



Agenda Report

MEETING DATE: Tuesday, October 25, 2022

TO: City Council

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR DI RENZO
TOTO VU-DUC, SR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS ANALYST

THROUGH: CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION APPROVING APPLICATION FOR \$827,853.38 IN
GRANT FUNDING FROM THE CALIFORNIA NATURAL
RESOURCES AGENCY (CNRA) FOR GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
FEATURES AT THE NEW EXPLORATION CENTER AT RAMSAY
PARK

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution approving a grant application for \$827,853.38 from the General Fund Urban Greening Grant Program 2022 administered by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and if awarded, appropriate such funds to the Special Grants Fund [0260], and authorize the City Manager to execute all agreements and any amendments necessary.

BACKGROUND:

The City is applying for \$827,853.38 in grant funding to design and construct green infrastructure features for the new Exploration Center ("formerly Nature Center") which is currently in the design phase. These features are not currently funded in the Center's renovation budget. If awarded, funding from this grant will be used to deliver further environmental benefits at Ramsay Park, one of five priority areas identified in Watsonville's Green Infrastructure Implementation Plan (GIIP).

The CNRA grant is funded through the Urban Greening Program (SB170) specifically for urban greening projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide multiple benefits. The green infrastructure features identified for the new Center will not only reduce emissions but also deliver benefits for stormwater runoff, urban heat island reduction, and user accessibility. The incorporation of these features at the Center will provide added benefit of increasing visibility and demonstration of green infrastructure for visitors to the Center.

DISCUSSION:

The City developed a comprehensive plan to accelerate environmental benefits through green infrastructure funded by the Bay Area Council's California Resilience Challenge Grant.

The GIIP identified five priority areas most suited to green infrastructure investment. The new Exploration Center currently under development at Ramsay Park is one of these priority sites.

The GIIP outlined key green infrastructure features for each priority area. The green infrastructure features proposed for the Center include the following:

1. Green roof
2. Bio-swale for advanced stormwater treatment and
3. Tree-lined switchback accessible path

These components are shown in green as “Phase IV” in the attached diagram showing different project scopes at Ramsay Park.

Due to budget limitations, these features were not scoped into the Center’s building renovation project. Acceptance of this grant would leverage existing investment by completing the full concept plan for the site. The features above complete a park-wide green infrastructure network for heat island reduction and stormwater runoff improvement into the Pájaro River watershed. These benefits meet the requirements for the CNRA’s Urban Greening Grant Program 2022, which can provide complete funding to install these features.

Acceptance of this grant, if awarded, will also ensure the Center’s green infrastructure design and construction can occur alongside the building development, preventing risks of rework by delivering the features in tandem with the Center’s building and preventing any need for further building closure to install the green infrastructure once the Center is open.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This project is consistent with Strategic Plan Priority:

3 - Infrastructure & Environment

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Acceptance of the CNRA Urban Greening Grant will fully fund the cost to install the green infrastructure features at the new Exploration Center. Accepting the funds at this time will also save on the total cost to install the green infrastructure features because they can be built alongside the construction of the new Center building, reducing additional site closure due to construction and additional traffic management & construction costs, were the features to be installed at a later date.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION:

Council may choose not to accept the grant, if awarded. Without the grant award it is unlikely that the City will pursue installing green infrastructure at the Exploration Center.

ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):

- 1) Ramsay Park Masterplan Project Scope Diagram