



Legislation Text

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Staff Report for two City of San Leandro City Council Resolutions, to 1) Accept \$2.75 Million in Grant Funding from the California Department of Parks and Recreation Towards the Renovation of Memorial Park, and B) To Seek Additional Funding from the "Per Capita Grant Program" from the Same State Agency for Other Future City-Led Projects

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt the attached resolutions. The first resolution would approve and authorize the City's acceptance of \$2.75 million in grant funding from the State Department of Parks and Recreation to renovate Memorial Park, located at 1105 Bancroft Avenue. The second resolution would authorize the City to seek additional "Per Capita Grant Program" funds from the State Department of Parks and Recreation for other future City-led projects, tentatively envisioned to help support the resurfacing of Thrasher Park, located at 1300 Davis Street.

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS

Consistent with the City Council's previous policy direction to pursue grant opportunities that may help to support City operations and public services, staff identified a potential funding opportunity from the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation. More specifically, as part of the November 2018 election, statewide voters authorized Proposition 68 (the "Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018"), which authorized \$4 billion in general obligation bonds for state and local parks, environmental protection projects, water infrastructure projects, and flood protection projects. Using funds derived from that measure, the State Department of Parks and Recreation created a grant program to which municipalities throughout the state may apply each year for parks renovation projects.

Overview of Funding Options for Memorial Park

In coordination with the City's state legislative advocate, Townsend Public Affairs, in 2019 staff examined all City-owned parks and identified Memorial Park as the park that most closely met the application criteria for securing potential funds through the above-referenced grant program. The Recreation and Human Services Department subsequently organized community meetings with various local community and non-profit organizations in order to solicit feedback on the types of park amenities that members of the public might want to see at the park, in the event grant funds were awarded. As part of those efforts, a list of potential park amenities was developed, which could include new playground equipment that is accessible to users of all abilities, including those with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities.

The City of San Leandro submitted its application for this grant in Fall 2019, estimated to cost up to \$4.47 million. Although feedback from State staff indicated that the City's application was very well conceived, the City was ultimately notified that it was not awarded funding through the program as part of that round of funding, which was highly competitive. In June 2021, the City Council then

authorized City staff to apply again for the same project via a new grant application cycle. The estimated total cost of all potential improvements remains unchanged from that which was submitted in 2019 - up to \$4.47 million. Subsequent to submitting the second application, staff was contacted by the state advocacy consultant (Townsend Public Affairs) regarding a potential opportunity to secure a portion of the requested project funding for Memorial Park through another source. More specifically, thanks to the office of State Senator Nancy Skinner in partnership with Townsend Public Affairs' advocacy efforts, Senator Skinner in her role as State Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee chairperson was able to embed a direct \$2.75 million allocation of funds towards this project as a line-item earmark within the adopted current fiscal year state budget. After being notified of this funding award, staff subsequently modified the state grant application to reduce the requested funding amount from \$4.47 million to \$1.72 million, to reflect that \$2.75 million had already been awarded for the project. That reduced-level application is now in process and the City expects to receive notification on the outcome of the grant application process in the first quarter of calendar year 2022.

Irrespective of whether or not the grant application is awarded, per State requirements, the City Council must adopt a resolution in order to accept the \$2.75 million in funding that was already appropriated by the State legislature for the project. To the extent the City is successfully awarded the additional \$1.72 million in funding through the modified grant application, the City Council would have a subsequent opportunity to review and consider the proposed grant before accepting the grant funds. Alternatively, if the City is unsuccessful in obtaining that additional funding, the scope of the project could be commensurately reduced to align with the existing \$2.75 million funding allocation that was already secured through the state earmark. In either scenario, the grant program does not require any local financial match from the City, beyond the use of staff time and ongoing maintenance costs, which could be absorbed using existing and projected City resources, which are already being utilized to maintain the existing park space.

A copy of the resolution is included in the City Council agenda packet for this item, which is virtually identical to the City Council resolution that was adopted in 2019 for this same purpose.

Overview of "Per Capita Grant Program" funding request

In addition to the above project, thanks to the efforts of Townsend Public Affairs, the City was also made aware of another potential source of funding that could be used for other park-related projects in San Leandro. More specifically, in addition to the competitive grant funds that were made available by Proposition 68, that ballot measure also authorized a direct allocation of funds to certain communities based on population size and other codified metrics. At this time, staff estimates such funding could fall in the range of approximately \$233,000 in the current fiscal year. Based on a review of the program funding criteria coupled with a staff review of all existing parks facilities in the community, it is believed that a resurfacing of the skateboard park pavement at Thrasher Park would have a strong likelihood of meeting the program's funding criteria and could potentially be funded through this program. As such, a second resolution has also been included in the agenda packet for this item, which would authorize the City Manager to pursue this additional source of potential project funding.

Fiscal Impacts

None. Adoption of the associated resolutions authorizes the pursuit or acceptance of various state funding towards various parks projects. The funding programs do not require any local matching requirements and any ongoing maintenance costs could be absorbed using existing staffing resources.

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