



Agenda Report

File #: 19-0660

AGENDA REPORT REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

DATE: 07/17/2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

FROM: Library and Recreation Services Department

SUBJECT:

City Council consideration of Resolution No. 2019-076 approving the application for the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant Funds for the City Park Project.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council adopt Resolution No. 2019-076 approving the application for the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant Funds for the City Park Project and directing the Library and Recreation Services Director to negotiate and execute any and all agreements or documents necessary for the grant application.

ANALYSIS:

Corona's oldest, most historic park, City Park, was first established in 1913. Early on, City Park was a public gathering spot that welcomed both residents and visitors passing through to Los Angeles or Palm Springs. The public grounds at City Park were initially used for community picnicking and to host visitors to the City's Grand Prix races that took place on Grand Boulevard. City Park has gone through a lot of changes since its inception.

Over time, City Park has evolved in its use and as amenities have been added. Initially, a wading pool and play equipment were installed, along with picnic shelters. By 1940, the City constructed the Municipal Plunge, the City's first pool. By 1950, sporting events took center stage with the addition of a Baseball Diamond. The current Armory site was also added during this era (the lease expired in December 2016). In the mid-1960's, the Municipal Plunge was retired, and the current City Pool was built. The bandshell and skatepark were added in the 1990s. Most recently, City Park received another update in the form of basketball and volleyball courts installed in conjunction with the construction of the Ion Exchange Plant in the northeast corner of the park.

Despite myriad changes, City Park has remained a meeting spot for the community, a center for aquatics and athletics, and the location for many annual community events, including the Cinco de Mayo Celebration and Day of the Child. It also continues to house local youth soccer leagues and a

swim team. Despite its uses, City Park has slowly lapsed in prestige in the community. Aging facilities and undesirable activities have caused a decline in resident perception of the park and level of use. City staff believes that City Park is a gem of the community that needs significant improvement to help restore it to its former glory. There is currently a grant opportunity that can help fund this endeavor.

Proposition 68 (Prop 68), also known as the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018, was passed by California voters on June 5, 2018. Prop 68 authorized the sale of \$4.1 billion in general obligation bonds that would fund various programs related to habitat conservation, parks and water-related projects. There are two funding components, one of which is the Statewide Park Program (SPP). The SPP is a competitive grant opportunity for critically underserved communities. Eligible projects consist of the construction of new parks and park expansions or renovations. Project applications can request anywhere between \$200,000 to \$8,500,000 per project. A funding match is not required for critically underserved areas. City Park's location qualifies it as being a critically underserved area.

In order to determine the needs of the community, City staff started by reviewing a previous plan prepared in 2012 titled the Corona City Park Reutilization Plan (Plan). The Plan was developed by local landscape architectural firm BMLA Inc., with input from the Parks Commission, City staff, and members of the public. The Plan identified a vision for City Park as the new epicenter of Corona with a cohesive purpose and the ability to host regular community events and activities that promote the park's rich history. Though not formally adopted, the Plan provided a foundation for City staff to use as it gathered further public input about potential amenities.

A community meeting was held at City Park on May 29th at 6:00 p.m. to listen to the community and determine how residents would like to use City Park in the future. Roughly 90 individuals attended the meeting at the park and shared their desires and concerns over the current state of the park. City staff also obtained input at two other City events, the Family Health and Fitness Fair and Summer at Your Library Kick-off Party on June 6th and June 7th. Subsequently, an online survey was also developed to solicit additional input from those unable to attend any of the meetings. By the survey end date of July 8th, more than 350 residents provided feedback on City Park. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that a new state-of-the-art aquatic center, better delineated multi-purpose sports fields, an adventure playground, and a new senior/community center are most desirable.

As a result, staff is preparing a grant application for the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant in the amount of up to \$8.5 million. The funding will be used to create a new aquatic center to replace the existing aging City Pool facility, construct an adventure playground, create multi-purpose sports fields, and expand the parking areas at City Park. While these are not the only projects desired for City Park, these additions will be an excellent start to restore City Park to its original status. Staff recommends adoption of this resolution approving the application for the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant Funds to make the above improvements at City Park.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

This item was taken to the Parks and Recreation Commission on May 8, 2019 and the Public Services Committee on June 6, 2019 as part of a presentation on Proposition 68 Grant Program. Both the commission and committee recommended the project for City Council approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This item supports the City's Strategic Plan Goal 1: Promote Public Safety: Protect our Residents and Businesses; Objective C: Ensure adequate funding for investments and improvement in infrastructure that support public safety. The recommended action will help achieve these goals by providing funding to replace the aging pool facilities and build a new senior/community center for residents at City Park. It further supports Strategic Plan goal 4: Actively engaging in public and private partnerships to provide services and amenities. Corona held several community events, as well as conducted an online survey, in order to receive input on desired uses at City Park.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This action does not have a fiscal impact, as it only authorizes the submission of an application for a grant. If the City is awarded the grant, the City will be required to fund the construction activities prior to seeking reimbursement from the Prop 68 grant funds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that the operation, maintenance and minor alteration of existing public structures, facilities, or topographical features is exempt from CEQA if it involves negligible expansion of use beyond that existing at the time the determination of exemption is made; Section 15302 of CEQA, which states that the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced is exempt from CEQA; and Section 15303 of CEQA, which states that the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures, is exempt from CEQA. The proposed City Park project consists of minor alterations to the existing sports fields to allow for multiple different uses, improvements to existing parking lots serving City Park, replacement and reconstruction of an existing aquatic facility, and construction and installation of additional playground equipment. These improvements to City Park will be located on the same site as the structures that are being replaced or improved and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required, and staff will file a Notice of Exemption with the County of Riverside.

PREPARED BY: TRACY MARTIN, UTILITIES PROJECT MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: DAVID MONTGOMERY-SCOTT, LIBRARY AND RECREATION SERVICES
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REVIEWED BY: DEAN DERLETH, CITY ATTORNEY

REVIEWED BY: KERRY D. EDEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER/ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
DIRECTOR

REVIEWED BY: MICHELE NISSEN, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: MITCHELL LANSDALL, ACTING CITY MANAGER

Attachments:

1. Resolution No. 2019-076