



*City of Arts & Innovation*

# City Council Memorandum

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL** **DATE: AUGUST 23, 2016**

**FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT** **WARDS: 2 AND 4**

**SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO SUBMIT GRANT APPLICATION TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION'S HABITAT CONSERVATION FUND PROGRAM FOR FUNDS TO ACQUIRE FIVE-ACRES OF LAND TO INCORPORATE INTO SYCAMORE CANYON WILDERNESS PARK - SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION**

## **ISSUES:**

Approval to submit a grant application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation under the Habitat Conservation Program for funds to use for acquisition of five-acres of land to incorporate into Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a resolution authorizing the submittal of a grant application in the amount of \$250,000 under the provisions of the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation for acquisition of land to incorporate into Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park;
2. Upon grant award, authorize an increase in estimated revenues in the amount of \$250,000 and appropriate expenditures in the same amount in a project account to be established by the Finance Department;
3. Upon grant award, if needed, authorize a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$250,000 from the Regional Park Special Capital Improvement Fund (413) to the project account established by the Finance Department for required matching funds; and
4. Authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all necessary documents to implement the approval of the grant application and to carry out the grant project on behalf of the City, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park is a 1,500 acre natural park serving as a habitat reserve for the endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat. It is an open space available to the community for recreation that is enjoyed regionally by hikers, mountain bikers, trail runners, naturalists, and

many others. It is also used for scholarly research by nearby academic institutions and agencies. The park is almost completely surrounded by residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. An undeveloped five-acre parcel remains on the western frontage of the park. It has recently been put up for sale, and the Owner of Record (COEGCA2-LLC) is willing to sell the land to the City. If not sold to the City for incorporation into the park and preserved as open space, this land would likely be developed for residential use as it is currently zoned for Residential Estates.

The parcel is located at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Via Vista and Canyon Crest Boulevards. Park access is currently available at this location for pedestrians and bicyclists; however, the nearest available vehicle parking is on the other side of Canyon Crest Boulevard from the park, which requires visitors to cross a busy street with fast-moving traffic. The adopted *Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Park Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Management Plan and Conceptual Development Plan (1999)* calls for acquisition of the undeveloped five-acre parcel in order for a trailhead to be developed at this location, including a parking lot for 15 to 20 cars.

Funding sources are being sought in order to acquire the land. The Habitat Conservation Fund grant program is made available to local jurisdictions by the California Department of Parks and Recreation to support projects that bring urban residents into park and wildlife areas. Staff is requesting approval to submit an application for this grant, which requires a letter or other document indicating the owner's willingness to sell the land to the City. An exclusive purchase agreement between the two parties would fulfill the requirement for the grant, and would provide the two parties assurance of their mutual commitment to the transaction. The City's Real Property Services Division is currently working with the land owner to finalize the purchase agreement, with assistance from the City Attorney's Office, and will be submitting it to the City Council at a later date.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund. The appraised price for the five-acre parcel is \$500,000. The Habitat Conservation Fund Grant requires a dollar-for-dollar match. The grant amount requested will be \$250,000, and the match requirement will be met using funds from the Regional Park Special Capital Improvement (413) Fund in the amount of \$250,000. While waiting for the results of this grant application, staff will continue to seek other grant funding to use for the match in place of using fund balance from the 413 Fund.

Prepared by:	Adolfo Cruz, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director
Certified as to	
Availability of funds:	Scott G. Miller, Interim Finance Director/Treasurer
Approved by:	Alexander T. Nguyen, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Gary G. Geuss, City Attorney

Attachment:	Grant Application Resolution
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