

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Agenda Item:

City Manager's Office

GENERAL INFORMATION—

Agenda Date: 1/12/04
04-019

Communication No.:

Agenda Item Type: Resolution

Roll Call No:

Submitted by: Donald M. Tripp, Park and Recreation Director
Jeb E. Brewer, P.E., City Engineer

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SUBJECT—

American Discovery Trail—Riverpoint Segment: Trail Alignment and Property Acquisition

SYNOPSIS—

Approval of alignment and the authorization to begin acquiring the property necessary for the construction of the Riverpoint Segment of the American Discovery Trail.

FISCAL IMPACT—

Total Project cost is estimated at \$1,170,000 with \$795,000 available from grants awarded to the City from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) and the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The City's contribution is \$375,000 from the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Fund: CP040 Org: PKS990000 Project: PKS045, Recreational Trails

RECOMMENDATION—

Approval

BACKGROUND—

The 1.9-mile alignment of the Riverpoint Segment of the American Discovery Trail (ADT) will be a 12 foot wide asphalt recreational trail with limited lighting at bridges that will connect the Kruidenier Trail at Gray's Lake with the Principal Riverwalk in downtown Des Moines. The

ADT, a national trail project, runs from coast to coast across America (please see a map of the Riverpoint Segment alignment attached to the Roll Call). Other Riverpoint Trail Master Plan elements include enhancements such as lighting, emergency phones, river overlooks, trail furniture and additional signage. This project will include the design for lighting and emergency phones and will include installation of these items as funding allows. Design and construction of the other elements listed, will be postponed until additional funding is made available.

When the City applied for a \$5,000,000 Vision Iowa Grant in early August the initial budget for the Riverpoint Trail was \$870,000. By mid-August the City also applied for a \$300,000 Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Recreation Enhancement and Protection (REAP) grant for additional funds to construct the trail. In early October the City received approval for the \$300,000 REAP Grant bringing the total Riverpoint Trail budget to \$1,170,000.

The alignment of the Riverpoint Trail will begin near the east end of the pedestrian bridge on Gray's Lake and follow the south property line of Gray's Lake Park for a distance of 1200 feet before entering the abandoned Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) corridor. It will follow that corridor in a northeasterly direction for about 2800 feet until it passes beneath the SW 7th Street Bridge on the south bank of the Raccoon River. It will continue along the south bank of the river for 1400 feet on City property containing flood control structures until reaching the SW 5th Street/Jackson Avenue Bridge. The trail will cross this 400-foot bridge and then continue northeasterly along the north bank of the Raccoon River and along the south side of Sec Taylor Stadium for 2000 feet to the confluence with the Des Moines River. The trail will utilize an at-grade street crossing at Water Street immediately east of Sec Taylor Stadium. At this point, the trail turns northward along the west bank of the Des Moines River for a distance of about 2100 feet where it will intersect the Principal Riverwalk. This final segment includes utilization of a significant portion of the Des Moines River Outfall Sewer as the riding surface of the trail.

The City of Des Moines Engineering Department and the consultants RDG Crose, Gardner, Shukert, Inc and Stanley Consultants, Inc recommended the trail alignment. Also the Riverpoint Segment of the American Discovery Trail is part of the Des Moines Recreational Trail Master Plan which has been approved by the Des Moines Bike and Trail Advisory Committee.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the trail alignment and also authorize the Real Estate Division to begin the necessary acquisition of property to allow construction of the Riverpoint Trail. The abandoned UPRR corridor extends from SW 30th Street on the West to SE 18th Street on the East, and is currently available for purchase by the City under a Certificate of Interim Trail Use granted by the federal Surface Transportation Board. While acquisition of only a portion of the abandoned UPRR railway corridor is necessary for the construction of the American Discovery Trail - Riverpoint Segment, acquisition of the entire abandoned railway corridor would allow extension of the City's recreational trail network across the Des Moines River at SE 1st Street, and would benefit other future public improvement projects, including the Des Moines River Outfall and Overflow Sewer and the Southwest Connector.

It is staff's recommendation that it be authorized to make a voluntary offer for the purchase of said entire abandoned UPRR railway corridor for the benefit of said projects, with the understanding that if a voluntary agreement cannot be reached for the acquisition of the entire abandoned railroad corridor from SW 30th Street to SE 18th Street, then only the necessary

property interests for the American Discovery Trail - Riverpoint Segment would be acquired by purchase or condemnation.

It is anticipated that trail construction will begin in July of 2004 with the trail open by late fall of 2004.

Two critical path items will determine the ability of the City to complete the trail construction as proposed: 1) the timing and cost of property acquisition (especially parcels belonging to the Union Pacific Railroad), and, 2) the timing of the required bid process of the Iowa Department of Transportation.