



City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

☒ CITY COUNCIL ☐ NPUA ☐ HACN ☒ Regular ☐ Special

Meeting Date: September 9, 2025

Title: Resolution 2025-38 of the City Council of the City of Needles Approving the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle (OHMV) Master Plan and Pilot Project

Background: On August 26, 2022, Assembly Bill (AB) 2152 was approved, authorizing the City of Needles to establish a pilot project to designate combined-use highways within city limits. The intent of the legislation is to create connections between existing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) off-highway vehicle trails, recreational use areas, and necessary service and lodging facilities, while preserving traffic safety, reducing private land trespass, and minimizing impacts on residents.

On March 12, 2024, the City Council appointed an Ad-Hoc Committee to research implementation of the pilot project. The Committee engaged stakeholders, including law enforcement and BLM representatives, and directed staff to develop a comprehensive plan.

Following this effort, the City contracted with Minagar & Associates, Inc. to conduct technical studies of roadway conditions, safety requirements, and connectivity options. The resulting Final OHMV Master Plan and Routes – Pilot Project Technical Memorandum (July 21, 2025) identifies 9.20 miles of proposed OHMV routes throughout the city, connecting local roads with BLM trailheads, lodging facilities, and service areas. The proposed plan ensures compliance with California Vehicle Code §38026.2, which authorizes Needles' pilot program and requires:

- Routes not exceeding 10 miles.
- OHMV speed limits restricted to 35 mph.
- Compliance with driver licensing, helmet usage, and insurance requirements.
- Approval by the City Council following public review.

The plan also includes:

- Route signage and traffic control devices (CA MUTCD compliant).
- Public education and outreach, including maps, FAQs, and community meetings.
- Coordination with law enforcement for enforcement and safety oversight.

Additionally, two potential staging areas are identified at Park Drive & River Road and Clary Drive & Lillyhill Drive, providing centralized access points for residents and visitors.

Fiscal Impact: Implementation will require funding for signage, staging areas, and public outreach, with costs eligible for grants through the Off-Highway Vehicle Trust Fund and other sources. The program is also expected to boost tourism by attracting OHMV enthusiasts, generating visitor spending at local businesses and increasing City revenues through sales tax, lodging tax, and related economic activity.

Environmental Impact: The pilot program is subject to ongoing monitoring and reporting requirements established under AB 2152 and Vehicle Code §38026.2, including coordination with the California Highway Patrol, Department of Transportation, and Department of Parks and Recreation. Impacts to air quality, noise, and adjacent lands will be evaluated in the City's 2027 legislative report

Recommendation: Approve Resolution 2025-38 Approving the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Master Plan and Pilot Project as outlined in the Technical Memorandum. Direct staff to proceed with implementation, including signage, public education, and coordination with law enforcement. Authorize staff to pursue state and regional funding opportunities to support the program.

Submitted By: Patrick Martinez, City Manager

City Manager Approval: Patrick J. Martinez Date: 9/4/2025

Other Department Approval (when required): _____ Date: _____