

**San Francisco Bay Trail
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Bay Area Metro Center
January 9, 2020**

1. Call to Order / Confirm Quorum

Meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

Steering Committee

John Woodbury, *Chair*
Julie Bondurant
Brenda Buxton
Ethan Lavine
Steve McAdam
Juan Raigoza

Board

Diane Ross-Leech

Guests

Erik Alm, Caltrans District 4 Planning

Bay Trail/MTC Staff

Laura Thompson
Maureen Gaffney
Lee Huo
Ben Botkin
Ross McKeown
Kenneth Folan
Karl Anderson
Brad Paul

2. Adoption of Agenda and Approval of Minutes

ACTION: Adopted the 01/09/20 agenda and approved the 9/12/19 minutes. Raigoza moved, Woodbury seconded. Bondurant abstained.

Yes Votes:

*John Woodbury
Brenda Buxton
Ethan Lavine*

*Steve McAdam
Juan Raigoza*

No Votes: None

Abstentions: Julie Bondurant

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Announcements by Committee Members and Staff

-Thompson Reported on the continued excitement around the new Richmond-San Rafael Bridge trail, noting that over 12,000 trips have occurred in the first 30 days. Informed the Committee of a successful December 14 Bair Island hike as part of promotion through *Bay Nature* magazine. Announced that the ABAG Executive Board will hear presentations on the Bay Trail and the Water Trail at their March 19 meeting. Informed

the Committee that Block Grant #6 from the Coastal Conservancy will be under contract soon with conversations about the grant program coming to the next Steering Committee meeting. Announced new staff joining the Bay Trail team in Local Government Services in February responsible for managing 13 new Priority Conservation Area grants awarded to local jurisdictions by MTC.

- Huo Announced that the City of Fremont is embarking on their first ever trail plan and he will serve on the advisory committee to ensure Bay Trail is included in the plan and to support cross-town trail connections, including the Niles-Canyon Trail. He also serves on the Delta Protection Commission advisory committee for the Delta Trail as a result of our partnership in the Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail planning effort. Informed the Committee that building on the success of the 30th anniversary outreach with MTC's Legislative & Public Affairs department, we will continue to have resources for outreach in 2020 including promotion of the Bay Trail on social media. MTC's Operations department has formed a New Mobility team to promote e-bikes for commute purposes on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, and he will be on the panel to help select a contractor for this work.
- Gaffney Announced that NBC Bay Area's Open Road will feature another episode on the Bay Trail in 2020, with a focus on bicycle commuting, also featuring Rich City Rides, a small business in Richmond that provides opportunities to get kids on bikes, an Emeryville Councilmember who commutes by bike, and the winner of last year's 30-on-30 social media campaign. Informed the Committee that an updated map set will be available in March or April. The Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail final planning document is now available, the result of great partnership work. Announced she is leading early discussions of a Three-Bridge Loop cycling event, promoting a 50-mile bike ride that includes the Richmond-San Rafael, Golden Gate and Bay Bridges, potentially in fall 2020.
- Botkin Announced the new \$600k block grant from the Coastal Conservancy that will allow the Water Trail grant program to continue, with much of the funding tied to improvements in disadvantaged communities. Announced the 48th site has recently been added to the network, Cass Gidley in Sausalito, marking great progress. Informed the Committee of the recently-released draft board sailing plan, a comprehensive overview of the issues, needs and opportunities for this boating community. Announced he is working with Candlestick State Recreation Area in San Francisco to support overnight opportunities for kayakers.

5. New Regional Coalition Membership

Thompson introduced the item, provided background on the mission and goals of the new regional coalition that replaces the Bay Area Open Space Council. The Committee emphasized the importance of the new organization, the need for it to increase focus on regional trails as well as its critical role to increase funding for the Bay Conservancy program. The Committee encouraged Bay Trail staff to participate in shaping the trail work at the new organization.

ACTION: Authorized the San Francisco Bay Trail Project nonprofit organization to join the new regional coalition as a dues paying member based on the nonprofit organization budget. Raigoza moved, Bondurant seconded. Buxton abstained.

Yes Votes:

John Woodbury
Julie Bondurant
Ethan Lavine

Steve McAdam
Juan Raigoza

No Votes: None

Abstentions: Brenda Buxton

6. 2020 NBC Bay Area Open Road Sponsorship

Thompson provided background on Open Road and our work with Doug McConnell to promote the Bay Trail and Water Trail on television. The Bay Trail Project has provided financial support for all 5 years of this program and the Committee voiced support for continued sponsorship.

ACTION: Approved a \$5,000 sponsorship for 2020 NBC Bay Area Open Road that will be used in combination with BATA's \$20,000 sponsorship to support an entire episode about the Bay Trail. Raigoza moved, McAdam seconded.

Yes Votes:

John Woodbury
Julie Bondurant
Brenda Buxton

Ethan Lavine
Steve McAdam
Juan Raigoza

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

7. Regional Measure 3 Bay Trail Program Preliminary Feedback

Folan provided a status update on the court challenge to RM3. The tolls are being collected and directed to an escrow account while the appeals process moves forward. MTC is hoping for a decision in 2020, but the case could be appealed to the California Supreme Court. In December 2019, the Commission adopted policies and procedures for RM3 that allows projects with one sponsor to move forward at their own risk while the funds are on hold. The Bay Trail/Safe Routes to Transit funding is referred to as an umbrella project that must wait for the case to be resolved before funds can be awarded to specific projects through a competitive process. MTC is in the early stages of getting feedback from stakeholders, including the Bay Trail Steering Committee. Ultimately the Commission makes the final decision.

Anderson provided an overview of the Active Transportation Program (ATP), highlighting the two programs managed by the State and by MTC. The funds are allocated every two years and MTC anticipates having \$37 million to allocate later this year.

The Committee provided feedback on the following topics outlined in the staff memo:

Bay Trail / SR2T Split. A proposal to split the funds **25% Bay Trail, 25% SR2T and 50%** or **50%-50% across both programs** was supported by the Committee. However, it was recognized that these are highly desirable funds and many agencies and organizations will strive to secure as much of the \$150M as possible for a variety of projects. The Committee feels it is important for the **full geographic range of projects** along the Bay Trail to be a part of this program. If the only eligible segments are those that provide direct access to a bridge or transit station, it would be too restrictive. If the timeframe is 10 years, Bay Trail should have a larger share to apply to projects over time.

The Committee wants to see an inventory of projects, identifying what phase they are in and when they would move forward. It would be helpful for staff to develop a hierarchy of projects from most to least eligible for RM3 funds.

Project Types. The Committee supports directing the funding to **capital projects**, including all the steps necessary to complete construction: **feasibility studies, design, engineering, environmental review and construction.**

Funding Cycle Timelines. The Committee envisioned two cycle timeframe scenarios: 1) a call for projects that includes RM3 and Coastal Conservancy funds, and 2) a call for RM3 funds while strategically applying Coastal Conservancy funds to projects outside of the RM3 funding cycle.

Program Structure/Restrictions. The Committee recommended coordinating the review process across ATP, RM3 and PCA programs. The Committee agreed that soliciting **letters of interest** before a full application would be a good way to streamline the process and have a tool to allocate the funds strategically.

The Committee discussed whether a match should be required, with **consensus around no match requirement.** There was support for assessing the value of a project on its face. While match requirements could be unfair to smaller communities, large projects will almost always leverage other sources and may require a separate process to create a balance in order to avoid eliminating the small projects. On the flip side, a match requirement grows the program and many jurisdictions could use SB1 funds as match. The program could also be more competitive if there is a match. Artificial limits like caps and jurisdiction size were not supported.

Evaluation Criteria. There was support for an open and flexible process, recognizing that Bay Trail staff has in-depth knowledge of projects and the **program will likely not need strictly defined criteria.** The project is either on the Bay Trail or not. SR2T may need more clear cut criteria given the variety of projects and locations.

Decision-Making Process. The Steering Committee is interested in serving the **role of advisory committee** for the Bay Trail funds as it has for the Coastal Conservancy funds.

Other Considerations. The Committee wants to ensure an **equitable approach to funding projects**—a longer timeframe could accomplish this by spreading more funds out to a variety of communities.

The Committee raised some questions, such as, once funding is awarded, what is the timeline for spending? The statute does not have a timeline, however, the Commission could adopt a timeline.

The Committee also supported a strict definition of what is eligible and what qualifies for SR2T, questioning where the line will be drawn between new facilities, street reconfiguration, improvements and deferred maintenance.

8. 30th Anniversary Board Meeting: Summary of What We Heard & Next Steps

Thompson reviewed the key topics from the November 2019 board meeting and walked through the four primary proposals that came out of that discussion. The Committee discussed each proposal and offered direction to staff for next steps.

1) Establish a Bay Trail foundation.

The Committee acknowledged that a foundation might not raise substantial funds and questioned whether it is worth the hard work to set up. It was noted that other successful foundations have significant revenue sources, such as the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Foundations typically fund highly visible projects, and construction of Bay Trail gaps might not rise to that level. However, the Bay Trail program does not currently have flexible funding for maintenance, outreach and other non-capital expenses that foundation funds could generate. This is a long-term idea that ideally should be cultivated now to establish a legacy fund for the Bay Trail.

Recommendation: Since we already have a nonprofit organization, as a first step, explore potential funding sources for a staff person that could begin to build a coalition of private sector contributors to the Bay Trail.

2) Create legislative champions and change.

Political support has historically been a core element of the Bay Trail's success and elected official support results in multiple benefits for the program.

Recommendation: Complete an analysis of the remaining Bay Trail gaps, identifying the local and state legislative districts, develop a list of potential champions and begin to create a strategy for communicating with the elected officials most likely to become champions.

3) Leverage partnership with ABAG/MTC.

The Committee acknowledged the increasing resources that have been made available to the Bay Trail after staff integration, recognizing that strong support from MTC could set the project up well to accomplish proposals #2 and #4.

Recommendation: Continue working with MTC management to support the Bay Trail, looking for opportunities to expand capacity and resources for the program.

4) Establish staff in key organizations to focus on the Bay Trail.

It was clarified that under the BCDC model, a Caltrans staff person came to BCDC to expedite major project review and permitting. The Committee recognized that a Caltrans staff person fully dedicated to addressing Bay Trail gaps around the region would be a significant step forward. This step could help address public access issues prior to Caltrans coming to BCDC for permits.

Recommendation: Identify specific gaps within Caltrans jurisdiction around the region that could be advanced with dedicated staff as a first step toward exploring funds to finance this idea. Meet with BCDC to discuss.

Overall recommendations: The Committee recommended focusing on proposals #2 and #3 in the near term. Proposals #1 and #4 are dependent on funding.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.