

TO: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Tegan Speiser, Senior Transportation Planner
REGARDING: Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission:

1. Approve the recommendations of the RTC's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to:
 - a. Recommend to the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments that they add a seat for a member of the RTC's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee to serve on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Steering Committee (Attachment 1) to represent access issues for pedestrians and people with disabilities;
 - b. Recommend to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary that they add the goal of universal access for people of all abilities to the proposed "Alignment Principles" outlined in the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (Attachments 2 and 3);
 2. Direct staff to forward the recommendations listed above to the appropriate entities, AMBAG and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; and
 3. Approve the recommendation of the RTC's Bicycle Committee to appoint J. Ben Vernazza as the alternative representative from the RTC Bicycle Committee to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Steering Committee.
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BACKGROUND

Interest in developing a continuous network of trails along or near the coastline of the Monterey Bay has been growing for many years. Federal appropriations were recently secured by US Representative Sam Farr to help link existing trail segments with new segments to form a Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) spanning 50 miles from Lovers Point in Pacific Grove to Wilder Ranch in Santa Cruz. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) was designated to manage and disperse the federal funds for the project. Towards that end, AMBAG convened a two-county steering committee to help develop overall trail policy and to consult with the Transportation Commissions in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties on trail project funding decisions.

A subcommittee of an earlier Sanctuary Trail Steering Committee, convened by Sam Farr in 2001 and superceded by a new Trail Steering Committee in April 2005, recently released a draft plan that identifies interpretive opportunities along the shoreline that surrounds Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. (This draft plan was included in the April RTC agenda packet.) It is hoped that these interpretive elements will help guide the siting of the trail and interpretive opportunities for the Sanctuary. The public comment period on the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan for the MBSST has been extended until May 13, 2005. Comments are to be directed to the staff of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary who will print and distribute the final document.

DISCUSSION

The RTC's Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&DTAC) and the Bicycle Committee discussed the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail and the draft Interpretive Plan at their April meetings. Recommendations from both Committees have been forwarded to the Commission for consideration.

Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee

The membership of the MBSST Steering Committee is primarily comprised of all of the public jurisdictions through which the trail will pass as well as representatives of convention and visitors councils, bicycling and agricultural interests from the two Counties ([Attachment 1](#)).

Unlike Monterey County which has a combined Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee, the RTC has two committees -- a Bicycle Committee that advises it on cycling issues and an Elderly and Disabled Transportation Advisory Committee (E&DTAC) that advises it on issues relating to pedestrian access and access for people with disabilities. The E&DTAC believes that pedestrian and universal accessibility issues should be included in this major, multi-use trail planning effort. Toward this end, they voted unanimously to recommend that the Commission request AMBAG to add a seat on the MBSST Steering Committee for a representative and alternate from the RTC's E&DTAC.

The E&DTAC also felt that the goal of universal accessibility was important to include in planning documents that will be used to guide the trail planning effort. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend adding language to the Draft Interpretive Plan for the MBSST that would articulate the goal of universal access. Specifically, they identified adding language to the Alignment Principle on Connectivity on page 8 of the draft plan ([Attachments 2 and 3](#).)

A letter from E&DTAC Chair Mike Molesky conveys the two actions taken by the E&DTAC ([Attachment 3](#)).

Bicycle Committee

Last month, the RTC appointed a representative and an alternate from the RTC's Bicycle Committee to serve on the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Steering

Committee. Unfortunately, the alternate representative who was appointed, Mike Dalbey, is unable to serve in this capacity. At its April 11th meeting, another member of the Bicycle Committee, J. Ben Vernazza, was selected by the Bicycle Committee to serve as an alternate on the MBSST Steering Committee instead.

Mr. Vernazza is also a good choice for representing Santa Cruz bicycling needs and interests. He is an active senior, an e-bike user and an experienced businessman who has served on a number of boards of directors. The Bicycle Committee and staff recommend that the Commission appoint Ben Vernazza as the Bicycle Committee alternate on the MBSST Steering Committee.

Comments on the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan are continued until the May Bicycle Committee meeting.

Santa Cruz County Agricultural Appointment

Commissioners Pirie and Campos are working to identify an agricultural representative from Santa Cruz County to serve on the MBSST Steering Committee. Their outreach efforts towards this end are continuing.

SUMMARY

The E&DTAC and Bicycle Committee discussed issues related to the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail at their respective April committee meetings. Recommendations from the two committees have been forwarded to the Commission for their consideration. Commissioners Pirie and Campos are continuing their efforts to identify an agricultural representative from Santa Cruz County to serve on the MBSST Steering Committee.

Attachments:

1. Current Membership of the MBSST Steering Committee
2. "Alignment Principles" – Page 8 of the Draft Long Range Interpretive Plan for the MBSST
3. Letter from E&DTAC Chair Michael Molesky