

ITEM #: 12
DATE: 09-22-09

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: STATE RECREATION TRAIL GRANT APPLICATION FOR SHARED USE PATH SYSTEM (SKUNK RIVER TRAIL EXTENSION)

BACKGROUND:

The 2008/09 Shared Use Path System Improvement project is to extend the Skunk River Trail from East Lincoln Way to Southeast 16th Street along the west side of Skunk River. This project is part of a city-wide greenbelt trail that will eventually connect Ada Hayden Park to the Hunziker Youth Sport Complex. The total estimated cost to construct this 1.2 mile trail segment, including a bridge over Squaw Creek, is \$1,045,000. This includes \$867,500 for construction and \$177,500 for easements and engineering design.

The Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) administers grants through the Recreational Trail Program (Federal Program) that provide \$4.5 million annually to fund only the construction portion of regional trail projects. The application deadline is October 1st of each funding cycle. There is a minimum requirement of 20% in local matching funds, which for this project would be approximately \$173,500, leaving \$694,000 to be requested from the Iowa DOT.

Currently there is \$78,825 from the Local Option Sales Tax fund shown in the 2008/09 Capital Improvements Plan, as well as \$250,000 from the Local Option Sales Tax fund, that were part of the 2010/11 Skunk River Trail (13th Street to Carr Pool) project that has recently been identified to receive stimulus money not requiring a local match. Therefore, those funds are available for other trail projects. Using these funds would bring the total potential local match to \$328,825 from the Local Option Sales Tax fund.

It should be noted that construction for the 2008/09 Skunk River Trail (East Lincoln Way to Southeast 16th Street) will not begin earlier than the 2010/11 fiscal year. This is due to the various constraints of the project associated with the construction of a new bridge over Squaw Creek.

There are other requirements for this grant. First, these grant monies must be used for a trail that is part of a local or area-wide trail plan. This section of the Skunk River Trail is shown in the 2005 Long Range Transportation Plan under the Trail Master Plan, thereby meeting this requirement. Second, trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years. A certification to this effect must be included as part of the application packet.

If awarded, this grant could act as a vital funding source to supplement City funding sources for the cost of this project, while providing a highly anticipated improvement to the City of Ames shared use path network.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Authorize the federal Recreational Trail Program application for the Skunk River Trail Extension (East Lincoln Way to Southeast 16th Street), up to the maximum amount equaling 80% of the total estimated eligible project costs. Concurrently, provide assurance that the trail will be adequately maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.
2. Do not authorize this grant application.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Authorization of this grant application is an important step to receive outside funding for a portion of this project. If awarded, this grant will help this expensive trail segment be constructed earlier than our local funding sources would allow. It would also provide a significant benefit to the City by reducing the burden on the Local Option Sales Tax fund.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, authorizing the federal Recreational Trail Program application for the Skunk River Trail Extension (East Lincoln Way to Southeast 16th Street), up to the maximum amount equaling 80% of the total estimated eligible project costs; and that the Council concurrently provide assurance that the trail will be adequately maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.