



County of San Luis Obispo, California

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM TRANSMITTAL

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Parks and Recreation / Shaun Cooper 781-4388

SUBJECT: Recommend that the Board of Supervisors: 1) Certify the Bob Jones Pathway project Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.; and, 2) Approve the Bob Jones Pathway project between the Octagon Barn, on South Higuera Street and Ontario Road staging area.

DATE: 1/22/2015

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend that the Board: 1) Certify the Bob Jones Pathway project Environmental Impact Report in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.; and, 2) Approve the Bob Jones Pathway project between the Octagon Barn, on South Higuera Street and Ontario Road staging area.

Discussion:

The Bob Jones Pathway - San Luis Obispo to Ontario Road project will ultimately develop an approximately 4.5 mile segment of a mostly Class I multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path from the Octagon Barn located on South Higuera St., just south of the City of San Luis Obispo, to the staging area of the existing Bob Jones pathway at Ontario Road within the Avila Valley area. The project includes construction of four bridges, and crossings along South Higuera Street. The proposed project is primarily within the Agriculture and Rural Lands land use categories and begins at the south-western edge of the City of San Luis Obispo, approximately 2,000 feet south of the intersection of South Higuera and Los Osos Valley Road, and follows an alignment along South Higuera, San Luis Obispo Creek, Monte Road and Ontario Road. The project is expected to provide an alternative transportation corridor as well as an important recreation corridor for residents of and visitors to San Luis Obispo County

On January 5, 2010, the Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with PMC to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Bob Jones Pathway project. The EIR addresses the environmental impacts that may be associated with the request to construct this segment of the Bob Jones Pathway and includes issue areas such as: Aesthetics; Agricultural Resources; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; and Land Use.

The proposed project has undergone several public outreach meetings through the EIR process. The Draft EIR was released for public review on August 19, 2013. Approximately thirty comment letters were submitted to the County based on the Draft EIR. Many of these comments expressed concerns with the environmental impacts related to portions of the proposed project and some of them included suggested revisions to the project design. Because of this, the County studied additional route alternatives and included them in a Revised EIR Alternatives Section. These revisions include: alternative routing between Baron Canyon and the Highway 101 Crossing along the SLO Creek Farms property (corner of Monte Road and San Luis Bay Drive), on the Land Conservancy farm along Monte

Road, and along San Luis Bay Drive; and an undercrossing alternative to Highway 101. The Revised Draft EIR Alternatives Section was released for public review in October of 2014. Approximately one dozen comment letters were submitted to the County based on the Revised Draft EIR. Most of the comments expressed support for the new alternative included in the Revised Draft EIR.

The recommended project alignment for the Bob Jones Pathway project is the environmentally superior alternative which is alternative 6. This alternative: incorporates improved user safety by eliminating at grade crossings on South Higuera Street; reduces the visual impacts and controversy by eliminating the pedestrian/bicycle bridge over Highway 101; increases the pathway width to 12-feet where feasible; and reduces impacts associated with farming conflicts. This recommended route provides the best balance in addressing community concerns, meeting the project objectives, and minimizing environmental impacts.

The next phases of work for this project include the completion of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study, engineering, permitting, easement/right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the first segment. The timing of subsequent phases of the project is dependent on additional funding sources. A portion of the funding for subsequent phases of the project has been secured. Additional construction funding will continue to be sought through grant funding sources.

Other Agency Involvement:

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, Caltrans, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Air Pollution Control District, County Parks and Recreation Commission, County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, Avila Valley Advisory Counsel, County Planning, County Public Works, and County Counsel.

Financial Considerations:

The preliminary cost analysis for the ultimate construction of the project, based on a 2008 Engineers Estimate is approximately 10 million dollars. Construction cost estimates will vary based on the final design and constraints of the project. Possible constraints include: bridges at creek crossings; acquisition of easements and right-of-ways; and environmental impacts.

Based on a 2003 feasibility study, annual operation and maintenance costs are estimated at \$10,000/ mile (except for flood prone areas, which are \$15,000/ mile). Annual maintenance costs for the project are estimated to run between \$40,000 and \$50,000. At the time this project is ready for construction, operation and maintenance funding will need to be identified.

Attachments

Attachment A - Vicinity Map

Attachment B - Bob Jones Pathway Final Environmental Impact Report

Attachment C - Bob Jones Pathway Project Description and Exhibits