



Monterey County

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Board Report

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Authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support for TAMC's Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant proposal for the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway Project

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support for TAMC's Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant proposal for the Fort Ord Regional Trail and Greenway Project.

SUMMARY:

Fort Ord Recreational Trail and Greenway (FORTAG) concept is proposed as a 30-mile-long, multi-jurisdictional, regional network of paved recreational trails and greenways connecting communities to open space to facilitate active transportation, with the intent of expanding the region's opportunities for traveling between home, work, and commercial areas by foot, bike, or wheelchair. The Measure X sales tax provides for an estimated \$20 million in sales tax funding for FORTAG.

With the passage of Measure X in November 2016, the Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC) and the FORTAG proponents are pursuing the next steps of planning, design, and environmental analysis for the project. TAMC, in coordination with FORTAG proponents, is sponsoring a grant application for federal funding under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to plan and design the project and conduct environmental review of an approximately 4.35-mile portion of the FORTAG proposed trail connecting the Fort Ord Dunes State Park to the Fort Ord National Monument ("sanctuary-to-monument corridor"). Subject to the environmental review and future approvals, the grant would also cover permitting, acquisition of right-of-way, and construction of this segment.

TAMC is proposing to be the lead agency for the environmental analysis under CEQA for the entire length of the FORTAG, and will be presenting a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) regarding lead agency status for consideration by the jurisdictions in the near future. Monterey County would be a responsible agency under CEQA, as approximately one and a half (1.5) miles of the proposed sanctuary-to-monument alignment is proposed to cross property owned by the County, and another approximately half (.5) miles within County jurisdiction. In addition, sections of the conceptual alignment traverse county right of way. There has been no action by the Board relative to this trail across County-owned lands. TAMC has requested a letter of support for this grant proposal from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors. The letter of support for grant funding will enable the environmental review. Supporting TAMC filing this application does not commit the County to this project, alignment or use of County lands (including right-of-way), all of which would not be determined until after environmental

review. Thus, this letter of support is not a project under CEQA (Section 15378.b.4 CEQA Guidelines).

Staff asks that the Board authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support.

DISCUSSION:

According to its website (www.fortag.org), the Fort Ord Recreational Trail and Greenway (FORTAG) trail is proposed as a 30-mile-long regional network of paved recreational trails and greenways connecting communities to open space to facilitate active transportation, with the intent to expand the region's opportunities for traveling between home, work, and commercial areas by foot, bike, or wheelchair. The facility is envisioned as a continuous 12-ft wide paved bikeway with an open-space buffer on both sides incorporating habitat, parks, playing fields, developed outdoor recreation sites, associated amenities, unpaved trails, and agriculture. The northern loop concept for FORTAG encircles Marina, following an approximately 13-mile route including three miles of the existing "Coastal Recreational Trail". The southern loop concept for FORTAG encircles Seaside and bisects Del Rey Oaks, following an approximately 15-mile route including four miles of the existing coastal trail system. The FORTAG proposed route includes spurs connecting with existing bike/pedestrian infrastructure and plans. Several sections of the paved trail are conceived to be accompanied by nearby unpaved trails running loosely parallel to the main paved trail. Many unpaved trails already exist.

In November 2016, Monterey County voters approved Measure X establishing three-eighths of one percent (3/8 %) sales tax to raise funding for the Transportation Safety and Investment Plan. Measure X will raise an estimated \$600 million over thirty (30) years for road and mobility projects in Monterey County. The Measure X sales tax provides for an estimated \$20 million in sales tax funding for FORTAG. The Transportation Agency of Monterey County (TAMC), in coordination with the FORTAG proponents and local jurisdictions, is taking the lead to solicit grant funds and proposes to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement, which is not yet developed, with the local jurisdictions to designate TAMC as the lead agency for environmental review for FORTAG.

TAMC, in coordination with FORTAG proponents, is sponsoring a grant application for federal funding under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to plan and design the project and conduct environmental review of an approximately 4.35-mile portion of the FORTAG proposed trail connecting the Fort Ord Dunes State Park to the Fort Ord National Monument ("sanctuary-to-monument corridor"). Subject to the environmental review and future approvals, the grant would also cover permitting, acquisition of right-of-way, and construction of this segment. The general alignment of the sanctuary-to-monument corridor proposed in the grant application would run through the City of Marina along the 8th Street Corridor, and into and through the unincorporated area of Monterey County, ending in the vicinity where the existing Jerry Smith Trail enters the National Monument. The proposed sanctuary-to-monument corridor crosses properties currently owned by a number of entities, including Caltrans, the Dunes development, City of Marina, California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB), University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC), and the County (Attachment 1).

Approximately two (2) miles of the proposed sanctuary-to-monument segment is located within the unincorporated county, and of those, about one and a half (1.5) miles of the segment are

proposed on County-owned property. TAMC has requested a letter of support for this grant proposal from the Monterey County Board of Supervisors (Attachment 2). FLAP is a competitive grant program, and it should be noted that the County is sponsoring five FLAP grant proposals to fund projects on County-owned/operated roadways which will be competing against the FORTAG proposal. County has requested TAMC to support these applications.

Staff has met preliminarily with the FORTAG proponents and TAMC staff to discuss the project to gain an understanding of the questions and issues that will need to be addressed to help move the project from concept to reality. Based on preliminary consideration of the sanctuary-to-monument corridor, staff has identified a number of policy issues and potential institutional hurdles that will require attention during review of the proposed project, including but not limited to:

- Coordination and compatibility with the future Eastside Parkway and Intergarrison Road-widening projects
- Consistency with the FORA's BRP and HMP, the County's Fort Ord Master Plan, and the County's General Plan
- Determination of ownership, management (including liability), for the proposed, multi-jurisdictional, trail and corridor (e.g. underlying jurisdiction, new entity, TAMC)
- Determination of standards and costs for long-term maintenance, and identification of responsible entity and a sustainable funding source
- Establishment of right of way needs (e.g. width), dedication mechanism (e.g. land transfer, easement)
- Processing in accordance with Implementation Agreement between FORA and County
- Conformity with existing easement and agreements on County properties

Staff asks that the Board authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

TAMC is sponsoring the grant application for federal funding under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) and proposes to be designated as the lead agency for environmental review. The proposed sanctuary-to-monument corridor is proposed to cross properties owned by Caltrans, the City of Marina, CSUMB, UCSC, and the County, and will require coordination with and action by these entities. FORA will be involved for consistency determinations and approval of property transfers in accordance with the Implementation Agreement. Depending on outcomes and decisions that come out of the planning, environmental analysis and design process, many other entities may be engaged for this project (e.g. utility companies, conservation/wildlife agencies).

FINANCING:

There is no impact to the General Fund to submit a letter of support for the FORTAG FLAP grant application. The design, environmental review, permitting, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the approximately 4.35-mile concept for the sanctuary-to-monument proposed corridor of the FORTAG project would primarily be funded through the voter approved three-eighths of one percent (3/8 %) sales taxes to be collected and federal funding under the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), if awarded.

To date, staff time to conduct preliminary meetings and analysis for the project has been funded through the RMA's FY2016-17 baseline budget, Fund 001, Department 8170, Appropriation Unit RMA011. As the project moves forward, staff time will be needed from various County departments to coordinate with project partners and for the review and processing of the project. Staff will determine the effort and costs associated with this project, and will evaluate if the costs: can be absorbed within baseline budget for existing staff resources; may be reimbursable by the project; or if additional monies may be needed from the General Fund. Staff will return to the Board of Supervisors if it is determined additional funds are needed.

The costs and entity(ies) responsible of long-term management and maintenance of the FORTAG are not known at this time. Staff will work with TAMC and other project partners to identify responsible parties and costs for long-term management and maintenance, if the project is approved.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS STRATEGIC INITIATIVES:

Trails provide opportunity for health and wellness for biking and pedestrian transportation for County residents. The intent of the project as proposed is to connect residents and visitors to the recreational, open space, and diverse habitats of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Fort Ord National Monument. The support for the grant furthers this objective, but whether the project is approved and in what form are subject to later determinations.

Check the related Board of Supervisors Strategic Initiatives:

- Economic Development
- Administration
- Health & Human Services
- Infrastructure
- Public Safety

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Reviewed by: John Guertin, Acting RMA Deputy Director-Land Use and Community
Development

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director

The following attachments are on file with the Clerk of the Board:

- Attachment 1 - Map of FORTAG Conceptual Segments between National Monument and National Marine Sanctuary
- Attachment 2 - Draft Letter of Support for the FORTAG FLAP Grant Proposal