump station, but it will not necessitate any upgrades or changes to the existing sewage treatment plant. Therefore, the proposed project will not result in anything more than a negligible expansion of an existing use.

The proposed construction project is categorically exempt under Section 15302 (Class 2), “Replacement or Reconstruction,” because the proposed project consists of replacing/reconstructing an existing structure and facility. The new structure will be located on the same site and within the same general footprint as the structure replaced and will have the same purpose. Although the proposed project will expand the local capacity of the existing public restroom facility at the project site, it will not necessitate expanding the capacity of existing sewage treatment plant (where the on-site sewage is pumped for treatment); the existing sewage treatment plant will remain at its current capacity and can accommodate the proposed project with no upgrades or changes. Therefore, the proposed project will constitute replacement/reconstruction of an existing facility where the new facility/structure will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

Staff will file a Notice of Exemption upon approval of the project.