



**CITY OF FORT BRAGG**

416 N. FRANKLIN, FORT BRAGG, CA 95437  
PHONE 707/961-2823 FAX 707/961-2802

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**COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT**

**MEETING DATE:** April 28, 2015  
**TO:** Community Development Committee  
**FROM:** Marie Jones  
**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** Receive Report and Provide Feedback to Staff Regarding the City Surrounded by a Park Planning Project

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**ISSUE:**

In 2012, the City applied for and received funding from Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) to complete a conceptual plan for the City Surrounded by a Park project. The “City Surrounded by a Park” concept envisions a multi-use trail (including a hiking/biking trail) that could encircle the City along the Noyo and Pudding Creek drainages and connect to the Coastal Trail on either end. It is a big vision—and one that will take years to implement. The City has implemented the Coastal Trail portion of the City Surrounded by a Park. The MCOG grant is intended to look at potential trail alignments along the Noyo River and Pudding Creek drainages. The scope of work includes:

- (1) Develop preliminary conceptual map of trail system (GIS) - City staff & Campbell Timberland Management
- (2) Conduct initial outreach to property owners - City staff; property owners
- (3) Conduct outreach to partner agencies and stakeholder groups (Mendocino Land Trust, State Parks, Coastal Conservancy, Fat Tire Coalition, etc.) - City staff
- (4) Prepare a Request for Proposals (RFP) and select design consultant - City staff
- (5) Conduct community outreach - City staff/Consultant
- (6) Prepare conceptual design/plan for trail system – Consultant/City Staff/City Council
- (7) Prepare phasing plan and budget estimate for trail development - Consultant
- (8) Define appropriate locations for easements and fee simple acquisition - City staff; property owners

Staff has completed task items 1 through 4, as described below, and is seeking feedback from the Committee regarding next steps.

**SUMMARY:**

Since MCOG awarded funding for the planning study in 2013, a number of steps have been taken, as summarized below.

On January 16, 2014, the City held a community workshop at Town Hall which was attended by approximately 150 persons. A rough trail alignment, as shown in the City's General Plan, was included with the meeting notices mailed to property owners along the alignment (see Attachment 1). At the workshop, public testimony was taken regarding the conceptual alignment and a large number of residents expressed concerns about a public trail on or near their properties. The following list summarizes both concerns and supportive comments heard at the workshop:

#### **Concerns**

- Project should not be on private land; It should be on public lands and existing right-of-ways
- Ebbing Way concerns include homeless people, child safety, garbage, robbery
- Monsen Way concerns include homeless on tracks, robbery, conceptual alignment is problematic, not on private property, Munson Lane north is too vertical for the trail
- Casa del Noyo Property –impact on privacy of homeowners, terrain is very steep
- Railroad track – impacts to wildlife on Pudding Creek, fire risk
- Not on Lyta Way
- A&W Haul Road - Logging trucks will conflict with cyclist and walkers
- General concerns about increased violence and crime associated with increased access to wooded private areas

#### **Supportive Comments**

- A&W haul road trail would be good
- Mountain bike trail would be great
- Community has a tremendous desire to walk, jog, bike
- Bird watching place accessed from town would be good
- Need a safe bike location
- Walkers have cell phones and would appreciate safe places to walk; would call in problems
- Potential economic benefits
- Other communities have done this and have increased revenues by attracting mountain bikers
- Trail users drive pot growers and homeless out of public lands
- Could be a resource for beginner mountain bikers that want to bike in the forest
- Always interested in ways kids can be active safely off the road
- Will trail be ADA accessible?
- Good to use logging roads

Initially, the regional manager of Campbell Timberland Management (manager of major timber holdings along the Noyo and Pudding Creek drainages) expressed interest in working with the City and other property owners to define a trail system for the “City Surrounded by a Park” concept. He has since left the area and it is unclear as to whether the company still supports public acquisition of land and/or easements on the timberland. Please see Attachment 4 to understand the ownership of land in areas for possible trail alignment.

A preliminary analysis of the feasibility of aligning the trail along the edge of the Skunk Train tracks indicates that the right of way does not offer sufficient width to easily accommodate a trail and allow sufficient safety margin for the train. Indeed, in about one third of the length of the train track between the cemetery and tunnel, there is no clear area for a trail alignment. One alternative, albeit expensive, would be to cantilever a trail parallel to the train tracks, possibly with a bridge over the Pudding Creek Reservoir. The Skunk Train has indicated that it would be necessary to keep cyclists and pedestrians out of the tunnel. An alternative route over a steep embankment above the tunnel would go through private property and would be a challenge. At the January 2014 meeting, the property owners expressed support for the project.

Based on the feedback received thus far, staff identified three alternative potential trail alignments for the City Surrounded by a Park study as follows:

1. A trail that fronts along the south side of Pudding Creek. This would require cooperation from the property owner and managers of the property (currently Hawthorne Timber Company/Campbell Timberland Management).
2. A trail up the Noyo River drainage, possibly connecting to City-owned property on Summers Lane and/or the MCRPD Regional Park property on Highway 20, and possibly including a community forest concept (similar to Arcata and Eureka's community forests) – See Attachment 2
3. A trail that travels through town on City right of way – See Attachment 3

After City Council approval of a revised scope of services for the planning study, a Request for Proposals was circulated in February for consultant services to complete the planning project. The new scope of work includes the following tasks:

1. Project Management and Coordination.
  - a. Kick-off meeting with City staff.
    - i. Review existing documents
    - ii. Review community input from the well-attended initial community meeting (January 16, 2014) regarding a potential trail alignment as illustrated in the City's General Plan (i.e., up Noyo and Pudding Creek drainages).
    - iii. Complete a site visit
  - b. Prepare a final work plan
  - c. Weekly phone communications with the City's project manager to ensure the budget, timeline and deliverables are progressing within the terms of the contract.
2. Facilitate one (1) Community planning workshop and one (1) City Council workshop.

Responsibilities will include: preparation of worksheets, exhibits, preliminary alignment options and design alternatives; provision of easels, writing utensils, and other items needed for public meetings; preparation of draft and final meeting agendas and meeting outlines; attendance at and facilitation of the community planning workshop. All documents associated with outreach, including newspaper ads and other advertising, agendas, meeting outlines, preliminary alignment options and design alternatives will be submitted to Community Development Department staff at least two (2) weeks prior to publication. A summary of the outreach efforts and public input will be included in the feasibility study.
3. Prepare Draft Work Products to include:
  - Trail alternatives analysis – Present to City Council for feedback and selection of a preferred alignment(s). The alternatives analysis should include the pros and cons of each alignment and preliminary estimate of feasibility (cost, community acceptance, ease of acquisition).
  - Conceptual plan and trail sections for preferred alternative(s) (as determined by City Council).
  - Phasing plan, including priority sections for development.
  - Cost estimate for each trail section/alignment.

4. Prepare a Draft Report.
  - a. Consultant will prepare a draft report including:
    - i. Executive summary
    - ii. Introduction
      - 1) Project background and objectives
      - 2) Methodology
    - iii. Trail alternatives analysis
    - iv. Conceptual plan and trail sections
    - v. Phasing plan, including priority sections for development
    - vi. Cost estimate for each section/alignment.
  - b. Two (2) printed copies and one (1) digital copy (Microsoft Word) will be submitted to City staff for review. All supporting documents will be provided in their original software form (not as PDFs); this includes all maps, tables, figures and photos.
5. Final Report & City Council Presentation.
  - a. The Consultant will prepare a final report, incorporating direction provided by City staff and present the final report to City Council.
  - b. Seven (7) print copies and one (1) digital copy in Microsoft Word of the final report will be provided to City of Fort Bragg staff.

The City received four proposals in response to the Request for Proposals and staff is preparing to recommend a preferred consultant for the project. Before proceeding, staff is seeking direction from the Community Development Committee regarding the project approach and direction, as well as suggestions about public outreach to avoid the misconceptions and controversy that prevailed at the initial public meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Provide feedback to staff regarding approach to City Surrounded by a Park planning project.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 – Initial Conceptual Alignment

Attachment 2 – Community Forest concept

Attachment 3 – City street concept

Attachment 4 – Property Ownership