



Agenda Date: 10/9/2007
Agenda Placement: 9B

NAPA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS Board Agenda Letter

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Hillary Gitelman - Director
Conservation, Development & Planning
REPORT BY: John Woodbury, Principal Planner , 259-5933
SUBJECT: Acceptance of Napa River/San Francisco Bay Trail Feasibility Study, Designation of Bay Trail Alignment, and Support for Implementation

RECOMMENDATION

Director of Conservation, Development and Planning requests the following actions relating to the Napa River/San Francisco Bay Trail:

1. Accept the Feasibility Study dated September 5, 2007 prepared by Questa Engineering;
2. Adopt a Resolution designating the alignment proposed by the Feasibility Study, plus an additional trail segment connecting to Kennedy Park, as the preferred alignment and authorize staff to request that the San Francisco Bay Trail Project governing board designate this alignment as the official alignment in lieu of Highway 29; and
3. Authorize the Chair to indicate through letters or otherwise the County's support for efforts by the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District to seek grant funding, obtain permits, enter into agreements and implement the Napa River/San Francisco Bay Trail as described in the Feasibility Study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recently completed Napa River/San Francisco Bay Trail Feasibility Study prepared for Napa County by Questa Engineering has identified an eight-plus mile alignment for providing a non-motorized recreational trail connecting the cities of American Canyon and Napa, which appears to be feasible and offer the best balance between providing public recreation, protecting natural resources, and respecting the missions of the various public agencies over which the trail would travel. This alignment is clearly more user-friendly than the current official alignment for the Bay Trail, which in this area follows Highway 29.

The preferred alignment is over eight miles in length, crosses land owned by eight different public agencies and one private railroad. While not all of the issues have been resolved, discussions with the staff at each of the these agencies, the railroad, and with other regulatory agencies indicates the needed agreements and permits should be obtainable.

Because of the length, complexity and cost of the trail, phased implementation will be necessary. The best choice for Phase One appears to be the trail segments starting in American Canyon and extending north to Green Island Road. The environmental review for the segments within this phase that utilize the Napa Salt Plant site is virtually complete, and the City of American Canyon has already started the environmental review for the American Canyon segments. In addition, American Canyon has \$800,000 in grant funding which it intends to apply to this project, that must be utilized within the next year.

The Feasibility Study assumes that the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District will take the lead in implementing and operating the trail. As a first step in implementation, the District and the City of American Canyon are jointly preparing a grant application to complete the funding necessary for Phase One. The actions requested at this time of the Board of Supervisors are important to helping the District have to strongest possible grant application.

FISCAL IMPACT

Is there a Fiscal Impact? No

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION: The proposed action does not commit or authorize the County to undertake any action which will have a physical impact on the environment, and is thus not a project as defined by 14 California Code of Regulations 15378 (State CEQA Guidelines) and therefore CEQA is not applicable.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

In December of 2005 the Board of Supervisors accepted the Airport Area Bicycle Master Plan, which in addition to designing a bicycle commuter route in the vicinity of the airport, also identified a potential recreational trail route connecting the cities of American Canyon and Napa that generally follows the eastern bank of the Napa River and its associated wetlands. Following up on this planning document, on April 25, 2006 the Board approved an application for a \$75,000 grant to prepare a Feasibility Study for this route. On October 10, 2006, the Board approved a contract with Questa Engineering to prepare the Feasibility Study.

The study, which is now complete, has analyzed a range of alternatives for providing a non-motorized recreational trail connecting the cities of American Canyon and Napa, and has identified an alignment which appears to be feasible and offer the best balance between providing public recreation, protecting natural resources, and respecting the missions of the various public agencies over which the trail would travel.

The proposed alignment is clearly more user-friendly than the current official alignment for the Bay Trail, which in this area follows Highway 29. Bay Trail Project staff agrees, and is interested in seeing the officially designated Bay Trail alignment moved to the proposed alignment. To change the official alignment, the first step is for the County to adopt a resolution making this request. Because the Feasibility Study was only evaluating trail options over public lands or easements, it stops just short of the Napa Pipe property. Thus, there is a short gap between where the study terminates and where there is existing Bay Trail in Kennedy Park. Given that the Napa Pipe property may at some point be redeveloped, and that from a public perspective the ideal alignment for the trail through the Napa Pipe property would be as close to the Napa River as feasible, when requesting the change in the official alignment for the trail, it would make sense at this time to request that the official Bay Trail alignment not

only reflect the alignment proposed by the Feasibility Study, but to also extend this through the Napa Pipe property to Kennedy Park, so that there is a continuous trail alignment that completely avoids Highway 29.

The preferred alignment is over eight miles in length. It generally follows existing levees and/or service roads, although there are several hundred feet where boardwalk would be needed to cross a freshwater wetland area, as well as four bridges to cross various creeks or channels. The proposed alignment crosses land owned by eight different public agencies and one private railroad, and is adjacent to or near public operations which must be protected (including two sewage treatment facilities, one landfill, and one airport). A variety of techniques for protecting these public operations are identified in the Feasibility Study, including fencing, signage and restrictions on nighttime use. In the case of the airport, and in coordination with the airport manager, an alignment has been selected which keeps the trail off airport property, out of airport safety Zone A, and fenced to prevent trespassing. Agreements will need to be negotiated with each of the affected public agency property owners, and permits will need to be obtained from several regulatory agencies. While not all of the issues related to these needed agreements and permits have been resolved, discussions with the staff at each of the agencies indicates there do not appear to be any insurmountable problems and that the needed agreements and permits should be obtainable.

The Feasibility Study also contains extensive detail regarding design options, costs, and needed permits and approvals. The total cost of the trail is estimated to be close to \$8 million including all design, permitting and construction activities.

Incorporated into the Feasibility Study is additional analysis prepared at the request of and paid for by the City of American Canyon, which identifies options for providing direct access to the Napa River at the foot of Eucalyptus Drive in addition to heading northward toward the City of Napa. The City of American Canyon already has grant funding with which to design and construct a portion of these additional trail segments, as well as the first leg of the main Napa River/Bay Trail.

Because of the length, complexity and cost of the trail, phased implementation will be necessary. The best choice for Phase One appears to be the trail segments starting in American Canyon and extending north to Green Island Road. The environmental review for the segments within this phase that utilize the Napa Salt Plant site is virtually complete, and the City of American Canyon has already started the environmental review for the American Canyon segments. In addition, American Canyon has \$800,000 in grant funding that it intends to apply to this project, and that must be utilized within the next year.

The Feasibility Study assumes that the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District will take the lead in implementing and operating the trail, working in partnership with the other interested and affected public agencies. As a first step in implementation, the District and the City of American Canyon are jointly preparing a grant application to the River Parkway Grant program administered by the California Resources Agency to complete the funding necessary for Phase One.

The actions requested at this time of the Board of Supervisors are important to helping the District have the strongest possible grant application. These include accepting the Feasibility Study, designating the proposed alignment as the preferred alignment for the San Francisco Bay Trail, and authorizing the Board Chair to sign letters and take other appropriate actions to indicate the County's support for implementation of the trail.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- A . Proposed Napa River/Bay Trail Alignment
- B . Resolution

CEO Recommendation: Approve

Reviewed By: Helene Franchi