

City of Culver City, California
Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: <u>08/04/09</u>		Item Number: <u>A-1</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Recommendation to the City Council Regarding City Participation in the Culver City Park/Overlook Gateway Portion of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's "Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project."			
Contact Person/Dept.: Bill La Pointe, Director of Parks Recreation and Community Services		Phone Number: (310) 253-6655	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Public Notification: PRCS Master Notification List (07/30/2009).			
Department Approval: Bill La Pointe, Director of Parks Recreation and Community Services (07/28/09).		City Attorney Approval: N/A	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: N/A		City Manager Approval: N/A	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends that the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding City participation in the Culver City Park/Overlook Gateway portion (Element #3) of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's "Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project." <u>BACKGROUND:</u> In April 2009, construction of the new Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook (Overlook), visitors center and trails system was completed. Located in the 58-acre Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook State Park, the Overlook is an educational urban park that features restored native habitat and outstanding views of the Los Angeles Basin. The Overlook neighbors Culver City Park; although no formal connection exists between the two, the public is able to hike from one park to the other using existing undeveloped trails. Planning efforts to formally connect the Overlook, Culver City Park and the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path were initiated by stakeholder agencies a few years ago. In February 2008, the PRCS Commission took action to recommend that the City Council support a project to formally connect these three recreational amenities through a partnership between Culver City and the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Subsequently, MRCA was unsuccessful in securing funding for the project, thus eliminating the need for the Commission's recommendation to go before the City Council.			

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Since that time City staff from both the PRCS and Public Works Departments has continued to collaborate with the MRCA and the California Department of Parks and Recreation towards establishing a connection between the Overlook, Culver City Park and the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path. Linking these three amenities will significantly enhance the value of the existing open space and trails, ultimately resulting in increased awareness of area recreational and natural resources. MRCA has now received (alternative) grant funding to support a project similar to the one that previously came before the PRCS Commission.

DISCUSSION:

The goal of the “Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project” (Project) is to link the Baldwin Hills parklands to Ballona Creek by connecting open spaces through trails and gateways. The Project is an important component of two larger efforts that incorporate additional state, county and local agencies; the “One Big Park,” a concept developed in the Baldwin Hills Master Plan and “Park to Playa,” a regional effort to connect the Baldwin Hills parklands to the Pacific Ocean. The Project is also consistent with the Planning Principles adopted in 2004 as a result of the Culver City Ballona Creek Focused Special Study, feedback collected in the Public Works Department Bike-Pedestrian Master Plan process currently underway and the recommendations of the recently completed Culver City Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project includes three major elements consisting of connection gateways (1) at Higuera Street; (2) at Duquesne Avenue; and (3) between Culver City Park and the Overlook. The Project Map is included as Attachment A. The Culver City Public Works Department will be involved in the multi-agency coordination of Elements #1 and #2 of the Project. Element #3, the connection gateway between Culver City Park and the Overlook, exists almost exclusively within Culver City Park. Therefore, the PRCS Department has the primary responsibility for providing oversight and coordination with MRCA and the contractor for this element of the Project.

The Culver City Park/Overlook gateway portion of the Project incorporates the existing park infrastructure. This element will:

- Create a pedestrian route from the Jefferson Boulevard entrance of Culver City Park to the connection point at the terminus of Lotts Lane by:
 - Evaluating and improving the existing sidewalks and trails to be used for the pedestrian route through Culver City Park; and
 - Enhancing and extending the existing trail that borders the outfield of the Culver City Little League Ball Field to the connection point at the terminus of Lotts Lane;
- Create and install directional and interpretive signage relevant to the connection gateway and native plantings within Culver City Park; and
- Create and install a decorative gate on State parkland that highlights the connection gateway (a draft drawing is included as Attachment B).

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Given the existing paths, sidewalks and City ordinances, the proposed trail enhancements and extensions within Culver City Park are intended for hikers and walkers. The Culver City Park connection trail is not proposed to be used by cyclists, skateboarders, etc.

All signage that is installed as part of the Project will be designed by the MRCA with the input and approval of Culver City. Staff will work with MRCA to ensure the signage produced is consistent with the City's anti-graffiti standards.

The grant funding MRCA will use to implement this element of the Project (see Fiscal Analysis below) must be expended by February 2010. The MRCA seeks to commence work immediately upon approval from Culver City. To ensure that the Project can continue to move forward expeditiously MRCA has already begun parallel work on signage and trail evaluation.

The Culver City Park/Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook gateway connection will benefit park users in various ways. It will decrease the erosion and degradation of parkland caused by perimeter fencing intrusions and unofficial trail usage between the two parks while increasing regional connectivity of parks and natural resources. The Project will also encourage greater physical fitness and wellness by increasing public accessibility and exploration of area recreational amenities.

Staff will work with the City Attorney's Office to review and prepare any documents necessary to formalize the multi-agency coordination of the Project.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

The Culver City Park/Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook gateway portion (Element #3) of the Project will be funded by MRCA through an Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation grant and Los Angeles County Proposition A funding. The estimated value of the work proposed to be completed including the trail enhancements and extension, signage, native plantings and gate, is estimated at \$100,000.

Culver City's contribution to the project will be in the form of providing maintenance for the trail improvements within the Culver City Park areas that the PRCS Department currently services. Staff estimates the maintenance related to these improvements will equal approximately \$2,000 per year (staff time and materials) but does not expect it will have a significant impact on the departmental budget.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Project map
- B. Draft drawing of decorative gate to be installed on State parkland

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MOTION:

That the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Commission:

1. Recommend that the City Council approve City participation in the Culver City Park/Overlook Gateway portion (Element #3) of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's "Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project;"

OR

2. Recommend that the City Council not approve City participation in the Culver City Park/Overlook Gateway portion (Element #3) of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's "Ballona Creek to Parks Connection Loop Project;"

OR

3. Provide staff with alternate recommendation(s).