



## INFORMATION ITEM

### Delta Protection Commission Great California Delta Trail Master Plan

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**Summary:** Public Resources Code sections 5852-5855 require the Delta Protection Commission to develop and adopt a plan and implementation program for a continuous recreation corridor, including bicycle, hiking, and water trails, around the Delta. At today's meeting, Delta Protection Commission staff will present the Draft Great California Delta Trail Master Plan, which is currently available for public comment. While the Master Plan is not a covered action under the Delta Reform Act, it advances implementation of several recommendations set forth in Delta Plan Chapter 5, *Protect and Enhance the Unique Cultural, Recreational, Natural Resource, and Agricultural Values of the California Delta as an Evolving Place*. Council staff are reviewing the Plan and may submit comments prior to the close of the comment period on December 16, 2021.

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#### BACKGROUND

Public Resources Code sections 5852-5855 require the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) to develop and adopt a plan and implementation program for a continuous recreation corridor, including bicycle, hiking, and water trails, around the Delta. Since the legislation was passed in 2006, two planning documents involving extensive public outreach have been completed: the 2010 Western Blueprint for Solano and Contra Costa Counties, and the 2019 Eastern Blueprint for Sacramento, San Joaquin, and Yolo Counties.

While the DPC does not itself build trails, the DPC coordinates trail planning and implementation across local jurisdictional boundaries to achieve the continuous recreation corridor around the Delta. Individual trail segments are conceived, developed, built, and managed by local entities. Currently, a total of 47.3 miles of the Great California Delta Trail (Delta Trail) segments are designated and open to trail users including the River Walk, Clarksburg Branch Line and Sycamore Trails (City of West Sacramento); Sacramento River Parkway (City of Sacramento); Big Break Regional Shoreline and Marsh Creek Regional Trail (East Bay Regional Park District [EBRPD]); and Carquinez Strait Scenic Loop Trail (multiple agencies).

The Great California Delta Trail Master Plan (Plan) is an element of the Commission's overall mission to support the Delta economy. Some of the most effective ways to support the economy are encouraging and supporting established activities, projects, and programs in Delta communities. These include several trail projects that will enhance and highlight the many diverse qualities of the Delta.

#### PLAN APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

The vision for the Delta Trail is a continuous recreational corridor through the five California Delta counties (Contra Costa, Solano, Yolo, Sacramento, and San Joaquin), including routes accessible to all with connections to other trails, recreational facilities, water access sites, and public transportation. The trail will link the San Francisco Bay Trail system at the Carquinez Bridge in Contra Costa and Solano Counties to planned Sacramento River trails in Yolo and Sacramento Counties, ending with the Sacramento River Parkway Trail at the Jibboom Street Bridge.

The Plan lays out important considerations trail planners should account for, including both opportunities and constraints in the development of the trail. It is also intended to help the public understand the goals and strategies for the trail, and the range of possible benefits from the trail. The Plan is meant to support agency planning efforts and is not a mandate for local agency land use changes.

Four regional maps (Western, Northern, Central, Southern) depict existing and proposed trails and associated features. The Plan includes Trail Design Guidelines specifying recommended Delta Trail types and classifications; specific trail design standards for the Delta; principles for designing trails in different settings and accommodating specific user types; suggested trail road crossings and connections; signage and wayfinding guidelines; and guidance for trail amenities. The Plan also includes planning-level estimated costs for various trail types; funding opportunities and sources; and approaches to operating and maintaining the trail system.

The Plan is intended to be a useful and lasting tool for community partners who are involved in trail development. These include public works and park and recreation planners, local trail and outdoor education or environmental justice advocates, and those seeking to preserve and inspire appreciation for the Delta's unique cultural, recreational, natural resource, and agricultural values.

#### *Community Engagement*

Outreach efforts for the Plan included Stakeholder and Technical Advisory Committee meetings, a public survey, and input from local agency planners, park and trails practitioners, trail advocates, an agricultural operation, and Levee Management Agencies (Reclamation Districts or RDs). DPC staff also presented the Draft Plan to the Delta Protection Advisory Committee and the DPC Board. The Draft Plan is now available for review and comment at <http://delta.ca.gov/recreation-and-tourism/>. The DPC hosted two virtual public workshops on the Draft Plan on November 30, 2021, and December 8, 2021.

#### RELATIONSHIP TO THE DELTA PLAN

The DPC has determined that pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies), the Great California Delta Trail Master Plan is a planning study for possible future actions that the DPC has not approved, adopted, or funded and as such is exempt from CEQA and does not require preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration (ND). For the Council's purposes, projects that are exempt from CEQA are generally not considered covered actions that would be required to demonstrate consistency with the Delta Plan, as they would not have a significant impact on the achievement of one or both of the coequal goals or the implementation of government-sponsored flood control programs to reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta. (Cal. Wat. Code § 85057.5(a); Cal. Code Regs., tit. 23, §§ 5001(j)(1) and 5001(dd)(4)). However, the Plan advances implementation of the following Delta Plan recommendations:

- **DP R12: Encourage Partnerships to Support Recreation and Tourism.** The DPC and Delta Conservancy should encourage partnerships between other state and local agencies, and local landowners and businesses to expand recreation, including boating, promote tourism, and minimize adverse impacts to nonrecreational landowners.
- **DP R16: Encourage Recreation on Public Lands.** Public agencies owning land should increase opportunities, where feasible, for bank fishing, hunting, levee-top trails, and environmental education.
- **DP R17: Enhance Opportunities for Visitor-serving Businesses.** Cities, counties, and other local and state agencies should work together to protect and enhance visitor-serving businesses by planning for recreation uses and facilities in the Delta, providing infrastructure to support recreation and tourism, and identifying settings for private visitor-serving development and services.

#### NEXT STEPS

Council staff may prepare and transmit comments on the Plan to the DPC, inclusive of any comments from Council members offered at today's meeting. Following the conclusion of the public comment period, DPC staff will prepare a final version of the Plan for DPC Board approval. DPC and local agency partners will begin implementation of the Plan. The Council may receive certifications of consistency for individual future trail projects resulting from the Plan as covered actions.

FISCAL INFORMATION

Not applicable

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

No attachments

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