

MEETING DATE: May 8, 2006
DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office
PREPARED BY: L. Ruffing
DEPT. DIR. APPROVAL: _____
CITY MGR. APPROVAL: LR
PRESENTED BY: L. Ruffing

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

RECEIVE REPORT REGARDING COASTAL TRAIL PLANNING PROJECT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION TO STAFF

BACKGROUND

Last summer, the City submitted an application to the National Park Service's "Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program" seeking technical assistance to help prepare conceptual plans for the coastal trail and the Mill Site parklands. The City was selected to receive assistance and two RTCA planners/landscape architects (Linda Stonier and Sally Sheridan) have been working with the City to define the planning process.

In November 2005, the RTCA planners conducted a number of focus groups with representatives from various agencies and community groups to develop an understanding of the community, the site and the many issues that need to be addressed through the planning process. Since then, a planning group comprised of representatives from the City, RTCA, State Parks, State Coastal Conservancy, and the Mendocino Land Trust have been meeting regularly to define the scope and process for creating a conceptual plan for the coastal trail.

SUMMARY

The goal of the project is to create a conceptual design plan and illustrations for a Fort Bragg coastal trail and associated park and open space areas from Pudding Creek to Noyo Harbor. This will assist the City in its efforts to establish a coastal trail on the Mill Site Parkland and it will assist State Parks in its efforts to manage visitor use at the recently-acquired Glass Beach property in MacKerricher State Park.

The planning process will be co-sponsored by the following entities:

- City of Fort Bragg
- State Department of Parks & Recreation
- Mendocino Land Trust
- State Coastal Conservancy
- Rivers, Trails & Conservation Assistance Program
- Georgia-Pacific (Koch Industries)

We are planning a three-day Design Workshop to be held at the end of September. The workshop will bring together invited community members, agency staff, students, artists, and representatives from the California chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and other professionals, to creatively address appropriate corridor development and enhancements, adjacent parkland concepts, site restoration, community connections, and interpretive features. Attachment 1 provides information about the RTCA technical assistance program and their partnership with the ASLA, along with a generalized explanation of what happens at a design workshop. Attachment 2 presents a draft program and agenda for the proposed Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Design Workshop. Attendance at the Design Workshop will be “by invitation only” to allow for the creation of four focused, balanced, and productive working groups. The public will be invited to attend a presentation of the results and to provide feedback at the conclusion of the three-day workshop. We will also be soliciting broad public input at a Community Workshop to be held a couple of weeks in advance of the Design Workshop. The Community Workshop will be held on September 14, and the Design Workshop will be held on September 28, 29 and 30. We will be conducting bus tours of the Mill Site in advance of the Community Workshop—and those are tentatively scheduled for September 12.

The RTCA program provides technical assistance for planning efforts, however, a source of funding is needed to cover the hard costs associated with the Design Workshop. Staff estimates the costs at \$15,000, as follows:

Bus Tours (publicity; bus rentals)	\$500
Community Workshop (publicity; facility; refreshments; supplies)	\$500
Add’l RTCA travel costs (3 extra trips)	\$3,500
Design Workshop (publicity; postage; copying)	\$500
Design Workshop (supplies; facility; food; etc.)	\$5,000
ASLA volunteers (mileage; lodging)	\$3,000
Workshop follow-up	\$2,000

Staff is working with Congressman Thompson's office to obtain clarification about when and how to access the funds that were appropriated in the federal budget and whether they would be available to cover these expenses. If not, staff suggests that a portion of the funds from the 2004 redevelopment bond that were set aside for public acquisition on the Mill Site be used for this purpose. We believe that this is an eligible use of the bond funds as the planning process is directly related to the construction of the coastal trail and parkland facilities—and these facilities will have great economic benefit to the redevelopment project area. At this time, staff is seeking direction from the Council/RDA Board as to whether to proceed with the allocation of RDA funds to the planning process, with the understanding that they would be supplanted by federal funds from the congressional appropriation, if feasible.

FISCAL IMPACT

The coastal trail planning process involves a considerable amount of in-kind staffing from the City as well as all of the other co-sponsoring agencies. Hard costs associated with the Design Workshop and Community Workshop are estimated at approximately \$15,000. Staff

recommends that, if feasible, the \$750,000 congressional appropriation for the coastal trail would be tapped into to pay these expenses. Otherwise, staff recommends that redevelopment bond funds be used.

ALTERNATIVES

1. No action. Identify further information or analysis requested from staff.
2. Identify alternative funding source(s) for coastal trail planning process.
3. Direct staff to proceed with the allocation of \$15,000 of the redevelopment bond funds to cover costs associated with the coastal trail planning project. **(This is the staff recommendation)**

RECOMMENDATION

Receive Report Regarding Coastal Trail Planning Project and Provide Direction to Staff

ATTACHMENTS

1. "What Happens at a Design Workshop"
2. Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Design Workshop- Draft Program & Agenda

AGENDA & SUMMARY REPORT TO:

1. Linda Stonier and Sally Sheridan; RTCA
2. Sheila Semans; State Coastal Conservancy
3. Renee Pasquinelli and Kirk Marshall; State Parks
4. James Bernard and Louisa Morris; Mendocino Land Trust
5. Carol Stephens; Georgia-Pacific

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop

What Happens at a Design Workshop

Background

Approaching its 6th year of partnership, the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA) have been collaborating under the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding to help communities across the nation "plan, design, and manage their natural, cultural and recreation resources." RTCA is a technical assistance program of the National Park Service with offices throughout the country. Its mission is to advocate and assist community-based conservation action. This partnership with RTCA provides ASLA members a unique opportunity to broaden their professional experience in community design process while raising public awareness about their profession through pro bono technical assistance on RTCA projects.

What actually happens at a Design Workshop?

A "design team" of multidisciplinary professionals comes together for multiple consecutive days with the necessary expertise to create holistic, feasible concept plans that consider all relevant input. The design team stays consistent for the duration of the workshop, working day and night on-site in a "workshop studio."

A successful workshop is not a stand-alone process, but requires extensive preparation and follow-through. The workflow involves a well-planned series of collaborative design and public input cycles throughout its course. All workshop participants and stakeholders – from city planner to local business owner– become aware of the opportunities and challenges of the development and design issues, and everyone works together to arrive at the best possible solution.

Step One

The workshop usually starts with a kick-off meeting and site tour for the design team. A public "open house" follows to provide an overview of the purpose and process of the Workshop and to solicit the public's response. Public input from any prior outreach efforts can also be presented to the design team at this time.

Step Two

The design team creates a series of alternative concepts based on all information gathered to date. Another round of public presentation and feedback is then used to refine the alternatives and create more detailed plans for peer and public review and critique at another open house. The design team further refines and narrows the feedback into a final draft plan and set of implementation documents to be presented for public comment on the final night of the workshop.

Step Three

Although a set of usable documents including both graphic and textual elements are anticipated results from the workshop, the project process is not complete when the workshop is over. One additional feedback loop of stakeholder discussions and a follow-up meeting approximately a month later are usually key for refining the work into a well-accepted final plan.

Key Principles

Work collaboratively

All interested parties must be involved from the beginning. Having contributed to the planning, participants are in a position both to understand and support the project's results.

Design cross-functionally

A multi-disciplinary team method results in decisions that are realistic every step of the way. The cross-functional process eliminates the need for re-work because the design work continually reflects the wisdom of each specialty.

Compress work sessions

The workshop itself, usually lasting 2 ½ - 3 days, is a series of meetings and design sessions that would traditionally take months to complete. This time compression facilitates creative problem solving by accelerating decision-making and reducing unconstructive negotiation tactics. It also encourages people to abandon their usual working patterns and “think outside of the box.”

Communicate in short feedback loops

During the workshop, design ideas are created based upon a public vision, and presented within hours for further review, critique, and refinement. Regular stakeholder input and reviews quickly build trust in the process and foster true understanding and support of the product.

Use design to achieve a shared vision and create holistic solutions

Design is a powerful tool for establishing a shared vision. Drawings illustrate the complexity of the design challenges and can illustrate creative solutions and opportunities to these challenges. They may be used to resolve conflict by proposing previously unexplored solutions that represent win/win solutions.

Hold the Workshop on site

Working on site fosters the design team's understanding of local values and traditions, and provides the necessary easy access to stakeholders and information. The workshop area should be located in a place where it is easily accessible to all stakeholders and where the designers have access to the site.

Source: National Charrette Institute

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop Draft Program

Project Goal

To create a conceptual design plan and illustrations for a Fort Bragg coastal trail and associated park and open space areas from Pudding Creek to Noyo Harbor. A three-day design workshop organized and conducted by a diverse sponsoring team will bring together invited community members, agency staff, students, artists, representatives from the California chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architects and other professionals, to creatively address appropriate trail corridor development and enhancements, adjacent parkland concepts, site restoration, community connections, and interpretive features.

Vision Statement for the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Project

A four-mile long coastal public access corridor between Pudding Creek trestle and Noyo Bay that includes a non-motorized trail and park and open space elements, and re-connects the Fort Bragg community to its waterfront.

Workshop Date

Thursday, September 28th through Saturday, September 30th, 2006

Location

[tbd]

Workshop Co-Sponsors

City of Fort Bragg
California State Coastal Conservancy
California State Parks
Mendocino Land Trust
Georgia Pacific (Koch Industries)
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program of the National Park Service

Workshop Project Scope

The coastal trail corridor, associated parkland/open space sites and public access connections from the southern end of the Pudding Creek trestle to Noyo Harbor, including:

- 1) Coastal trail alignment from Pudding Creek trestle to Noyo Harbor;

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop Draft Program

- 2) Park and open space planning for the Glass Beach area of MacKerricher State Park and the North Soldier Bay headlands and South Parkland parcels on the mill site;
- 3) Community connections, including east-west public access between the City of Fort Bragg and the coastal trail corridor and parkland/open space areas; public access from the north and south ends of the mill site.

Desired Outcomes

- 1) Identification and definition of the coastal trail alignment, character, and enhancements
 - Desired/allowable uses
 - Trail details (width, materials)
 - Trail alignment and bluff setbacks
 - Environmentally sensitive areas
 - Access and parking
 - Site amenities (benching, lighting, drinking fountains, windbreaks, restrooms)
 - Fencing (security, safety, directional)
 - Interpretive and wayfinding features (signage, art)
 - Buffer current and future land uses
- 2) Park/open space conceptual Plans for Glass Beach, North Soldier Bay Headlands, South Parkland parcel
 - Overall Conceptual Design*
 - Public use (active, passive interpretive....)
 - Sensitive habitat
 - Bluff erosion
 - Beach and intertidal access
 - Public access and parking
 - Stormwater treatment

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop

Draft Program

- Security/safety

Interpretive Plan

- Theme identification, media ideas, opportunity sites

Site Restoration Solutions

- Asphalt removal
- Informal trails
- Haphazard bluff/beach access
- Invasive plant removal/native plant restoration
- Bluff stabilization

Buffering Current and Future Uses/Design Treatment

- Trail alignment
- Integration and connections with adjacent uses
- Marine Lab
- Mill Pond area
- Wastewater treatment plant
- Native American homes
- Cemetery
- Parkland/open space edges

3) Local/regional "greeninfrastructure" concept and linkages

- Corridor connections north to MacKerricher State Park and south to Noyo Beach and Pomo Bluffs Park
- Visual connections to the waterfront
- Public access links to town
- Necessary street connections (e.g. Glass Beach Drive)
- Short or long-term access to coastal trail corridor on south end of mill site
- Potential connections to Marine Lab site

4) Implementation/Safety/Maintenance

- Project phasing (permitting)
- City maintenance responsibilities
- Stewardship ("Friends" groups)
- Joint agency management potential
- Funding needs

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop

Draft Program

Workshop Agenda

Thursday 9/28

- 1:00 pm Welcome and Introductions (NPS, City)
Workshop Overview/Site Orientation (via maps/aerials) (City, other sponsors)
Guided Site Tour (Sponsors, resource experts)
- 4:30 Presentation of work/plans to date (City or Consultant)
- Mill Site Management Plan
 - GP Mill Site Reuse Study
 - ALTA survey
 - Marine Center
 - State Parks General Plans
 - Conservancy Plans
 - Resources
 - Archaeological
 - Cultural (Native American studies)
 - Hydrology (including stormwater)
 - Geology (Engineering Geologic Reconnaissance Report)
 - Sensitive species
 - Habitat
 - Economic Benefits of Parkland
- 7:00 Dinner/ Place-making Presentation (Native American, Historian, Storyteller...) (Design Team and guest speaker)
- 9:00 Adjourn

Friday 9/29

- 8:30 Agenda Review/Desired Outcomes (NPS)
- 8:45 Summary of public input (from public outreach process) (City/other)
- 9:15 Social/Environmental Challenges (Workshop co-sponsors)
- Homeless
 - Toxics
 - Abalone Harvesting
 - Communication with multi-cultural users
 - Drainage and erosion
 - Balancing recreational use and restoration/resource protection
- 10:00 Team Formation (NPS)
- Presentation of Team Design Challenges
 - Team Assignments
- 10:30 Break

5.08.06

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program
National Park Service

Fort Bragg Coastal Trail - Design Workshop

Draft Program

10:45	Facilitated Discussion/Design Development (NPS) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observed Conditions• Opportunities and Constraints Analysis
12:30	Lunch
1:00	Design Development (Facilitated Teams)
4:30	Break
4:45	Peer Review (NPS, Design Teams, other interested parties)
6:30	Break
7:30	Dinner

Saturday 9/30

8:00	Discuss Plan Integration and/or Optional Site Visit (Facilitated Teams)
10:00	Concept Plan development and design Refinement (Facilitated Teams) (with working lunch)
2:00	Public Presentation and Feedback (NPS and Teams)
3:30	Respond to Feedback/Identify Action Items (NPS, Workshop co-sponsors, Teams)
5:00	Adjourn