



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** August 26, 2015

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Parks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Recreational Trails Program Grant Application for the Douglas Family Preserve Trails Restoration Project

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Commission recommend that the Parks and Recreation Department submit a grant application to the Recreational Trails Program for the Douglas Family Preserve Trails Restoration Project.

**DISCUSSION:**

The 70-acre Douglas Family Preserve (Preserve) is an Open Space Park located at 2551 Medcliff Road. When the Trust for Public Land transferred the property to the City, there were a large number of trails onsite and no planned trail system. The trails included dirt trails, old asphalt roads, and informal dirt paths. Over the past several years, the well-used Preserve trails have compacted, eroded and widened and are in need of maintenance.

Recreational Trails Program.

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a state-administered local assistance program of the US Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Within the State of California, the Department of Parks and Recreation is authorized to administer the program. The FHWA recently released \$11 Million to the RTP, outside of the normal grant timeline, so applications are fast-tracked, with a due date of September 15, 2015. The Parks and Recreation Department is preparing a RTP grant application package.

Proposed Project.

The Douglas Family Preserve Trails Restoration Project (Project) will rehabilitate and renovate 1.7 miles or 1.44 acres of trails at the Preserve. The Project will reduce trail erosion, improve safety and access, foster the restoration of native habitats, and help prevent further erosion. The trail work location is illustrated on the Attachment. The

Project will remove asphalt and reroute and decommission user created trails, and will provide Universal Access to 1/3 of the three miles of Preserve trails. All work will be performed within the existing trail corridors, as follows:

- Renovation of approximately one mile (5,309 feet) of trail, five feet wide, will achieve Universal Access for a total of 26,545 square feet (sf).
- Approximately 564 feet of informal user-created paths will be formalized to create a Universal Access trail loop.
- Removal of 3,633 linear feet by 10 feet (36,330 sf) of cracked and eroded asphalt will restore trails to native soil throughout the Preserve.
- Signage to identify the new Universal Access route.

The project has been designed to avoid sensitive resources in the Preserve by limiting the amount and location of ground disturbance. Sensitive resources include Coast Live Oak Woodlands, the top of bluff and associated 50-foot buffer and the 75-year cliff retreat. This will be accomplished by working within the existing trail corridors, that have previously been disturbed, and by directing Universal Access away from the bluff to interior trails. The proposed trail location will also minimize grading as the route is through a relatively level area of the mesa. Sustainable trail practices will be employed throughout the Preserve to improve drainage, help prevent erosion, and provide longevity to the Universal Access and other trails in the Preserve.

*Universal Access.* The Universal Access route is planned to provide a diversified Preserve user experience through two trail loops including mature Coast Live Oak Woodlands and the coast. In order to connect the user to the coast and scenic vistas of the coastline, Elings Park and the Santa Ynez Mountains, informal user-created paths will be formalized.

#### City Council Action

City Council adopted a resolution approving the application for grant funds from the RTP on August 11, 2015. Preserve trail restoration has been an unfunded priority for many years. A successful grant application will support Department management and maintenance of the Preserve.

#### Community Outreach

The Department will be conducting a community meeting on Thursday, August 27, 2015, at 5:30 pm at the Preserve to discuss the Project with neighboring residents.

**BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:**

The total cost of the Project is estimated to be \$365,000. The Department plans to request up to \$300,000 in grant funding through the RTP. The grant guidelines require at least a 12 percent match. Matching funds for the Project would include the 2016 Parks and Recreation Community Foundation disbursement of \$30,000 from the Douglas Family Preserve Endowment Fund. Additional matching funds would be provided in the form of “in-kind” staff support to manage and implement the Project.

**ATTACHMENT:** Douglas Family Preserve Trails Restoration Project Site Plan

**PREPARED BY:** Kathy Frye, Natural Areas Planner

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Acting Parks and Recreation Director