



**EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

DATE	Friday, March 1, 2024
TITLE	Trail Development, Maintenance, and Management Overview
DIVISION	Acquisition, Stewardship, and Development
FROM	Sean Dougan, Trails Program Manager, Planning, Trails & GIS Ken Wysocki, Assistant General Manager of ASD
APPROVED	Sabrina Landreth, General Manager 

INTRODUCTION

Development, maintenance, and management of the East Bay Regional Park District’s (Park District) trail system requires effort from every division. The Park District operates roughly 1,330 miles of paved multi-use regional trails, natural surface roads, and natural surface trails within its two-county district. During the 2024 Trails Board Study Session, staff will be in attendance from Planning, Trails, &GIS, Maintenance and Skilled Trades (MAST), and Public Safety. During the Study Session, staff will present current projects in various stages of development and allow time for discussion. Staff from MAST will provide approaches to maintaining and managing this complex trail system and will share some current challenges and approaches to address increased maintenance demands and discuss prioritization and standardization approaches critical to addressing these demands while ensuring protection of natural resources. Staff from the Trails Program and Public Safety will provide an overview of data collection efforts and discuss trail enforcement and education efforts centering on bicycle usage. The Board will be shown statistics of incidents, cases, accidents, and citations from the calendar year 2023, and the current year to date. Staff would like the Board to consider the following questions for discussion during the Study Session:

1. What is your biggest concern regarding Park District trails?
2. Which of the three elements (Development, Maintenance, or Management) should the Park District invest in most?

BACKGROUND

Trails Development

Trail Development encompasses all steps in the process to construct new natural surface trails from the initial planning process to eventual construction. The trails development process may be included in the initial planning process for a park or may occur as a stand-alone project within an existing park or public right of way (ROW). Initial steps include determining the purpose of the trail, route location, positive and negative control points, evaluation of potential environmental or cultural resource impacts and design features required to make the trail sustainable. As a project progresses, following steps include acquisition of the appropriate regulatory permits, identifying appropriate mitigation areas and ratios, additional studies and refinements required to secure those permits, and the final construction phase that may include contracted labor or the appropriate Park District

personnel and equipment to construct the trail. This is done by a mix of Park District staff, Conservation Corps crews and/or qualified contractors, depending on complexity and staff capacity.

The Trails Program Unit consists of four full-time staff who have traditionally facilitated the planning, acquisition, and development of new paved and natural surface trails within Park District lands or rights-of-way. The Trails Program coordinates with internal Park District departments, partner agencies, volunteers, and community groups to expand and enhance the Park District's trail system.

SUMMARY

The following project list provides a summary of some of the active district-wide trail projects. There are 19 projects included (listed in no order) in various stages of development. Fifteen of these projects are led by the Trails Program, three projects led by the Design and Construction Department, and one project completed in partnership with Contra Costa County.

The projects represent roughly a 25-mile expansion of the Park District's trail system. Detailed funding information is still being finalized, but staff estimates the total cost to complete the projects based on comparison is approximately \$42 million with a shortfall of approximately \$27 million needed to do so.



View from the proposed Bay Trail at Point Molate

Trail Projects Completed

I. Iron Horse Trail: Marsh Drive Bridge Extension

Contra Costa County (County) has replaced the Marsh Drive bridge, which spans east to west over the Walnut Creek channel in Concord, that includes an extension of the Iron Horse Trail (IHT) as a barrier-separated two-way pathway.

The replacement of the bridge and trail construction was funded by Caltrans through the Highway Bridge Program. The Park District agreed to share in the local matching funds to cover the additional design and construction costs incurred to include the trail in the project through a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement (JEPA) with the County. Within the agreement to receive

Highway Bridge Program funding, Caltrans is requiring that construction of a northern IHT extension begin within five years of the Marsh Drive Bridge project completion. Further design and engineering feasibility will determine the preferred extension and project scope. There are just over \$1.6 million in remediation funds from Tosco Refinery in the Iron Horse Trail / Tosco – Walnut Creek channel project account that will be used to cover trail design and a portion of the construction costs for the northern extension. More funding may be required to construct the project.



Completed Iron Horse Trail on the new Marsh Drive Bridge (spring 2023)

2024 Trail Projects In Construction

2. San Francisco Bay Trail: Pt. Molate Phase I

The Park District plans to advertise this project for bid in late February 2024 and begin construction (pending bid results) in spring 2024. The Park District has finalized the easement agreement with Chevron for the project and secured the necessary permits from the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

The City of Richmond is finalizing its negotiations for additional ROW and property security improvements which will allow both the Park District's segment and Richmond's segment to be advertised together as a 2.5-mile Bay Trail gap closure. Grant funds have been awarded to the project from the Priority Conservation Area (PCA) grant program administered by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC); the California Natural Resources Agency's Trails and Greenways Prop 68 grant program; and the California State Department of Parks and Recreation's (State Parks) Recreational Trail Program (RTP). The total project cost for the

project including work completed thus far is estimated to be approximately \$10.5 million.



Proposed Bay Trail at Point Molate looking toward the Richmond / San Rafael Bridge

3. Pleasanton Ridge: Mariposa Trail & Philip Scholz Trail

The Park District secured regulatory permits to construct roughly five combined miles of trails within Pleasanton Ridge. Remaining trails to be built include the Tehan Canyon Trail, a portion of the Aquila Loop Trail, the Mariposa Trail, and the Philip Scholz Trail identified in the Pleasanton Ridge Land Use Plan. In 2023, the Park District has entered into an on-call trail services agreement with Singletrack Trails Inc. to complete trail projects within various Park District lands including the Mariposa Trail and the Philip Scholz Trail in Pleasanton Ridge. Unfortunately, this company is ceasing its trail construction operations until further notice. The Park District is in the process of identifying another trail contractor to construct these trails and in general will continue to explore other efficient methods to constructing natural surface trails in parklands.



Proposed Mariposa Trail looking east from Sunol Ridge

Trail Projects Being Designed or Permitted

4. Bay Area Ridge Trail: Garin to Vallejo Mill Park

The Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Bay Area Ridge Trail: Garin to Vallejo Mills Park project was completed in November 2018 and permits are anticipated to be secured by early 2024 for this 5-mile Ridge Trail connection. The Park District will take a phased approach to the construction of this project; separating the northern/upland section of the project from the development of the southern crossing of the Niles Canyon Railway (NCR), owned by Alameda County (County) and operated by the Pacific Locomotive Association (PLA). Once permits have been secured, construction of the upland portion of the Ridge Trail can begin.

The Park District has received final approval from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for an at-grade crossing of the NCR. The crossing will include sufficient safety features such as active warning devices, manual swing gates, detectable warning surfaces, fencing, and signage. As mitigation for adding an additional at-grade crossing, the CPUC requires the Park District to install pedestrian safety features to the at-grade crossing of Killkare Rd. in Sunol. The Park District is finalizing design of the new crossing and pedestrian safety mitigation of the Killkare Rd. at-grade crossing. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1.8 million.



View looking east from the proposed Ridge Trail: Garin to Vallejo Mill Park

5. Sibley / McCosker Trails: Pacific Pea / Coyote Brush / Restore Ridge Trail

There are two natural surface trails and restoration of a segment of the Bay Area Ridge Trail proposed within Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve/McCosker. These projects were included in the permit package for the Alder Creek / Leatherwood Creek Restoration project recently completed.

The Pacific Pea Trail connects the McCosker property to Huckleberry Preserve and totals approximately 0.4 mile. This trail travels mostly through oak-bay woodlands. The Coyote Brush Trail connects Robert Sibley Volcanic Regional Preserve to Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve and is a reroute of the existing Ridge Trail/Skyline Trail. The reroute is a new trail that totals approximately 0.76 mile. This trail traverses a eucalyptus forest, grasslands, and oak-bay woodlands.

Restoration of the existing Ridge Trail alignment (to be replaced by the reroute) will include closure and restoration of approximately 0.59 mile of steep eroded trail by scarifying, installing check dams or other features to address drainage and catch/build up sediment, and transplant and/or reseed with native seed. This work is planned to be completed in the next two years. The total project cost is estimated to be \$100,000, but the project scope and costs have not been finalized.

6. San Francisco Bay Trail: Nejedly Staging Area to Berrellesa Street – Martinez

Design of the SF Bay Trail: Nejedly Staging to Berrellesa Street project requires California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) approval for the trail segment and safety improvements proposed to the at-grade railroad crossing of Berrellesa Street. The Park District's consultant team is coordinating with the City of Martinez, CPUC, and UPRR to design and secure environmental permits. UPRR is in their third cycle of design review for the preliminary crossing design submitted. The at-grade crossing safety upgrades are substantial. The required fix along with drainage conditions on site will increase the cost of this project.

Federal grant funding has been awarded to this project through the California State Recreational Trails Program in the amount of \$917,784 and funds from the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant program in the amount of \$925,000. These grant sources require additional studies and

documentation pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Park District has entered into a cooperative agreement with CCTA to implement the Martinez Bay Trail Project. The administration costs of CCTA managing the planning, project management and procurement will be paid by the Park District. The Park District is attempting to complete CEQA/NEPA, receive 35% design approval from UPRR prior to handing off the project to CCTA in 2024. The total project cost is estimated to be approximately \$4.5 million.



SF Bay Trail: Nejedly to Berrellesa Street looking east

7. Bay Area Ridge Trail: Llama Lane Connector

Settlement of a complex easement dispute resulted in the acquisition of a 15-foot-wide trail easement that provides access to the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Five Canyons Parkway near Garin Regional Park. The Park District received \$1 million through the settlement agreement to partially fund trail construction of this 0.3-mile segment. The Park District is currently designing this trail connection and is required to begin construction in 2024. Costs for final design and construction are estimated at \$1.5 million, but the project cost and scope has not been finalized.

8. Marsh Creek Trail: Vineyards Parkway to Round Valley

In cooperation with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Contra Costa County, Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and the City of Brentwood, the Park District completed a conceptual engineering design and CEQA studies. This proposed three-mile segment will extend from Vineyards Parkway to Round Valley Regional Preserve in unincorporated Contra Costa County. The preliminary engineering study and the Mitigated Negative Declaration were completed and filed in September 2021. The Park District will continue to partner with California State Parks and seek additional funding to finalize the design. The total estimated project cost for this project is approximately \$5.5 million.



View from the proposed Marsh Creek Trail: Vineyards Parkway to Round Valley looking southwest

Trail Projects In Preliminary Design

9. San Francisco Bay Trail: Point Pinole to Wilson Point

Preliminary engineering and design for this 0.9-mile gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail from Point Pinole to Wilson Point is underway. A portion of the trail will be in the outer 15 feet of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor as 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 from Pinole Point Properties and additional ROW currently being negotiated with Contra Costa County.

The Park District hired BKF Engineers to review previous studies, complete studies pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and provide preliminary design of the preferred trail alignment. BKF is now completing a wetland trail design alternatives analysis and is aiming to complete the CEQA process in early 2024.

The Park District released a survey in 2023 to gauge community support and address any neighbor concerns. The 477 responses received showed 95% would use the section of trail once completed and 86% think this is a very beneficial project for the local area. The Park District also engaged in person with multiple neighbors adjacent to the project. The neighbors were supportive and those with concerns were acknowledged, and where possible the design will be adjusted or incorporate changes to relieve those concerns.

This project was awarded \$500,000 from the West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCTAC). Preliminary cost estimates for this project are approximately \$7.9 million. Funding for construction of this segment has not been secured.



SF Bay Trail: Point Pinole to Wilson Point Union Pacific Railroad - Longitudinal Trail Easement

10. Calaveras Ridge Trail: Olympic Boulevard to Rohrer Drive

The Park District is working with the City of Lafayette to extend the Calaveras Ridge Trail along Burton Ridge from Olympic Boulevard to Las Trampas. The City of Lafayette and the Park District have secured the necessary right-of-way (ROW) to construct the trail from Olympic Boulevard to Rohrer Drive. Environmental studies and final design of this segment are estimated to begin in 2024. Total project cost for this trail project is approximately \$200,000, but the project scope and cost has not been finalized.

11. Garin to Pleasanton Ridge Trail – Chouinard-Owen Public Access

This is a proposed 0.35-mile natural surface connection between Garin Regional Park and Pleasanton Ridge Regional Park. The recent acquisition of the Chouinard Winery property provides the opportunity to develop a staging area and design a trail and safe crossing of Palomares Road, to connect these two parks together. The Park District has hired an engineering, architecture, and construction services firm, GHD, to develop the design concept alternatives and analysis pursuant to CEQA for Chouinard-Owen Public Access Project. Project scope and costs have not been finalized for this project.



Garin to Pleasanton Ridge Trail corridor looking west

12. Oyster Bay Regional Shoreline: Bike Skills Park Management Study / Design

The Oyster Bay Land Use Plan adopted by our Board in December 2013 identifies a bike skills park to be developed within a 15-acre portion of the park. Since that time, the Park District has completed a feasibility study and grading plan for the bicycle skills area that includes a risk management strategy, signage & user guidelines, a maintenance and operations plan, conceptual design, and recommended phases for construction. For the past several years, contractors working to deliver dirt to Oyster Bay have raised the dirt to the appropriate levels to accommodate the preliminary design and the monitoring wells on site have been raised to allow for the development of the future bike park. For this project to move forward additional funding must be appropriated. The Park District is working with the Regional Parks Foundation to identify funding to build the first phase of this project. Total project cost is estimated at approximately \$1.5 million.

13. San Francisco Bay Trail: Oakland Shoreline / Tidewater to High Street

The Park District is working cooperatively with the City of Oakland (City) to formalize several shoreline segments of the San Francisco Bay Trail along the City waterfront. The Park District is in active negotiations to acquire right-of-way (ROW) through industrial property between the Tidewater Boating Center and High Street. In 2022, Oakland and the Park District met with the Coast Guard and Oakland Merchant Mariners to discuss the potential for a trail undercrossing of the Park Street and High Street bridges. The proposed bridge undercrossing under High Street was met with severe opposition due to its potential to increase navigational challenges for commercial mariners and safety risks for boaters. The Park District has concluded an alternative option to extending the Bay Trail to High Street must be pursued. The total estimated cost for this project has not been finalized.



SF Bay Trail: Oakland Shoreline - Tidewater to High Street

14. Wildcat Canyon: Wildcat Flow Trail

In 2022, the Park District was approached by the Northern California chapter of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), trail advocates, and a potential donor requesting the development of a new bike optimized flow trail within Wildcat Canyon Regional Park. The Trails Program Unit worked with Stewardship staff to identify a feasible trail corridor within Wildcat Canyon that will have minimal impact to sensitive plant and animal communities.

The Park District hired Nomad Ecology to conduct a jurisdictional wetland delineation, a special-status plant survey, vegetation mapping, and prepare a biological resources report to identify avoidance and mitigation measures. The studies completed to date have concluded there are no Sensitive Natural Communities or rare plants observed in the study area and no jurisdictional wetlands. There is potential for some wildlife species to be present during trail construction, e.g., bumble bees, California red-legged frog, Alameda whipsnake, nesting birds, etc. Nomad Ecology has advised that preconstruction surveys and biomonitoring measures can alleviate any potential impacts to these species.

In 2024, the Park District will further analyze this project under CEQA and continue to engage with the community. Project costs have not been finalized.

15. Tassajara Creek Trail: Tassajara Creek Staging to Windemere Parkway

The Park District has successfully negotiated with the US Army to revise easements for two segments of trail totaling about 1 mile through the Camp Parks Reserve Forces Training Area (Camp Parks) in the City of Dublin. With the construction of the adjacent one-mile trail segment within the Wallis Ranch development, completion of the Camp Parks segments would create a 4-mile continuous stretch of the Tassajara Creek Trail that connects residents from Dublin and San Ramon to the Dublin/Pleasanton BART and the Iron Horse Trail to the south and eventually to Mount Diablo State Park to the north. The project will involve construction of paved and unpaved trail segments and relocation of Camp Park's perimeter security fencing and patrol road. The Army approved the Park District's proposal and preliminary design of the trail alignment. The Trails Program Unit will continue to work with Land Acquisition to ensure the Army continues to draft the easements that will optimistically be dedicated and recorded

in 2024. Approximately \$150,000 is currently appropriated for design and environmental studies. The total project cost estimates are approximately \$2.1 million, but the project scope has not been finalized.

16. Dunsmuir Ridge to Lake Chabot Trail

CEQA studies and final design are currently stalled for the preferred alignment of the Dunsmuir Ridge to Chabot Trail. Alameda County requires completion of a landfill closure plan for the portion of this trail over the City of Oakland's (City) landfill near the Chabot Golf Course. The Park District has requested that Oakland pursue the formal closure of the landfill to allow for the trail to be constructed in the preferred location. Park District staff is coordinating with City staff and providing pertinent information about the trail project and recommendations on how to navigate the closure process. City staff has reviewed with regulatory permitting agencies to analyze the environmental impact of closing the landfill which will determine the approach to capping the landfill and the future land use the City will propose to CalRecycle and Alameda County for approval. Once the City obtains funding and formal approval of the closure plan and cap design, it will take approximately two years before the work is complete. Pending successful closure of the landfill, CEQA and final design for this trail project can resume. Total project cost has not been finalized.

17. Crockett Hills: New Cummings Skyway Staging Area

Crockett Hills does not have adequate parking to accommodate the increased popularity of the trails within this park. The adopted Land Use Plan calls for an additional staging area in the southern portion of this park accessible from Cummings Skyway. The Park District hired Parisi Design Group to complete a study in 2019 that identifies a preferred location for an additional staging area at Crockett Hills. The study included a complete traffic safety study in coordination with Contra Costa County and completion of an initial study for a proposed entrance off Cummings Skyway. The Park District Design and Construction Department is the lead on this project with Trails Program support. The initial project cost estimate for construction of the staging area and county road improvements was estimated in 2019 to be approximately \$1.8 million.

18. Bay Area Ridge Trail / Feeder Trail #1

The Ridge Trail / Feeder Trail #1 alignment from Dutra Road to Ferndale Road in Contra Costa County has been opened to the public. ROW for the remaining segment from Ferndale Road to Pereira Road has been acquired by the Park District, but certain segments are impassible along this alignment. The Park District receives public complaints related to the confusing nature of alignment, private property ownership and accessibility at this location. The Park District is being encouraged by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council to complete this remaining gap. Options are being explored to improve access to these areas. Acquisition of additional ROW will be needed to close the gap from Pereira Road to EBMUD trails at Alhambra Valley Road.

19. Iron Horse Trail: Marsh Drive to Imhoff Drive

Contra Costa County (County) has replaced the Marsh Drive bridge, which spans east to west over the Walnut Creek channel in Concord, that includes an extension of the Iron Horse Trail (IHT) as a barrier-separated two-way pathway.

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extension begin within five years of the Marsh Drive Bridge project completion. Further design and engineering feasibility will determine the preferred extension and project scope.

There are just over \$1.6 million in remediation funds from Tosco Refinery in the Iron Horse Trail / Tosco – Walnut Creek channel project account that will be used to cover trail design and a portion of the construction costs for the northern extension. More funding may be required to construct the project.



Proposed Iron Horse Trail: Marsh Drive to Imhoff Drive looking south