



Midpeninsula Regional
Open Space District

R-11-116
Meeting 11-33
December 14, 2011

AGENDA ITEM 5

AGENDA ITEM

Authorization to Apply for a Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant for the El Corte de Madera Creek Parking/Staging Area and Trails Project

GENERAL MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the attached Resolution of the Board of Directors of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) approving the application for funds from the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant for implementation of the El Corte de Madera Creek Parking/Staging Area and Trails Project.

SUMMARY

El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve (Preserve) is the District’s most popular Skyline Boulevard (Highway 35) Preserve. The 2,817-acre Preserve offers approximately 36 miles of multi-use trails to hikers, bicyclists and equestrians who, to date, are limited to parking along the Highway 35 frontage or at an existing Caltrans vista point parking area known as Skeggs Point. Over the last ten years, the District has worked to establish a formal parking area and improve the trail system at the Preserve. The proposed project improvements include a staging area and four phases of trail construction and site restoration that, when completed, will result in two miles of new Bay Area Ridge Trail (Ridge Trail). With construction plans complete for the new parking area and plans under way for the first phase of trail improvements, the project is currently eligible for a Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant. Staff is seeking authorization to apply for this grant in the amount of \$282,000 to help fund implementation of the Phase 1 and 2 trails and staging area.

DISCUSSION

The final design for the El Corte de Madera Creek Parking/Staging Area and Trails Project includes the following project elements, which have been divided into four phases as follows:

Phase 1

- Parking and staging area for 65 vehicles and 4 horse trailers
- 0.25-mile connector trail to the Gordon Mill trailhead
- Installation of “No Parking” signs to remove approximately 40 deficient roadside parking spaces on Skyline Boulevard

- Relocation of an existing Highway 35 pedestrian/equestrian crossing along with construction of 0.5 miles of crossing trails to connect the Preserve to the Ridge Trail corridor

Phase 2

- 0.75 miles of new trail to extend the perimeter trail (also a future Ridge Trail segment)

Phase 3

- 1.0 mile of the remaining perimeter trail (also a future Ridge Trail segment)

Phase 4

- 0.2 miles of trail realignment
- Restoration of 0.7 miles of abandoned trail

The trails portion of the project is being phased over four years to spread costs over multiple fiscal years and ensure that the Skyline Field Crew is able to incorporate the multiple trail construction needs of the project into their work plan.

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant program is administered by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the Coastal Conservancy, and is funded by Proposition 84.

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council (Council) is a coalition of volunteers and agencies that plans, promotes, builds, acquires and maintains the more than 300-mile, multi-use Bay Area Ridge Trail (Ridge Trail). When complete, the Ridge Trail will connect over 75 parks and open spaces on the ridgeline surrounding the San Francisco Bay. This continuous long-distance trail also serves to create a protected greenbelt corridor for habitat and wildlife. Recognizing the growing recreational needs of the Bay Area's diverse populations, along with the desire of individuals to connect with their communities and the outdoor environment, the Council creates links between parks, people and communities.

Coastal Conservancy

The Coastal Conservancy partners with other agencies and organizations to preserve, protect, and restore the resources of the California coast and the San Francisco Bay Area. One of the goals of the Public Access, Coastal Resource Conservation, and San Francisco Bay Area Conservancy Program from the Coastal Conservancy Strategic Plan dated July 2007, is to "improve public access, recreation, and educational facilities and programs in and around San Francisco Bay, along the coast, the ridgelines, in urban open spaces, and natural areas." New staging areas and Ridge Trail segments are two program goal objectives.

Grant Program

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant Program intends to encourage government agencies and nonprofit organizations to plan, acquire and construct new segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. The program specifically targets high priority segments and critical Ridge Trail "gaps" to leverage state funds with matching contributions and in-kind contributions, and to foster new partnerships and creative design solutions.

The grant program requires the District to complete, operate, and maintain the staging area, and Phase 1 and 2 trails. The total cost of the staging area and Phase 1 and 2 trails is currently estimated at \$646,000 and staff is requesting \$282,000 through the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council

– Coastal Conservancy Grant program. To date, staff has secured additional grant funding in the amount of \$100,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Habitat Conservation Fund. This amount will help offset the match required by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant program.

If awarded, the grant would assist in funding the following specific actions at El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve:

- Construction of the staging area
- Construction of Phase 1 trails: 0.25-mile connector trail, 0.5 miles of trails associated with the pedestrian/equestrian crossing
- Construction of Phase 2 trails: 0.75 miles of perimeter trail

FISCAL IMPACT

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant program is a reimbursement program and grantees initially finance all project costs. If the grant is awarded in the amount of \$282,000, the Coastal Conservancy requires the District to complete, operate, and maintain the staging area, and Phase 1 and 2 trails. To offset the required commitment of District funds, staff has separately secured \$100,000 from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Habitat Conservation Fund.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this Agenda Item was provided per the Brown Act. No additional notice is required.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

Staff completed a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project, which the District's Board of Directors adopted on February 10, 2010. A Notice of Determination was filed with the San Mateo County Clerk Recorder on February 16, 2010.

NEXT STEPS

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council has already recommended this project to the State Coastal Conservancy. If the Coastal Conservancy recommends the project for funding, the District will be notified by early spring of 2012. Staff will then work with the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and Coastal Conservancy to ensure that the project meets all requirements. Project funding would then be available in 2012. If funds are awarded, project implementation of Phase 1 will be scheduled for summer and fall 2012 with Phase 2 anticipated to follow the next year. Staff will continue to pursue alternative funding sources for upcoming and future phases of the Project.

Attachment:

Resolution for the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council – Coastal Conservancy Grant

Prepared by:

Tina Hugg, Open Space Planner II

Contact person:

Same as above

RESOLUTION NO 11-XX

RESOLUTION OF THE MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE DISTRICT APPROVING THE APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY

WHEREAS, the Legislature of the State of California has established the State Coastal Conservancy (“Conservancy”) under Division 21 of the California Public Resources Code, and has authorized the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies and nonprofit organizations to implement the provisions of Division 21; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy awards grants for projects that it determines are consistent with Division 21 of the Public Resources Code and with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan and that best achieve the Conservancy’s statutory objectives, in light of limited funding; and

WHEREAS, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (“applicant”) has applied for or intends to apply for Conservancy grant funding for the El Corte de Madera Creek Open Space Preserve Staging Area and Trails Project (“the project”); and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy encourages applicants for grant funding to certify through a resolution the applicant’s approval of the application and of certain listed assurances at the time of submission of an application to the Conservancy for an award of grant funds; and

WHEREAS, the applicant will enter into a contract with the State of California to complete the project(s);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Board of Directors hereby:

1. Approves the filing of an application for funding by the Conservancy; and
2. Certifies that said applicant has or will have sufficient funds to complete and, following completion, to operate and maintain any property acquired under the project or to operate and maintain any facilities funded as part of the project for a reasonable period, not less than the useful life of the facilities; and
3. Agrees to provide any funds beyond the Conservancy grant funds necessary to complete the project; and

4. Authorizes the General Manager to act as a representative of the applicant and to negotiate and execute on behalf of the grantee all agreements and instruments including, but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the project and to comply with the Conservancy's grant requirements, including, without limitation; and

5. Agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations and guidelines.
