

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Meeting Date: 09/24/07		Item Number: <u>A-3</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Preliminary Conceptual Plans and Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Staff to Submit a Proposition 50 California River Parkways Grant Application for the Construction of the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (P-900) Adjacent to Overland Avenue.			
Contact Person/Dept.: John Rivera, Senior Management Analyst		Phone Number: (310) 253-5616	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☒ No ☐		General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, County of Los Angeles Public Library, Culver City Unified School District, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission and Ballona Creek Renaissance by e-mail (09/12/07). All property owners and occupants within an expanded 300-ft radius of the project site, attendees of the July and August 2007 community workshops and those persons who submitted verbal or written comments at the December 8, 2003 Council discussion of the Ballona Creek Focus Special Study (09/12/07). Master Notification List on 09/19/07.			
Department Approval: Public Works: Charles D. Herbertson (09/13/07)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by H. Iker) (09/19/07)	
City Controller Approval: Marlee Chang (09/18/07)		City Manager Approval: Jerry B. Fulwood (09/18/07)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council approve Preliminary Conceptual Plans, file dated September 18, 2007, and adopt a resolution authorizing staff to submit a Proposition 50 California River Parkways Grant application for the construction of the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (P-900) adjacent to Overland Avenue. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> In November 2002, California voters approved the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beaches Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 50). Proposition 50 authorized the State Legislature to appropriate \$100 million for the acquisition, restoration, protection and development of river parkways. In December 2006, Staff submitted a Proposition 50 grant application to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) for the purpose of implementing and enhancing the improvements along a segment of the Ballona Creek Bike Path. Specifically, the grant requested \$60,000 for planning and design services through construction documents for the project and a safety/security study to be performed under the direction of the Culver City Police Department. On January 22, 2007, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy adopted Resolution No. 07-03, authorizing the grant			

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

for the project planning and design of the Ballona Creek Overland Project (Named locally as the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project).

In 2003/2004 the City implemented the Ballona Creek Pedestrian Bridge Replacement project. As part of the original project design concept, the areas adjacent to the entrances to the bridge and the adjacent embankment area owned by the Culver City Unified School District (CCUSD) were proposed to be improved with enhanced hardscape and landscape treatments. As a result of the higher than anticipated cost of the project, the scope of the design was reduced and the improvements at the northern end of the bridge, along the bike path and school campuses were eliminated.

On May 15, 2007, Public Works issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) seeking the professional services of a qualified planning and design firm(s) to conduct public outreach workshops, prepare conceptual plans, grant application exhibits and construction plans and specifications for the proposed Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (Project). And, on July 9, 2007 the City Council awarded the contract for professional planning and design services to Lawrence R. Moss & Associates (Design Team).

Project Location

The project is located along the north side of Ballona Creek, between Overland Avenue and the pedestrian bridge west of Overland Avenue. The project site is bounded on the north by the Julian Dixon County Public Library, and the campuses of Culver City High School, Culver City Middle School, and Farragut Elementary School; on the east by Overland Avenue; on the south by Ballona Creek; and on the west by the westerly extension of the Ballona Creek Bike Path. The project site consists of portions of property that are owned by three government agencies. The Culver City Unified School District owns the area consisting of the embankment along the upslope side of the bike path (between the bike path and the fenced school properties). The County of Los Angeles Public Library owns the area adjacent to the Julian Dixon Library and north of the service roadway to the creek channel/bike path. And the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works owns the area of the creek channel and bike path.

Project Concept

The project is intended to transform this segment of the creek and bike path by enhancing the beauty of the creek and providing amenities for recreational users, students, library patrons, and nearby residents. The Project is designed to help restore natural habitat, enhance the creek and bike path environment, and create educational opportunities for users of the bike path.

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

The goal of the this phase of the project is to complete the planning and design activities in time to submit the project for construction funding for the next California River Parkways grant cycle on October 19, 2007. This is another Proposition 50 grant program implemented by the California Resource Agency, which may fund river parkway projects that relate to at least two of the following issue areas; recreation; habitat; flood management; conversion to river parkways; and, conservation and interpretive enhancements. The City will be relying on the grant to fund complete construction costs of the project. If the State does not approve the grant, the construction of the project will not go forward until another source of complete funding is found.

Concurrent with the project design process, City staff and the Design Team have been working closely with the Culver City Police Department who have been conducting the safety and security review of the existing facilities and the design concepts and participating in the community outreach process.

Planning and Community Outreach Process

The City staff and the Design Team began the planning, public outreach workshops and conceptual design process in July. During this period we have been working with staff from the CCUSD, County Public Library and County Department of Public Works. Three community workshops were conducted by the Design Team. Notice advising of the project and the community workshop process was sent on July 17, 2007 to all property owners within a 300 + foot radius of the project site and the individuals who provided comments to the City Council at their December 2003 meeting regarding the Ballona Creek Focused Special Study. The workshop attendances averaged 19 people per workshop. The following is a brief description of what the workshops entailed:

Workshop One: Introduction to the Project and Issues/Assets Inventory
July 28, 2007 - Stone House in Lindberg Park

This workshop introduced the parameters of the project, provided an overall list of goals, and familiarized participants with the issues and assets related to this segment of Ballona Creek. During the workshop, participants were organized into small groups and walked through the project site. Disposable cameras were provided for groups to record both the elements that they wish to accentuate or improve and areas of concern. The groups reconvened and working with aerial photos of the site, discussed what they experienced.

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Workshop Two: Issues/Assets Analysis and Design Solution Charrette
August 1, 2007 - Garden Room at Veterans Memorial Building

The second workshop further discussed the issues and assets related to the site and allowed for all participants to take part in addressing both elements. The pictures taken from the previous workshop's orientation walk were distributed. The participants were then organized in groups to discuss what they saw as the most relevant and pertinent items. Through facilitation by the Design Team, the groups brainstormed solutions to address concerns. They also worked on ways to accentuate and improve existing assets on the site. The workshop provided a forum for all participants to voice their opinions and proactively work together to develop solutions.

Workshop Three: Design Refinement
August 29, 2007 - Garden Room in Veterans Memorial Building

At the final workshop the Design Team presented the preliminary conceptual design. They explained what elements were incorporated from previous workshops, both in addressing issues and enhancing assets of the site. A matrix of the comments received during the first two workshops was presented (See Attachment No. 1). Workshop participants were again organized into groups to review the preliminary conceptual design and provide their comments and suggestions. The workshop participant feedback was intended to help refine the design to ensure that participants had an active and vocal role throughout the process in shaping both the planning and design of the project.

The participants in the third workshop voiced support for the overall conceptual design. However, there were some of the participants who voiced their concerns that the concept design did not include a rest area. This issue is discussed in more detail in the following section of this report.

On September 11, 2007, City staff and the Design Team representative provided an introductory presentation to the CCUSD School Board of the August 29, 2007 preliminary conceptual plans. The School Board's primary comments were in support of the project and the conceptual plans. However, the Board did raise concerns regarding maintenance and graffiti issues. These issues are discussed in more detail in the following section of this report. On September 18, 2007 David El Fattal, CCUSD Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, submitted a letter confirming the School Board's support of the project and the conceptual plans. The letter reiterates the Board's concerns and the need for the District's active participation in the construction planning phase of the Project. The September 18, 2007, letter is included with this report as Attachment No. 2.

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

DISCUSSION:

Preliminary Conceptual Design

The project has been designed to meet the requirements of the American's with Disabilities Act requirements. The preliminary conceptual design for the project incorporates the following features:

- Removal and rehabilitations of planting along the Julian Dixon Public Library and adjacent County service roadway and installation of a decomposed granite (DG) pedestrian path and planting of drought tolerant and Southern California native plants appropriate to the creek habitat and low-volume water conserving irrigation systems. (Some existing trees in this area would be retained in place).
- Removal of concrete embankment along the upslope side of the bike path (between the bike path and the school properties) and replacement with a DG pedestrian path, retaining wall and terraced landscaping utilizing drought tolerant and Southern California native plants appropriate to the creek habitat and low-volume water conserving irrigation systems.
- Enhanced fencing between the service roadway and creek channel, and between the bike path and creek channel.
- Relocated and enhanced entry gate at the service roadway entrance to the creek located off of Overland Avenue and adjacent to the library building.
- Repair or repaving of the bike path along this portion of the bike path.
- Installing lighting, emergency "call-boxes," and security cameras along this portion of the bike path.
- Installing educational displays regarding the creek and the project.
- Installing drainage devices and a bio-swale to capture storm run-off.

Project Issues

As stated previously, the participants in the third workshop voiced support for the project's overall conceptual design. However, there were some of the participants who voiced their concerns that the concept design did not include a rest area. There were also other participants who voiced opposition to the inclusion of any rest area. The rest area had been discussed as a possible amenity for users of the bike and proposed pedestrian paths. The rest area potentially could include any combination of seating, water fountain and trash receptacles. Representatives of the three agencies that own the properties that are the project site have also stated their opposition to inclusion of any rest area.

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Proponents generally state that a rest area is a typical improvement along enhanced projects such as those found on river and creek parkways throughout the County. They have stated that the rest area would be important in promoting use of the project by seniors and families with young children, as well as serving as a useful amenity for other users.

Those who have stated opposition to a rest area generally cited concerns over potential loitering, camping, crimes, and liability and maintenance costs. The agencies, which own the project site and the Culver City Police Department (CCPD), who has been an active participant in this design process, also opposed the inclusion of any rest area for the same reasons. The agencies concerns are based on the proximity of the project site to the schools and the library. The CCUSD and County Library staffs have stated that they are already experiencing similar problems and are concerned that the inclusion of a rest area would increase the problems.

During the community outreach process the issues of graffiti, vandalism and maintenance were brought up by the workshop participants and the School Board. Concern was expressed that the City is currently having difficulty keeping up with the ongoing graffiti in the project site and the vandalism of the lighting fixtures on the pedestrian bridge. Those who voiced these concerns questioned what impact adding improvements and new surfaces to this area would have on the City's resources and whether these additional demands would result in a deterioration of the improvements.

As part of the City's recent budget process, the graffiti removal program has been revised and enhanced. The program currently relies on the service of private contractor (1-person crew, working 5 days a week) and supplemental City staff support. The revised program will result in the graffiti removal being done by a designated 4-person City crew which will provide 7-day a week removals. With this change, the City staff believes that we will be able to handle any increased graffiti in the area. In addition, the project design will also incorporate features such as plant materials that will grow to overhang the retaining wall and the use of graffiti resistant materials and coatings that have been used on similar projects in the County. It is also felt that the installation of the security cameras and potential increased use of the area may act as a deterrent to some incidents.

Vandalism is also a potential issue and it is difficult to quantify how often this may occur until there is some history to base the frequency on. Because it is a potential issue, again the project has been designed to reduce the vulnerability of the improvements, such as using 14-foot tall metal light poles and placing the cameras on top of the poles. Also, the project design incorporated stone, metal and concrete materials which are less vulnerable to vandalism and easier to clean. Project related

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

signage will incorporate metal and sacrificial surfaces or coatings to facilitate repair of most damage.

Maintenance needs will increase as a result of the project. The City will be including the cost of the maintenance for the initial 5-years after the project is constructed in the River Parkways Grant application. Subsequent to that period, the City would have to absorb the maintenance costs or find a partner to take on the maintenance activities. During the workshops, it was suggested the City explore the potential of partnering with a local community group or create a volunteer group to provide the maintenance. It was also suggested that the general maintenance off the plants could be incorporated into a school program on the local ecosystem. There is also the potential that other agencies, such as the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy or the Baldwin Hills Conservancy would take on the maintenance efforts.

City crews currently maintain the bike path and remove debris and litter. It is anticipated that this would continue even with the primary maintenance of the project being taken on by a third-party.

A discussion of the fiscal impact of these issues has been included below in the Fiscal Analysis section of this report.

Zoning and Environmental Reviews

It is anticipated that the Project will be exempt from the City's Open Space Zone requirements for preparation of a Comprehensive Plan. In addition, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the construction of the project is anticipated to require adoption of a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration. Both the processing of the Comprehensive Plan Exemption and the adoption of the CEQA action will occur as part of the construction document approval process in the next phase of the project.

Project Timeline

The CCUSD School Board is scheduled to consider approval of the conceptual plans and the request to authorize a support letter of the City's River Parkways Grant application on September 25, 2007. Once the Council and School Board have approved the conceptual plans and the grant application has been submitted on October 19th, work will begin on the construction drawings. The grant awards are anticipated to occur in June 2008. We anticipate completing the construction documents prior to the grant awards so that we may start the project before the start of the Los Angeles County Official 2008-2009 Rainy Season. The following table includes the currently anticipated timeline for the project:

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

Task	Time Frame
Project study, community workshops and conceptual design	July – September 2007
City Council Approval of Conceptual Design & Authorize River Parkways Grant proposal submission	September 24, 2007
School Board Approval of Conceptual Design & Authorize support letter of City's River Parkways Grant proposal submission	September 25, 2007
River Parkways Grant application submission and begin preparing final plans/specifications	October 19, 2007
Council approval of plans & specifications and authorize release of request for bids.	May 2008
School Board approval of plans and authorization to work on District property	May 2008
Award construction contract	August 2008
Begin construction	August or September, 2008
Complete construction	January or February, 2009

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Staff support from the following City departments will be needed to implement the project: Public Works, Police, Fire, Community Development and Parks, Recreation & Community Services.

The City has allocated funds in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Budget as the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project P-900, Accounts No. 42300900. The total project allocation is \$60,000. The SMMC Proposition 50 grant requires that all planning and design activities are completed and reimbursement paperwork finalized no later than June 30, 2008.

The Lawrence R. Moss & Associates, Inc. (LRMoss) proposal included the following costs for Design Development (\$23,400), Construction Documents (\$20,650), Electrical Subconsultant (\$4,800) and Construction Observation (\$10,000) for a total of \$58,850. It was determined by staff, with concurrence from LRMoss', that the \$10,000 for Construction Observation included in LRMoss' proposal would not be necessary at this time. Therefore, the contract amount with LRMoss is \$48,850. Staff will include the cost of the construction observation activities in the River Parkway Grant application for construction of the project. If the City is awarded a

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

grant to fund the construction of this project and the cost of construction observation activities is covered by the grant, the contract with LRMoss should be amended to include those services.

As stated previously, the City will be relying on the River Parkways Grant to fund complete construction costs of the project. If the State does not approve the grant, the construction of the project will not go forward until another source of complete funding is found.

If the State does approve the grant then the City will incur the cost of the staffs from various City departments participating in the implementation of the construction of the project. Also, as the project is anticipated to increase use of the area there may be additional calls for service from the City's emergency services. These costs can not be quantified/estimated at this time.

Maintenance and operational costs for the first five (5) years of the Project will be a requirement of the construction contract. The Project will be designed to incorporate native drought tolerant plant materials and construction material with increased durability in order to reduce maintenance and operation costs.

However it is anticipated that the City will either have to fund or find a partnership in the community or with other agencies to cover these costs. These costs will be associated with potential graffiti and vandalism of the improvements and equipment. There are also potential cost increases as a result of debris and litter removal from the area.

Staff and LRMoss have received some cost estimates for the maintenance of similar "Call-Box" and cameras:

- The City of Manhattan Beach has 6 "Call-Boxes" located in their parks and along a walking path. Their total annual budget for maintenance is \$2,000. However, they stated that they have not had a graffiti or vandalism problem with them. LRMoss also contacted the City of Los Angeles and was informed that they have been experiencing significant amounts of vandalism of the units they've installed along bike paths. Staff contacted the supplier of the Manhattan Beach boxes and was informed that depending on what type of unit is used, post-mounted or freestanding, the purchase and installation cost are approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 per unit. The purchase costs would be requested as a part of the grant application. Although the maintenance cost is primarily going to be dependent on the frequency or lack of any vandalism, based on the information stated above staff estimates that the annual maintenance cost for the 2 boxes that is proposed for the project would approximately \$2000.

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

- LRMoss staff has reviewed the proposal for the installation of the 5 fixed security cameras with a supplier. Based on these proposed installations, it is anticipated that the annual maintenance costs for the camera system is \$1,200 to \$1,500. The cameras are proposed to be mounted on top of 14-foot tall metal post lights and therefore are anticipated to be less vulnerable to vandalism.

The project design also includes the installation of 4 new post lights. These lights will be on 14-foot tall metal posts and are anticipated to be less vulnerable to vandalism, although the posts will be susceptible to graffiti. Graffiti removal cost may also increase due to the installation of the new retaining wall, boulders, signage and light poles. However, the City has recently reorganized and expanded its graffiti removal program and any potential increase in graffiti is anticipated to be within the capabilities and capacity of the City crew to handle once the in-house City graffiti removal crew is in place. The complete complement of the City's reorganized graffiti crew is anticipated to be operational by the time the project is completed.

Maintenance needs will increase as a result of the project. City crews currently maintain the bike path and remove debris and litter. The City will be including the cost of the maintenance for the initial 5-years after the project is constructed in the River Parkways Grant application. Subsequent to that period, the City would have to absorb the maintenance costs or find a partner to take on the primary maintenance activities. Staff will explore these options. It is anticipated that even with primary maintenance of the project being taken on by a third-party, City crews would continue maintenance of the bike path and removal of debris and litter.

In the event that no third-party could be found to take on the maintenance responsibilities, staff estimates the additional maintenance would cost approximately \$7,000 to \$8,000 annually. This is based on recent proposals received during the 2007/2008 budget discussion for Assessment District LMD #1, Zone 2. Zone 2 is located across the creek and to the east of the project site and is an approximately 20-ft wide and 2,200-ft long landscaped buffer with non-native trees and plant materials. The estimate for the proposed weekly maintenance of Zone 2 was \$11,200 to \$12,900 annually depending on the specific services provided. The project site is approximately 1,100-ft long and slightly less wide and would use native plant materials. Staff therefore believes that the \$7,000 to \$8,000 is a reasonable estimate of the potential annual cost.

The CCUSD has expressed their willingness to participate in the project, but are not able to incur additional project related expenses. In addition to the maintenance cost described above there will be energy and water costs. We estimate that the energy costs for operation of the 3 lights and the 5 cameras proposed to be located on the Districts property would be approximately \$1,320 annually. Based on the

City of Culver City, California
City Council Agenda Item Report

annual water costs for the adjacent Assessment District LMD #1, Zone 2, we estimate the annual water costs to be \$532. The District has said they would allow the cameras to be connected to the Police Department through their web access.

If the City Council approves this project, this estimated annual maintenance expenditure maybe included in the future year's budget when it is needed.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution
2. September 18, 2007 Letter from David El Fattal, CCUSD Assistant Superintendent, Business Services to John Rivera, City of Culver City.
3. Workshop Comments Matrix
4. Preliminary Conceptual Design Package
 - Preliminary Conceptual Design (Project Site Plan View)
 - Preliminary Design Sections (Cross Sections)
 - Preliminary Plant Palette
 - Conceptual Design Sections (Plan View) L1.01-01 through L1.01-06

MOTIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Approve the Preliminary Conceptual Plans for the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (P-900), file dated September 18, 2007;
2. Adopt the Resolution authorizing staff to submit a Proposition 50 California River Parkways Grant application for the construction of the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (P-900); and,
3. Authorize the City Manager to sign on behalf of the City all documents required for the Ballona Creek Bikeway Project (P-900) Proposition 50 California River Parkways Grant application.