



## AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT

**SUBJECT:** Consider Adoption of a Resolution to Adopt an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Construction of a 1.9-Mile Multimodal Trail Segment of the Great Redwood Trail - Ukiah (Phase 4).

**DEPARTMENT:** Community Development

**PREPARED BY:** Katherine Schaefers, Planning Manager

**PRESENTER:** Katherine Schaefers, Planning Manager; Jesse Davis, Chief Planning Manager

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Notice of Intent (NOI)
2. Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration - ISMND
3. Public Agency Comments & Staff Response
4. Draft Resolution

**Summary:** The City Council will conduct a public hearing and consider adoption of a resolution to adopt an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the construction of a 1.9-mile multimodal trail segment of the Great Redwood Trail (GRT) - Ukiah (Phase 4).

**Background:** In 1999, the City of Ukiah began to plan a new Class I trail facility (a paved right-of-way for bicycles and pedestrians), adjacent to the Northwestern Pacific (NWP) railroad tracks in the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) right-of-way corridor. The trail concept first appeared in the City's 1999 Bicycle Master Plan. The planning for the overall NWP Rail Trail Project was further advanced in the 2002 Rail Trail Feasibility Study, and the Project was ranked as the highest priority in the Bicycle Master Plan in the 2006 Mendocino County Regional Bikeway Plan.

In 2012, the City approved the first phase of the project, which was the first rail-with-trail project to be designed and constructed within the NCRA right-of-way in Mendocino County. Phase 1 was completed in 2015, and in that same year, the Ukiah Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted by the City Council, furthering the City's efforts for a holistic transportation system. In 2018, the City approved the construction documents for Phases 2 and 3 of the Great Redwood Trail - Ukiah. Construction commenced in the winter of 2019 and was completed by the spring of 2020. In June 2020, the Ukiah City Council officially designated the trail as a recreation/park facility and renamed it the 'The Great Redwood Trail – Ukiah'. Later that year, the City adopted the Great Redwood Trail - Ukiah Linear Park Master Plan to evaluate ancillary trail features and uses.

In May 2021, the City was awarded an Urban Greening Grant from the California Natural Resources Agency to construct the Phase 4 segment of the Great Redwood Trail – Ukiah. In September 2021, the City Council awarded a professional services agreement to prepare the plans and specifications for Phase 4, which was subsequently amended in 2022. A contract was awarded by the City Council for the construction of Phase 4 in May 2024 to Granite Construction.

Phase 4 will construct a 1.9-mile multimodal trail segment of the Great Redwood Trail (GRT) in the south of Ukiah. The trail will provide a walking and biking facility from the existing southern terminus of the GRT-Ukiah at Commerce Drive to existing municipal facilities at Plant Road that will be improved to feature a small parking area and trail head with seating and recreational amenities. In addition to the safety and connectivity

improvements, the trail would provide opportunities for enhanced access to the GRT-Ukiah, as the Project would cross Airport Road and Norgard Lane, and include the proposed construction of two (2) pedestrian access points to Panda Express and the Holiday Inn parking lot within the Redwood Business Park. The proposed pathway would meander within the Great Redwood Trail Agency right-of-way and consist of a 10-foot wide asphalt concrete paved pedestrian and bicycle facility, with 2-foot-wide-gravel shoulders on either side, for a total width of 14 feet, paralleling the existing railroad tracks.

Originally, Phase 4 of the GRT - Ukiah was intended to be located on the centerline of the tracks, but the City of Ukiah elected to shift the alignment to the east side of the tracks based on concerns that rail-banking for this corridor would not be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) in a timely manner. To date, the lack of rail-banking remains an obstacle to the development of the GRT-Ukiah, as well as other segments of the GRT outside Ukiah. The result of shifting Phase 4 to the east of the tracks introduced several additional design and environmental requirements. In 2024, prior to commencing construction, it was determined that further environmental analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was required to address the needs and considerations of agencies having jurisdiction.

On August 29, 2024, the City of Ukiah circulated Attachment 1, a Notice of Intent (NOI), commencing a 30-day period to identify environmental issue and areas potentially affected if the project were to be implemented. For the most part, the issues identified were generally related to grading, drainage, tree removal and wetland preservation. Nearly all of these considerations were interwoven into the project design, and agency permitting was addressed through additional contracts for environmental services and monitoring in 2023. The selected design for Phase 4 is proposed pursuant to the previously adopted rail-with-trail policy of the former North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA), and thus can be constructed and operated adjacent to the existing railroad tracks without necessitating the abandonment or rail-banking of the subject property prior to approval.

More information about the Project can be found on the City of Ukiah weblink: <https://cityofukiah.com/great-redwood-trail-ukiah-phase-4/>

**Discussion:** As described within the Draft Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration - ISMND (Attachment 2), the Project involves application for an Encroachment Permit to the Great Redwood Trail Agency (GRTA) to construct a 1.9 mile multimodal trail segment of the GRT - Ukiah (Phase 4). The Project will provide a Class 1 paved walking and biking facility from the existing southern terminus of the GRT - Ukiah at Commerce Drive to existing municipal facilities at Plant Road that will be improved to feature a small parking area and trailhead with seating and limited recreational amenities, such as tables. In addition to safety and connectivity improvements, the trail would provide opportunities for enhanced access to the GRT – Ukiah, as the Project would cross Airport Road and Norgard Lane and include the construction of two (2) pedestrian access points to commercial entities within the Redwood Business Park. No trail lighting is included. but lighting at the road crossings will be provided. Associated appendices for the ISMND are available for review via the aforementioned weblink.

The Project is located fully within a former railroad corridor that traverses residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial areas within and adjacent to the City of Ukiah, as well as areas within and adjacent to the County of Mendocino. The site is mostly flat with a 0 to 2 percent slope. While some naturalized areas remain along the trail, such as wetlands or valley oak woodlands, numerous segments appear highly disturbed, featuring substantial amounts of detritus and evidence of disturbance from encampments. These are located adjacent to public facilities, such as the Ukiah Municipal Airport.

The Great Redwood Trail - Ukiah is a designated park/recreation facility per Ukiah City Code §1965(C), and although not zoned, the project area is adjacent to a mixture of commercial, public facilities, residential and manufacturing uses. Nearly all the land adjacent to the Project, however, is under the ownership of the City, including the Ukiah Municipal Airport, recently annexed City-owned parcels south of Norgard Lane and north of the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility, an undeveloped parcel with frontage along Airport Park Boulevard, as well as three (3) parcels at the terminus of Airport Road.

The City in conjunction with its technical consultants prepared field work and studies to determine potential

habitat and aquatic features, submitted necessary permit applications, and undertook coordination with the following regulatory agencies: U.S. Army Corps of Engineering (USACE) Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit – North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB) Section 401 Water Quality Certification – California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Both prior to and during the public review period, Staff received comments from representatives of GRTA, CDFW, Pacific Gas & Electric, the Northwest Information Center (NWIC), and the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC). These comments from public agencies and entities are included in Attachment 3. Staff responses to comments from the GRTA and CDFW are also included in Attachment 3.

No substantive changes have been made since the Draft ISMND was circulated for public review. As such, Staff recommends the City Council approve the adoption of a Resolution (Attachment 4) to adopt the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the construction of a 1.9-mile multimodal trail segment of the Great Redwood Trail - Ukiah (Phase 4).

---

**Recommended Action:** Conduct a public hearing; and approve the adoption of a resolution to adopt an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the construction of a 1.9-mile multimodal trail segment of the Great Redwood Trail (GRT) - Ukiah (Phase 4).

---

**BUDGET AMENDMENT REQUIRED:** No

---

**CURRENT BUDGET AMOUNT:** \$2,991.75 (CEQA - Environmental Document Filing Fees)

---

**PROPOSED BUDGET AMOUNT:** N/A

---

**FINANCING SOURCE:** 51124210.80230.18253 (Great Redwood Trail - Phase 4)

---

**PREVIOUS CONTRACT/PURCHASE ORDER NO.:** N/A

---

**COORDINATED WITH:** Tim Eriksen, Director of Public Works / City Engineer; Jesse Davis, Chief Planning Manager

---

**DIVERSITY-EQUITY INITIATIVES (DEI):** Goal 5 – Instill diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential core elements of policy-making, accountability, and delivery of City services.

---

**CLIMATE INITIATIVES (CI):** 2b – Encourage active transportation as a viable alternative to automobiles. 2d – Continue to expand the Great Redwood Trail – Ukiah. 4a – Implement nature-based climate solutions. 7a – Expand sustainable water practices.

---

**GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS (GP):** MOB 1-2 (Multi-modal Access); MOB 1-9 (Bikeway Network); MOB-2.3 (Pedestrian Facilities);

---

Approved:   
Sage Sangiacomo, City Manager