

AGENDA: August 7, 2008

TO: Regional Transportation Commission
FROM: Cory Caletti, Senior Transportation Planner
RE: Draft Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan and
Environmental Review Request for Proposals (RFP)

RECOMMENDATION

The Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and staff recommend that the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) review and release, with revisions as appropriate, the Request for Proposals (RFP) ([Attachment 1](#)) for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network Master Plan and Program Level Environmental Review.

BACKGROUND

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network is envisioned to be a multi-use recreational, interpretive and transportation pathway network for bicyclists and pedestrians that will span the coast of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary from Davenport (and possibly the San Mateo/Santa Cruz County line) in Santa Cruz County to Lovers Point in Pacific Grove, Monterey County. The trail was originally conceived by the Santa Cruz County Interagency Sanctuary Task Force, a body convened by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in the mid-1990s to find ways to maximize the potential benefits of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. They envisioned using existing facilities aided by new interpretive signage and exhibits for which a standards manual was developed. A viable project took shape when Congressman Sam Farr became the champion for this Sanctuary scenic trail network and acquired federal appropriations for this purpose. Federal funds were secured to establish a continuous trail spanning Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties with the Transportation Agency for Monterey County taking the lead for the Monterey County portion of the trail and the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission taking the lead in Santa Cruz County. AMBAG was designated as the local administrator of the federal appropriations to be dispersed between the two counties for this trail project.

Over the span of several years, related local coastal trail projects have been proposed, funded and/or constructed. These include the Wilder Ranch Bicycle and Pedestrian Path, the Watsonville Slough Trails, the Rail Trail, the Coastal Trail Network and the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail. All these projects share the goal of developing new accessible bicycle and pedestrian trail facilities on or near the coast. For improved planning, administration, coordination with state and federal entities, improved connectivity to existing facilities, and to benefit from the economies of scale, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) *Network* (emphasis added) moniker was developed, and in March 2007, funds previously allocated to the MBSST, the Rail Trail and the Coastal Trail Network were consolidated by the Regional Transportation Commission through the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* under the MBSST Network title. As the Monterey Bay comprises 5% of the California coastline, a local coastal trail will be a key piece of a statewide California Coastal Trail which is being planned by the California Coastal Commission and State Coastal Conservancy.

As shown in the attached funding matrix (Attachment 3), to date, \$4.24 million in federal appropriations and earmarks have been secured for this project in Santa Cruz County and the same amount for the project in Monterey County. Local governments in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties have also contributed significant funds towards the development of a continuous trail network. In addition, the RTC has committed \$2.24 million of locally controlled funds to develop the MBSST Network thereby providing our region with significant resources to transform this long-held community vision into a tangible reality.

DISCUSSION

The Regional Transportation Commission committed to conducting a comprehensive master planning process for the MBSST Network. The purpose of a master plan is to identify potential alignments for a continuous network of coastal trails in Santa Cruz County spanning from Davenport (and possibly the Santa Cruz/San Mateo County line) to the Pajaro River connecting with the southern portion of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail at the Thurwachter Bridge. The Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) recently completed a master plan for the Monterey County portion of the trail leading up to the Thurwachter Bridge and is in the beginning stages of constructing new trail segments.

RTC staff has been working with the Budget and Administration/Personnel (B&A/P) Committee and County Counsel to develop and review a draft request for proposals (RFP) for a master plan (Attachment 1). A master plan will define the potential trail routes of the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (to address the needs of different types and abilities of trail users) and spur trails (to provide links with other local bike/pedestrian trails and transportation facilities and to take advantage of scenic overlooks and other destinations and points of interest). The overall objectives of the master plan are to end up with a prioritized list of short and long range trail projects that can be phased in as funding is secured; to define design guidelines and related elements for the trail itself; and to understand the costs of constructing, managing and maintaining such a trail system. The master plan which will also help Commissioners, staff, the public and others understand the project challenges and trade-offs is expected to take approximately one to two years to develop.

MBSST Network Northern Boundary

In order for the Master Plan to serve as the comprehensive planning tool it is intended to be, staff is requesting two bids – for distinct geographic areas – through the RFP. One bid is for the defined scope of work to be performed from the Monterey County line to Davenport and the second bid is for the same scope of work to be performed from Davenport to the Santa Cruz/San Mateo County line. Due in part to the Coastal Conservancy's interest in funding the Davenport to San Mateo County line portion of the Master Plan and also to enable the Commission to have a full planning tool at the end of the analysis, the northern portion was added to the scope.

Comments Received on Draft RFP

At the direction of the B&A/P Committee, and in consultation with County Counsel, staff incorporated producing a Program Level Environmental Review into the RFP Scope of Work, added language indicating that all viable options are to be considered for a trail network, and added that additional neighborhood meetings would be held, if needed. The draft RFP was then circulated to RTC advisory committees, relevant agency partners and interested members for

review and comment; and then brought back to the B&A/P Committee meeting with recommendations regarding the numerous comments received.

Attachment 1 is the Draft RFP with changes requested by the B&A/P Committee at their June 12, 2008 meeting in response to public comments received. . Staff responses to the numerous comments received, as well as the comment letters and emails, are included as Attachment 2 for Commission reference. Staff responses were reviewed by the B&A/P Committee and the additions and changes requested by the B&A/P are shown in underline/strike through format.

Master Plan Budget and Funding

Caltrans, the administrator of federal appropriations, requested that a budget be defined for the project. After review of the RTC budget, staff addressed the request by indicating that the RTC has an established budget of \$250,000 for the Master Plan project.

Federal transportation funding mandates that allocated dollars be spent on planning, environmental analysis and construction activities. Funding has been requested for trail markers by the Santa Cruz County Interagency Task Force for a trail that was identified long ago as part of an early effort to designate a trail from existing facilities. The Master Planning for the full span of the Trail Network and for connecting spurs, using new facilities where possible, is just beginning and all prior work will be considered as part of this work. A limited portion of the funds will also be available for directional and identification signage (versus interpretive elements) as construction is completed on prioritized segments of the trail. Staff is working to identify grant opportunities appropriate for funding interpretive trail markers.

RFP Draft Timeline

The B&A/P Committee and staff propose the following consultant selection schedule:

Request for Proposals

- RTC Board Approval of RFP Release 8/7/08
- Issue RFP to Consultants 8/15/08

Consultant Proposals

- Pre-Proposal Conference 9/10/08
- Proposals due 9/26/08
- Consultant interviews 10/30/08
- Select consultant to recommend to the RTC November

Consultant Contract

- RTC approves consultant 12/4/08
- Finalize contract negotiations December/January
- RTC approves contract January/February
- Pre-Award Audit, if needed February/March
- Notice to proceed March/April

Selection Committee

A Selection Committee will be formed to work with staff on the consultant selection process. The B&A/P Committee Chair and Commission Alternate Andy Schiffrin and B&A/P Committee member and Commissioner Ellen Pirie expressed interest in serving on the selection committee. In addition to staff and the two Commissioners, other selection committee members may also

include one representative from each of the following organizations: Caltrans, TAMC and AMBAG.

SUMMARY

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network is envisioned to be a multi-use recreational, interpretive and transportation pathway network for bicyclists and pedestrians that will span the coast of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. For improved planning, administration, coordination with state and federal entities, improved connectivity to existing facilities, and to benefit from the economies of scale, the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) *Network* (emphasis added) moniker was developed, and in March 2007, funds previously allocated to the MBSST, the Rail Trail and the Coastal Trail Network were consolidated by the Regional Transportation Commission through the *Regional Transportation Improvement Program* under the MBSST Network title. Staff has been working with the Budget and Administration/Personnel Committee to develop a Request for Proposals for a comprehensive Master Plan and Environmental Review document. Staff and the B&A/P Committee recommend that the RTC review and release the RFP for the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail (MBSST) Network Master Plan and Program Level Environmental Review.

Attachments:

1. Draft RFP for MBSST Network Master Plan and Program Level Environmental Review (with changes per B&A/P Committee direction at the June 12, 2008 meeting in underline/strikethrough format)
2. Written comments and responses to the draft RFP
 - a. Exhibit 1: Email from the Santa Cruz Port District
 - b. Exhibit 2: Email from the City of Santa Cruz
 - c. Exhibit 3: Email from the County Redevelopment Agency
 - d. Exhibit 4: Letter from the Santa Cruz County Interagency Task Force
 - e. Exhibit 5: Letter from the City of Capitola
3. MBSST Network Programmed Funds