



# Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: SAFETY, WELLNESS AND YOUTH COMMITTEE      DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2021**  
**FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY      WARD: 1**  
**SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE GAGE CANAL TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

**ISSUE:**

Receive an update and provide feedback for the Gage Canal Trail Improvements Project.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee:

1. Receive an update on the Gage Canal Trail Improvements Project; and
2. Recommend that the City Council approve the execution of an interdepartmental MOU between the City of Riverside Public Utilities Department, Water Division (RPU), and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD).

**BACKGROUND:**

On July 21, 2020, the Purchasing Division posted RFP No. 2032 on the City's online bidding website. On August 11, 2020, three proposals were received. After a thorough review by the Purchasing Division, it was found that two proposals were deemed non-responsive. A selection committee consisting of four staff members from multiple City Departments reviewed the remaining responsive proposal and interviewed the firm, Alta Planning+ Design, Inc. The firm received a high rating based on their proposal submission. Following the interview, staff negotiated with Alta Planning + Design, Inc. to reduce their price by \$70,811.81.

On December 1, 2020, City Council approved the agreement for RFP No. 2032, Gage Canal Trail Improvements Master Plan with Alta Planning + Design, Inc., of Portland, Oregon, in an amount not to exceed \$532,431.65.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

On Monday, July 19, 2021, with Chair Feola, Vice-Chair Iverson, and Commissioners Friedlander, Fairfax, Engles, and Jester present, they unanimously provided positive feedback on the Gage Canal Trail Improvements Master Plan Project.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Existing Conditions**

The Gage Canal Multi-Purpose Recreational Trail (Trail) is an existing informal and unpaved path that follows the Gage Canal and is located within a City-owned easement. Phase I of the project is approximately a two-mile stretch starting from Palmyrita Avenue, running southwest along the edge of the Box Springs Mountain Reserve and south across Spruce Street, ending at the UC Riverside Campus at Blaine Street.

### **Community Input**

Beginning April 1, 2021, Alta Planning + Design (Alta) and the City of Riverside Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department polled Riverside residents and stakeholders about their current and anticipated use of, and amenity preferences for the Trail. This brief 5-minute, 8 question survey was designed as a “low friction” opportunity for the community to share their experiences and perspectives on walking, biking, and recreating along the Trail without a significant imposition on their time. Survey results and themes will be utilized by the City and Alta to inform design direction, programming, and trail amenities.

The survey, which was available in English and Spanish both digitally and in print, was promoted and distributed to Riverside stakeholders in a variety of formats. Each survey question was accompanied by a variety of response options so that respondents needed only to select their relevant choice(s), with a final open-ended prompt provided for those that wanted to share additional thoughts or recommendations for the project team to consider.

While open for input from all stakeholder’s input, the project team targeted advertisements to those that lived, worked, or played near the Gage Canal. This included households within a ¼ mile radius of the project area (including the disadvantaged communities near the Trail’s northern and southern ends), UC Riverside students and faculty, RUSD and AUSD students and parents, and current Trail users. The survey remained open for input from April 1 through June 1, 2021, with a total of 545 responses.

### **Master Plan**

The proposed Master Plan Design attempts to create a Class I asphalt concrete shared use path and an unpaved path within an existing city-owned water utility easement. The trail corridor will be landscaped with native and climate-appropriate trees, shrubs and will feature additional amenities including entry plazas, trailside seating, bicycle racks, interpretive signage, and solar lighting. It will create a continuous off-street multipurpose trail connection from Palmyrita Avenue to Blaine Street and will offer local residents both recreational opportunities and a connection to the Box Springs Reserve.

### **Budget**

On October 1, 2019, City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application for the California Natural Resources Agency Urban Greening Grant Program in the amount of \$3,708,509 for the design and implementation of the Gage Canal Multi-Purpose Recreational Trail Phase I.

On April 1, 2020, the City of Riverside entered into an agreement with the State of California Natural Resources Agency for the Gage Canal Multi-Purpose Recreational Trail Phase I in the amount of \$3,708,509.

The construction budget based on the consultant's estimate is \$3,175,000 is fully funded by the Greening Grant received by the State.

The anticipated annual recurring maintenance costs based on a consultant's estimate is \$85,000.

### CEQA Determination

With guidance from project CEQA consultants and the City Attorney's Office, the PRCSD Staff have determined this Master Plan project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to SB 288 of the Public Resources Code 21080.20, as the proposed project is designed to implement new active transportation while located in an urbanized area and within an existing public right-of-way, does not require the demolition of affordable housing units, and will not add physical infrastructure that increases new automobile capacity or include the addition of any auxiliary lanes. Upon completion of supporting documentation, the PRCSD Staff will prepare Notice of Exemption (NOE) documentation for the project and file with the County Clerk.

### Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is being drafted by and between the City of Riverside Public Utilities Department, Water Division (RPU), and the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) to formalize the responsibilities for the monitoring, maintenance, and costs associated with the City's right to operate the Gage Canal Multi-use Trail (Trail) along the old Gage Canal right of way (ROW), from Blaine Street to Palmyrita Avenue.

The attached presentation provides a further detailed update on the project as well as the Draft Master Plan and rendering images.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:**

The work contributes to **Strategic Priority 1 – “Arts, Culture and Recreation”** of the Envision Riverside 2025 Strategic Plan, which aims to provide diverse community experiences and personal enrichment opportunities for people of all ages.

The work specifically contributes to **Goal 1.3**, to improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs, and **Goal 1.4**, to prioritize safety at parks, trails, arts, cultural and recreational facilities.

1. **Community Trust** – The PRCSD and its design consultant have done extensive community outreach in order to obtain stakeholder feedback that has helped drive the overall trail design and amenities selection. The public is currently able to track the progress of the project through the Parks Department's CIP tracking map located on the City's website.
2. **Equity** – With this project's improvements, it will extend the Gage Canal Trail along a section that was previously restricted to public access, while also offering and encouraging free walking, jogging, and biking recreational opportunities and active transportation routes to all members of the public.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The purchasing of all services for this project is in accordance with Purchasing Resolution 23256. Also, the grant funding obtained for this project requires no City “match”.

4. **Innovation** – The improvements for this project along a restricted access easement ensures that new recreational and transportation opportunities are offered, unlike anywhere else in the City.
  
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – This project contributes to improving existing City facilities and amenities, which encourages and provides access to healthy exercise opportunities. Also, major components of the project’s design include water efficient-drip irrigation, installation of a smart controller, and planting 600 native trees to help with carbon sequestration, improving the overall quality of life for all City of Riverside residents.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The project’s construction phase is estimated to cost a total of \$3,175,000 and the project’s recurring maintenance costs are estimated to be \$85,000 annually. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services department is not able to absorb the annual maintenance costs within its current budget allocations, which have remained flat in recent budget cycles. When the project is complete, an increase in the amount of \$85,000 in future General Fund budget allocations for the Parks, Recreation and Community Services department will be required to cover annual maintenance costs.

Prepared by: Randy McDaniel, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Interim Director  
Certified as to availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer  
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments: 1. Presentation  
2. Draft Master Plan