



RPV gets Coastal Trail grant

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A long-desired and long-delayed statewide coastal trail will soon have one of its newest sections running through scenic Rancho Palos Verdes.

The city and a local land conservation group last week received a major state grant to build 9 miles of the California Coastal Trail, a 1,200-mile pathway from Oregon to Mexico that has faced many obstacles to completion.

The \$500,000 grant from the Coastal Conservancy, funded by voter-approved state bonds, will allow Rancho Palos Verdes to create decomposed granite trails along the city's seaside from Palos Verdes Estates to San Pedro.

The segment will be a significant addition both for its scenery and for its length through urbanized Los Angeles County, said the head of a nonprofit group that has spent 27 years advocating for the statewide trail.

"It's so spectacular. The views are absolutely incredible. You just feel like you're in Cinque Terre or something in Italy," said Una Glass, executive director of Sebastopol-based

Coastwalk California. "As a resource to the people of the Los Angeles area, it's pretty amazing."

The trail will be completed with the cooperation of the city and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, which manages several city reserves that the path will run through.

There will be access from the trail to the Portuguese Bend Reserve through Gateway Park, which will get new, unpaved parking.

"It's terrific in terms of connectivity, being able to go on a long coastal walk. ... It will be an improved experience," said Andrea Vona, executive director of the land conservancy.

The trail will also traverse several public parks and already improved paths that the city required from the developers of Oceanfront Estates, Terranea Resort and Trump National Golf Club.

Though mostly geared toward pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists will be able to use parts of the trail.

In some areas, the trail will run next to busy Palos Verdes Drive South. But city officials said they'd made their best effort to keep the planned trail as close as possible to the ocean.

It's close enough for Glass and others who have worked for years to complete the statewide trail despite the need for easements through private

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property and coastal military installations such as Camp Pendleton.

The California Coastal Trail was authorized as part of Proposition 20, the 1972 ballot measure that created the California Coastal Commission and mandated public access to the ocean. But nearly 40 years later, the trail is only about 60 percent done.

In 2001, the Legislature called for a status report. The resulting document gave the Coastal Conservancy a framework to help local jurisdictions finish their portions of the trail. Money from state bonds has since funded more improvements, Glass said.

The Rancho Palos Verdes City Council authorized the grant application in June.

Last week, the conservancy voted unanimously to distribute the funds to Rancho Palos Verdes. In a report, conservancy staff said the project was the first step in providing a complete Palos Verdes Peninsula link between the bike path that runs along most of Santa Monica Bay and the Los Angeles and Long Beach harbors.

Rancho Palos Verdes will need to contribute \$60,000 toward the trail.

For the city, coastal access had long been held sacred. The future trail system - which Vona said would be built within the next 36 months - was developed in the city's Coast Vision Plan, completed in 2008.

"Personally, I think this is a very good thing," Mayor Steve Wolowicz said. "It's recognition for the fact that not only the council but the residents are stewards to the coastline."

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