



COUNCIL AGENDA: 6-14-05

ITEM: 2.9

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 05-23-05

Approved

Date

5/31/05

Council District: 5
SNI Area: East Valley/
680 Communities
Mayfair
Gateway East

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE SANTA CLARA COUNTY OPEN SPACE AUTHORITY 20 PERCENT FUNDS PROGRAM FOR PREPARATION OF THE LOWER SILVER CREEK TRAIL MASTER PLAN

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority (OSA) for use of 20 Percent Funds in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for the Lower Silver Creek Trail Master Plan and associated environmental document.

BACKGROUND

In 2000, the City Council approved the "Greenprint, A 20-Year Strategic Plan for Parks and Community Facilities and Programs." The Lower Silver Creek Trail is identified in the document as a trail alignment that will link the future Thompson Creek Trail (City Council approved the master plan on April 26, 2005) to the future Coyote Creek Trail (feasibility study completed in June 2004).

Currently, the Santa Clara Valley Water District (SCVWD) is designing and building flood control improvements along several segments (or reaches) of the waterway. As they proceed with flood control measures, they have been installing service roads that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines for slope so that the roads can be more easily developed as recreational trails at some future date.

Residents in the area identified the bridge and trail as important priorities and were successful in securing partial funding for their development as part of the Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy (NRS).

On May 27, 2003, Council directed staff to secure SCVWD grant funds for the development of the Dobern Bridge/Trail project. The project spans the Lower Silver Creek and will provide access from neighboring streets to a future trail. Construction of the bridge and associated trail will commence during the summer 2005.

In February 2005, City staff approached Open Space Authority (OSA) staff and obtained confirmation that the Lower Silver Creek Trail project was suitable for the organization's funding.

On April 25, 2005, staff presented the project and reviewed the funding request with the OSA's Citizen Advisory Committee. The committee voted 8 to 1 in support of the project.

On April 28, 2005, staff presented the project to the OSA's Board of Directors and obtained unanimous support for the project. Staff is awaiting a formal resolution from OSA and a draft funding agreement for negotiations.

ANALYSIS

Preparation of a master plan is necessary before development of construction documents. Specifically, a plan defines the preferred alignment, secures community input, identifies opportunities and constraints, and provides a cost estimate and schedule for development of a trail project.

The Lower Silver Creek Trail Master Plan will identify the ultimate trail project to be built as funding permits and an interim trail to allow public access in the near term. An interim trail, as defined by the City and SCVWD, is a relatively low cost project that permits public access through the installation of minimal signage, call boxes, and other necessary safety enhancements.

With completion of the master plan and environmental document, the project will be competitive for construction grant funding. The total cost for the master planning and environmental document is estimated to be \$489,000. Of this total, PRNS anticipates receiving \$250,000 in OSA funds for the project. A separate memorandum will be submitted to the City Council to appropriate this funding once the City completes negotiations and executes an agreement with OSA. The balance of funds; \$239,000 will be requested from City sources through a separate Council memorandum.

The SCVWD is proceeding with channel improvements at several points in the creek that can support future public access. To permit public access, the City must prepare an environmental

document that analyzes the proposed recreational use to identify impacts to the environment and prescribe mitigations as necessary.

The SCVWD is constructing a number of bridges along the Lower Silver Creek. The bridges are located at Kammerer Road, Dobern Avenue, Lausset Avenue, and Plata Arroyo Park. These facilities are or will be open to the public as they are completed. They will be referenced in the master plan and integrated into an overall public trail system.

The City's Trail Inventory contains 30 trail systems, composed of over 180 individual reaches. The City's Trail Program Manager reviews all projects on an annual basis. An annual strategic plan is proposed for each Council district through this process. Typically, a set of three meetings occurs with the Council offices to review the plan, discuss funding, and refine an overall list that is captured in an annual city-wide work plan for trail development. If funding permits, these projects are then recommended for approval by the City Council through the Capital Budget process. Projects that are not funded by City resources may be targeted for grants if they meet the prescribed Grant Funding Prioritization Guidelines (Informational Memorandum, October 2004).

Use of OSA funds for projects is defined as part of the Grant Funding Prioritization Guidelines. Because OSA funds can support a wide range of projects, the guidelines identify objective criteria that direct funds to specific project types. In preparing the city-wide work plan for trail development, projects surface with unique characteristics or time requirements that warrant urgent action. The Lower Silver Creek Trail project presents just such an opportunity. The proposed project aligns well with the following criteria.

Project Criteria	Objective
Contiguous Open Space	Project site is adjacent to existing open space and parklands.
Accessibility	Provides access to open space from a nearby urban area.
Unique/Significant Characteristics	Project has exceptional environmental, scenic, recreational or cultural attributes.

For the Lower Silver Creek Trail project, the data in support of the objective measures are:

- Provides an opportunity for an east-west connection between the future Thompson Creek and Coyote Creek Trails.
- Links Lake Cunningham to numerous neighborhood parks and school sites.
- Provides off-street neighborhood access in an area that is bordered by high-volume arterials and freeways.
- Serves a community that is less likely to have access to private vehicles.

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OUTCOME

By directing the City Manager to negotiate and execute a funding agreement with OSA, a significant portion of funds necessary for preparation of a master plan will be in place.

COORDINATION

This item has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Budget Office, Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, and the Department of Public Works.

CEQA

Exempt, CEQA Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies.



SARA L. HENSLEY
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood and Services