

MEMORANDUM

TO: Donna Barron, City Manager

FROM: Stacie Anaya, Director

DATE: July 30, 2018

SUBJECT: Approval of Texas Parks & Wildlife Department Grant Application for Valley Vista Nature Park

BACKGROUND

During the City Council retreat held in February 2018, City Councilmember Daniels pitched his idea for accelerating the process for establishing the Valley Vista property as a usable park. His pitch included identifying funds to complete the concepts (attached) for the property provided by Studio Outside during the early design phases for Thrive, establishing priorities for building elements and partnering with groups to begin activating the property. This pitch was heavily supported by the Council during the scoring exercise.

After the retreat, staff set aside money in the 4B Cash Fund to finalize a master plan for the future park and to serve as seed money for development of the park. In effort to stretch the resources available for development, staff has worked to identify grants and other resources to leverage the funds.

In May 2018, staff began work with Studio Outside to finalize the master plan for the park and identify priorities for development based on input from stakeholders and congruency with Lewisville 2025 and the top outdoor facility needs established in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (PROSMP). This site plan will be finalized in September 2018 but Studio Outside has already identified priorities for elements and provided phasing alternatives for the development of grant applications.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department offers the Local Park Grant Program to assist local units of government with the acquisition and/or development of public recreation areas and facilities throughout the State of Texas. The Program provides 50% matching grant on a reimbursement basis to eligible applicants. Funding for the Program comes from a portion of the state sales tax on sporting goods through the Texas Recreation and Parks Account and the Texas Large County & Municipality Recreation & Parks Account. Additional funds come from off-shore gas royalties through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. All grant assisted sites must be dedicated as parkland in perpetuity, properly maintained and open to the public. Applications are

evaluated using a priority scoring and must be submitted via TPWDs Recreation Grants Online system. The deadline for grant applications is October 1 system and funding recommendations are presented to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission for approval the following Spring.

ANALYSIS

Staff has worked with a grant writer, Sally Gavlik, to compile a competitive application based on the priorities for development established in the PROSMP and the site plan for the Valley Vista Nature Park. Ms. Gavlik is a well respected grant writer and has an excellent batting average with the TPWD grant programs. This grant opportunity provides the best opportunity to leverage the funds earmarked for development of the site.

Estimated costs for executing the master plan of the site is \$2.3 million. As this exceeds grant and matching funds currently available, the development of the park will be phased. Phase one will focus on elements that will garner the most points in the TPWD grant scoring process: primary trails, passive recreation and education areas, natural landscaped areas (pollinator gardens) and wayfinding/interpretive signage. This grant application will request maximum funding through the Local Park Grant for Non-Urban Outdoor Recreation facilities: \$500,000 with a \$500,000 city-match. Phase two of the project will include the secondary trails, natural playscapes and viewing tower. Once matching funds are identified, the department will work to submit another grant application to TPWD (or other funding sources) to complete the site plan.

If awarded, the site will be dedicated as parkland and work on the site can begin as early as June 2019. If the City is not awarded funds through the Local Park Grant Program, staff will evaluate whether to move forward with limited development of the elements identified in the site master plan or make another attempt at grant funding in the next round (October 2019).

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the resolution as set forth in the caption above.