



Legislation Text

File #: 2019-1905, **Version:** 1

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Department or Agency Name(s): Sonoma County Regional Parks
Staff Name and Phone Number: Ken Tam, (707) 565-3348
Vote Requirement: Informational Only
Supervisorial District(s): Fifth

Title:

Draft Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study Presentation

Recommended Action:

Receive draft report and provide comments on the Draft Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study. (Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

In 2018 Regional Parks secured a transportation planning grant from Caltrans and the Northern Sonoma County Regional Air Pollution Control District and local match funds to complete the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study (Study) by the end of February 2020. The Lower Russian River Trail (Trail) is a planned bicycle and pedestrian pathway. The purpose of the Study is to evaluate existing site conditions and provide a recommendation for the most feasible and safest route for a separated, paved recreational and non-motorized transportation trail (Class I bikeway/share use path) that accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians where feasible. The 19.3-mile Study area starts at the intersection of River Road and Mirabel Road and ends at the intersection of Highway 1 and 116.

The existing lower Russian River study area does not have adequate facilities to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to travel safely and continuously between the residential river communities such as Forestville, Guerneville, and Monte Rio. The development of bicycle and pedestrian pathway will provide safe access to destination areas such as beaches, parks, and local businesses, to encourage residents to be healthier by walking and bicycling more, and to reduce vehicle congestion and emissions.

The Study process included soliciting public input from online surveys, community workshops, and stakeholder meetings to help identify a preferred Trail alignment with alternatives. The findings and recommendations of the preferred Trail alignment are documented in the Draft Study. A copy of the Draft Study is on file with the clerk and can be downloaded and reviewed from the following web page www.lowerrussianrivertrailstudy.com <<http://www.lowerrussianrivertrailstudy.com>>. Comments from the Board and the public will be reviewed and addressed for the Final Study. Regional Parks will request that the Board of Supervisors accept the Final Study at its February 10, 2020 meeting to meet grant obligations.

Discussion:

The Russian River area has always been a popular recreation destination and gathering place for Sonoma County residents and visitors. The main mode of transportation to travel within the Russian River area is by

either car or bus because the area has very limited pedestrian and bicycling facilities. With the exception of downtown Guerneville and a few areas, there are no sidewalks for pedestrians and very narrow to no road shoulders for bicyclists to use. A safe pathway is needed to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation in the area. The development of the Lower Russian River Trail will provide an 8 feet wide shared pathway for exclusive use by pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians where feasible. The pathway could have a 5 feet wide horizontal landscape buffer or a physical barrier to create a buffer from vehicle traffic.

The proposed 19.3-mile Lower Russian River Trail would improve the area by providing a safe and separated pathway for walking, jogging, and bicycling to and from destinations such as retail shops, restaurants, wineries, schools, river parks (e.g. Steelhead Beach Regional Park, Sunset Beach River Park, Forestville River Access), and resorts in the Russian River area. It would also provide recreation access and connectivity to other existing and planned non-motorized transportation networks that link the river communities of Forestville, Guerneville, Mirabel, Hacienda, Odd Fellows, Summer Home Park, Rio Nido, Monte Rio, Villa Grande, Sheridan, Duncans Mills, and Jenner. Other Trail benefits include reducing vehicle congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Lower Russian River Trail study area encompasses a large portion of the Russian River corridor that includes River Road and Highway 116 within Supervisorial District 5. The Lower Russian River Trail is identified as a project in the adopted County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (August 2010). The Plan identifies a start and end point for the Trail but does not specify the Trail alignment. The Study starts at the intersection of Mirabel Road and River Road and ends at the intersection of Highway 1 and 116, as shown on the attached location map. The Study will help determine where the Trail could be located along the corridor and to provide guidance on future phases of development.

In April 2018, the County received a planning grant in the amount of \$620,000 from Caltrans to prepare and complete a feasibility study for the Lower Russian River Trail project by February 28, 2020. The Caltrans grant program requires a local match which consisted of the following funding partners: Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District (\$120,000), Park Mitigation Fees (\$25,000), Transient Occupancy Tax (\$10,000), Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation (\$5,000), Monte Rio Recreation and Parks District (\$5,000), Korbel Winery (\$5,000), Russian River Recreation and Parks District (\$2,500) and the Wildlands Conservancy (\$1,000) for a total of \$173,500. The combined funding is \$793,500.

In October 2018, after a competitive consultant selection process, the County hired Alta Planning + Design, Inc. to prepare the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study. The scope of the Study includes identifying existing site conditions and public right of way, preparing benefits analysis, identifying existing demographics and interest groups, preparing community survey to solicit input, preparing concepts and maps, facilitating community workshops and stakeholder meetings, collecting and responding to public comments, recommending a trail alignment, and preparing draft and final feasibility study reports.

Public outreach included press release, mailers, two stakeholder meetings, three community workshops, and online surveys available in English and Spanish to solicit input. Participants could also provide comments using an online interactive mapping tool to identify prefer routes and existing site constraints. From March to November 2019, more than 612 responses were received online. The community workshops were held on May 7 and 11 in Guerneville, and in Monte Rio on October 23, 2019. Participants included but not limited to: residents, Russian River Chamber of Commerce, members from the Lower Russian River Municipal Advisory

Council, Guerneville School District, Monte Rio School, and members from the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. More recently, the Draft Study was presented to the Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on December 18.

Comments from all meetings and online surveys were reviewed and evaluated. The findings and recommendations of the Draft Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study are presented to Board of Supervisors for review and discussion. A copy of the Draft Study is on file with the clerk and can be downloaded and reviewed from the following web page www.lowerrussianrivertrailstudy.com
<<http://www.lowerrussianrivertrailstudy.com>>

The locations of the preferred Trail alignment are shown in the Draft Study and listed as follows:

State Highway 116 (from to State Highway 1 to Gravenstein Highway North 116)

- 1) Highway 1 to Sheephouse Creek, the proposed Trail is on the south side of Highway 116
- 2) Sheephouse Creek to Moscow Road, the proposed Trail is on the north side of Highway 116
- 3) Moscow Road to Mill Street, the proposed Trail is on the south side of Highway 116
- 4) Mill Street to Gravenstein Highway North 116 in downtown Guerneville, proposed buffered bike lanes on both sides Highway 116

River Road (from Gravenstein Highway North 116 to Mirabel Road)

- 1) Gravenstein Highway North 116 to Orchard Road, the proposed Trail is on the east side of River Road
- 2) Orchard Road to Canyon 2 Road, the proposed Trail is on the west side of River Road
- 3) Canyon 2 Road to Hacienda Bridge, the proposed Trail is on the south side of River Road
- 4) Hacienda Bridge, proposed new pedestrian and bicycle bridge
- 5) Hacienda Bridge (east end) to Rio Vista Road, the proposed Trail is on the south side of River Road
- 6) Rio Vista Road to Mirabel Road, the proposed Trail is on the north side of River Road

The total estimated development costs for the preferred Trail alignment is approximately \$124 million. The high development costs is attributed to construction methods (that would require the use of pedestrian/bicycle bridges and cantilevered paths), acquisition costs, environmental mitigation, and site constraints such as limited public right of way, steep terrain, and utility relocation.

The recommended implementation strategy is to: 1) prioritize segments that compete well for transportation, recreation, and other public funding, 2) prioritize segments within the public right of way or with identified willing sellers, and 3) to prioritize segments associated with State Highway and County road improvements or other adjacent development projects. Most of the Trail alignment is within an economically disadvantaged area that is crucial for securing competitive public funding. Implemented segments of all lengths will have a significant community benefit because the Trail corridor has countless residential, commercial, and other destinations spread throughout its length.

Based on the recommended implementation strategies, the Trail will be developed in multiple phases over many years. The Draft Study recommends completing the initial Trail segments in areas that will serve and benefit a larger population and/or provide immediate relief for walking and bicycling. In no specific order, initial Trail segments are located in Rio Nido to Guerneville, Guerneville to Monte Rio, and Forestville. The implementation order of the Trail segments can be rearranged as needed to take advantage of upcoming

funding opportunities and adjacent development projects. The estimated costs for the initial Trail segments range from \$750,000 to \$3 million dollars.

Comments from the Board and the public received on January 14, 2020 will be reviewed and addressed as appropriate for the Final Lower Russian Trail Feasibility Study. Regional Parks will request the Board of Supervisors to accept the Final Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study at its February 10, 2020 meeting to meet grant obligations. Following the February 10 Board meeting, the next steps include:

- 1) Preparing a project budget for pursuing immediate opportunities to be proposed in the Fiscal Year 20-21 capital budget, including acquisition, preliminary engineering, and engaging with ongoing planned and proposed public and private development projects along the corridor.
- 2) Identifying anticipated specific grant and other funding opportunities for the next 12 to 24 months, and critical tasks needed to make specific segments grant ready for the next planning and development phase.

Prior Board Actions:

October 9, 2018 (Agenda Item No. 11), Board approved professional service agreement with Alta Planning + Design, Inc. to prepare the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study.

February 6, 2018, by Resolution No. 18-0046 approved the funding agreement for Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program for the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study and authorized the Regional Parks Director to execute all documents necessary to carry out and administer the grant.

February 6, 2018, by Resolution No. 18-0047 approved budget adjustment in fiscal year 2017-2018 to increase revenues and expenditures in the amount of \$752,500.

August 24, 2010, by Resolution No. 10-0636, adopted the 2010 Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY 19-20 Adopted	FY20-21 Projected	FY 21-22 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

Total cost of the feasibility study is \$793,500, which was previously budgeted in the FY 2017-18 Capital Budget. There is no additional cost associated with this item. There will be future development costs when the County starts the Trail implementation in phases.

Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

None

Attachments:

- Map
- PowerPoint Presentation

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

Draft Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study (December 2019)