



PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA REPORT

DATE: September 29, 2017

AGENDA OF:

October 5, 2017

ITEM NO.:

CP17-0170

Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 7 Project (Phase I)

RECOMMENDATION: That the Planning Commission adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Exhibit "B") and approve the Coastal Permit the Design Permit and the Heritage Tree Removal Permit to construct Phase 1 of Segment 7 of the Coastal Rail Trail based on the Findings listed below and the Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit "A."

PROJECT DATA

Property Owner: Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission
Railroad right-of-way (ROW)

Representative: Christophe Schneider, Assistant Director/City Engineer, Santa Cruz
Public Works Department

Application Type: Coastal, Design and Heritage Tree removal Permits to construct
Phase 1 of Segment 7 of the Santa Cruz Rail Trail located in the
IG/Per2; RL; R-1-5; CZO zone districts.

Zoning: General Industrial Performance Overlay (IG/Per2), Single family
residential (R-1-5) Coastal Zone Overlay (CZO)

Project Consistency: Consistent with zone district regulations

General Plan: Industrial, Low Density Residential (1.1-10 DU/Acre)

Project Consistency: Consistent with the General Plan designation

Land Use:

- Existing: Railroad ROW
- Proposed: Railroad ROW with multi use trail

Parking: NA

Coastal Review: Coastal Permit required

Environmental Review: Mitigated Negative Declaration

Mandatory Action Date: 60 days after adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration

Planner: Michael S. Ferry, AICP

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BACKGROUND

The 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail plan extends from Davenport to Watsonville in Santa Cruz County, and is considered the spine or primary alignment of the 50-mile Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network (MBSST) extending along the entire Santa Cruz County coast, from the Santa Cruz/San Mateo County line on the north to the Santa Cruz/Monterey County line on the south. The MBSST Network includes several spur trails connecting a number of recreational areas such as Arana Gulch and the Moore Creek Preserve to the Coastal Rail Trail network.

The Coastal Rail Trail located within the City will be constructed in the Santa Cruz Branch Rail Line right-of-way (ROW), owned by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC). The Santa Cruz & Monterey Bay (SC&MB) Railway has an operating agreement with the SCCRTC to operate freight trains on the rail line. SC&MB Railway is a company of Iowa Pacific Holdings, is designated as the common carrier on this line by the Surface Transportation Board (STB), and has an agreement with the RTC for their operations and owns an easement for those operations. Regular freight service is currently provided in the south county area while freight operations on the other portions of the line are currently being considered. Recreational passenger rail service currently includes service to and from the Boardwalk area, including 1,000 feet west of the wye, by Roaring Camp Railroads which is located in Felton. Recreational passenger service up-coast from the City may be considered in the future.

The RTC prepared the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan to establish a continuous alignment, design standards, and guidelines for the Coastal Rail Trail and its associated Trail Network. The RTC certified a Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Master Plan on November 7th, 2013, and an addendum to the Final EIR on February 6, 2014. The Master Plan divides the 32-mile Coastal Rail Trail alignment into 20 segments: Segments 1-5 (Northern Reach), Segments 6-14 (Central Reach), and Segments 15-20 (Watsonville Reach). This project (Phase 1) represents the majority of Segment 7 of the Coastal Rail Trail in the Master Plan.

Phase 1 of Segment 7 runs from Natural Bridges Drive on the west to the intersection of California Street and Bay Street on the east. The Phase 1 logical termini are the existing bicycle facilities and sidewalks at each end of the segment and at each street crossing. Phase 1 would not require future construction or transportation improvements to fully utilize the trail and therefore, can be considered a stand-alone project with independent utility. Final plans for Phase 2 of Segment 7 are currently under development and scheduled for environmental review in early winter 2018.

The Initial Study for Phase 1 of segment 7 was circulated for 30 days from August 14, 2017 to September 14, 2017. Staff received comments from the Coastal Commission and the County Environment Health Department, as well as many comments from the public regarding the six Heritage Trees that are proposed to be removed. Those comments are attached to the staff report and discussed in the Environmental section of the report.

Staff also received many comments that did not address the Initial Study. At the time the staff report was completed, staff had received 49 comments in support of the project and 75 comments

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in opposition to the project. The opponents were primarily concerned that the project included the rail line for future use and that the RTC is currently working on a Unified Corridor Investment Study (UCS) with a non-rail option. Many of the opponents felt the project should wait until the study has been completed.

The RTC and local jurisdictions are moving ahead with the rail trail projects that have been approved through a public process by the RTC and partnering agencies. The RTC adopted a trail Master Plan in 2013 after multiple years of public input with a policy to design the trail in such a way so as to not preclude future rail service. The four governing bodies of the jurisdictions through which the trail will traverse also adopted the Master Plan. Funding for design and construction of segments was first allocated in December, 2013 and the RTC has taken multiple actions since that time to move ahead with trail projects under the scenario specified in the Master Plan.

Measure D, approved by Santa Cruz County voters in November of 2016 commits the RTC to conduct an analysis of both rail transit and non-rail options for the corridor. The RTC is using the UCS to conduct that analysis. Once the UCS is completed, the Commission will determine the best use of the corridor. That action may or may not change current policy. Until such action is taken, the RTC is responding to funding requirements to construct trail segments within a specified timeframe, as well as general community interest to see as much of the trail constructed as possible.

If the policy is revised for a trail-only option, an unknown amount of time and effort will be needed to reverse the current commitments to the California Transportation Commission, the current rail operator, SC&MB Railway, and the Surface Transportation Board, and to go through a public outreach process for a new design. Grant funds obtained for the trail prior to passage of Measure D may be lost if the RTC and implementing agencies wait until this process is completed. The segments of trail that are planned for construction prior to the completion of the UCS in December 2018 could be widened in the future to utilize the area with rails if a trail-only policy is later selected.

Section 24.08.220 of the Zoning Ordinance requires approval of a Coastal Permit for this project while Section 24.08.410 of the Zoning Ordinance requires approval of a Design Permit. A Coastal Permit is typically approved by the Zoning Administrator at a public hearing; however, Section 24.04.130.2 of the Zoning Ordinance allows the Zoning Administrator to refer to the Planning Commission any matters on which he or she is authorized to act. Given the significant public interest in this project, coupled with associated policy matters, the Zoning Administrator has referred this item to the Planning Commission.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The phase 1 project is a 1.36-mile section of paved bicycle/pedestrian Multi Use Trail (MUT) along an existing rail line within the City from Natural Bridges Drive on the west to the intersection of California Street and Bay Street on the east. The trail within this Phase 1 section will vary from a

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minimum of 12 feet, up to 16 feet in width. The edge of the trail alignment will range from 8.5 feet in the constrained areas, to a maximum of 45 feet from the rail centerline.

The trail will be constructed within the existing rail ROW, except where the trail crosses public streets, and where the trail would require limited private land adjacent to the rail ROW to maintain minimum clearance from the rail tracks. These locations include the New Leaf Market parcels and a small portion of one parcel at Almar Avenue. Permanent easements will be required from each of these locations. No property acquisition or structure removal will be required. The project includes protection of 15 trees, 11 of which are recognized as Heritage Trees. Although the trail alignment has been altered to retain several trees, six heritage trees will have to be removed due to the project construction. The City Arborist has reviewed the plans and added several tree protection measures that are included in the Conditions of Approval. The six heritage trees to be removed will require 12 replacement trees to be planted. The location and species of the replacement trees will be reviewed and approved by the City Arborist.

The Project area is primarily flat and open and extends through residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational areas. The project plans include:

- Construction of approximately 1.36 miles of new Multi Use paved trail adjacent to the coastal, or south side of the rail;
- Smooth wire fencing with metal posts, 54-inches in height between edge of rail and trail;
- Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed;
- 11 roadway crossings, nine of which are cross-bike facilities;
- 10 new lights added at new roadway crossings
- One drainage crossing (Arroyo Seco) via construction of a clear span bridge;
- Two pedestrian hybrid beacons at Swift Street and Fair Avenue;
- Relocation and reconstruction of one trash enclosure at New Leaf Market;
- Seven new parking spaces at New Leaf Market, and three on-street parking spaces along Fair Avenue;
- Installation of one new storm drain inlet;
- Extension of three small culverts (one between Rankin Street and Younglove Street and two on either side of Palm Street, and;
- A retaining wall west of Almar approximately 55 feet in length and from 1-5 feet in height.

Bicycle and pedestrian access points to the trail will be available at all street crossings, 10 of which will include new street lights. Safety fencing is required to separate the trail from the railroad. The design includes smooth wire fencing with metal posts separating the inner edge of the trail from the rail. Fencing will be approximately 54-inches in height. Way-finding, directional, and safety signage, as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed.

A clear span bridge will be constructed over Arroyo Seco designed to avoid encroachment into watercourse as well as the embankment. Construction of public trails and bridges on public lands, consistent with a Parks Master Plan or Management Plan are exempt from a Watercourse

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Development Permit. As discussed above the RTC prepared the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan to establish a continuous alignment, design standards, and guidelines for the Coastal Rail Trail and its associated Trail Network.

The trail alignment begins at Natural Bridges Drive extending to Swift Street to the east. This section of the Project alignment would be approximately 0.45-miles long. The trail will cross Arroyo Seco with a clear span bridge structure to avoid encroachment into the stream and embankment. Installation of the bridge will not require tree removal.

The trail alignment continues from Swift Street to Fair Avenue approximately 0.17-miles and will require the partial relocation and reconstruction of the trash enclosure and several parking spaces in at the New Leaf Market grocery store. A total of seven net new parking spaces will to be added to the New Leaf parking lot and the plans include the construction of a park lane island along Fair Avenue, east of the market, to accommodate an additional three on-street parking spaces.

The alignment continues approximately 0.28-miles from Fair Avenue to Rankin Street. A retaining wall will be required along this section of the alignment, just west of Almar Avenue to support the trail. This retaining wall would be approximately 55 feet in length and would vary in height from one to five feet in height. At the intersection of Rankin and Seaside Street, the trail will cross Seaside Street to the east corner of the intersection, and then cross Rankin Street.

The alignment continues east approximately 0.18-miles from Rankin Street to Palm Street crossing Younglove Avenue, Bellevue Street, and Dufour Street. As the Project alignment approaches Palm Street, it will move further away from the rail to avoid an existing culvert on the western side of Palm Street. At this location, an additional culvert will be constructed to extend the existing culvert underneath the trail to maintain the existing drainage pattern. Approximately 20 trees of varying species and a row of bamboo will be removed to accommodate the trail. Three of these trees qualify as heritage trees under the Santa Cruz City Code Chapter 9.56.

The trail continues east approximately 0.27-miles from Palm Street to California Street, crossing Lennox, Redwood, and Bay Streets. From Palm Street, the trail will continue to veer away from the rail to avoid a second existing culvert on the eastern side of Palm Street. An additional culvert will be constructed to extend the existing culvert underneath the trail to maintain the existing drainage pattern. From this point, the trail will curve northward, crossing Lennox Street approximately 50 feet south of where the rail crosses the street. The project includes a striped pedestrian crosswalk at this crossing. Additionally, the existing sidewalk would be extended out and around an existing heritage Cypress Tree on Lennox Street for pedestrian travel while bicyclists would continue to travel along the low volume road. The proposed design allows the preservation of this heritage tree.

The trail continues east on the coastal side of the rail to Bay Street. At Bay Street, the trail will turn east and continue along Bay Street, crossing Redwood Street, to California Street. This section of the trail includes a Cycle Track (Class IV Pathway) for bicyclists traveling east or west on Bay Street. At California Street, the trail follows the existing crosswalk at Bay Street and California Street to cross Bay Street. The existing three-way stop located at Bay Street and California Avenue

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will be relocated to Bay Street and California Street to create a controlled stop. The Project will also include a curb ramp on each end of the existing crosswalk for trail users at this crossing. Approximately five trees of varying species will be removed to accommodate the trail, three of which qualify as heritage trees.

ANALYSIS

A guiding principle found in the 2030 General Plan is to provide an accessible, comprehensive, and effective transportation system that integrates automobile use with sustainable and innovative transportation options—including enhanced public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks throughout the community. There are numerous General Plan Goals, Policies and actions that support development of the Rail Trail.

The Community Design Element includes the following policies supporting the project:

- CD4.1.4 Protect and enhance historic street patterns, rail lines, walls, and pedestrian walkways to emphasize historic routes and help define districts and neighborhoods.
- CD5.1 Create a well-connected street and pedestrian network.
- CD5.1.1 Implement the Master Transportation Study's recommendations for improving the city's pedestrian network.

The Land Use Element includes the following policies that support this project as it provides access to the coast:

- LU2.3.1 Protect, maintain, and enhance publicly accessible coastal and open space areas.
- LU3.11 Protect open spaces that provide scenic, recreational, educational, and environmental benefits.
- LU3.11.1 Continue to recognize and protect the Pacific Ocean, Monterey Bay, and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary as natural resources and valuable open space.

By providing bicycle and pedestrian access the project fulfills:

- Goal LU4 Land use patterns should facilitate alternative transportation and/or minimize transportation demand.
- Policy LU4.2 Encourage land use changes that reduce the need for autos.

The Following General Plan Policies support the use of the railway for transit purposes, therefore, maintaining the rail with this design, the project supports:

- LU4.2.3 Prepare a Rail Transit Land Use Plan and recommend land use changes at and near proposed transit stops in anticipation of local rail service.
- LU4.5 Seek opportunities to secure land for transit center development along rail lines.
- LU4.5.1 Consult with the Regional Transportation Commission on land dedications or land use changes related to future transit centers.
- LU4.5.2 Condition projects located along rail lines for potential rail stops.

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The Mobility Element includes the following goals and policies that support the project:

- Goal M1 Land use patterns, street design, parking, and access solutions that facilitate multiple transportation alternatives.
- M1.1.1 Create walk-able, transit-oriented activity centers throughout the city.
- M1.1.2 Connect activity centers with pedestrian and bicycle paths.
- M1.1.3 Implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements that support transit ridership.
- M1.4.2 Allow for future multi-modal use of future rights-of-way by protecting them from development.
- M1.5.1 Increase land use efficiency and the walkability of activity centers.
- Goal M2 A safe, sustainable, efficient, adaptive, and accessible transportation system.
- M2.1 Provide leadership on sustainable regional mobility.
- M2.1.2 Encourage use of alternative modes of transportation.
- M2.1.3 Implement pedestrian, bike, mass transit, and road system improvements through the Capital Improvements Program.
- M2.1.4 Support regional funding and implementation of key regional projects that can significantly benefit Santa Cruz and further the City's mobility policies.

Specific Policies regarding rail include:

- M2.2 Encourage passenger rail transit or other alternative transportation options via the continued support, acquisition, and expansion of railroad rights-of-way.
- M2.2.1 Protect existing and potential railroad lines and rights-of-way, and other potential rights-of-way, from land uses that would prevent the development of rail or fixed-guide way services or other transportation-related uses in the future.
- M2.2.2 Encourage the continued transport of goods by rail.

The Rail Trail design and location supports the following policies in the Mobility Element:

- M3.3.5 Require new development to be designed to discourage through traffic in adjacent neighborhoods and to encourage bicycle or pedestrian connections.
- Goal M4 A citywide interconnected system of safe, inviting, and accessible pedestrian ways and bikeways.
- M4.1 Enable and encourage walking in Santa Cruz.
- M4.1.1 Update and implement the Pedestrian Master Plan for development of a complete, continuous, and structurally adequate system of pedestrian paths and walkways.
- M4.1.4 Encourage walking in Santa Cruz through educational outreach and promotional programs. M4.2 Provide and maintain a complete, interconnected, safe, inviting, and efficient citywide bicycle network.
- M4.2.2 Work with appropriate agencies to seek funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects.
- M4.2.3 Facilitate bicycling connections to all travel modes.
- M4.3 Require pedestrian and bicycle improvements in major activity centers and activity areas.
- M4.3.2 Develop bike commute routes along railroad rights-of-way (while ensuring the ability to develop rail transit) and along West Cliff Drive, Broadway, King, and other streets.

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- M4.4 Assure a high level of bicycle user amenities.
- M4.5 Support pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements.
- M4.5.1 Design and also modify intersections using striping, pedestrian crossing signs, pedestrian islands, and pedestrian-friendly signal phasing.
- M4.5.3 Develop a schedule and comprehensive funding program for proposed bike system improvements within the Capital Improvements Program.

The Park and Recreation Element includes the following goals and policies that support this project:

- Goal PR3 Well managed, clean, and convenient public access to open space lands and coastline.
- PR3.1 Enhance the outdoor educational and recreational experience in appropriate open space lands and coastline.
- PR3.1.1 Provide recreational and educational opportunities within the open space lands and coastline consistent with adopted master or management plans.
- PR3.2 As opportunities arise and when economically feasible, consider acquiring undeveloped parcels that provide access to City-owned open space lands and coastline.
- PR3.3 Protect, maintain, and enhance publicly accessible coastal and open space areas.
- PR3.3.3 Require new development and public works projects to provide public access from the nearest public roadway to the shoreline and along the coast, except where it is inconsistent with public safety or protection of fragile coastal resources, or where adequate access exists nearby.
- PR3.3.4 Maximize public access and enjoyment of recreation areas along the coastline.
- Goal PR4 An integrated system of citywide and regional trails.
- PR4.1 Provide and maintain an accessible citywide trail system within the city and connect it to regional trails.
- PR4.1.1 Provide trails for a range of uses.
- PR4.1.2 Update and maintain trails in accordance with the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.
- PR4.1.4 Create a continuous pathway along the coast by enhancing the physical links between West Cliff and East Cliff Drives and the Beach Promenade.
- PR4.2 Provide and maintain trails within parks and appropriate open space areas.
- PR4.2.1 Use public or quasi-publicly-owned lands for trails.
- PR4.2.2 Obtain trail easements through private donations and by public purchase, where required for critical links.

The Natural Resource and Conservation Element includes the following policies that support the project:

- NRC4.4.2 Establish an Alternative Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Team to produce a transportation plan that defines alternative transportation options (not associated with autos, busses or carpools) to address the Santa Cruz mobile emission reduction goals of 30 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050.

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- NRC6.1 Manage and enhance open space and the coastline.
- NRC6.2 Support protection of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and its environs.

The 2020 General Plan Goals and Policies listed above support numerous aspects of the proposed Rail Trail. The Adopted Local Coastal Plan includes policies that support the Rail Trail project as well:

- LCP Policy 3.5 Protect coastal recreation areas, maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public, and enhance public access, open space quality and recreational enjoyment in a manner that is consistent with the California Coastal Act.
- LCP Policy 3.5.5 Develop and implement plans to maximize public access and enjoyment of recreations areas along the coastline.
- LCP Policy 3.7 Recognize and protect the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay as a valuable open space, natural resource, and National Marine Sanctuary.

Environmental

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the SCCRTC certified the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Master Plan on November 7th, 2013, and an addendum to the Final EIR on February 6, 2014. Because funding sources for this Project include both local, State, and Federal sources, the environmental documentation for the Project must comply with both CEQA and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). As the CEQA lead agency, the City has prepared an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) which is attached to this report. As the NEPA lead agency assigned by the Federal Highway Administration, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), is preparing a Categorical Exclusion (CE).

The Initial Study was circulated for 30 days from August 14, 2017 to September 14, 2017. Staff received 124 comments regarding the Initial Study. One comment from Coastal Commission staff included questions regarding fencing, heritage tree removal, cultural resources and water quality. Staff met with Commission staff and addressed their concerns. The County Environmental Health Department provided a letter outlining the notification procedure required prior to any construction activity due to potential soil contamination. The letter also noted that the paved path provides a barrier to potential contaminated soil which would protect the public from potential hazards. Many comments expressed concern with tree removal which is discussed in the Initial Study and the staff report and which have been incorporated into the conditions of approval.

The project includes tree protection measures for 15 trees, 11 of which are recognized as Heritage Trees in the Municipal Code. The measures include tree fencing to be installed around the drip line of the trees prior to and throughout the time of construction. The fencing will be installed prior to any ground disturbance in a manner approved by the City Arborist. The fencing will be removed at the conclusion of construction and with approval of the City Arborist. No construction materials can be placed within the tree protection zone and any protected tree with ivy shall have it removed as part of the protection measure. Root pruning for any roots greater

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than two inches in diameter will be completed under the supervision of the City Arborist. Page two of the project plans includes the tree notes discussed above.

Although the trail alignment has been altered to save several trees, six heritage trees will have to be removed due to the project construction. The six heritage trees to be removed will require 12 replacement trees to be planted. The location and species of the replacement trees will be reviewed and approved by the City Arborist. Many more of the comments concerned the project in general by citizens in support of the proposed design and those opposed to the design leaving the rail lines in place which was discussed in the Background section of the staff report.

Phase 2 of Segment 7 is currently under development and scheduled for CEQA review in the early winter 2018.

Summary

Segment 7 will be the first section of the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail network to be built. The existing connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the coastal edge, beaches, and activity centers is limited. This project will fill in one section of the missing gaps in the City's bicycle network. Phase 1 will maximize safe and convenient opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian uses separate from roadway vehicle traffic while providing connectivity to other existing local and regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities from residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. The limits of Phase 1 provide ideal start and end points from adjacent residential and commercial neighborhoods. The trail access along the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary will enhance appreciation, understanding, and protection of the Sanctuary while promoting awareness of the trail, trail opportunities, and trail user responsibilities; and reduce transportation related energy use and greenhouse gas generation.

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Exhibit "B") and approve the Coastal, Design, and the Heritage Tree Removal Permits based on the Findings listed below and the Conditions of Approval attached as Exhibit "A."

FINDINGS

Coastal Permit, Section 24.08.250

1. Maintain views between the sea and the first public roadway parallel to the sea.

The project will maintain and enhance coastal views. Safety fencing is required to separate the trail from the railroad. The design includes smooth wire fencing with metal posts separating the inner edge of the trail from the rail. Fencing will be approximately 54-inches in height. Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed.

2. Protect vegetation, natural habitats and natural resources consistent with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan.

The proposed project has been evaluated for potential environmental impacts in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will protect the natural resources within the rail right-of-way (ROW).

The project includes tree protection measures for 15 trees, 11 of which are recognized as Heritage Trees in the Municipal Code. The measures include tree fencing to be installed around the drip line of the trees prior to and throughout the time of construction. The fencing will be installed prior to any ground disturbance in a manner approved by the City Arborist. The fencing will be removed at the conclusion of construction and with approval of the City Arborist. No construction materials can be placed within the tree protection zone and any protected tree with ivy shall have it removed as part of the protection measure. Root pruning for any roots greater than two inches in diameter will be completed under the supervision of the City Arborist. Page two of the project plans includes the tree preservation measures discussed above.

Although the trail alignment has been altered to save several trees, six heritage trees will have to be removed due to the project construction. The six heritage trees to be removed will require 12 replacement trees to be planted. The location and species of the replacement trees will be reviewed and approved by the City Arborist.

3. Be consistent with any applicable design plans and/or area plans incorporated into the Local Coastal Land Use Plan, in that it implements policies therein.

The project is consistent with the General Plan, the Zoning Ordinance and Local Coastal Land Use Plan. The project design ensures the protection of coastal resources and views, enhances public access, provides maintenance for the use and promotes a safe and reasonable use of an existing railroad ROW.

The Adopted Local Coastal Plan includes the following policies that support the Rail Trail project: Policy 3.5 Protect coastal recreation areas, maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public, and enhance public access, open space quality and recreational enjoyment in a manner that is consistent with the California Coastal Act. Policy 3.5.5: Develop and implement plans to maximize public access and enjoyment of recreations areas along the coastline. 3.7: Recognize and protect the Pacific Ocean and Monterey Bay as a valuable open space, natural resource, and National Marine Sanctuary.

Phase I of Segment 7 of the Santa Cruz Rail Trail Project has been adopted through a public process by the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) and the City of Santa Cruz. The RTC adopted a Trail Master Plan in 2013 after multiple

years of public input with a policy to design the trail in such a way so as to not preclude future rail service. The four governing bodies of the jurisdictions through which the trail will traverse also adopted the Master Plan. The project is consistent with the Master Plan.

4. Maintain public access to the coast along any coastline as set forth in the Local Coastal Land Use Plan.

The project is consistent with Local Coastal Plan Policy 3.7.5: Develop and implement plans to maximize public access and enjoyment of recreations areas along the coastline.

Segment 7 will be the first section of the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail network to be built. The existing connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the coastal edge, beaches, and activity centers is limited. This project will fill in one section of the missing gaps in the City's bicycle network. Phase 1 will maximize safe and convenient opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian uses on a trail separate from roadway vehicle traffic while providing connectivity to other existing local and regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities from residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. The trail will provide ideal start and end point from residential neighborhoods while providing a public trail access along the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to enhance appreciation, understanding, and protection of the Sanctuary. The project will promote alternative transportation modes while reducing transportation related energy use and greenhouse gas generation.

5. Be consistent with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan goal of providing visitor-serving needs as appropriate.

This project will provide coastal access for visitor serving and residential uses inland as well as along the coast to the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary which will enhance appreciation, understanding, and protection of the Sanctuary.

6. Be consistent with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan goal of encouraging coastal development uses as appropriate.

The project is consistent with Local Coastal Plan Policy 3.5: Protect coastal recreation areas, maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public, and enhance public access, open space quality and recreational enjoyment in a manner that is consistent with the California Coastal Act. This project is an appropriate coastal use by providing access to coastal recreational uses.

Design Permit, Section 24.08.430

7. The site plan shall be consistent with physical development policies of the General Plan, any required or optional element of the General Plan, any area plan or

specific plan or other city policy for physical development. If located in the Coastal Zone, a site plan shall also be consistent with policies of the Local Coastal Program.

A guiding principle found in the 2030 General Plan is to provide an accessible, comprehensive, and effective transportation system that integrates automobile use with sustainable and innovative transportation options—including enhanced public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks throughout the community. There are numerous General Plan Goals, Policies and actions that support development of the Rail Trail which have been listed in the body of the staff report.

This project will be the first section of the Monterey Bay Scenic Sanctuary Trail network to be built. The existing connectivity for bicyclists and pedestrians to access the coastal edge, beaches, and activity centers is limited. This project will fill in one section of the missing gaps in the City's bicycle network. Phase 1 will maximize safe and convenient opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian uses on a trail separate from roadway vehicle traffic while providing connectivity to other existing local and regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities from residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas. The trail will provide ideal start and end point from residential neighborhoods while providing a public trail access along the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to enhance appreciation, understanding, and protection of the Sanctuary. The project will promote alternative transportation modes while reducing transportation related energy use and greenhouse gas generation.

The Project will protect coastal recreation areas, maintain all existing coastal access points open to the public, enhance public access and open space quality while providing recreational enjoyment in a manner that is consistent with Policy 3.5 of the Local Coastal Plan as well as the California Coastal Act.

- 8. The exterior design and appearance of buildings and structures and the design of the site plan shall be compatible with design and appearance of other existing buildings and structures in neighborhoods which have established architectural character worthy of preservation.**

Bicycle and pedestrian access points to the trail will be available at all street crossings, 10 of which will include new street lights. Safety fencing is required to separate the trail from the railroad. The design includes smooth wire fencing with metal posts separating the inner edge of the trail from the rail. Fencing will be approximately 54-inches in height. Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed. A clear span bridge will be constructed to avoid encroachment into the Arroyo Seco stream and the existing embankment.

- 9. Design of the site plan shall respect design principles in terms of maintaining a balance of scale, form and proportion, using design components, which are**

harmonious, materials and colors that blend with elements of the site plan and surrounding areas. Location of structures should take into account maintenance of view; rooftop mechanical equipment shall be incorporated into roof design or screened from adjacent properties. Utility installations such as trash enclosures, storage units, traffic-control devices, transformer vaults and electrical meters shall be accessible and screened.

The project includes construction of approximately 1.36 miles of new multi use paved trail adjacent and south of the rail. Smooth wire fencing with metal posts, 54-inches in height will be built between edge of rail and trail. Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed. Eleven roadway crossings, nine of which are cross-bike facilities and 10 new street lights will be constructed at new roadway crossings. The Arroyo Seco bridge will be a clear span bridge avoiding the stream and stream bank. Two pedestrian hybrid beacons will be constructed at Swift Street and Fair Avenue. One new storm drain inlet and the extension of three small culverts will maintain existing drainage patterns. A retaining wall west of Almar approximately 55 feet in length and from 1-5 feet in height will be constructed.

- 10. Where a site plan abuts, or is in close proximity to, uses other than that proposed, the plan should take into account its effect on other land uses. Where a nonresidential use abuts or is in close proximity to a residential use, the effect of the site plan should maintain the residential quality of adjacent or nearby areas.**

The project includes construction of approximately 1.36 miles of new multi use paved trail adjacent and south of the rail line. The trail will provide safe and convenient opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian uses on a trail separate from roadway vehicle traffic while providing connectivity to other existing local and regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities from residential neighborhoods and commercial and industrial areas.

- 11. The orientation and location of buildings, structures, open spaces and other features of the site plan shall be such as to maintain natural resources including significant trees and shrubs to the extent feasible, maintain a compatible relationship to and preserve solar access of adjacent properties, and minimize alteration of natural land forms, building profiles, location, and orientation must relate to natural land forms.**

The project includes tree protection measures for 15 trees, 11 of which are recognized as Heritage Trees in the Municipal Code. The measures have been incorporated into the project plans as well as the Conditions of Approval and require tree fencing to be installed around the drip line of the trees prior to and throughout the time of construction. The fencing will be installed prior to any ground disturbance in a manner approved by the City Arborist. The fencing will be removed at the conclusion of

construction and with approval of the City Arborist. No construction materials can be placed within the tree protection zone and any protected tree with ivy shall have it removed as part of the protection measure. Root pruning for any roots greater than two inches in diameter will be completed under the supervision of the City Arborist. Page two of the project plans includes the tree notes discussed above.

Although the trail alignment has been altered to save several trees, six heritage trees will have to be removed due to the project construction. The six heritage trees to be removed will require 12 replacement trees to be planted. The location and species of the replacement trees will be reviewed and approved by the City Arborist.

- 12. The site plan shall be situated and designed to protect views along the ocean and of scenic coastal areas. Where appropriate and feasible, the site plan shall restore and enhance visual quality of visually degraded areas.**

The existing view of the ocean will remain unchanged as the project involves at grade alterations and safety fencing. The safety fencing is required to separate the trail from the railroad. The design includes smooth wire fencing with metal posts separating the inner edge of the trail from the rail. Fencing will be approximately 54-inches in height. Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed. A clear span bridge will be constructed to avoid encroachment into the Arroyo Seco stream and the existing embankment.

- 13. The site plan shall minimize the effect of traffic conditions on abutting streets through careful layout of the site with respect to location, dimensions of vehicular and pedestrian entrances, exit drives and walkways; through the adequate provision of off-street parking and loading facilities; through an adequate circulation pattern within the boundaries of the development; and through the surfacing and lighting of off-street parking facilities.**

The trail alignment between Swift Street and Fair Avenue will require the partial relocation and reconstruction of the trash enclosure and several parking spaces in at the New Leaf Market grocery store. A total of seven net new parking spaces will to be added to the New Leaf parking lot and the plans include the construction of a park lane island along Fair Avenue, east of the market, to accommodate an additional three on-street parking spaces.

- 14. The site plan shall encourage alternatives to travel by automobile where appropriate, through the provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists, including covered parking for bicycles and motorcycles where appropriate. Public transit stops and facilities shall be accommodated as appropriate, and other incentive provisions considered which encourage non-auto travel.**

The project, to install a multi-use trail within an existing railroad right-of-way provides alternatives to automobile use and safe access to and from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

- 15. The site shall provide open space and landscaping which complement buildings and structures. Open space should be useful to residents, employees, or other visitors to the site. Landscaping shall be used to separate and/or screen service and storage areas, separate and/or screen parking areas from other areas, break up expanses of paved area, and define open space for usability and privacy.**

The project will provide safe access for pedestrians and bicyclists within an existing railroad ROW that is currently unavailable to the public. The plan includes native drought tolerant landscaping to be installed on those portions of the project site disturbed by the construction.

- 16. The site plan shall reasonably protect against external and internal noise, vibration and other factors, which may tend to make the environment less desirable. The site plan should respect the need for privacy of adjacent residents.**

The project will not generate external or internal noise, vibration and other factors, which may tend to make the environment less desirable.

- 17. Signs shall complement the site plan and avoid dominating the site and/or existing buildings on the site or overwhelming the buildings or structures to which they are attached. Multiple signs on a given site should be of a consistent theme.**

Way-finding, directional, and safety signage as well as pavement markings at all street crossings will be installed as required for public safety and convenience. The signage as proposed is consistent with the Master Plan guide lines.

- 18. Building and structures shall be so designed and oriented to make use of natural elements such as solar radiation, wind, and landscaping for heating, cooling and ventilation.**

This finding does not apply.

- 19. The site plan shall incorporate water-conservation features where possible, including in the design of types of landscaping and in the design of water-using fixtures. In addition, water restricting showerheads and faucets shall be used, as well as water-saving toilets utilizing less than three gallons per flush.**

This finding does not apply.

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- 20. In all projects in Industrial (I) Zones, all buildings and structures shall be so designed and oriented to make use of natural lighting wherever possible.**

This finding does not apply.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Michael S. Ferry, AICP
Senior Planner

Eric Marlatt
Principal Planner

Exhibits

1. Exhibit A Final Conditions of Approval
2. Exhibit B City of Santa Cruz Mitigated Negative Declaration
3. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
4. Errata CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
5. CEQA Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Santa Cruz Rail Trail Segment 7 Project (Phase 1)
6. Correspondence