

Dear Councilmembers ~

Two funding myths have been clarified in the last three weeks. It took a great effort to get the answer to the second myth, repeated as recently as the March 11th hearing of the CA Coastal Commission. I present the results of these efforts for your information.

Myth #1 Tarplant management is dependent on the Broadway-Brommer project

All these years, a main concern in supporting the Broadway-Brommer (B-B) transportation project through Arana Gulch's ESHA stated that the project would provide desperately needed funds for recovery of the endangered tarplant. It turns out that B-B is not needed to provide almost \$400,000 as an endowment for tarplant recovery and management.

I have now confirmed from three sources that there is **no** money for tarplant management at Arana Gulch (AG) in the SCCRTC budget for the B-B transportation project.

First, a transcript of the March 11th hearing will show Chris Schneiter, Assistant Director of City Public Works, answering a question from one Commissioner in which he states that money for tarplant funding will come from the sale of City property.

Second, to confirm that statement, the City's Capitol Improvements Project (CIP) report <http://www.cityofsantacruz.com/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=13142> shows SCCRTC money budgeted for the B-B project with a separate line item for the sale of City property in the amount of \$391,434.

Third, at a meeting on April 7th, with the Parks & Recreation Dept. (the City's managers of the greenbelt) Steve Hammack confirmed that the money for an endowment (to last 20 - 30 years) for tarplant management was to come from the sale of City property. That property could have been sold any time, of course, independent of B-B. In fact, that property could have been sold years ago to create an endowment for tarplant recovery and conservation in Arana Gulch.

The pertinent point is that the money for tarplant funding is **not tied** to Broadway-Brommer, so there is no reason for anyone concerned about tarplant recovery & management to support a transportation project of any sort through the AG ESHA. The Master Plan, sans B-B, could be permitted at the next available CCC hearing and the City could begin immediately to plan recovery strategies while it sells its property. In fact, I wonder why the City, thinking it would get its permit at the March hearing, hadn't already put the "for sale" sign on the property to start the process for tarplant management endowment.

Myth #2 The City cannot get funding for an alternative to B-B as proposed in the Arana Gulch Master Plan

In reviewing the testimony of the City at the March 11th hearing, the City stated that it had asked "its funders" and was told it could not get funding for the alternative routing as proposed by the CA Native Plant Society just days before the hearing. Historically the City has also said that it could not consider east-west connection routes outside of Arana Gulch because it could not get funding to do so. These statements turn out not to be the case. The City, the lead agency for the

B-B project, has never asked to have B-B funds re-allocated, but that avenue is open to it.

Although I was unable to receive a reply to my question about the veracity or substantiation of those statements from Public Works, I did finally receive a reply from the SCCRTC. In an April 2, 2010 reply to my question, George Dondero answered thusly (**emphasis is mine**):

Dear Ms. Brocklebank:

In response to your question,

"Will the SCCRTC answer this question about whether or not funding for the Broadway-Brommer project can or cannot be applied to another alternative alignment, either within or outside of the Arana Gulch ESHA?"

The funding currently programmed by the RTC for the Broadway-Brommer project could be applied to an alignment alternative to the current one.

However, if the scope of the project were to change to the extent that the benefit/cost of the project were to significantly diminish (i.e.: the transportation needs would not be met as effectively), then the RTC could determine to reconsider the project for funding with new staff recommendations based upon the new conditions of the project. **The RTC would then vote to 1)retain the funding, 2)re-program part or all of the existing funds to other projects, or 3)de-program the project.**

Without knowing exactly what new alignment(s) are to be proposed by the City, we cannot know if such an alignment would be reconsidered by the RTC for funding. If you should have any other questions regarding RTC funding on the project, please feel free to contact me.

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As you are all aware, the Coastal Commission was adamant that a non-resource dependent transportation project through an ESHA is a violation of Section 30240 of the Coastal Act. The Commissioners were extremely concerned about the precedence such a transportation project through an ESHA would create up and down the coast. Furthermore, in reviewing the tapes of the March 11th hearing, you will also see that the instruction from the Commissioners was for the City to look at alternatives (plural), not just the CNPS alternative.

To this end, Friends of Arana Gulch (FoAG) has submitted to the City (on April 7th) our "Restoration Alternative with Interpretive Trails." As can be seen, in reviewing this simple two page document, our goal meets access concerns and also allows all visitors to use all interpretive trails, without prohibiting bicyclists from the eastern Marsh Vista Trail segment.

I hope the City will give this alternative the fair consideration it deserves. FoAG is sure that if the City returned to the Coastal Commission with a modified application, asking that its Master Plan, without B-B, be accepted and also with a plan for visitor use of the greenbelt as proposed in our alternative, the permit would be granted immediately. And then the City could move on with tarplant recovery, developing funding for interpretive trails, and ask the SCCRTC to re-allocate the substantial B-B transportation funds to other much needed transportation projects.

Sincerely,
Jean Brocklebank
on behalf of Friends of Arana Gulch