



CITY OF NORMAN, OK STAFF REPORT

MEETING DATE: 5/24/2022

REQUESTER: James Briggs, Park Development Manager

PRESENTER: Jason Olsen, Director of Parks and Recreation

ITEM TITLE: CONSIDERATION OF ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL, REJECTION, AMENDMENT, AND/OR POSTPONEMENT OF A RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$111,200 FROM THE OKLAHOMA TOURISM AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO THE GEORGE M. SUTTON URBAN WILDERNESS PARK FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, CONTRACT K-2122-133, AND BUDGET APPROPRIATION AS OUTLINED IN THE STAFF REPORT.

BACKGROUND:

To make improvements to George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness Community Park, the Park Development staff applied for a Recreational Trails Grant from the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD) in January 2020. The request was for \$111,200 that would be matched by \$27,800 in funds from the City of Norman to implement a total of \$139,000 of development in the park, following the 80/20-Match formula for this grant program. The work described in the grant was planned with help from the Sutton Urban Wilderness Advisory Committee. The project will include the construction of a 12-car parking lot expansion at the trailhead parking off 12th Avenue NE, which will provide much-needed additional spaces for the public. Additionally, repairing and surfacing a spur of walking trail in the park connecting Sutton Wilderness to the trail in Griffin Park (south of Sutton). The old path section will be re-graded and topped with crushed granite to match the rest of the trails in Sutton Wilderness. Previous improvements to the parking and trails in this park were made through an earlier Recreational Trails Grant in 2017. Since then, there has been a noticeable increase in the daily and annual use of this unique wilderness area in Norman. The grant application proposed to use already-approved funding for trail and sidewalk maintenance as the match for the grant if approved.

The grant request was tentatively approved by OTRD in October of 2021. Since that time, staff has completed the required state historical and archaeological reviews and received clearance from the five separate Native Tribes identified by the State as having a potential historical interest in the area of the park. The OTRD has now reviewed these approvals and has subsequently provided the City of Norman with the grant agreement.

DISCUSSION:

Once the City of Norman accepts K-2122-133, the Project Agreement (attached), we will proceed to have the engineered drawings for the new parking area and the trail rehabilitation completed. Those drawings will be left for bidding, and work will proceed this summer. This reimbursable grant requires those receiving it to finance the entire project and submit paid invoices for reimbursement from the OTRD grant administrators. Parks has received several grants in the past for various park trail projects and have always established a Special Grant Fund to pay for the project costs, and we propose to follow that same format for this grant. As stated earlier, the matching funds (the 20% that will not be reimbursed) will come from our annual park sidewalks and trail maintenance account, as was proposed in the grant application.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that City Council approve K-2122-133, the Recreational Trails Program Project Agreement awarding a grant of \$111,200 from the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and approve the appropriation of \$111,200 into a Special Grant Account for improvements described above to George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness Community Park.

Appropriation of \$111,200 from the Special Grant Fund Balance (22-29000) to George M. Sutton Urban Wilderness Park Development, Construction (Account 22790074-46101; Project PC0025).