

**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE January 17, 2024
TITLE Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity Grant Application
DIVISION Finance and Management Services
FROM Katy Hornbeck, Grants Manager
Dr. Ana M. Alvarez, Deputy General Manager
APPROVED Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board Executive Committee support the General Manager's recommendation to the Board of Directors for the submission of a grant application to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program for the construction of the Richmond Bay Trail Gap Closure project in the amount of \$6.4 million.

BACKGROUND

Raise Program

The Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE), provides a unique opportunity for the Department of Transportation (DOT) to invest in road, transit and port projects that promise to achieve national objectives. Previously known as both Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Discretionary Grant (TIGER), Congress has dedicated \$12.3 billion for 14 rounds of National Infrastructure Investments to fund projects that have a significant local and regional impact. It is a discretionary grant program for investments in surface transportation infrastructure that will have significant local or regional impact. The programs priorities are projects with beneficial long-term outcomes, job creation, economic stimulus, innovation and partnership. Additionally, competitive projects must reduce potential serious injuries/fatalities, elevate commute time for drivers, connect people to jobs, services, and education, and have regional connectivity.

The RAISE granting criteria established by Congress includes safety, state of good repair, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability, and quality of life. For the RAISE grant project evaluation, the DOT staff shared there will be emphasis on how the project provides for racial equity and environmental sustainability. Through these lenses, the criteria elements Park District staff considered during project evaluation are:

- Safety – Does this project provide solutions to persistent safety issues and relate to the overall community health?
- State of Good Repair – Will the established project provide for long lasting infrastructure, accessible to the public?

- Economic Competitiveness – Will the project provide for lasting, equitable economic benefits for the public?
- Environmental Sustainability – Is this project providing for adaptation or mitigation of a changing climate?
- Quality of Life – Does this project serve the local community? Did the project process involve communities who have not historically been involved in project development?

Application History

The East Bay Regional Park District's regional trails are an integral part of the region's active transportation network. Many planned expansion and improvement projects qualify for RAISE funding. The Park District has applied to the RAISE program twice (Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2023). In each application round, the Park District's project list represented high priority projects in the Regional Trails network that closed gaps and connected with transportation hubs, jobs and housing centers.

In 2021, the Park District submitted a robust RAISE application requesting \$24.6 million for eight (8) proposed projects, but it was not selected for a grant award. Park District staff was able to receive feedback from the Department of Transportation which helped inform the project list submitted in the 2023 application package. The application submitted in 2023 reduced the number of proposed projects to four (4) for a total requested amount of \$18.94 million. The application was scored by reviewers as "Highly Rated" and advanced to the final review stage; however, was not selected for grant funding. Because the application had advanced to the highly rated list, but not selected, it was designated as a project of merit.

ANALYSIS

After review of available match funding, current project statuses and timelines, and how competitive each project would score against the grant criteria, Park District staff has determined to apply to DOT's RAISE program for one project: Richmond Bay Trail Gap Closure.

The Richmond Bay Trail Gap Closure project will construction of a .9-mile paved Class I multi-use extension of the San Francisco Bay Trail from Pinole Point Business Park in Richmond, CA to Point Wilson in Contra Costa County, CA providing a connection to previous TIGER II investments and the Hercules Intermodal Transit Station in partnership with the City of Richmond, Contra Costa County Public Works, and Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

Preliminary engineering and design for this .9-mile gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail from Point Pinole to Wilson Point is underway. A portion of the trail will be located in the outer 15 feet of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) right-of-way (ROW) and is included in the 2016 amended and restated Memorandum of Understanding between the Park District and UPRR. Other portions of the trail are proposed within a 50-foot trail easement dedicated to the Park District by Pinole Point Properties and additional ROW will be needed from Contra Costa County to make this trail a reality.

FISCAL IMPACT

The estimated total project cost is currently \$8 million. The grant application will request \$6,400,000. If awarded, grant funds will be budgeted into the existing project (#528400 – Develop Trail to Point Wilson). There is a 20% non-federal match requirement for the RAISE program. Park District staff continue to seek grant funding for this project to go towards the match requirement. There is approximately \$845,000 already appropriated into the project. This includes \$500,000 secured in grant funds from the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee.

ATTACHMENTS

PowerPoint presentation