



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

ARCHITECTURAL BOARD OF REVIEW REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 26, 2015

TO: Architectural Board of Review

FROM: Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Douglas Family Preserve Trail Restoration Project (2551 Medcliff Rd.)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Architectural Board of Review grant project design approval for the Douglas Family Preserve Trail Restoration Project.

DISCUSSION:

The 70-acre Douglas Family Preserve (Preserve) is a publically-owned open space located at the western edge of the Mesa neighborhood (Attachment A). The Preserve is a popular destination that provides passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking, dog walking, wildlife viewing, and bicycle riding. Many of the trails at Preserve are in need of maintenance to ensure a smooth and safe path of travel throughout the year. The Parks and Recreation Department (Department) submitted a Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant application for the Douglas Family Preserve Trails Restoration Project (Project).

Recreational Trails Program Grant

The state-administered RTP recently received \$11 million, outside of the normal grant timeline, resulting in fast-tracked application timelines. City Council adopted a resolution approving the Department's application for RTP grant funds on August 11, 2015 and the Parks and Recreation Commission passed a recommendation that the Department submit a RTP grant application for the Project at their August 26, 2015 meeting. The Department submitted an expedited RTP grant application package on September 14, 2015 for \$300,000 to partially-fund the estimated \$365,000 project. Supporting grant materials are due November 6, 2015, including City design approval for CEQA purposes. If funded, Project construction would begin in the spring of 2017.

Proposed Project

The Project will rehabilitate and renovate 0.92 miles of trails at the Preserve. The Project will reduce trail erosion, improve safety and access, and help prevent further erosion. The Project will provide Universal Access (an ADA path) to one-third of the three miles of Preserve trails. A Project site plan is provided in Attachment B and a cross-section of the proposed trail design is provided in Attachment C. A topographic map of the Preserve is

provided in Attachment D. All work will be performed within the existing trail corridors, as follows:

- Renovation of approximately 4,860 linear feet (0.92 miles) of trail, five feet wide, will provide Universal Access within the existing trail route, including:
- Removal of 18,963 sf of degraded asphalt to achieve Universal Access in the existing trail bed.
- Signage to identify the new Universal Access route.

The Project is designed to avoid sensitive resources in the Preserve by limiting the scope of work to the renovation of existing trails. Sensitive resources at the Preserve include Coast Live Oak Woodlands, the top of bluff and associated 50-foot buffer, and the 75-year cliff retreat (Attachment D). No new trails, no tree removal, and no new landscaping are being proposed as part of the Project. The proposed Universal Access will also minimize grading as the route is through a relatively level area of the Preserve. Photographs of the existing site and surrounding neighborhood are provided in Attachment E.

To meet Universal Access requirements, a firm and stable trail surface will be prepared according to established standards (Attachment C). The Preserve deed covenants restrict the use of asphalt or concrete. Instead, decomposed granite, or other crushed rock suitable for Universal Access, will be mixed with Stabilizer, a patented, non-toxic, organic binder of crushed seed hulls. Stabilizer binds soil particles and strengthens aggregate to withstand traffic and weather extremes while creating a permeable and stabilized surface. It is activated by the addition of water and performs well in dry environments. The overall Preserve drainage pattern is illustrated on Attachment F.

Project Studies

Trail improvements were identified in the Douglas Family Preserve Management Plan and Off-Leash Dog Park Locations Draft Environmental Impact Report (2003) and are in compliance with the Final Douglas Family Preserve Management Plan (2008). Policy OM-9 in the Preserve Management Plan recommends implementing Universal Access trail improvements to allow persons with disabilities to have access to the Preserve. The Project will implement all mitigation measures and conditions contained within the Management Plan.

Design Review, Environmental Review and Permit

The Project requires design review and approval from the Architectural Board of Review as the Project is located on City owned property and grading is over 250 cubic yards. No soil is proposed to be exported off-site.

The City's Environmental Analyst determined that the Project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15301(c) and Section 15304.3. Section 15301(c) consists of repair and maintenance or minor alterations to public structures, including trails. Section 15304.3 consists of minor alterations to land, including construction of trails and paths which follow existing topography and do not require substantial amounts of grading or removal of mature, scenic trees, as referenced in the List of City Determined Examples of Activities/Projects Qualifying as Ministerial or Categorically Exempt (Santa Barbara City Council 1999).

The Project is exempt from a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) under the Repair or Maintenance Exemption category as trail improvements are a modification of existing trails that do not result in an adverse environmental impact. A CDP Exemption application has been submitted and is in process.

Community Outreach

On August 19, 2015 a mailed flier was sent to 750 households surrounding the Preserve to invite them to a community meeting. The information was also posted online at the Department's Facebook account and in the City's News and Briefs. On Thursday, August 27, 2015 the Department conducted a community meeting at the Preserve to discuss the Project with neighboring residents. Based on comments received from the public, the Department submitted a revised trail project to the RTP. The revised Project includes relocation of the Universal Access entrance from Medcliff Road to Borton Drive, reduction of the Universal Access route adjacent to residential areas and a decrease in asphalt removal. To update the community regarding the revised project, an invitational mailer was sent on October 14, 2015 and the Department held a community meeting at the Preserve on October 20, 2015.

ATTACHMENT(S): A. Douglas Family Preserve Trail Restoration Project Vicinity
B. Douglas Family Preserve Trail Restoration Project Site Plan
C. Cross section of proposed trail design
D. Preserve Topographic Map
E. Photographs
F. Preserve drainage pattern

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