

**BUSINESS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION
OF THE CITY OF HALF MOON BAY**

AGENDA REPORT

For meeting of: June 13, 2023

TO: Honorable Chair and Planning Commissioners

FROM: Jill Ekas, Community Development Director
Douglas Garrison, Senior Planner

TITLE: Pacific Coast Bicycle Connectivity North Project / Eastside Parallel Trail - Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Coastal Development Permit

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt the Mitigated Negative Declaration and associated Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (Attachment 3) for the proposed project; and
2. Approve the Coastal Development Permit allowing construction of an approximately 0.3 mile long Class I shared-use bike trail, with a single span bridge across Roosevelt Creek and other associated improvements, within the Caltrans Highway 1 right-of way, based on the Findings and Evidence contained in Exhibit A of the Draft Resolution (Attachment 1), and pursuant to the project plans (Attachment 2) and the Restoration Plan (Attachment 5).

PROJECT BACKGROUND

To reduce potential confusion, it should be noted that the Pacific Coast Bicycle Connectivity North Project has also been identified as the “Eastside Parallel Trail” in other City documents. The Half Moon Bay Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, adopted by the City Council in September 2019, identifies it as the Eastside Parallel Trail. In the Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) prepared for the project, it is identified as the Pacific Coast Bicycle Connectivity North Project. These are essentially the same project. Also note that this trail segment has also been considered a part of the Naomi Patridge Trail that runs parallel to the west side of Highway 1. Another area of potential confusion is the name of the creek that the trail will cross. The creek is not named on U.S.G.S. maps. It is known locally as Roosevelt Creek, Roosevelt Ditch or Naples Creek. The City’s Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) refers to it as Roosevelt Creek, therefore it has been referred to as Roosevelt Creek throughout the IS/MND and in this report.

A related project is the Highway 1 / Terrace Avenue Signalization and Eastside Multi-Use Path Project, approved in December 2018. Both projects are required to implement offsite mitigation for permanent removal of riparian willows, that meet the LUP definition of environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA). A mitigation site for the Highway 1 North project had not been identified at the time of project approval. Mitigation requirements for both projects will be

combined and met by implementing riparian restoration work along the north side of Pilarcitos Creek, at 880 Stone Pine Road (City Corporation Yard property). A restoration plan has been prepared and is attached for Planning Commission review and approval (Attachment 5). Restoration work will be within the existing conservation easement and riparian buffer. It has been designed to accommodate a future public trail, as required by the purchase agreement with the seller (Peninsula Open Space Trust or POST), and will not interfere with future affordable housing development, if the City proceeds with that project.

Summary of Project			
File Number	PDP-20-007		
Requested Permits/Approvals	Coastal Development Permit		
Site Location	Highway 1 eastside ROW, approx. Roosevelt Blvd. to Mirada Rd./Alto Ave.		
Applicant/Property Owner	City of Half Moon Bay (Applicant)/ Caltrans (Owner)		
Project Planner	Douglas Garrison; (650) 712-5836; dgarrison@hmbcity.com		
Zoning District	N/A Caltrans Right-of-Way		
LCP Land Use Plan Designation	N/A Caltrans Right-of-Way		
Water Connection	N/A		
Sewer Connection	N/A		
Street Improvements	N/A		
Environmental Determination	An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration has been prepared that evaluates potential adverse effects on the environment related to the project. All potentially significant impacts will be avoided or mitigated to a less than significant level.		
Heritage Trees	No Heritage trees will be removed		
Story Poles	Required	No	Yes, if in Visual Resource Area; however, vertical construction is not part of project.
		No	Variance or Exception required?
		No	Located in a largely undeveloped area?
Right of Appeal	Located in the Coastal Commission Appeals jurisdiction		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project includes construction of an approximately 0.3-mile extension of the Naomi Patridge Trail, within the Highway 1 right-of-way (ROW), along the east side of the highway. The southern end of the trail will connect to the existing trail at approximately Roosevelt Blvd. At the north end, the trail extension will connect to San Mateo County’s Coastal Trail, at Mirada Road/ Alto Ave. (Figures 1 and 2 below). The trail will consist of an eight-foot wide paved trail with two-foot wide compacted decomposed granite shoulders. The project also includes a 44 foot long prefabricated bridge over Roosevelt Creek, and 53 linear feet of raised boardwalks through low-lying riparian scrub and over small roadside drainage ditches. The project includes erosion control and onsite revegetation after construction. The trail alignment has been designed to avoid or minimize impacts to the creek and associated riparian vegetation, as well as avoid impacts to the

drainage ditches that parallel the highway. The trail will maintain a minimum of 5 feet separation from the highway, at its closest point per Caltrans standards. All staging areas will be located in the ROW avoiding areas identified as ESHA. No lights, water, or sewer hookups are proposed.

Figure 1. Location (Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan)



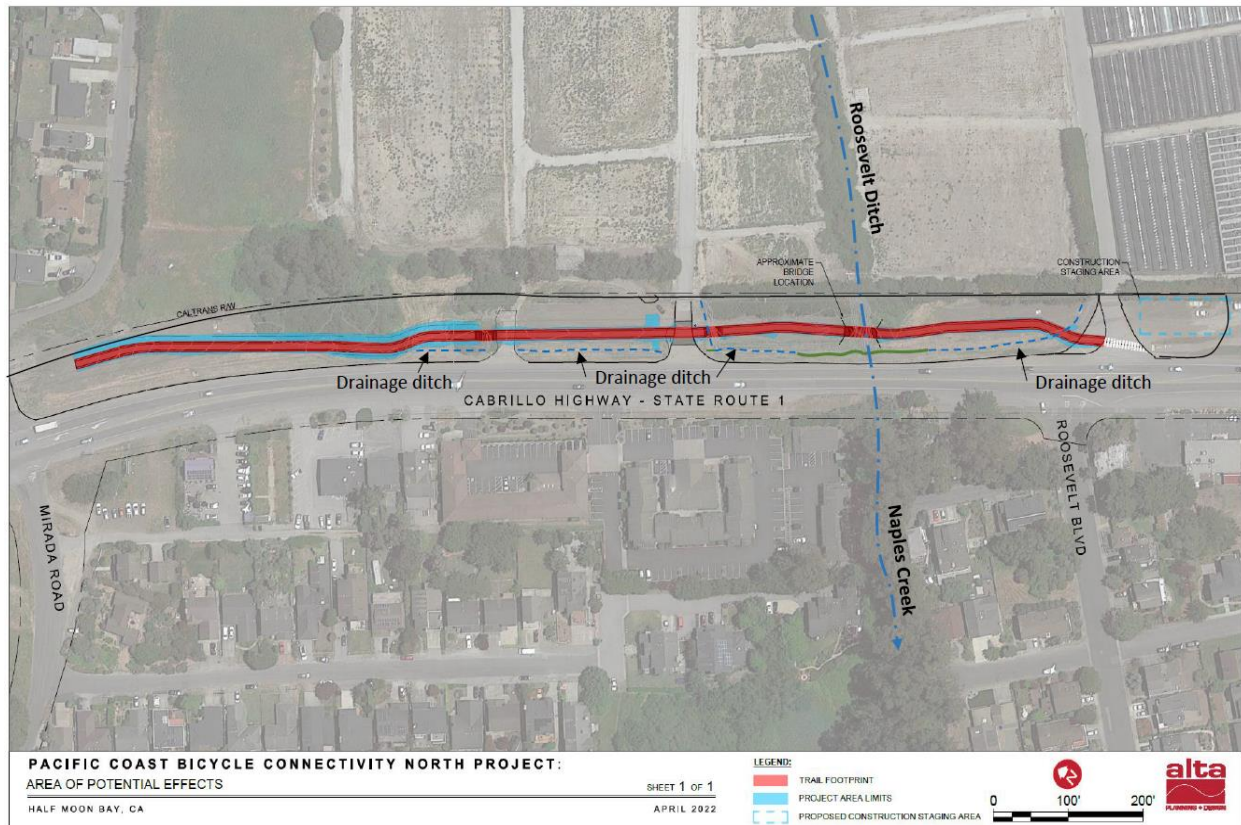
Site and Surrounding Properties

The project occupies an approximately 0.3 mile long section of Highway 1 ROW (east side). Adjacent land uses are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1. Surrounding Uses

	Use	Land Use Plan Designation / Zoning
North	Caltrans ROW	N/A
South	Caltrans ROW	N/A
East	Undeveloped, formerly agriculture/horticulture	Planned Development (PD)/ Planned Unit Development (PUD)
West	Highway 1 with residential and commercial uses across highway	LUP: Residential Medium Density and Commercial Visitor Serving Zoning: Commercial Visitor Serving

Figure 2. Project



ANALYSIS

The key issues for this project are conformance with the General Plan/Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP), conformance with the Zoning Code/LCP Implementation Plan,¹ and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The following is a summary of project conformance with State and City requirements. A more detailed analysis is provided in the IS/MND and the Findings section (Exhibit A) of the attached Resolution.

Conformance with the General Plan.

The Half Moon Bay General Plan consists of five adopted elements: Noise, Safety, Parks and Recreation, Circulation, and Housing. The proposed project is in conformance with General Plan goals and policies. The LUP serves as the City's General Plan Land Use Element, and is discussed in the next section.

Safety, Parks, Recreation, Circulation, Noise, and Housing. The project is identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as a top 10 priority project. The Class 1 shared-use path will provide a missing link in the regional bicycle and pedestrian network. It will improve safety. It will potentially reduce local vehicular traffic and help attain vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction

¹ The Zoning Code is the LCP Implementation Plan.

goals. Noise will be limited to construction activities. Potential noise impacts have been evaluated in the IS/MND and determined to be less than significant. Based on the above, the project is consistent with General Plan goals and policies.

Local Coastal Land Use Plan and Zoning Code

Table 2, below, identifies key Zoning Code/LCP Implementation Plan topics and their applicability to the subject site.

Table 2. Key Zoning Code/LCP Implementation Plan Topics

Topic	Applicability/Explanation	
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA)	Yes	A biological resources evaluation (BRE) and IS/MND evaluated potential impacts to special status species and ESHAs. With the implementation of mitigation and avoidance measures, potentially significant impacts will be avoided.
Visual Resource Area	No	The project does not include vertical development, and therefore would not obstruct views of broad ocean expanses or hillsides from Highway 1 which is designated as a Town Boulevard in the LUP.
Public Access	No	The development would not adversely affect coastal access; one primary purpose of the development is to improve public access.
Archaeological Resource Area	No	An Archaeological Resources investigation was completed. With the implementation of mitigation and avoidance measures, no significant impacts are anticipated.
Historic Resources	No	None on site

Conformance with the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan (LUP)

The LUP includes goals and policies to guide development and protect coastal resources. The project will not impede coastal access or obstruct views of scenic vistas. With the implementation of mitigation, avoidance measures and standard CDP conditions of approval, the project will not adversely affect environmental, historic, paleontological, or cultural resources. Potential impacts to the environment and consistency with local land use policies and regulations have been evaluated in the IS/MND and are also addressed individually in the attached Resolution.

Potential impacts associated with implementation of The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan were evaluated in an IS/MND that was adopted by the City in 2019. A project-specific Biological Resource Evaluation (BRE) and IS/MND have also prepared for this project, which provide more

detailed evaluations based on site-specific conditions. For consistency, the project IS/MND incorporates previously adopted mitigation measures, where appropriate, from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan IS/MND. The project IS/MND and BRE are attached (Attachments No. 3 and 4).

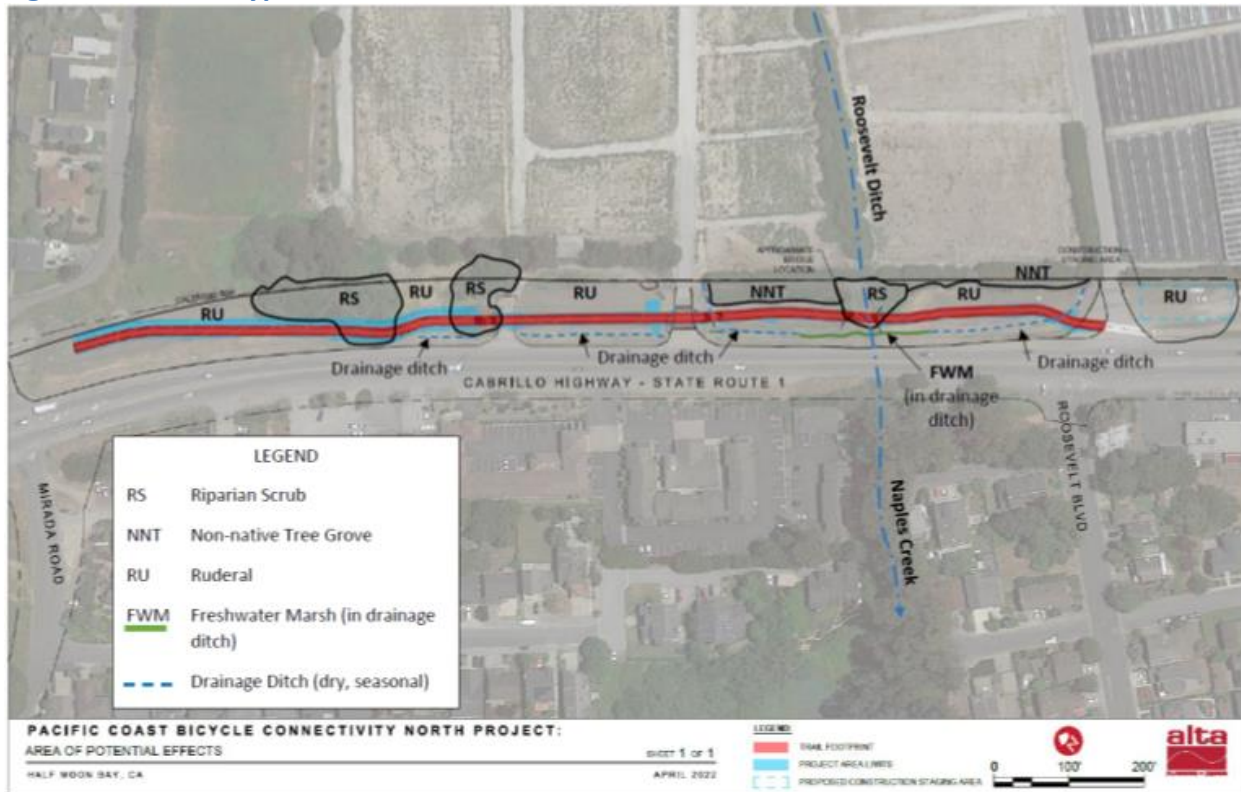
Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA). The site consists primarily of level ground with ruderal weedy and non-native grasses. Caltrans routinely mows these areas. There are, however, areas that meet local criteria to be classified as environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA). These include Roosevelt Creek and associated riparian vegetation. There is also a small area near the Roosevelt Creek culvert, that is classified as coastal freshwater marsh. The site includes isolated drainage ditches. In some cases, these support riparian willow scrub vegetation. Project design helps to avoid and reduce potential effects to these resources.

Crossing Roosevelt Creek will be required, there is no feasible way to avoid this. However, with the proposed prefabricated free-span bridge design, there will be no need for installation work to occur within the creek or on the banks. Concrete supporting piers are set back 10 to 20 feet from the top of bank, as shown on project plans, Sheet S-1 (Attachment 2). The trail alignment avoids the freshwater marsh area and will not impact this feature.

A number of isolated drainage ditches pass through the site. For the most part, these ditches have been avoided. However, crossing some of the ditches will be required. In two areas, the ditches support riparian willow scrub, as shown below in Figure 3. When crossing ditches the path will be elevated on boardwalk-type structures to avoid affecting local hydrology. The originally proposed trail alignment was revised to reduce impacts to the areas of riparian willow scrub, located in the north-central portion of the site. Rather than passing through the center of the northernmost cluster of willows, the trail now turns westerly towards the highway, reducing impacts to this area. Caltrans design standards for multi-use paths require five feet of separation from the edge of pavement. Consequently, the willows cannot be totally avoided. It should also be noted that Caltrans routinely trims these willows back, several feet from the roadway for safety reasons. Additionally, there are existing underground and overhead utilities along this section of the right-of-way. Both riparian willow areas are disturbed on a regular basis to perform required maintenance.

Protected Wildlife Species. The BRE concluded that two special status species have the potential to occur on the site, California red-legged frog (CRLF) and San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat (SFDFW). The site does not contain suitable year-round or breeding habitat for CRLF. SFDFW houses could occur in the dense riparian scrub. Implementation of standard permit requirements and Mitigation Measure BIO-1 will ensure that impacts to protected species will be avoided. Standard CDP conditions ensure that nesting birds and roosting bats will not be impacted.

Figure 3. Habitat Types



ESHA. The LUP contains numerous policies concerning development within and adjacent to ESHA. Due to an inadvertent omission in the updated LUP, however, these policies are inconsistent when it comes to the development of trails in riparian buffers. On the one hand, Policy 5-27 directs the City to complete “the new Eastside Parallel Trail east of and adjacent to Highway 1 along its entire length.” On the other, “public trails” was inadvertently left off of the list of permitted uses within riparian corridors. See Policy 6-47 (LUP page 6-49).² The intent to include public trails as a permitted use in riparian corridors is supported by the fact that public trails are considered resource-dependent uses (Policy 5-29) and are permitted uses within terrestrial ESHA (Policy 6-16) and within wetlands (Policy 6-40). Similarly, bridges providing public transportation (which may include bridges connecting public trails) are a permitted use in riparian corridors where no feasible alternative exists; and public scenic overlooks are permitted uses within riparian corridor buffer zones (Policy 6-51) which implies the presence of public trails. The zoning code also states that trails and scenic overlooks on public land are a permitted use in riparian corridors and buffer zones (18.38.075); as well as within wetland buffer zones (18.38.080). Note the alignment of the California Coastal Trail that traverses a wide range

² City staff have confirmed this interpretation with Coastal Commission staff and that public trail use in riparian corridors and buffers is generally consistent with the California Coastal Act. Staff are preparing a post-certification clean-up of the LUP for several other non-substantive items like this one that have come to light following its certification in April 2021.

of habitat types including ESHA buffers and spanning water courses of various types as an example.

The trail will be limited to the approach and departure to and from the proposed bridge across the creek. The bridge has been designed to minimize potential impacts to creek banks and associated riparian vegetation. Concrete piers supporting the bridge are set back 10 – 20 feet from the top of bank. No work will be conducted in the creek or on the banks. Erosion control measures will be implemented to protect water quality.

LUP Policy 6-48 and 6-52 establish standards for development within riparian areas and buffers. Key provisions include minimizing removal of native vegetation, replanting with native species, minimizing erosion and maintaining hydrologic function of streams. The project has been designed to comply with these requirements.

LUP Policy 6-69, 6-70 and 6-71 establish standards and priorities for mitigation and restoration when impacts to ESHA are unavoidable. Onsite restoration is preferred. Areas that are temporarily impacted will be restored with native plantings. When onsite restoration is not feasible, offsite mitigation is allowed. Offsite mitigation for permanent loss of riparian vegetation requires replacement on a 3:1 basis and preparation of a mitigation and monitoring plan. The project will permanently impact approximately 2,100 square feet (0.048 acres) of willows. These will be replaced on a 3:1 basis. In combination with the willow replacement plantings required for the 2,000 sq ft. (0.045 acre) of willows permanently affected by the Highway 1 North Safety Improvement Project (4:1 ratio), a total of 0.32 acres of riparian restoration will be undertaken along Pilarcitos Creek. A Restoration Plan has been prepared. It includes planting, monitoring, and performance standards. This Plan is also being used in support of State permitting requirements. Consequently, minor revisions may be required.

Visual Resources.

The trail will be minimally visible from Highway 1. Due to the low profile, the project will not block views of hillsides to the east or other coastal resources.

Historic and Cultural Resources.

A cultural resources study was prepared for the project, by Holman and Associates. Findings from the study are incorporated into the IS/MND. The study concluded that the project has a low potential for encountering buried Native American resources or historic era artifacts. The authors concluded that no additional studies were warranted. The Consultant contacted tribes that are known to have connections to the region and notified them of the project. The City then, in compliance with AB 52, sent letters to the tribal representatives on January 3, 2023, formally notifying them of the project and requesting input. No requests for consultation or comments on the project, from the tribal representatives, have been received to date.

Conformance with the Zoning Code

The project is located entirely within Caltrans right-of-way. Consequently, there is no zoning designation and there are no setback, lot coverage, or height standards. Zoning Code provisions

that do apply to the project are Section 18.37, which provides development requirements in designated Visual Resource areas, and Section 18.38, which addresses coastal resource conservation standards.

Potential effect on visual resources are discussed above. Limited development will be visible from Highway 1 and no buildings are proposed. The trail and single bridge are low in profile and comply with zoning requirements for protection of visual resources.

Section 18.38.035 requires the preparation of a BRE when projects are within or near ESHA. Section 18.38.075 provides guidance for allowed uses and development requirements in or adjacent to riparian areas. As discussed in previous sections, public trails and bridges are allowed in riparian areas. A BRE has been prepared and impacts to ESHA have been avoided, minimized, or will be mitigated.

Environmental Review / California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

In compliance with the requirements of CEQA Guidelines §15073, the City provided a thirty-day review period for the IS/MND. A Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration and a Notice of Completion were submitted electronically to the California State Clearing House on March 29, 2023, posted at the County Clerk's Office, posted on the project site, and mailed to adjacent neighbors. The 30-day comment period ended on April 28, 2023. The IS/MND was also posted on the City website. Additionally, a public hearing notice for this Planning Commission hearing was published in the Half Moon Bay Review on May 31, 2023, hearing notices were also mailed to residents and other property owners within an expanded area beyond the City's minimum standard of 300 feet, and hearing notices were posted on the site.

Public Agency Comments

Comment letters dated April 26, 2023 and April 27, 2023 were submitted by two State agencies, California Coastal Commission (CCC) and Caltrans, after reviewing the IS/MND. The comments did not directly address the CEQA impact evaluations or mitigation measures. The CCC comments focused on LUP policies and recommended amending our LUP to correct the omission of trails as an allowed use in riparian areas. Caltrans comments focused on internal requirements for an encroachment and other permits. The City submitted written responses to those agencies on June 1, 2023 (Attachment No. 6). Staff believes that the written responses adequately address the comments and no further action or significant revisions to the IS/MND or project are required.

Public Comments

One comment, in support of the project has been received to date. It is included in Attachment 6.

CEQA Determination

All potentially significant impacts to the environment have been avoided through project design or will be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of mitigation measures and standard City conditions of approval that are applicable to all Coastal Development Permits.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, staff concludes that the proposed project is consistent with the General Plan, the Local Coastal Program and the Zoning Code; and conforms to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act. Staff recommends adoption of the IS/MND and then approval of the project based on the recommended findings and conditions of approval contained in Exhibits A and B of the proposed Resolution.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Resolution with Findings and Evidence, Exhibit A and Conditions of Approval, Exhibit B.
2. Plans
3. Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
4. Biological Resource Evaluation
5. Restoration Plan
6. Comment Letters and Responses