



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-14-83
Meeting 14-15
June 11, 2014

AGENDA ITEM 6

AGENDA ITEM

Contract for Planning and Environmental Review Services for the Bay Trail Connection at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve

GENERAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "SMA".

Authorize the General Manager to enter into a new contract with Callander Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc., to continue planning and environmental review services for the Bay Trail connection project at Ravenswood Open Space Preserve for an amount of \$63,211.

SUMMARY

In November 2010, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) entered into a contract with Callander Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc., (Callander) to help identify and design a suitable Bay Trail alignment to link Ravenswood Open Space Preserve (Preserve) with University Avenue in East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, and to prepare the environmental review document for this project (see Report R-10-134). Since the proposed trail must pass through lands owned by the City and County of San Francisco (San Francisco), a conceptual plan is required to secure a public trail easement from San Francisco to complete the trail connection. After reviewing the District's preferred conceptual trail alignment, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) has requested additional work from the District (evaluation of alternative trail alignments and detailed trail plans) before considering approval of a final trail easement. The recommended contract with Callander would provide the additional consulting services needed to complete this additional work as well as the remaining scope from the original contract which has expired. The FY2014-15 Budget includes sufficient funds to cover this contract.

DISCUSSION

On July 14, 2010, the District Board of Directors approved an exchange agreement with San Francisco whereby (1) the District would grant to San Francisco a subsurface tunnel easement underneath Ravenswood Open Space Preserve to accommodate a new water pipeline spanning the bay and (2) in exchange San Francisco would grant to the District an open space easement across a portion of the adjacent San Francisco lands with the intention of converting this open space easement into a public trail easement in the future (see Report R-10-65). The proposed trail easement would secure the right-of-way necessary to connect the Bay Trail at Ravenswood Preserve to University Avenue (see Attachment 1). The exchange agreement requires the District to evaluate the feasibility of various trail alignments within the open space easement area.

The District has been working with Callander to identify and evaluate trail alignment and design alternatives, and subsequently develop a conceptual plan for the proposed Bay Trail connection. The following objectives are guiding this trail planning process: 1) avoid conflicts with San Francisco's use and management of its lands and conflicts with surrounding land uses, 2) avoid or minimize environmental impacts to wetland areas, and 3) offer an enjoyable user experience consistent with the goals of the Bay Trail Project. The scope of work also includes preparation of an environmental review document that satisfies the District's obligations as lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. The resulting conceptual plan and environmental review document will provide the information necessary to enable the District and San Francisco to fully evaluate and consider the granting and acceptance of a public trail easement.

To date and under a separate contract, Callander has completed an existing conditions assessment, developed and evaluated preliminary trail alignments, and prepared a conceptual design for an initial preferred trail alignment. This planning process has involved consultations with stakeholder agencies, including the SFPUC, and the Cities of East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, as well as outreach to the public through two public open houses held in Menlo Park and in East Palo Alto, and through the use of an online public engagement tool called Mindmixer. This effort identified a proposed alignment that would separate the trail from the neighboring community of University Village by placing the trail on the far (north) side of the SFPUC service road and would avoid crossing a wetland area (see Attachment 2).

Recent discussions regarding the proposed trail alignment with the SFPUC Project Review Committee have yielded requests for additional evaluation and information. More specifically, the SFPUC has requested that the District evaluate alternative trail alignments that follow the property boundary to avoid dividing the SFPUC parcel, which would place the easterly portion of the trail closer to neighbors and require a bridge across wetlands on the SFPUC property. In addition, the SFPUC is requesting a revised trail plan showing that the proposed trail will not interfere with vehicle traffic along the SFPUC maintenance road and that any increases in water runoff will be managed. Additional time and effort by the District, with the assistance of Callander, is needed to evaluate the alternative trail alignments and prepare more detailed trail plans. Since the District's original contract with Callander has expired, a new contract is needed to complete the remaining work.

The District is also investigating a more direct, alternative trail alignment to complete the desired University Avenue connection that would require a trail easement across a Caltrans-owned parcel (see Attachment 2). To further explore this alternative, the District has consulted with Caltrans and submitted an encroachment permit application. The recommended contract with Callander for an amount of \$63,211 includes the additional work needed to continue discussions with the SFPUC as well as a feasibility analysis for a separate trail alignment through the Caltrans parcel.

FISCAL IMPACT

The FY2014-15 Budget adopted by the Board on March 26, 2014 (see Report R-14-58) includes \$60,000 for the Ravenswood Bay Trail connection project. Savings associated with other projects within the same budget category will cover the remaining funds needed for the recommended contract.

In 2010, The Bay Trail Project, acting through ABAG, awarded the District \$40,000 in support of planning efforts to secure the property rights for this long-sought Bay Trail link. To date, ABAG has reimbursed the District \$33,472.06 for work on the Bay Trail study. Also, the Santa Clara Board of Supervisors approved a \$400,000 grant to fund future phases of this Bay Trail connection project. The District can enter into a grant agreement with Santa Clara County once the environmental review document has been certified.

BOARD COMMITTEE REVIEW

There was no Committee review for this agenda item.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice was provided as required by the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Retention of a consultant to undertake the Bay Trail study and environmental review services does not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as it will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment [CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(2)]. Any future action taken by the Board of Directors to implement the project will be evaluated for CEQA compliance at that time.

NEXT STEPS

If approved by the Board, the General Manager would enter into a new contract with Callander to begin evaluating the alternative trail alignments, develop the revised trail plans, and finalize the draft environmental document for Board consideration.

Attachment

1. Location Map
2. Conceptual Trail Alignment

Responsible Department Head:
Michael Williams, Real Property Manager

Prepared by:
Gretchen Laustsen, Planner II

Created By: glaustsen Path: G:\Projects\Ravenswood\SF_Bay_Trail_2\BayTrailRegional_BoardPacket_Landscape_8.5x11_srl.mxd



Attachment 1: Bay Trail Concept Plan Regional Map

- General Study Area
- MROSD Preserves
- Watershed Land
- Bay Trail
- Other Protected Open Space or Park Lands
- Non MROSD Conservation or Agricultural Easement
- Other Public Agency

Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District
(MROSD)



May, 2014



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, this data does not represent a legal survey and is merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

BAY TRAIL CONCEPT PLAN AT RAVENSWOOD

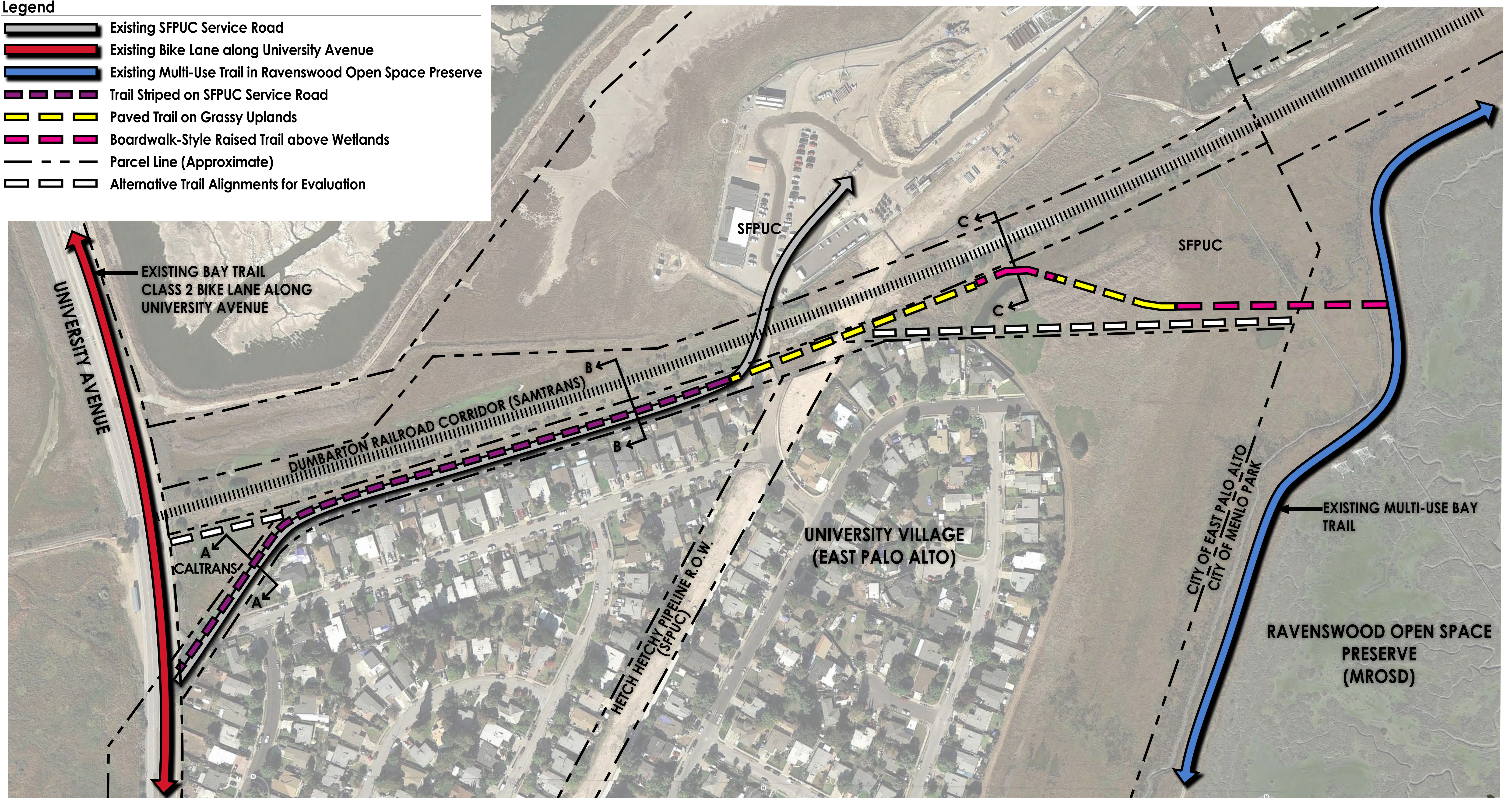
Trail Planning and CEQA Consulting

Updated May 2014

PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL TRAIL ALIGNMENT

Legend

-  Existing SFPUC Service Road
-  Existing Bike Lane along University Avenue
-  Existing Multi-Use Trail in Ravenswood Open Space Preserve
-  Trail Striped on SFPUC Service Road
-  Paved Trail on Grassy Uplands
-  Boardwalk-Style Raised Trail above Wetlands
-  Parcel Line (Approximate)
-  Alternative Trail Alignments for Evaluation



Attachment 2: Proposed Conceptual Trail Alignment