



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0029, **Version:** 1

To: Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Regional Parks

Staff Name and Phone Number: Ken Tam, (707) 565-3348

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Fifth District

Title:

Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study

Recommended Action:

Accept resolution accepting the findings and recommendations as contained in the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study. (Fifth District)

Executive Summary:

The Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study (Study) evaluated the feasibility of developing a 19.3-mile paved trail along the lower Russian River corridor from the intersection of Mirabel Road and River Road to the intersection of Highway 1 and 116. The primary objective of the Study is to evaluate existing site conditions and provide a recommendation for the location of 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 Study process included soliciting input at three public meetings, through an online survey and mapping tool exercise, and meetings with stakeholders. After reviewing comments and evaluating existing site conditions, the Draft Study recommended the preferred Trail alignment with alternatives that follows the Highway 116 and River Road corridor connecting Forestville to Highway 1. The findings and recommendations of the Draft Study were provided to the Board for review and comment at the January 14, 2020 Board meeting.

Comments on the Draft Study were received and addressed for the Final Study which is on file with the clerk and available on the following project web page www.lowerRussianRiverTrailStudy.com [<http://www.lowerRussianRiverTrailStudy.com>](http://www.lowerRussianRiverTrailStudy.com). Regional Parks requests that the Board of Supervisors accepts the findings and recommendations as contained in the Study to meet grant obligations and to receive final grant reimbursement.

Discussion:

In 2018, Regional Parks secured a transportation planning grant in the amount of \$620,000 from Caltrans, \$120,000 from the Northern Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District, and other local funding matches of \$53,500 for a grand total of \$793,500 to complete the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study (Study). The Lower Russian River Trail (Trail) is identified as a project in the 2010 County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, but the Plan does not specify the exact location of the proposed Trail. The Study will help determine the Trail

feasibility and where the Trail could be located along the lower Russian River corridor.

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, Rio Nido, Guerneville, and Monte Rio. 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 an 8 feet wide bicycle and pedestrian pathway will provide safe access to destination areas such as beaches, river parks, resorts, restaurants, and other local businesses, to encourage residents to be healthier by walking and bicycling more, and to reduce vehicle congestion and emissions.

The Study process was initiated in early 2018 and completed in December 2019. Meetings were held with the public and stakeholders to solicit input on how the development of the Lower Russian River Trail could improve their ability to walk and bicycle along the river communities. On January 10, 2020, the completed Draft Study was posted online and available for public review. The Draft Study was presented to the Board on January 14, 2020. Comments received from the Board, Sonoma County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and general public were reviewed, considered, and addressed for the preparation of the Final Study.

The Final Study provides broad guidance and recommends pursuing opportunities that will assist in the implementation of the Trail and alternatives, a planned recreational and non-motorized transportation corridor that, when complete, will provide a 19.3-mile long pedestrian and bicycle pathway. The preferred Trail alignment follows the Highway 116 and River Road corridor connecting the river communities such as Forestville, Rio Nido, Guerneville, Monte Rio, and Duncans Mills.

The findings in the Study concluded that multi-use trails, and walking and bicycling for both recreation and transportation have myriad benefits to both individuals and communities, examples of which have been documented throughout the nation. The benefits include: making communities better places to live by preserving and creating open spaces; encouraging physical fitness and healthy lifestyles; creating new opportunities for non-motorized transportation and outdoor recreation; improving traffic safety for bicyclists and pedestrians; and strengthening the local economy. The findings also identified challenges associated with Trail implementation such as existing site topography, adjacent land uses, and environmental resources located within the project limits. In addition to the preferred Trail alignment recommendations, the study recommends environmental studies, geotechnical investigations, boundary surveys, and detailed design and engineering in future phases to implement the project.

Accepting the Study's findings and recommendations is the final step needed to complete the scope of work described in our grant funding agreement. Regional Parks requests that the Board of Supervisors approves the resolution accepting the findings and recommendations as contained in the Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study to meet grant obligations and to receive final grant reimbursement.

Prior Board Actions:

January 14, 2020 (Agenda Item No. 32), Board receives and comments on the Draft Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study.

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 to prepare 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 action 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:

Attachment 1 - Map

Attachment 2 - Resolution

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

Lower Russian River Trail Feasibility Study