



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PARKS

File #: 24-346

Board Meeting Date: 5/7/2024

Special Notice/Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director

Subject: Application seeking \$500,000 in California Department of Parks and Recreation grant funds for the Ohlone-Portol'a Heritage Trail Historic Monument Project

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution authorizing:

- A) The Parks Director, or the Parks Director's Designee, to submit an application to the California Department of Parks and Recreation seeking \$500,000 in specified grant funds for the Ohlone-Portol'a Heritage Trail Historic Monument Project, and
- B) The Parks Director, or the Parks Director's Designee, to take any and all actions necessary to implement the intent of this resolution, including by executing any and all documents, as reviewed and approved by County Attorney, that are necessary to implement and/or effectuate the grant.

BACKGROUND:

On July 25, 2019, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors accepted the Ohlone-Portol'a Heritage Trail Feasibility Study (the "Study"). The Study was developed with oversight by a project steering committee comprised of over 60 partners including federal and state agencies, cities, tribes, special districts, legislators, and land trusts. The Study proposes a 90-mile-long multi-use regional trail that traverses the route used by Gaspar de Portola's 1769 expedition through what is now San Mateo County. During the expedition, Portola's crew became lost and depleted all supplies; local Native Americans rescued, fed, and guided the expedition from village to village. With help from the Ohlone people, the Portola expedition recorded the first sighting of the San Francisco Bay by Europeans.

Previously, the State of California designated State Historic Monuments at each of the expedition's campsites-which were located adjacent to Native American villages-but the monuments did not acknowledge the Native Americans themselves. Since 2019, the San Mateo County Parks Department ("Parks Department") and the San Mateo County Historical Association ("SMCHA") have

been working with the State Historic Preservation Office (“SHPO”) to re-write the background for each respective State Historic Monument, so they are consistent with the Statement of Historical Significance narrative in the Study and to recognize the Native American’s contributions to the expedition. Also at the request of the Parks Department and SMCHA, in 2023, the State Historic Resources Commission renamed the existing and proposed State Historic Monuments in San Mateo County the Ohlone-Portol`a Heritage Trail and changed the background of these existing and proposed State Historic Landmarks accordingly.

The Study provides design recommendations for overlook and trailside monuments at each historic monument site. The Department has chosen four monument sites within the County parks system to improve including: Northern Cowell-Purisima Coastal Trail, Hillcrest site in Millbrae, Crystal Springs Trail at the Crystal Springs Dam, and Tunitas Creek Beach. There will be four phases to this effort: (1) design, (2) development of interpretative content (including consultation with SHPO staff for the Historic Monument plaques and for the interpretive signs), (3) tribal and interagency consultation, and (4) construction of improvements. To ensure adequate funding exists, the Department will pursue one location at a time until all sites have been constructed or funding is expended.

To fund this effort, State Senator Josh Becker secured \$500,000 that was included in the State’s budget. As detailed below, to access these funds the Parks Department must apply to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, which has designated this project the Ohlone-Portol`a Heritage Trail Historic Monument Project (the “Project”).

DISCUSSION:

The California Legislature has delegated responsibility for administering the Project grant, including setting up the necessary procedures that govern the application process, to the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Said procedures require that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution that provides authority to proceed with submittal of the application and receipt of grant funds pursuant to the applicable policies and procedures for local assistance specified grants. The adopted resolution must be in the form provided by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, which is attached hereto.

Upon Board approval, the Department will negotiate and enter into a formal agreement with the State of California for the Project to be completed. The state’s grant program operates pursuant to a reimbursement model, under which the County will seek reimbursement for incurred expenses.

County Attorney’s Office has reviewed and approved the resolution to form and will review and approve the grant agreement prior to execution by the Parks Director, or the Parks Director’s Designee.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The California Department of Parks and Recreation grant is \$500,000. Given that there is not a matching requirement, there is no impact to the General Fund as a result of applying for the grant. There would be no impact to the Department’s operating budget beyond administrative costs to apply for the grant.