



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0420, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office, Parks Division recommending the Board of Supervisors conceptually approve the use of \$126,818 for consultant services for a site assessment, public outreach, and a feasibility study for the Chili Bar site.

FUNDING: SMUD Agreement Funds

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

Chili Bar is a rafting/kayaking put-in downstream of the Highway 193 Bridge over the South Fork of the American River. The site is approximately 16 acres and is owned by El Dorado County. The lower area of the property, located adjacent to the river, is operated for rafting activities by the American River Conservancy under the terms of a conservation easement. The upper level includes parking, structures, and the site of a previously-existing mobile home park. Chili Bar is a heavily-used access point for the South Fork of the American River.

The El Dorado County Parks and Trails Master Plan identifies the Chili Bar site as a Tier One Priority and identifies the need for the County to gather additional public input and finalize a plan for this site.

In 2009, the County entered into a contract with Foothill Associates, now Helix Environmental Planning, to prepare a Master Plan for the Chili Bar Park property to examine options for the development of the site. The 2009 Master Plan was preliminary only and was never adopted by the County.

On September 19, 2019, staff brought an agenda item, 19-1422, to gather input from the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) regarding a draft scope of work provided by Helix Environmental Planning that would include a three-phase process for the Chili Bar site and would include an updated plan, public outreach, and financial feasibility study. The original proposed scope of work was approximately \$50,000. Item 19-1422 was continued to the meeting of October 17, 2019.

At the regularly scheduled PRC meeting on October 17, 2019, staff, PRC Commissioners, and members of the public conducted a site visit at Chili Bar to provide Commissioners insight regarding the site in order to make a recommendation on agenda item 19-1422. At this meeting, the PRC made a motion to establish an ad hoc committee to work with staff on the scope of work. On November 21, 2019, the PRC made a motion to give the ad hoc committee another two weeks to fulfill its work to come up with a final scope so that staff could get an updated cost estimate.

The PRC changed the new scope of work to include a full site assessment to assess current infrastructure and deficiencies rather than use the 2009 plan as a starting point. The second change was to include an additional public meeting in the outreach phase. The study will also include detailed analysis up to four conceptual alternatives based on the outcomes of the site assessment and the public outreach portions of this project.

The Parks Division received two estimates for the Chili Bar Feasibility Study based on the revised

scope of work provided by the ad hoc committee. On February 20, 2020, parks staff brought forth agenda item 20-0255 to the PRC with the recommendation of moving forward with the Dudek proposal for the study in the amount of \$123,570. However, no action was taken on this item as the vote was split 2/2. Two Commissioners voted to move forward with the Helix proposal rather than the Dudek proposal and two Commissioners voted no on this motion. Since that date, Dudek has withdrawn its proposal for this project. Staff is comfortable moving forward with Helix Environmental Planning and its proposal.

The study will provide information on existing infrastructure, recommendations on the use of the property based on public input, and the cost to implement. It will also provide an economic analysis of the potential revenue from the site. If the Board approves the project today, staff will return with an agenda item to approve a budget transfer and the contract for the feasibility Study.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

The PRC, with input from members of the public, recommended the project as a priority that needed to move forward as soon as possible. Therefore, staff is bringing this request forward.

In the next six months, Parks staff will be bringing recommendations for the future use of SMUD funds as directed by the Board of Supervisors. Staff and the PRC are requesting SMUD funds now, for the Chili Bar Feasibility Study, due to the project being prioritized by the PRC.

NEXT STEP

After receiving a recommendation on this item, Parks staff will return to the Board of Supervisors with an additional agenda item to approve the budget transfer and contract for the Chili Bar Feasibility Study.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose to not approve funding for this project. This would cause the study not to move forward at this time.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Staff had originally anticipated funding a portion, \$50,000, of the Chili Bar Feasibility Study with the River Trust Fund. However, given a recent analysis of the fund and the anticipated decrease in revenue for the 2020 river season due to COVID-19, this is not feasible. Due to COVID-19 and reduced commercial outfitter operations, staff is anticipating that revenue for the 2020 river season will be approximately 20% of normal.

If the current situation improves, and revenues are higher than anticipated, the River Trust Fund may be able to reimburse another fund for a portion of the Chili Bar expenses. However, at this time, Parks Staff is requesting the full amount of the contract, \$126,818, be paid with another funding source. Transient Occupancy Tax was considered as a potential funding source, however, these funds are being affected by the current COVID-19 situation and cannot be recommended.

On December 18, 2012 with Legistar Item 12-1398, the Board provided direction to staff regarding SMUD fund expenditures directing that annually the Parks Division utilize 20/59ths (34%) of the annual SMUD payment for Rubicon Trail Maintenance. It should be noted that the annual allocation of SMUD funds is based on general direction from the Board and is not binding. The current Board of Supervisors has discretion to allocate funds as desired. Parks has budgeted \$168,997 (23%) for the Rubicon program as part of the FY 2020-21 Recommended Budget. With the proposed increase, Parks will be appropriated 39% (\$295,815) of the \$750,000 SMUD annual payment for FY 2020-21. Should the Board approve this item as well as the Monroe Trail project, the total would be \$335,815 or 45% of the annual payment. Due to anticipated fund balance, these projects could be funded without impacting other approved or scheduled uses of this funding as listed in the "SMUD Fund Data Analysis" spreadsheet, Legistar Item 19-1215, Attachment A (September 10, 2019, Item 24). However, it would limit availability of funding for other potential projects.

CAO RECOMMENDATION

Approve as recommended.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Infrastructure

CONTACT

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