



AGENCY:	City Council
MEETING DATE:	May 23, 2016
DEPARTMENT:	CDD
PRESENTED BY:	Marie Jones

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

### **TITLE:**

**RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING COASTAL TRAIL PHASE 2 DESIGN DECISIONS AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (ATP) GRANT APPLICATION, AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF**

### **ISSUE:**

For nearly a decade, the City of Fort Bragg has pursued development of a coastal trail and park along the 3½ miles of coastline on the former Georgia Pacific mill site. In early 2010, the City acquired 93 acres with a \$4.15 million grant from the State Coastal Conservancy and a dedication of land from Georgia-Pacific. After several years of environmental review and permitting, Phase 1 of the Fort Bragg Coastal Restoration and Trail Project was put out to bid in June 2014 and completed in late 2015. Both the north and south segments of the coastal trail are well used and well loved by Fort Bragg residents, coastal residents and visitors alike.

The City is preparing to begin the design and engineering process for the “central” section of the coastal trail which will traverse the Mill Pond area and connect the existing north and south Coastal Trail segments. This portion of the project has lagged behind the north and south trail alignments due to uncertainties around the environmental remediation, Mill Pond dam stability and limited funding. Georgia-Pacific (the responsible party for the remediation) is proposing a Remedial Action Work Plan (RAW) to remove contaminated hotspots in the Mill Pond area which will help facilitate construction of Phase 2 of the Coastal Trail.

Funding and timing constraints associated with the two grants (one of which has been awarded and the other for which the City is preparing an application) will necessitate Phase 2 being constructed in two separate phases. Additionally, it has become clear that the community would like to access the new Noyo Headlands Park from downtown, and a downtown access is both necessary and desirable in the near term, although not fundable with Prop 84 funding. Thus staff is looking for direction from Council as noted below under recommended action.

### **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Provide direction to staff regarding Coastal Trail Phase 2 Active Transportation Program (ATP) grant application, construction timing, and preferred downtown connection alignment. Specifically, direction is needed regarding:

1. The proposed project design and the location of the preferred downtown access, whether at Alder Street or Redwood Avenue, and the preferred parking lot location;
2. The focus of 2017 construction activities with State Parks Prop 84 funding; and
3. The focus of the ATP application for the portion of the trail that would be constructed in 2019-20 (if the grant is awarded); and
4. Which components of the design contract to proceed with now for construction in 2017 with Prop 84 funding, and whether the City should use additional City funding to proceed with the entire Coastal Trail Phase 2 project design and engineering.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):**

Provide alternative direction to staff.

**ANALYSIS:**

The following background information is provided to help inform the Council's decisions:

**Current Funding Status & Limitations.** The City has received a \$450,000 State Parks Prop 84 grant and is currently preparing another grant application requesting funding from Caltrans' Active Transportation Program (ATP). The application is due June 15th. The Prop 84 and ATP grants will fund different portions of the Coastal Trail Phase 2 project. Additionally, some portions of the project will need to be funded from other sources.

**Prop 84 funding.** The \$450,000 Prop 84 grant can only be used to design, engineer and construct the following features:

"Construct 3000 lineal feet of multi-use trails, beach access stairs, picnic areas, and the ecological restoration of 5 acres of paved industrial land."

This funding cannot be used for construction of a connection to the downtown, a parking lot, access road, or other amenities such as a restroom, as they were not part of the original grant scope. Likewise this funding cannot be used for design and engineering of these other features. Finally, this funding is only available on a reimbursement basis and the improvements must be put into service (use) at the end of the grant period (which is 2018). Thus the components of the project that are funded by Prop 84 must be permanent, fully functional, completed and put into service by 2018.

**ATP Funding.** The City is currently preparing a grant application for ATP funding. ATP funding cannot be used for the parking lot, access road, or restroom. ATP can only be used for portions of the project that provide alternative transportation facilities for bicycles and pedestrians. Thus ATP can be used for multi-use trail and pedestrian improvements. While the ATP grant awards will be announced August 2016, the funds cannot be used until FY 2019-20. Thus if the City is awarded an ATP grant for this project the construction process will need to be undertaken in two different phases.

**Alternative funding.** The City will need to secure other funding to complete the parking lot, welcome plaza and restroom, and access road from downtown to the parking lot. Possibilities include D1 funds and/or funding from other grant programs.

**CEQA Review and Permitting.** The City circulated and adopted a Subsequent EIR (SEIR) for construction of the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail through the Mill Pond area to connect the north and south alignments of the trail over the beach berm and around the Mill Pond. When CEQA and the Coastal Development Permit were approved, the City did not anticipate including a parking lot or access road to downtown as part of the project and these components of the project were not analyzed. If these project components are added to the design, both the CEQA document and the CDP, Use Permit and Design Review permit will have to be amended to reflect this change. These documents can be prepared in-house; however, a traffic study may need to be completed to determine if mitigation measures would be needed for the intersections at Main Street/Alder Street or Main Street/Redwood Avenue.

**Conceptual Project Design.** In early 2015, City Council provided direction to staff to pursue two multi-use trail connections, between the North and South trail, one which traverses the beach berm and another which skirted around the Mill Pond. In early 2016 as part of the community and Council discussion for the City of Trails plan, direction was provided to also seek a connection between Phase 2 of the Coastal Trail and the downtown.

**Connection to Downtown.** There are two options for the connection to downtown: Alder Street and Redwood Avenue.

An Alder Street connection offers some advantages as it would: 1) be cheaper to build as it is much shorter in length; 2) it would not interfere with GP operations as much; 3) it includes a pre-existing asphalt parking lot which could be used without improvements until such time as a permanent parking lot could be built; and 4) it would not impact parking in the downtown as much if there is overflow parking.

A Redwood Avenue connection offers the following advantages: 1) it is closer to the heart of downtown and would more readily serve pedestrians; and 2) it has a signalized intersection which would make left turns to and from Main Street easier. The Redwood Avenue connection would be more expensive to build, especially if the new access road is designed to follow the street grid of the Mill Site Specific Plan, which deviates from the current asphalt road surface.

Both options would require sidewalk improvements on the block between Chief Celeri Drive and Main Street. Council should provide direction regarding the preferred access. The multi-use portion of this access could be funded with ATP funds.

**Parking Lot Location Options.** As part of the City of Trails project, staff explored possible parking lot locations for the trail connection. If a connection is provided from the Coastal Trail to Main Street, it will generate significant parking demand which could interfere with customer parking in the downtown if the project does not include a parking lot and/or have overflow use.

Two potential alternative parking lot sites were identified: 1) the existing unpaved parking lot at the end of Alder Street, which is owned by Georgia-Pacific and is zoned Central Business District (see Attachment 1); and 2) a potential new parking lot which would be located on a large asphalt pad overlooking the Mill Pond area, which is owned by Georgia-Pacific and zoned Timber Resources Industrial (see Attachment 2).

Georgia-Pacific has expressed a preference that the City acquire the property which is zoned Timber Resources Industrial as it has less value than the Alder Street lot which is zoned CBD and is identified in the preliminary Mill Site Specific Plan as a possible location for multi-family housing. Additionally, the existing asphalt pad is in fairly good condition so a parking lot in this area would likely be less expensive. The parking lot cannot be funded with either Prop 84 or ATP funds.

Staff recommends the parking lot location in the lowland area because it provides closer access to the visitor, excellent views, and will be less expensive to acquire and develop into parking. Additionally this site can provide significantly more parking than the site at the end of Alder Street.

**ATP Grant Application and Implications for Trail Segment Construction Timing.** In order to identify the appropriate grant scope for the ATP application, it is necessary first to delineate what the Prop 84 grant can and cannot fund. As the Prop 84 funds require that a usable segment of trail be constructed with the \$450,000 grant award, staff recommends that these funds be used for the following trail segments, in the following order of priority (Please refer to Attachment 2).

1. First Priority – Segment A-B - This segment would be the top priority because it can be connected to downtown if the City finds an alternative funding source to construct segment B-C.

2. Second Priority – Segment B-D is necessary to connect A-B to the existing road that extends around the Mill Pond and almost all the way to the Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) and which can be used as a multi-use trail without improvements as an interim measure.

Segment E-F can remain as a gravel surface for the short term as there are not likely to be sufficient funds to complete it with Prop 84 funding. However, staff recommends that it be included as a bid alternate in the bid packet for 2017 in case there is sufficient funding. Segment D-E is already a functional road and can be used in the short term as a functional part of the multi-use trail without improvement.

Staff recommends that the City apply for ATP funds to complete the following components of the project.

1. First Priority – Segment B-C for multi-use trail and pedestrian improvements between Main Street and Chief Celeri Drive. ATP funds cannot be used for construction of the access road.
2. Second Priority – Segment E-F.
3. Third Priority – Segment D-E.
4. Fourth Priority – multi-use trail over the beach berm from A to E.

**Design & Engineering Contract.** Staff also requests direction from the Council on the best approach for dealing with the design and engineering for the project. The City released an RFP for design services for the entire project in March 2016. We received seven proposals and interviewed three firms. The top two firms were I.L. Welty and Associates and Northstar Engineering, with a total cost of \$84,000 and \$86,000 respectively. As Proposition 84 can only fund the design and engineering of the trail proper, in order to proceed with the entire design at this time, the City would need to dedicate funds from a non-Prop 84 source to cover design costs for the access road, parking lot, welcome plaza and restroom. If the City selects Welty, \$17,000 in design costs would need to be covered from some other source, and if the City selects Northstar, \$37,000 of their costs would need to be covered from some other source. Staff recommends proceeding with the design and engineering of the entire project at this time, as it will reduce overall costs and result in a more effective and efficiently designed project. The following potential sources of funds could cover the design and engineering of the entire project: D1 funds and Dredge Sands Tipping Fee funds (remaining from Phase 1 of the project). Staff seeks Council direction regarding whether to proceed with a contract for design and engineering services for the entire Phase 2 project by utilizing these sources for the remainder of the design.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The total Phase 2 Coastal Trail budget for design, engineering and construction is approximately \$1.2 million. The City currently has \$450,000 in secured funding for the project. The City anticipates applying for, and hopefully receiving ATP grant funds in the amount of \$410,000. The City will need to utilize other funds for the construction of the parking lot, access road, restroom and welcome plaza (totaling about \$340,000 in construction costs). Additionally, completion of Phase 2 will result in increased park maintenance and security costs. Overall, the project is expected to make the City and downtown a more desirable destination for tourists and thus will contribute to City revenues through increased visitor stays and retail spending.

**CONSISTENCY:**

The project is consistent with the Coastal General Plan, Coastal Land Use and Development Code and the City's Economic Development Strategy, which all envision coastal access along the former Mill Site property.

**IMPLEMENTATION/TIMEFRAMES:**

Construction of a portion of Phase 2 is anticipated in 2017, with the remainder of Phase 2 occurring when funding is available.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Project Conceptual Plan

**NOTIFICATION:**

1. Coastal Trail interested parties list

**City Clerk's Office Use Only**

Agency Action      ☐ Approved      ☐ Denied      ☐ Approved as Amended

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Ordinance No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Moved by: \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Deferred/Continued to meeting of: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Referred to: \_\_\_\_\_