

SUBMITTED BY: Daritza Villalobos, Grants Coordinator

MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW: Ana Urquijo, City Manager

FOCUS AREA: Other / NA

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS:

SUBJECT: **ACKNOWLEDGMENT and ACCEPTANCE of TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE from the ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY and participation in the RECREATION ECONOMIES in RURAL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Douglas has been selected to receive technical assistance through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) *Recreation Economy for Rural Communities* (RERC) program. This award provides expert planning services and community engagement support—at no cost to the city—to help build a locally-driven action plan focused on using outdoor recreation as a strategy for revitalization and economic development.

Through this assistance, the city will receive dedicated support from a team of national facilitators to coordinate and host a multi-day community workshop, engage stakeholders, and co-develop an implementation plan that supports our goals related to downtown revitalization, tourism, public health, and economic resilience. The expected outcome is a concrete and achievable action plan developed through public input that will serve as a catalyst for long-term investment and community development initiatives.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Douglas has prioritized downtown revitalization, improved quality of life, and economic diversification in its ten-year strategic plan. Like many rural communities, Douglas seeks to leverage its unique cultural, historical, and natural assets—including proximity to the San Bernardino Wildlife Refuge and surrounding natural areas—as tools for economic growth, community health, and increased tourism.

Participation in the EPA RERC program directly supports these priorities by offering technical assistance to:

- **Convene stakeholders** and community members in a series of inclusive planning workshops;
- **Identify local assets and opportunities** for recreational development, such as trails, parks, or downtown connections;
- **Create a community-driven action plan** to integrate outdoor recreation into economic development strategies;
- **Connect the city to federal, state, and philanthropic resources** that may fund implementation.

Specific activities funded through this award include:

- Planning, facilitation, and implementation of a multi-day workshop in Douglas;
- Preparation of pre-workshop assessments and post-workshop summary reports;
- Development of a strategic action plan aligned with community and Council priorities;

- Technical support from a federally funded consulting team, including community design experts, public engagement facilitators, and federal agency staff.

Award Amount and Match:

This technical assistance is provided in the form of services and facilitation only—**there is no direct financial award**. The program **does not require a match** from the city. While there is no funding attached, the value lies in the expertise and national support team being provided at no cost. The city will contribute in-kind resources such as staff time, meeting space, and logistical coordination to support successful implementation.

DISCUSSION:

Staff recommends approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A.

“...I MOVE THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY AND PARTICIPATION IN THE RECREATION ECONOMIES IN RURAL COMMUNITIES PROGRAM.”