

## Trail plan displayed

### Path goes from P.G. to Pajaro

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Details of a three-phase, 20-year, \$27 million walking and biking trail system from Pacific Grove to Pajaro were displayed Thursday by the Transportation Agency for Monterey County at Castroville Public Library.

The Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail is planned as a continuous coastal trail system between Pacific Grove and the Santa Cruz County line.

The master plan includes bicycle and pedestrian trail routes that are already in place and development of new trail segments.

It is intended to provide access to, and promote appreciation of, the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary and to serve as a regional transportation alternative to the automobile.

The project is divided into 17 segments. Maps showing existing trail routes, future routes and alternatives prepared for TAMC by consulting firm Alta Planning and Design, along with summaries of project details, were arranged in the library meeting room. Alta and TAMC staff members were on hand to answer questions. Written comments from visitors were collected.

The draft plan calls for an initial \$5.2 million project over the next five years to improve the existing trail segments in Monterey and Seaside; connection of a gap in the trail from Tioga Avenue to north of La Playa Avenue in Sand City; completion of trails at Fort Ord State Park to Marina State Beach; and completion of trail projects in Moss Landing, including a bridge across Elkhorn Slough.

The second phase, estimated to cost \$14 million, calls for completing a paved scenic trail from north of Marina and across the Salinas River, connecting to the Moss Landing segment of the trail to the McGowan-Thurwatchter Road bridge over the Pajaro River.

Several alternatives for crossing the Salinas River include using the existing railroad bridge, the existing two-lane highway bridge, or building a separate bridge for the trail, said Alta planner Loren Buckland.

Use of the railroad bridge, she said, would not preclude eventual restoration of rail service on the old Del Monte Express tracks.

The final trail project phase would involve completion of an unpaved trail between Marina State Beach and Moss Landing, with the cost estimated at \$7.9 million.

While the plan calls for avoiding, where possible, acquisition of private land for the trail, the \$27.1 million estimated cost includes \$9 million for land acquisition, according to the draft plan, which notes that this cost could vary with changes in land values.

The transportation agency is expected to consider approval of the scenic trail plan at its Aug. 26 meeting, said Debbie Hale of TAMC. An environmental analysis in compliance with state and federal environmental laws, and permits from the Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, state Department of Transportation and the state Coastal Commission, among others, would have to be secured.

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