



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STATEMENT



June 12, 2018

File ID: 18-0226

TITLE

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHULA VISTA ACKNOWLEDGING GRANT REQUIREMENTS OF SANDAG TO IMPLEMENT AN EIGHTEEN MONTH PROGRAM FOCUSED ON ADDRESSING THREATS TO SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND WITHIN THE RICE CANYON OPEN SPACE PRESERVE AREA, AND CONTINGENT UPON GRANT AWARD, ACCEPTING THE GRANT FUNDS, AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A GRANT AGREEMENT WITH SANDAG, ESTABLISHING A NEW CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT "RICE CANYON SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES" (CTY0230), AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2018-19 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM BUDGET, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR (4/5 VOTE REQUIRED)

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Council adopt the resolution.

SUMMARY

On October 02, 2017, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) issued a Call for Projects (CFP) for grant funding under the TransNet Environmental Mitigation Program (EMP) to support environmental land management projects. The City prepared and submitted a grant proposal to fund an eighteen month program focused on addressing threats to sensitive plant species found within Rice Canyon – illegal trespassing and weed eradication. On May 08, 2018, the EMP Working Group approved a list of projects, including Chula Vista's, to be considered for funding by SANDAG. The project's recommendation for funding will be presented to the SANDAG Transportation Committee, Regional Planning Committee and Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee this summer before being presented to the Board of Directors for final approval. In accordance with SANDAG's selection process, to be considered eligible for this grant funding, grant applicants are required to provide SANDAG with a resolution accepting grant funding, if awarded, and authorizing subsequent execution of SANDAG's standard grant agreement.

Tonight's actions would approve the grant application for TransNet funding. Additionally, tonight's actions, contingent upon grant award, will authorize staff to accept the requested grant funds, establish a new capital improvement project "Rice Canyon Sensitive Plant Species" (CTY0230), amend the fiscal year (FY) 2018-19 CIP program budget, appropriate \$36,500 in SANDAG grant funds, and execute a grant agreement between SANDAG and the City to implement the project within Rice Canyon.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Director of Development Services has reviewed the proposed project for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has determined that the project qualifies for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15304(d) (Minor Alterations to Land) of the State CEQA Guidelines. Consistent with Section 15304(d), the proposed project involves minor alterations in lands

within an existing officially designated wildlife management area (i.e., Rice Canyon Preserve) for purposes of improving existing wildlife habitat and resources. Thus, no further environmental review is required.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable

DISCUSSION

SANDAG TransNet EMP Grant Funding

In November 2004, the voters of San Diego County approved the TransNet Extension Ordinance 04-01 and Expenditure Plan, including an EMP. The EMP is a funding allocation category for the costs to mitigate habitat impacts for regional transportation projects. The EMP is a unique component of the TransNet Extension, in that it goes beyond traditional mitigation for transportation projects by including a funding allocation for habitat acquisition, management, and monitoring activities, as needed, to help implement regional habitat conservation plans.

On September 22, 2017, the SANDAG Board of Directors approved land management activities and a budget of \$2.0 million for projects that relate to: 1) Threat Reduction Stewardship and 2) Species and Habitat Recovery.

SANDAG Call for Projects and Chula Vista's Proposal

On October 02, 2017, SANDAG issued a CFP from entities wishing to apply for a portion of TransNet funds for the use of environmental land management projects. A copy of the CFP is provided as Attachment 3 to this staff report. On January 11, 2018, the City submitted a grant proposal requesting grant funds to support an eighteen month program focused on addressing threats to sensitive plant species found within Rice Canyon – illegal trespassing and weed eradication. Loss and degradation of existing clay lens habitat within Rice Canyon has occurred due to an increase of invasive plant species, unauthorized recreational use, historical cattle grazing, and drought. By controlling access through the maintenance of existing fencing and installation of new fencing and signage and by treating and removing the non-native invasive stinknet, known populations of Otay tarplant, San Diego thornmint and Orcutt's bird beak will have an opportunity to passively restore its population. A summary of the City's grant proposal and requested funding amount is provided below:

Promotes conservation by managing threats to known sensitive plants, Maintenance and monitoring within Rice Canyon

The goal of this project is to reduce threats to sensitive plant species, specifically Otay tarplant, San Diego thornmint and Orcutt's bird beak within Rice Canyon by maintaining and installing new fencing (wire and t-post) and signage to direct trail users on authorized trails only. There is approximately 2,225' of existing fencing and an additional 3,000' of fencing is proposed to be installed along with signage to keep people off unauthorized trails. In addition to fencing and signage, this project will treat and remove stinknet, an invasive weed found along both sides of the sewer access road in Rice Canyon (~ 3,600 linear feet).

The grant amount requested to retain a qualified biological consultant to implement this proposal is \$36,500 and would provide up to eighteen months of funding. Staff will select a qualified biological consultant to implement this project in accordance with the City's purchasing procedures set forth in Chula Vista Municipal Code (CVMC) 2.56. Attachment 4 contains the City's grant proposal.

Pending Grant Award and Eligibility Requirements

On May 08, 2018 the EMP Working Group approved a list of projects to be considered for funding by SANDAG's Transportation Committee, Regional Planning Committee and Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee this summer before being presented to the Board of Directors for final approval. The City's proposal was included on the list of projects recommend for TransNet funding. To be considered eligible for grant funding, the City is now required to provide SANDAG with a resolution authorizing City acceptance of the requested grant funds, if awarded, and execution of SANDAG's standard grant agreement. Applicants that do not provide the required resolution to SANDAG by June 22, 2018 will not be eligible for grant funding.

The City's grant proposal included providing funding through the use of in-kind administrative resources, more specifically, through the use of City staff time. While City funding is not a requirement of this grant, it did make the application more competitive. City staff will be utilized to implement the proposed project and administer the consultant contract. City staff time for this project, and all Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) related projects, is assured due to the City's obligation to implement the provisions of the Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan and the associated MSCP implementing ordinances. This obligation is pursuant to the Implementing Agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the City of Chula Vista.

DECISION-MAKER CONFLICT

Staff has reviewed the property holdings of the City Council members and has found no property holdings within 500 feet of the boundaries of the property which is the subject of this action. Consequently, this item does not present a disqualifying real property-related financial conflict of interest under California Code of Regulations Title 2, section 18702.2(a)(11), for purposes of the Political Reform Act (Cal. Gov't Code §87100, *et seq.*).

Staff is not independently aware, and has not been informed by any City Council member, of any other fact that may constitute a basis for a decision maker conflict of interest in this matter.

LINK TO STRATEGIC GOALS

The City's Strategic Plan has five major goals: Operational Excellence, Economic Vitality, Healthy Community, Strong and Secure Neighborhoods and a Connected Community. If awarded, the funds received through this grant program will support the Healthy Community goal, particularly City Initiative 3.2.1 (Implement environmental/conservation programs). The Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan and associated Implementing Agreement with the Wildlife Agencies rely on supplemental funding sources such as SANDAGs EMP to implement enhanced conservation projects (e.g., Maintenance and monitoring, habitat restoration and habitat enhancement) for the protection of biological resources within the Rice Canyon Open Space Preserve.

CURRENT-YEAR FISCAL IMPACT

All costs associated with the grant application and administration, should the contract be awarded, will be absorbed in the existing General Fund and Development Services Fund operating budgets. Pursuant to the timeframe specified in the grant application, implementation of the program is not scheduled to commence until Fall 2018.

Approval of this recommendation will result in the creation of CIP Project focused on addressing threats to sensitive plant species found within Rice Canyon 2018 and the appropriation of \$36,500 to the CIP Projects Expenditure category of the Transportation Sales Tax Fund. In kind staff services that are estimated to total

\$3,750 will be absorbed from within the existing personnel services budget resulting in no net fiscal impact.

ONGOING FISCAL IMPACT

The \$36,500 in grant funds will be sufficient to cover costs for a biological consultant to perform the necessary habitat enhancement, increase the quality of habitat, improve connectivity, and monitoring activities. If the grant funds are awarded, appropriation of funds will be added to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018-19 CIP Program.

In-kind City staff services for eighteen months of project management are anticipated to total \$3,750. No additional appropriations will be requested to fund the associated personnel expenditures.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Staff Report
- 2) Resolution
- 3) Call for Projects (CFP)
- 4) Chula Vista 2018 EMP Grant Proposal

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