

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation  
February 3, 2022

**SAN FRANCISCO BAY TRAIL:  
POINT MOLATE BAY TRAIL CONSTRUCTION**

Project No. 19-016-06, 19-016-07  
Project Manager: Avra Heller

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Authorization for the Association of Bay Area Governments to disburse up to \$300,000 of previously-granted Conservancy funds in the following manner: up to \$150,000 to the East Bay Regional Park District to construct 1.25 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail from the San Rafael Bridge Trail landing to the City of Richmond’s Historic Winehaven District, and up to \$150,000 to the City of Richmond to construct a connected 1.25 miles of San Francisco Bay Trail from the Winehaven Historic District to Point Molate Beach Park, and the adoption of findings under the California Environmental Quality Act.

**LOCATION:** City of Richmond, Contra Costa County

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EXHIBITS

- Exhibit 1: [Project Location Map](#)
- Exhibit 2: [Map of the Point Molate Bay Trail Segments](#)
- Exhibit 3: [Project Photos](#)
- Exhibit 4: [October 17, 2019 Bay Trail Block Grant No. 6 Staff Recommendation](#)
- Exhibit 5: [March 25, 2021, City of Richmond Point Molate Bay Trail Priority Conservation Area \(PCA\) Grant Staff Recommendation](#)
- Exhibit 6: [San Francisco Bay Trail at Point Molate Final Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration](#)

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**RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS**

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse up to \$300,000 of the Conservancy funds authorized as part of the San Francisco Bay Trail Block Grant No. 6 on October 17, 2019 in the following manner: up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) to construct 1.25 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail from the San Rafael Bridge Trail landing to the City of Richmond's Historic Winehaven District (Segment A), and up to one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to the City of Richmond to construct a connected 1.25 miles of San Francisco Bay Trail from the Winehaven Historic District to Point Molate Beach Park (Segment B), for a total construction of 2.5 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail, in City of Richmond, Contra Costa County, 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 final work programs, schedules and budgets, and grant agreements respectively between ABAG and EBRPD, and ABAG and the City of Richmond.
2. ABAG shall ensure installation of signs acknowledging the Conservancy and displaying the Conservancy logo in a manner approved by the Executive Officer.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation 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 the improvement of public access to, within, and around the bay, coast, ridgetops and urban open spaces of the San Francisco Bay area.
2. The proposed projects are consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines.
3. As a responsible agency, the Conservancy has independently reviewed and considered the "San Francisco Bay Trail at Point Molate Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration" (IS/MND), adopted by the EBRPD on May 1, 2018 pursuant to CEQA and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 6. The Conservancy finds that construction of 1.25 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail from the San Rafael Bridge Trail landing to the City of Richmond's Historic Winehaven District, as designed and mitigated, avoids, reduces or mitigates the potentially significant environmental effects to a less-than-significant level, and there is no substantial evidence based on the record as a whole that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, as defined in 14 California Code of Regulations Section 15382.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

### PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy authorize the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to disburse up to \$300,000 of the total Conservancy funds authorized on October 17, 2019 (known as “San Francisco Bay Trail Block Grant No. 6” – Exhibit 4) as two \$150,000 grants, respectively, to the EBRPD and the City of Richmond (City) to each construct a portion of the 2.5-mile segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail between the San Rafael Bridge Landing and Point Molate Beach Park in the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County (Exhibit 2). Conservancy authorization for ABAG to grant the funds is necessary because authorizing the trail construction requires adoption of findings under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The new 2.5-mile trail (proposed project) will provide access to a previously inaccessible stretch of the San Francisco Bay shoreline, transforming an isolated stretch of shoreline into an attractive recreational area for walking, bicycling, fishing, kayaking, and public enjoyment of a sandy beach in San Francisco Bay. There is not currently a safe access route for either pedestrians or cyclists to Point Molate Beach Park, which is approximately four miles from Richmond’s city center. These new connected trail segments will make it possible for residents of Richmond’s Iron Triangle and other adjacent disadvantaged neighborhoods to access Point Molate Beach Park safely, providing the recreational benefits of a non-motorized trail.

San Francisco Bay Trail plans in this area were developed starting in 2017 by the City and EBRPD, in partnership with Trails for Richmond Action Committee (TRAC) a community action group focused on completing the SF Bay Trail along the Richmond shoreline. Planning process also involved participation from the City of Richmond’s Point Molate Community Advisory Committee (PMCAC), representing a cross-section of Richmond residents, including some who are leaders of TRAC, as well as the California Native Plant Society and Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate.

**Segment A:** EBRPD will construct a 1.25-mile Class I trail segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the San Pablo peninsula starting near Stenmark Drive on the north side of the Richmond San Rafael (RSR) Bridge (I-580) and extending through Chevron’s property to the Point Molate Beach Park in the City of Richmond. The trail will be constructed in a previously disturbed area that coincides or is adjacent to the old Richmond Belt Railway corridor. This portion of the Chevron property includes the former railway corridor, access roads for maintenance of the RSR Bridge, and coastal areas. Approximately 1.1 mile of the trail will be constructed within an easement granted by Chevron to the EBRPD for construction, operation, and maintenance of the trail, and an additional 0.15 mile segment will be constructed by EBRPD within the City of Richmond’s property as the trail approaches Point Molate Beach Park. The trail will be 10 feet wide with a 5-foot soft shoulder on the shoreline side.

Segment A will be operated and maintained by EBRPD. Once completed, the southern end of Segment A will connect to the existing segment of the Bay Trail spanning the Richmond-San Rafael bridge. On the northern end it will connect to the City of Richmond's planned 1.25-mile portion of Bay Trail stretching from the Point Molate Beach Park to the historic Winehaven District within the City's property. In addition to completing an important segment of the Bay Trail, Segment A will also provide access to the San Francisco Bay Water Trail, as Point Molate Beach Park is a designated Water Trail site, and it is expected that there will be a few more associated non-motorized watercraft accesses constructed as part of the planned future development of the Winehaven District. Segment A project improvements will include asphalt pavement removal and grading, installation of asphalt-concrete pavement with a 5-foot soft shoulder on the shoreline side, installation of fencing at strategic locations, and construction of earthen berms where the trail is at grade with adjacent existing rip rap.

**Segment B:** The City of Richmond's portion of the trail (Segment B) will follow the shoreline between Point Molate Beach Park and the Winehaven District on Stenmark Drive at the northern border of the Point Molate property (Exhibit 2). Starting at the Point Molate Beach Park, the trail route follows the historic Richmond Belt Line rail corridor between the parking lot and the turf picnic area. Heading north, the alignment transitions to the shoreline and follows former U.S. Navy roads constructed primarily on land filled in by historic quarrying operations. The Beach Park has a paved parking lot for 25 automobiles plus a large, crushed rock surface overflow parking area. It is an ideal trailhead for the Bay Trail and has been designated as a Bay Area Water Trail site.

The connected trail segments will run from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Trail landing to just south of the Terminal Four Wharf Removal Project, where future segments that extend north to that site will eventually link a four-mile segment from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to the Point San Pablo Yacht Harbor. In March 2021, the Conservancy authorized a grant directly to the City for Segment B; further description of segment B is in the staff recommendation for that grant (Exhibit 5).

### **Site Description**

The Point Molate site encompasses 413 acres and includes the 41-acre Winehaven Historic District, once known as the largest winery in the United States in 1908. The site was also the prior home of a United States Naval Fuel Depot, now decommissioned. This section of shoreline offers spectacular views across San Francisco Bay framed by the Richmond San Rafael Bridge, Mount Tamalpais and East Brother Light Station. Backed by the 400-foot-high ridge line of the Potrero Hills, the inland landscape features coastal bluffs and the iconic Winehaven Historic District, which may be rehabilitated in the future for adaptive reuse by the Master Developer selected by the City. This Point Molate shoreline also has a rich and varied cultural history, including a Chinese shrimping village, and previously the Richmond Belt Line Railroad went through the site. The trail is planned to be constructed on the former railroad easement. In all of this history, there has not been formally designated public access paths to the shoreline of the City's 413-acre Point Molate property since the lands were inhabited by the Huichin tribe

of Ohlone Native Americans, aside from the Point Molate Beach Park, which was reopened to the public in 2014.

**Grant Applicants' Qualifications:**

The EBRPD is a critical partner in the implementation and maintenance of the San Francisco Bay Trail, and has substantial experience in managing many types of projects funded by grants from state and regional public agencies, including planning, design and building previous Class I Bay Trail projects. Examples include the recently completed Pinole Shores to Bayfront Park section of the Bay Trail in Pinole, and the Albany to Buchanan portion of the Bay Trail in Albany.

The City of Richmond has substantial experience in managing many types of projects funded by grants from state and regional public agencies, including planning, design and building previous Class I Bay Trail projects. Examples include several in the Marina Bay neighborhood, the Shipyard 3 Bay Trail and other Bay Trail sections along the Ferry Point Loop including along Canal Boulevard.

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

The proposed project is consistent with the Conservancy's Project Selection Criteria and Guidelines, last updated on September 23, 2021, in the following respects:

**Selection Criteria**

**1. Extent to which the project helps the Conservancy accomplish the objectives in the Strategic Plan.**

See the "Consistency with Conservancy's Strategic Plan" section below.

**2. Project is a good investment of state resources.**

The Project partners have secured the match funds (see Project Financing section below) and the project is ready to proceed on award of ABAG funding. EBRPD is currently securing regulatory permits and completing final site designs, plans, and specifications, with the intention to have all of those documents completed by the end February 2022. They plan to publish bid documents, review applicants, and award a contract by May, beginning construction in June of 2022. The project leverages additional state funding as well as funding from local government sources (see Project Financing).

The Bay Trail is specifically recognized in the California Recreational Trail Plan, as well as numerous regional and local plans including the San Francisco Bay Area's Plan Bay Area 2040 as a Priority Conservation Area, all nine Bay Area County General or Master Trail Plans, and the public access policies in the San Francisco Bay Plan.

**4. Project benefits will be sustainable or resilient over the project lifespan.**

The project is designed, and will be maintained, to be sustainable and resilient to a changing environment. The proposed project will be located above near-term 2050 sea level rise projections. Currently parts of the proposed trail alignment are eroded and will be stabilized so

that the trail and other improvements are not undermined by rising sea levels. Doing so will prevent further erosion, and in turn improve water quality in the surrounding area. Additionally, the new 2.5 mile trail section has the potential to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing safe passage for pedestrians and cyclists, connecting to the City of Richmond's Greenway system. This new trail will make it possible for users to opt for riding or walking to the park instead of driving their cars.

**5. Project delivers multiple benefits and significant positive impact.**

This project provides a critical connection to a sandy San Francisco Bay beach for all Bay Trail users, but particularly for residents of the City of Richmond who have no safe non-vehicular means of accessing this park. Due to the long-term development plans for Point Molate, without these two segments of Bay Trail the scenic shoreline of Point Molate is likely to remain closed to public entry for another decade or longer. This trail will connect to the City of Richmond's Greenway, connecting the City's Iron Triangle Neighborhood directly to the Bay Trail, greatly increasing equitable public access to the Bay Shoreline. The project will also support improved water quality due to decreased erosion along the shoreline.

In creating the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program, the legislature identified San Francisco Bay as the central feature in an interconnected open-space system of watersheds, natural habitats, scenic areas, agricultural lands and regional trails of statewide importance. This project will help implement a trail section that will link to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge pedestrian and bike access, which links to a broader set of trail connections in Marin County. There have been over 92,000 bicycle trips across the bridge since it opened Nov. 16, 2019, and pedestrian usage is about 15% of that number. The site also connects to the Richmond Greenway with links to the BART and AC Transit systems, providing a public access opportunity for much of the East Bay and Marin County

**6. Project planned with meaningful community engagement and broad community support.**

The City of Richmond's Point Molate Community Advisory Committee (PMCAC) provided the primary forum for public review of project design. Its membership included a representative cross section of Richmond residents, including some who are leaders of Trails for Richmond Action Committee (TRAC), the California Native Plant Society and Citizens for a Sustainable Point Molate.

The PMCAC reviewed the project at various stages and submitted recommendations to guide planning and design, beginning on December 16, 2015. A field trip held for the PMCAC's Parks and Open Space Subcommittee on March 23, 2016 led to further detailed recommendations by the PMCAC as a whole on April 11, 2016. Key topics covered included providing a safe and enjoyable user experience, conserving native vegetation, educational interpretive panels, etc. After incorporating these recommendations, a Stakeholder Workshop and Meeting was conducted on July 7, 2016 to receive further feedback. Finally, additional public comment was received via the Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration published March 14, 2018 and finalized May 1, 2018.

In addition, the Park District completed a Community Survey to see how residents use the parks and some of the things they would like to see in the future. Of the 8,000 respondents, 1,056

identified themselves as being from Richmond. According to the results, 31% of the Richmond respondents use the EBRPD parks on a weekly basis and 18% use them on a daily basis. Nearly half of these respondents (41%) use the parks for the physical health benefits and 30% for the stress-reduction benefits. Fifty-seven percent (57%) find regional trails as an accessible form of transportation.

The project is supported by the California Natural Resources Agency Prop 68 Trails and Greenways Grant Program, State Senator Nancy Skinner, State Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, Contra Costa County Supervisors John Gioia and Federal Glover, City of Richmond Mayor Tom Butt, Chevron, the Bay Area Toll Authority, the Bay Area Water Trail, Bike East Bay, Rich City Rides, Save the Bay, and Trails for Richmond Action Committee.

**PROJECT FINANCING (for Segment A grant to the East Bay Regional Parks District)**

<b>Coastal Conservancy (via Bay Trail Block Grant to ABAG)</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
CA Natural Resources Agency	\$1,202,830
Metropolitan Transportation Commission, PCA	\$1,000,000
CA State Parks, Recreational Trails	\$900,000
East Bay Regional Park District	\$2,271,460
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$5,524,290</b>

**PROJECT FINANCING (for Segment B grant to the City of Richmond)**

<b>Coastal Conservancy (via Bay Trail Block Grant to ABAG)</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
Coastal Conservancy (previously awarded) PCA grant	\$1,000,000
CA Natural Resources Agency	\$1,000,000
City of Richmond	\$1,000,000
<b>Project Total</b>	<b>\$3,150,000</b>

The Conservancy’s two respective \$150,000 contributions are proposed as portions of the \$1,400,000 Conservancy grant to ABAG known as the San Francisco Bay Trail Block Grant #6, which was authorized on October 17, 2019 (Exhibit 4). Conservancy funds for Block Grant #6 are derived from the “California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018” (Prop 68, Public Resources Code Division 45, Chapters 1-13, Sections 80000-80173), in particular Chapter 9, which allocates funds for projects that enhance and protect coast and ocean resources including projects that are consistent with the purposes of the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program at Division 21 of the Public Resources Code. (Pub. Res. Code sections 80120(d)). As defined by Proposition 68, the term “protection” includes actions that will improve access to public open-space areas and actions to allow the continued use and enjoyment of property and natural, cultural, and historic resources. (Section

80002(l)). The Bay Trail is consistent with the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program and will improve public access to, and enjoyment of, San Francisco Bay.

Unless specifically labelled “Required Match” the other sources of funding listed above are provided as estimates. The Coastal Conservancy does not typically require matching funds nor does it require documentation of expenditures from other funders. Typical grant conditions require grantees to provide any funds needed to complete the project.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:**

The proposed authorization is consistent with Chapter 4.5 of Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, Sections 31160-31165 regarding San Francisco Bay Area projects.

The proposed authorization is consistent with Section 31162(a) because it will help achieve the San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program goal of improving public access to and around the bay through completion of the Bay Trail, the Ridge Trail, and the connecting regional trail system. The proposed project will complete a segment of the Bay Trail.

Consistent with Section 31163(a), the Conservancy has cooperated with nonprofit land trusts and other organizations in identifying and adopting long-term resource and outdoor recreational goals for the San Francisco Bay Area. Completion of the Bay Trail is a priority recreational goal. The proposed project is consistent with Section 31163(c), for the following reasons:

1. The proposed project will promote completion of trails that provide safe routes to transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and recreational resources consistent with adopted local and regional plans. In addition, the Point Molate Bay Trail is identified as a Priority Conservation Area in Plan Bay Area 2040.
2. The proposed project serves a regional constituency by contributing toward the completion of a regional trail network through the nine counties surrounding San Francisco Bay.
3. The proposed project can be implemented in a timely manner.
4. The proposed project will provide benefits that could be lost if the project is not quickly implemented, as there is current momentum built from the work already undertaken by the City of Richmond, EBRPD, and TRAC.
5. The project provides matching funds.

**CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2018-2022 STRATEGIC PLAN](#) GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S):**

The proposed project is consistent with Goal 13, Objective E of the Conservancy’s 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, because by constructing a segment of the Bay Trail at Point Molate, the



proposed project(s) will construct a regionally significant public trail that will link the Bay Trail and the Water Trail.

**CEQA COMPLIANCE:**

On May 1, 2018, the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) adopted the San Francisco Bay Trail at Point Molate Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) (Exhibit 6). The IS/MND addresses the entirety of the 2.5 miles of trail - both the 1.25-mile segment of Bay Trail to be constructed by the City of Richmond – Segment B (Exhibit 5) and the 1.25-mile segment of Bay Trail to be constructed by EBRPD – Segment A. Although the IS/MND addresses the entire 2.5 mile trail, the Conservancy already adopted findings regarding the environmental effects of Segment B when it authorized a grant for Segment B in March 2021 (Exhibit 5). Segment B has not changed, and there is no new information or changed circumstances that would trigger the need for additional CEQA review for Segment B. Accordingly, this discussion and the findings recommended for Conservancy adoption are limited to Segment A.

The IS/MND included a Mitigation Monitoring Reporting Program (Appendix A to MND in Exhibit 6) which addresses the potential impacts of the proposed trail construction. The IS/MND identified potential impacts in the areas of aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, and noise and vibration. Mitigation measures were adopted to assure that these potential impacts are avoided or reduced to less-than-significant levels, as summarized below:

**Air Quality:** Air quality impacts (e.g., dust) from the construction of the proposed trail will be managed by incorporating Basic Construction Mitigation Measures regarding controlling dust and managing construction equipment, as required by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Construction air quality impacts are therefore considered ***less than significant***.

**Biological Resources:** The proposed trail development has the potential to adversely affect biological resources and sensitive habitat including rare native plant species, and a small upland wetland. To mitigate these potential impacts to a ***less-than-significant*** level, the IS/MND requires various measures including restriction of construction to daylight hours, training of construction personnel, limitations on the use and types of construction equipment, implementation of Best Management Practices, transplanting (and if feasible re-planting) salvaged native grasses to other areas, and avoidance of wildlife burrows. The IS/MND also requires the adoption of specific measures to mitigate potential impacts to bluff lettuce, coast buckwheat, nesting birds including tree nesting raptors, foraging birds, and the monarch butterfly. These measures include avoidance of potential habitat areas (e.g., coastal prairie grasslands, trees) and monitoring of construction activities by biologists if removal or alteration of these habitats is unavoidable or if construction occurs during the breeding season. To avoid impacts to potential black rails and CA Ridgway's rails, the IS/MND requires pre-ground disturbance surveys using the methods described by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and US Fish and Wildlife Service. To reduce potential short-term impacts to the upland wetland, the contractor shall install temporary

silt fencing beyond the outer edge of the wetland boundary to prevent entry of fill into the wetland during construction. Contractor will also place temporary Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) fencing where needed to prevent construction equipment and workers from entering the upland wetland.

**Cultural Resources:** Within the site, there is the potential to disturb cultural resources with trail development. To mitigate this potential impact to a *less-than-significant* level, the MND requires the presence of a qualified archaeologist and a Native American representative monitoring all ground disturbing activities within the park and establishes protocols to address such resources if they are unearthed. The contractor will be required to limit the depth of grading and subsurface activities to the depth of the Belt Line railway ballast (approximately 2 feet). If it is determined that the depth of subsurface activities would exceed the depth of the Belt Line ballast, then a qualified archaeologist will be retained to monitor Project ground-disturbing activities.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** Construction of the trail will require the movement and handling of soil with arsenic concentrations above background levels. In addition, contaminated soils not previously identified could also be encountered. There are also existing abandoned structures located near the proposed trail alignment that may contain hazardous materials and pose a physical hazard to trail users. Fencing would be installed to keep users from accessing abandoned buildings, other structures, and areas known to contain contaminated soils. The soils with elevated levels of arsenic along the trail will either be capped in place or relocated and capped. Soils will be covered with a minimum of 1-foot of clean fill material or clean fill, aggregate base and asphalt in the trail footprint areas with soils above background arsenic levels. To mitigate this potential impact to a *less-than-significant* level, EBRPD will require the contractor to prepare a Health and Safety Plan. Implementation of the project-specific soil management plan and air monitoring plan, and preparation and implementation of the Health and Safety Plan will be conducted with oversight by a Certified Industrial Hygienist.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:** The project has the potential, during construction, to cause erosion or spills that can contaminate water quality. To mitigate these potential impacts to a *less-than-significant* level, EBRPD will require the contractor to implement control measures associated with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's Statewide General Permit for Discharges of Stormwater Runoff Associated with Construction Activity as well as a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan.

Staff has independently evaluated the IS/MND and associated public comments and concurs that there is no substantial evidence that Segment A will have a significant effect on the environment. Staff therefore recommends that the Conservancy find that Segment A of the proposed project as mitigated avoids, reduces or mitigates the possible significant environmental effects to a level of less-than-significant and that there is no substantial evidence that the project will have a significant effect on the environment as that term is defined by 14 Cal. Code Regs. §15382.

Upon approval of the project, Conservancy staff will file a Notice of Determination for the award to the East Bay Regional Park District.