

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: NANCY ADAMS, TRANSPORTATION PLANNER
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS
SUBJECT: PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS – SOUTHEAST
GREENWAY

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation and Public Works Department and the Planning and Economic Development Department that Council, by resolution, approve and submit a nomination to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the Association of Bay Area Governments to designate the Southeast Greenway as a Priority Conservation Area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed project would provide a continuous pedestrian, bicycle and non-motorized connection linking downtown Santa Rosa, neighborhoods, schools, parks to the regional trail system. Designating the Southeast Greenway (SEG) as a Priority Conservation Area (PCA) would potentially enhance eligibility for funding for the proposed project and also supports the City Council Goal – Promote Environmental Sustainability. Enhancing our transportation system to reduce vehicle miles and promote multi modal transportation supports two City Council priorities; one to implement Climate Action Plan and the other to invest in downtown housing and livability. This project establishes links in the bicycle and pedestrian network to serve the Community's residents who choose to bike and walk as a form of transportation. In addition, the project supports one of the Bicycle Friendly Community's recommendations to further improve our community for bicyclists.

BACKGROUND

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) have created an opportunity to address parks, green spaces and recreation across the Bay Area as part of the Plan Bay Area (PBA) 2040 and PBA 2050. PCAs are regionally significant open spaces which have broad agreement for long-term protection.

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Over 165 PCAs have been adopted by the ABAG. There are 17 PCA designations in Sonoma County which are all located in the unincorporated area of the County.

PCAs are categorized by four designations that recognize the vitality of the Bay Area's natural systems, rural economy and health of all residents:

- Natural Landscapes
- Agricultural Lands
- Urban Greening
- Regional Recreation

Cities, Counties and park/open space districts are eligible to apply to ABAG for PCA designation.

Designation of a PCA on a private property does not change the local land use designation status, zoning or the ability for the property to be developed in the future.

The PCA designation process creates a list of areas that have the potential for conservation, restoration and public access. Specific projects within these designated PCAs may be eligible for future funding. There have been 2 cycles of PCA Program funding through the One Bay Area Grant Program (OBAG). Existing Sonoma County PCAs received \$1.25 million (cycle 1) and \$2.0 million (cycle 2) in funding.

In 2019, ABAG and MTC opened a call for Letters of Interest for new or modified PCAs. Along with Priority Development Areas (PDAs), PCAs will comprise PBA 2050's Regional Growth Framework, the Bay Area's strategy for coordinating housing and job growth.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On July 9, 2019, the City Council approved Resolution 2019-093 certifying the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and approving the General Plan and Zoning Code amendments and the Rezoning for the Southeast Greenway.

On March 12, 2019, the City Council approved Resolution 2019-027 adopting the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018.

On March 28, 2017, a second joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council was held to receive feedback on the single preferred land use and circulation alternative and proposed General Plan amendment.

On November 1, 2016, a joint meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council was held to review the draft guiding principles, land use and circulation concept alternatives, and results from the public outreach effort. At that meeting, the Council and Commission directed staff to create a single draft land use and circulation concept alternative, as described in the Community Outreach/Planning Process section of this report.

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On July 7, 2015, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28666 approving a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans, Sonoma Land Trust, and the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership. The MOU documents how the Partnership, Sonoma Land Trust, and Caltrans will collaborate and work together toward development of an agreement that will transfer the highway land to public ownership.

On June 17, 2014, the City of Santa Rosa joined the Southeast Greenway Community Partnership by signing a Mutual Letter of Intent.

On April 16, 2013, the Council adopted Resolution No. 28266 reaffirming Council Goal 4, Strategic Objective 3: “Support Efforts of Southeast Greenway Campaign by Monitoring and Providing Information.”

On October 18, 2011, the Santa Rosa City Council adopted Resolution No. 27995 which included Council Goal 4, Strategic Objective 4: “Acknowledge Southeast Greenway community planning projects.”

ANALYSIS

The [Southeast Greenway Land Use Illustrative Map](#) includes a planned shared use path which is a critical link in a predominately Class I east - west regional shared use path connecting active transportation mobility from Kenwood, CA to the City of Sebastopol, CA nearly 19 miles. The planned pathway will enable users to travel west to the City of Sebastopol via the existing Santa Rosa Creek trail (Prince Memorial Greenway) in downtown Santa Rosa and the Joe Rodota trail and to travel east to Kenwood, CA via the State and County park areas and a planned Sonoma Valley Class I shared use pathway.

The City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018 (BPMPU 2018) identified the Southeast Greenway shared use path as a First Phase Project.

On September 12, 2019, the City submitted a Letter of Interest (LOI) requesting consideration for a PCA designation for the Southeast Greenway. (See Attachment 1).

Upon review of the City’s LOI, ABAG indicated that the City should submit a local resolution nominating the Southeast Greenway as a PCA.

MTC and ABAG requires a local resolution nominating the Southeast Greenway project for a PCA. The City has coordinated with ABAG concerning the filling for a PCA designation after the identified January 2020 date.

FISCAL IMPACT

No impact to the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On March 19, 2020, staff informed the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB) that the City was asked to submit a local resolution nominating the Southeast Greenway as a PCA to MTC and ABAG.

On May 23, 2019, the Planning Commission held a public meeting and voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council certify the EIR, adopt the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, and approve the General Plan and Zoning Code amendments and the Rezoning.

On February 14, 2019, the Planning Commission recommended adoption of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018.

On February 14, 2019, a public hearing was conducted with the Planning Commission to receive comments from the Commission and the public on the Revised Draft EIR for the Southeast Greenway.

On January 17, 2019, the BPAB by motion recommended that the City Council adopt the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Letter of Interest
- Resolution

CONTACT

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