

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: DONTÉ WATSON, DIRECTOR
RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: AUTHORIZING SUBMITTAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO
THE ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION'S
PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREA GRANT PROGRAM FOR
MASTER PLANNING AND DESIGN OF THE SOUTHEAST
GREENWAY PROJECT

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Recreation and Parks Department that the Council, by resolution: 1) approve a grant application to the Association of Bay Area Governments Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) 2024 Priority Conservation Area Grant Program for Master Planning and design of the Southeast Greenway (Project) in the amount of \$1,000,000 and authorize the City Manager or designee to submit the grant application on behalf of the Recreation and Parks Department; 2) authorize the City Manager or designee to accept the grant and execute any and all grant agreements, and all other documents necessary for the completion of the Master Planning and design of the Project, subject to approval by the City Attorney; and 3) authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase appropriations by the approved grant amount.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The approved resolution will authorize the Recreation and Parks Department to apply for the Association of Bay Area Governments Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) 2024 Priority Conservation Area (PCA) Grant Program and execute all required documents to provide a master plan and design for the Southeast Greenway Project. The master planning process will involve a citywide outreach program, the Recreation and Parks Department will ensure the Project is thoughtfully planned and designed, responds to the needs of the community, and provides multiple benefits including, a full length Class I shared use path, separate pedestrian paths and neighborhood connections, a variety of park amenities, as well as tree planting and

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vegetation management approaches to enhance habitat for native plant and animal species and help mitigate the impacts of climate change throughout the corridor.

BACKGROUND

The City is currently working to finalize the purchase of the approximately 49 acres of State-rescinded, Route 12 excess lands owned by Caltrans, located between Farmers Lane and Spring Lake Regional Park. The acquisition provides the land base for the future development of the regionally significant, Southeast Greenway. Together with the consistent and collaborative efforts of its partners Sonoma Land Trust, the Southeast Greenway Campaign, Sonoma County Regional Parks, LandPaths and Sonoma Water, the acquisition stands to be completed and transferred to the City of Santa Rosa's ownership this fall.

With land acquisition nearly complete, the City and its partners stand on the cusp of a unique opportunity to transform a two-mile long abandoned right-of-way into a vibrant new linear park experience in the heart of Santa Rosa, realizing a community vision almost two decades in the making. While specific elements of the Greenway will be determined through the Master Planning process, based on previous input the City anticipates the Greenway will include a diverse mix of features and benefits including:

- Two miles of shared-use paths with multiple improved neighborhood access points making a significant contribution to the growing local and regional active transportation network, including safe, walkable routes to school, work, and shopping for residents.
- A variety of park amenities such as community gardens and orchards, play areas, picnic and gathering areas, off-leash dog parks, opportunities for socialization and outdoor education, and potential for a variety of other active and passive recreational features.
- Expanded access to nature within the diverse urban neighborhoods of southeast Santa Rosa.
- A mix of passive and active recreation areas such as woodlands, meadows, play areas, and sports courts.
- Enhanced climate resiliency and promotion of individual and community health.

The Greenway Project is an excellent fit with Priority Conservation Area grant program goals, and the funding would allow the City and its partners to move forward with a community-wide planning process to craft a comprehensive and well-supported Master Plan for what promises to be a major urban greening and park project connecting

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visitors with the community's beloved three-park complex of the County's Spring Lake Regional Park, the City's Howarth Memorial Community Park, and Trione-Annadel State Park.

With a variety of passive and active park and natural features planned along the pathway, the project has enormous potential to improve equitable outdoor, recreational, bike and pedestrian access, as well as provide a variety of benefits in support of local and regional climate resiliency.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On June 17, 2014, Council approved a Letter of Intent with Members of the Southeast Greenway Partnership.

On July 7, 2015, Council adopted Resolution No. 28666 approving the 2015 MOU between Caltrans and the Partnership.

On July 9, 2019, Council certified the Southeast Greenway Project Environmental Impact Report, adopted findings of fact, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program, and statement of overriding considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality act and adopted a General Plan Amendment and Rezoning for the Property.

On July 7, 2020, Council approved a first amendment to the 2015 MOU.

On July 25, 2023, Council declared the future Southeast Greenway property for a public purpose, approved a deed restriction for same, and established park land requirements for land retained by Caltrans in Resolution RES-2023-131.

ANALYSIS

On May 8, 2024, the Recreation and Parks Department submitted a pre-application letter of interest as the required first step for consideration in the MTC PCA Grant Program. Upon review, the MTC extended an invitation to the Recreation and Parks Department to submit a full application for this important Project for 2024 PCA Grant Program funding. The full applications are due August 28, and can be submitted via email. After review by the evaluation committee, applicants will receive award or non-award notifications in early October 2024.

If successful, the funds secured through the MTC PCA grant application will combine with existing funding allocated from Park Impact Development Fees (Southeast Quadrant), and be used to develop a community supported Master Plan, and conduct the design work for the improvements to the Southeast Greenway. Concurrently, staff is

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preparing a request for qualifications (RFQ) for the Project with an anticipated release date after the MTC PCA grant award notifications are released.

Provided the city is accepted into the grant program, and successful in awarding a planning and design consultant contract, community engagement for the Master Plan could begin in early 2025. Master Planning for the Project will involve a significant citywide outreach program, and together with the execution of the Master Plan, supporting design plans, specifications, and project administration, costs are estimated to be \$2,400,000 and take approximately 2 years. Subsequently, construction drawings, and implementation of path and park improvements are anticipated to be done in phases based on community priorities, access needs and available future funding.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund. If awarded, funds for the project will be provided in an amount not to exceed \$1,000,000 from the MTC. The remainder of the funds are currently available in the SE Greenway fund key 09786 in the amount of \$1,439,074. Approval of this resolution authorizes the Chief Financial Officer to appropriate the amount of the awarded grant funds from the General Fund to JL Key 09786 to complete this phase of planning and design for the Project. The General Fund will be reimbursed with the payment from the granting agency upon Project completion.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

As part of the Land Use Planning process to update the General Plan for the Southeast Greenway land to include allowable land uses and property zoning, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was adopted by the City Council including findings of fact, a mitigation monitoring and reporting program, and a statement of overriding considerations pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Subsequently, on July 25, 2023, Council approved a deed restriction for the property declaring it for a public purpose, and established park land requirements for the parcels to be retained by Caltrans which are now zoned for housing and mixed uses.

While the adopted map and land use concepts do not represent specific proposals for park development, it is anticipated that implementation of future public park areas, recreational facilities, multi-use paths, and associated greenway infrastructure may rely on the program level EIR, assuming they are within the parameters of what was evaluated in the certified EIR. The project strongly aligns with the requirements for a streamlined environmental review for project specific impacts under CEQA Section 15183. The streamlined environmental review process applies to projects that are

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consistent with the General Plan land use and zoning for which an EIR was certified. Specific studies regarding biological and cultural resources, traffic impacts etc. will be included during park planning and design, and additional environmental review and documentation may be required depending on the nature of project level elements.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Resolution

PRESENTER

Presenter: Scott Wilkinson, swilkinson@srcity.org, 707-543-3953