



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO:	City Council	DATE: June 9, 2025
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development	
PREPARED BY:	Sarah Peters, Assistant Planner	
PRESENTER:	Sarah Peters, Assistant Planner	
AGENDA TITLE:	Receive Report and Provide Direction Regarding Installation of Fitness Equipment along the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail	

BACKGROUND

Fitness Equipment

Last year, the Community Development Committee (CDC) requested that staff look into the possibility of installing several pieces of fitness equipment along the Coastal Trail to enable walkers, joggers and cyclists the ability to incorporate stretching and strength training exercises into their outdoor workouts.

At the October 25, 2024 CDC meeting, staff presented a memo outlining some preliminary policy options for Committee members' consideration. Issues brought forward were -

1. The importance of protection of the views to the ocean as required by the Coastal Act and the Coastal Development Permit
2. Longevity of equipment related to the harsh coastal environment and graffiti
3. Importance of avoiding cultural resources and biological resources by choosing locations that are not known to have them.

Based on discussion of these issues, the Committee selected several locations they thought would be optimal. See **Attachment 1** for recommended locations.

At that meeting, CDC members directed staff to take this issue to the full Council, and made the following recommendations:

1. Rather than complex fitness stations, select 4-6 simple pieces that can be placed individually in recommended locations. For example, a pull-up bar in one location, a sit-up bench in another location, etc.
2. Avoid the most visually sensitive locations and locations close to wastewater treatment plant, restrooms and at end of northern parking lot.
3. Keep installation simple so as not to detract from the trail itself and to keep costs low.

See **Attachment 1** for the locations CDC members recommended be considered for fitness equipment stations.

Binoculars

On March 3, City staff and BlueZones (BZ) presented the “BZ Built Environment Projects” to the Community Development Committee (CDC). The BZ Built Environment Projects include two (2) demonstration projects, one (1) project, plan, or report, and one (1) marquee project. CDC gave staff direction to include the installation of Fitness Equipment and binoculars as the two demonstration projects. On March 15, staff, Audubon Society, and BZ’s hosted a pop-up event at Glass Beach to allow trail users an opportunity to utilize binoculars and take a survey to gauge interest. On June 2, 2025, the results of the survey were presented to the CDC, and they provided a recommendation to bring this concept to the whole Council.

Discussion at CDC included the binoculars being a free amenity with the option to donate via QR code for maintenance and upkeep, installation of one pair of binoculars (one that is average adult height and one that is ADA compliant). Staff would recommend them being located at Glass Beach as the hub of tourist activity. Conceptually, the installation of binoculars is a little less fleshed out than the fitness equipment but given the BZ Project timeline and the need for coastal permitting on both, staff would like to gauge interest from the full Council regarding proceeding with these two items in tandem.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The fitness course would be a set of exercise stations that would be installed at intervals alongside the Coastal Trail. Each station would have one or more pieces of equipment that would allow participants to do exercises such as sit-ups, push-ups, and chin-ups.

The purpose of the fitness course would be to promote good health by providing well-balanced exercises in an outdoor setting, freely available to the public. Ideally on fitness course stations, the participant’s body functions as the resistance for strength training. All the main muscle groups can get a good workout by doing just a few basic exercises.

Regulatory Issues

A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) is required for any development in the coastal zone. Development means:

On land, in or under water, the placement or erection of any solid material or structure; discharge or disposal of any dredged material or of any gaseous, liquid, solid, or thermal waste; grading, removing, dredging, mining, or extraction of any materials; change in the density or intensity of use of land, including, but not limited to, subdivision pursuant to the subdivision map act (commencing with Government Code Section [66410](#)), and any other division of land except where the land division is brought about in connection with the purchase of such land by a public agency for public recreational use; change in the intensity of use of water, or of access thereto; construction, reconstruction, demolition, or alteration of the size of any structure, including any facility of any private, public, or municipal utility; and the removal or harvesting of major vegetation other than for agricultural purposes, kelp harvesting, and timber operations in accordance with a timber

harvesting plan submitted pursuant to the provisions of the Z'berg Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (commencing with Public Resources Code Section [4511](#)).

Installation of fitness equipment falls within this definition. The CDP staff report would analyze coastal resources, such as visual, biological, and cultural resources.

- A qualified biologist will need to be hired to complete a biological assessment to identify rare, threatened or endangered species and recommend mitigations as necessary.
- A cultural resources analysis has already been prepared for the entire coastal trail site, and none of the selected locations have cultural resources.
- A CEQA document would be required if impacts to biological or visual resources cannot be avoided.

Materials, Installation and Utilization Considerations

Materials. Proximity to the ocean is a major factor in the durability and cost of the equipment. The marine environment, with its moisture and salt air is very hard on materials, which decreases the warranty length for the equipment and increases the cost of more durable equipment.

The two materials options for this project are a highly durable wood, such as Robinia, with anodized aluminum or stainless steel for connectors. Robinia is considered very durable and would have the most natural appearance, blending well with the coastal environment. The other option would be stainless steel with extra finishes and protective coatings. While it would not have as natural an appearance, stainless steel would be less likely to be cut or vandalized by vandals, which is always a concern.

Shock Absorbency. There is typically a “fall zone” for each piece of equipment that generally depends on peak height. The project would include excavation and placement of a protective surface such as engineered wood chips to provide protective shock absorbency within the “fall zone” around each piece of equipment. For the wood chips, a border should be installed around the fall zone to prevent migration of the chips. Alternatives to the wood chips are poured rubber or decomposed granite.

Ongoing Maintenance. Ongoing maintenance would also be required and should be considered by the Council, such as raking, leveling, and removal of debris from wood chip surfacing and regular equipment safety inspections, cleaning and repair. The wood chip maintenance would take at least two Public Works staff for 2-3 hours a week of maintenance for 5-6 stations. Currently, there is only one Public Works crew member that is certified for inspections. This could result in impacts on the City’s ability to effectively complete existing maintenance commitments. Currently there are a number of outstanding maintenance needs on the Coastal Trail, including deteriorating property line fencing, re-establishment of invasive plant populations, and maintenance of the runway surface.

Accessibility. All three of the fall zone materials above, engineered wood chips, poured rubber and decomposed granite, are considered accessible. Practically speaking, wood chips are the most affordable and most natural in appearance. Poured rubber and decomposed granite may be easier to navigate for people using assistive devices for mobility and would likely require less on-going maintenance. However, they are much more costly to install and would increase the cost of the project significantly.

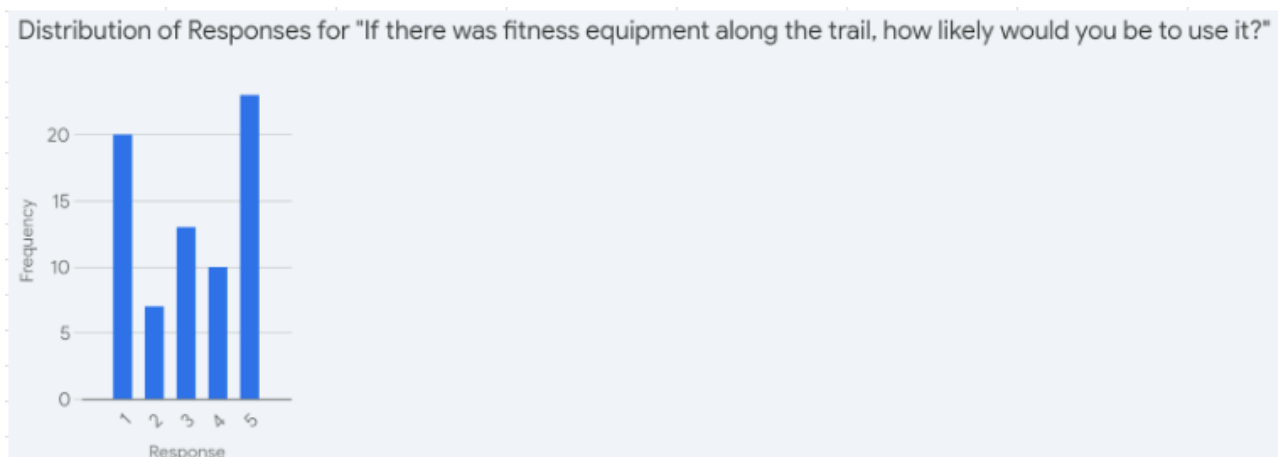
Age Restrictions. Equipment materials state 13 as a minimum age for equipment use. Signage would need to be placed at each site indicating the age restriction and that usage is at one's own risk.

Utilization. At least one fitness equipment source said that it has been shown that equipment along a trail is less utilized than equipment congregated in one location at or near an entrance or exit to a trail. This is because users of equipment stations tend to be the fit people that are already walking or jogging the length of the trail, and the addition of this equipment may not be as likely to draw many others out beyond the most heavily utilized areas. Conversely, equipment congregated in one station near an entrance to the trail is more accessible by all fitness levels and is therefore better utilized.

Surveys

An informal survey was conducted on March 11 in conjunction with BlueZones, Audubon, and the City of Fort Bragg. The question was, *if there were fitness equipment along the trail, how likely would you be to use it (on a scale of 1-5)*. Below is a graph of participant responses which indicates that about 30% of the respondents would be very likely to use the site while 25% would be unlikely to use the equipment with the remaining 15% have no strong opinion

Figure 1: Survey Response Graph



A more in-depth survey was initiated in conjunction with a "Fitness Equipment Demonstration" event hosted by City staff and BlueZones. This event was held on Friday, May 30 from 4pm – 6pm at the South Coastal Trail, Friday, May 30, 2025, from 4-6 PM, to gauge interest in the installation of fitness equipment along the coastal trail. Participants

were engaged in a series of guided physical exercises and had an opportunity to complete a survey. The survey link was posted through social media on the day of the event for those who could not attend in person. The survey is still underway, however most verbal feedback the day of the event was favorable to adding fitness equipment either along the trail or congregated in one area of the trail.

Project Pros and Cons

Pros –

- The potential to draw more visitors to the trail
- Promotion of health and fitness via whole body workout for trail users
- Added layer of enjoyment for trail users
- Helps meet City of Fort Bragg Strategic Goal #4 (see below).

Cons –

- Cost and time to complete project, i.e. environmental review and studies, permitting, staff time, equipment, installation
- Ongoing maintenance, repair, and replacement of equipment and surfacing
- Unknown how much use equipment will get
- Potential liability

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

Approximately \$35,000 excluding site work, installation or permitting fees. This includes five stations with five pieces of equipment, some of which have more than one function. Factoring in installation and permit fees would bring the project to at least \$55,000. Utilizing surfacing such as decomposed granite would add to the total cost significantly.

BlueZones has adopted this project as their “Marquis” project for the City of Fort Bragg and would commit up to \$35,000 toward the project, with the City committing a portion of the costs, such as for permitting and installation.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This would be analyzed in a Coastal Development Permit.

STRATEGIC PLAN/COUNCIL PRIORITIES/GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

General Plan Policy OS-17.3 Recreational Facilities: Provide recreational facilities to meet the needs of all Fort Bragg citizens, especially children and teenagers.

Strategic Goal 4: Enhance public spaces, promote recreation, and cultivate civic pride.

Strategic Goal 4E: Expand, improve, and repair parks, green spaces, and urban forests to encourage nature-immersed recreation.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Brought forward to CDC in October of 2024.
- Survey conducted on March 11, 2025, as part of the survey regarding adding binoculars to the Coastal Trail.

- Fitness demonstration event hosted by Blue Zones organization on May 30, 2025.
- A survey initiated in conjunction with the Blue Zones Demonstration event which is still open.

COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This was initiated through the Community Development Committee. Presentation to CDC October 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council: 1) receive staff report; 2) take public comment; 3) deliberate; and 4) provide direction to staff regarding whether or not staff should undertake permitting, environmental review and installation of fitness equipment in various locations along the Coastal Trail and if yes, provide feedback to staff regarding preferred equipment materials, surface materials, and options for installation. Staff is also seeking direction regarding whether or not to proceed with the Coastal Trail binocular installation project.

ALTERNATIVES

Provide other direction to Staff.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Recommended locations
2. Equipment Types
3. Coastal Trail Fitness Stations
4. Binocular Survey March 2025

NOTIFICATION:

"Notify Me" subscriber lists as applicable