

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 12/11/06		Item Number: <u>A-2</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Authorize a Letter of Support for Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority Grant Application for the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project.			
Contact Person/Dept.: John Rivera, PW-Admin		Phone Number: (310) 253-5616	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒	Attachments: ☒
Public Notification: City's Master Notification List 12/06/06.			
Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson (12/4/2006)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (12/07/2006)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (12/07/2006)			
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council Authorize the City Manager to submit a Letter of Support for Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority Grant Application for the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> The City's General Plan Land Use Element, updated in 1996, established a specific implementation task to conduct a "Ballona Creek Focused Special Study" to determine the potential for enhancing the Creek area as a recreational resource. On December 8, 2003, the Council received and filed the "Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study," (Ballona Creek Special Study) and directed staff to complete a General Plan Amendment (GPA) that includes the design and planning principles identified in Table 5-A of the Ballona Creek Special Study, as appropriate, and that establishes policies defining desired and allowable types of development along Ballona Creek. Table 5-A is provided as Attachment No. 1. The Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study is a very broad study of the Ballona Creek environs and issues and opportunities such as flood control, recreation, and beautification. The Ballona Creek Special Study is a study that highlights ideas and policy options that may or may not be desirable to pursue. This Special Study does not establish policy or commit the City to a course of action.			

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On May 24, 2004, the City Council approved Resolution No. 2004-R044 amending certain elements of the General Plan related to development along Ballona Creek (Attachment No. 2). The GPA was the first phase in a multiple-phase process to protect the safety and quality of life of Ballona Creek-adjacent properties and to protect the City's land use authority along Ballona Creek. Early in the process of identifying policies for development along Ballona Creek, the staff team determined that in order to accomplish the goals set forth by the City Council, it would be necessary to complete both a General Plan Amendment and a series of Zoning Code Amendments. The General Plan Amendment would establish policies and the Zoning Code Amendments would support and implement the General Plan policies.

The purpose of the Ballona Creek-related GPA changes were to define allowable types of development along Ballona Creek and the Ballona Creek Bike Path (Bike Path), and to protect adjacent properties from impacts associated with regional use of the Bike Path. The proposed General Plan Amendment was also to provide the City, and other governmental and non-governmental agencies interested in designing, installing and maintaining trail improvements to Ballona Creek and the Bike Path with a set of guiding policies and a framework from which to judge the appropriateness of a proposed project.

On June 13, 2005, the City Council approved Ordinance No. 2005-001 amending Title 17, Zoning, of the Municipal Code to establish an Open Space Zone, which includes Ballona Creek (Attachment No. 3). The establishment of the Open Space Zone, enables the City to regulate the location and development of new recreation facilities and public parks and the significant expansion of existing public parks through the Comprehensive Plan process, which includes review by the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission and the City Council to ensure significant levels of public review and comment.

DISCUSSION:

On October 17, 2006, The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) submitted a grant application to The Resource Agency of the State of California. The application is for a California River Parkways Grant funded by Proposition 50, Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002. The proposed grant is for a Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project (Project). The Project is intended to improve 7.2 miles of the existing Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path with 12 coordinated interpretive exhibits, new bike lane striping, way-finding signage at 15 locations and visitor amenities at key locations.

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The Project does not include any physical expansion of the Bike Path itself, but would, if approved, add to user amenities/facilities at 3 locations outside of the City. These amenities/facilities are proposed to be located at the existing Bike Path entrances at Sepulveda (west side), Inglewood and McConnell Boulevards. Each of these locations are located in the City of Los Angeles. These areas are anticipated to be improved with benches, trash receptacles, bike racks and landscaping, similar to improvements installed at the Centinela Boulevard entrance in 2005.

The Project would result in the striping, way-finding signage and interpretive signage being located in Culver City. The striping would be installed by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and has a life expectancy of 20 years. The way-finding signage is proposed for the major entrances to the path to make it easier to find and access the path. These locations would also have signage providing directional and distances to destinations information to areas such as the Baldwin Hills Recreation Area, Ballona Wetlands, the South Bay Bike Trail or other attractions. Interpretive signage is also anticipated to be placed adjacent to Culver City High School, and the Continuous Deflective Separation (CDS) unit installed by the City in 2005. The interpretive signage is intended to provide educational opportunities for children and adults about the environment and efforts to improve water quality. Signage content and location will be identified in final design in consultation with Culver City staff.

The Project has been envisioned to limit the impact on Ballona Creek related City maintenance cost. The City's principal added responsibility would be graffiti removal from the way-finding and interpretive signs. Repairing and/or replacing of damaged or faded signage would be the responsibility of the MRCA.

MRCA has been working with various governmental agencies, including Culver City, and stakeholders on Ballona Creek related issues as well as their grant proposal. The MRCA has requested a letter of support from the City for their grant application for the Project.

The Public Works Department believes that the MRCA grant proposal is in keeping with the City's adopted planning principles (Ballona Creek Special Study Table 5-A), specifically:

- Quality of Life – No. 9.

The Project will enhance Ballona Creek as an amenity for people who already use, live, or work near the bike path. – Restriping of the Bike Path and the installation way-finding signage will enhance safety by allowing users to identify where they are on the path if they need to report an incident or call for assistance. Interpretive signage will be an amenity that provides educational

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opportunity regarding the environment and efforts to address water quality issues.

- Public Safety – Nos. 1. and 2.
For the reasons stated above.
- Aesthetics and Environment – No. 3.
The Project will improve the general condition of the Ballona Creek through the restriping of the Bike Path and the installation of way-finding signage as noted in the principal.
- Aesthetics and Environment – No. 6.
The Project will include the installation of way-finding signage providing directional and distance information for Coastal Access as noted in the principal.
- Recreation and Use Potential – Nos. 1., 2. and 3.
The Project will include the installation of way-finding signage providing directional and distance information for the Baldwin Hills Recreation Area various major City facilities and destinations as noted in the principals.

As mentioned previously, in 2005 the City adopted Zoning regulations that were intended to regulate the location and development of new recreation facilities and public parks and the significant expansion of existing public parks through the Comprehensive Plan process. The MRCA Project would provide enhancements to the Bike Path and these enhancement in-turn could result in increased use of the Bike Path. The type of enhancements proposed, however, do not seem to raise to the level of a major modification to an existing resource, significant intensifying of existing use, or significant impact to the surrounding community which would require preparation of a Comprehensive Plan.

Staff believes the MRCA's proposed Project is consistent with the City's adopted planning principles and a letter in support of the grant application is warranted. The proposed draft support letter is provided as Attachment No. 4.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

As stated above, the Project has been envisioned to limit the impact on Ballona Creek related City maintenance cost. The City will continue to be responsible for weed control, trash pick-up, graffiti removal, etc. The City's principal added responsibility would be graffiti removal from the way-finding and interpretive signs.

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That repairing and/or replacing of damaged or faded signage would be the responsibility of the MRCA.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Table 5-A is provided as Attachment No. 1.
2. City Council Resolution No. 2004-R044 amending certain Elements of the General Plan related to development along Ballona Creek.
3. City Council Ordinance No. 2005-001 amending Title 17, Zoning, of the Municipal Code to establish an Open Space Zone.
4. Draft Support Letter
5. October 17, 2006, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, California River Parkways Grant Application.

MOTION:

That the City Council

1. Authorize the City Manager to submit a Letter of Support for Mountain Recreation and Conservation Authority Grant Application for the Ballona Creek Trail and Bike Path Enhancement Project.

OR

2. Provide further direction to staff.