

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: SHARED USE PATH SYSTEM EXPANSION (FROM CHRISTOPHER GARTNER PARK TO AMES MIDDLE SCHOOL)

BACKGROUND:

On February 9, 2010, City Council approved an alternative shared use path alignment from Christopher Gartner Park through the Estates of Nature's Crossing and South Fork subdivisions to the Ames Middle School and to draft a project agreement with the Estates of Nature's Crossing Subdivision developer that details the work to be performed and the shared funding arrangements. With the alignment approved, staff is bringing the plans and specifications for approval to allow construction to be completed before the start of school in the fall. The project agreement is being developed and must be executed before the contract is awarded.

The engineer's estimate for this project is \$124,700. The developer has offered to install or pay for all costs with the exception that the City will pay a set amount of \$14,000. This amount approximates a three-way split of the costs of that segment between the City, the Estates of Nature's Crossing developer, and the South Fork Subdivision owner. This arrangement will enable the construction of this eastern segment to occur prior to the development of South Fork.

Staff has received concerns from several citizens in Ames regarding safe travel for their children to the Middle School. Completing this section of shared use path will provide a safer travel route to the Middle School next fall, rather than waiting until the entire area develops, which is estimated to be at least five years.

Funding for this project was not included in the current year's budget. Constructing the Skunk River Trail with Stimulus II funds will hopefully create savings in the Shared Use Path Expansion program of approximately \$200,000 in Local Option Sales Tax funding. This could be used to cover the \$14,000 City portion for this path. It should be emphasized that the Stimulus II legislation has not yet been passed. However, it is anticipated that the legislation will pass Congress this month. Should that not happen, the \$14,000 will need to come from the Local Option Sales Tax fund's available balance.

It should be remembered that a portion of this shared-use path will be a double-wide sidewalk in the Nature's Crossing subdivision.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the Shared Use Path System Expansion (Christopher Gartner Park to Ames Middle School) by establishing April 21, 2010, as the date of letting and April

27, 2010, as the date for report of bids. The \$14,000 contribution from the City to complete this path segment will come from the Local Option Sales Tax Fund.

2. Do not proceed with the project.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Moving ahead with this new alignment will facilitate the 2010 completion of the path connection between South Dakota Avenue and the Ames Middle School. This will finish the final link in this trail between Daley Park and State Avenue. This also allows for children walking or bicycling to school to avoid crossing the busy accesses to the Middle School along Mortensen Avenue.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving Shared Use Path System Expansion (Christopher Gartner Park to Ames Middle School) by establishing April 21, 2010, as the date of letting and April 27, 2010, as the date for report of bids.

Although this project is being sent out for bids now, the project agreement still needs to be finalized and signed. It is anticipated that the agreement will be presented to Council in April. Following Council acceptance of that agreement, bids will be reported and Council may award the contract, enabling construction to begin.