

**MEMORANDUM**



**RANCHO PALOS VERDES**

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, BUILDING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT  
AND THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS *[Signature]* 9/9/08

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 16, 2008

**SUBJECT:** STATE OF CALIFORNIA RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM GRANT  
– PALOS VERDES NATURE PRESERVE AT THE FORRESTAL  
RESERVE

Staff Coordinator: Ara Mhrianian, Principal Planner *[Signature]*  
Lauren Ramezani, Sr. Administrative Analyst *[Signature]*

**RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt Resolution No. 2008-\_\_ authorizing Staff to file a State Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grant for trail and trailhead improvements at the Forrestal Reserve and committing the allocation of 12% matching funds for the grant project, if approved.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The State of California Department of State Parks has various competitive grants programs, including the annual Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The RTP grant funds are for both motorized and non-motorized projects and are for the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of trails and trailhead facilities, and the construction of new trails. Last year, the City submitted a State RTP grant application for two trail improvement projects. One project was at the Forrestal Reserve and the other along the Sunnyside Trail segment. Although both grant applications were not awarded to the City, the grant review board expressed a strong interest with the trail improvement project at Forrestal.

In constant search of grant opportunities to fund potential public improvement projects, City Staff once again became aware of this year's State grant opportunity. In reviewing this year's grant criteria and the expressed interest in the Forrestal project from last year's review board, Staff is proposing to reapply for the State grant for the trailhead and trail improvements at the City-owned Forrestal Reserve.

The City Council is being asked to authorize Staff to file the grant application to the State by the October 1, 2008 deadline. If the grant is awarded for the project, detailed plans for the project will need to be prepared, public input on the detailed plans will be obtained and the project will be subject to further review by the City Council at a future meeting before

initiating project construction. As specified in the grant application, the City will need to match the grant by 12%, estimated at \$24,000.

## **BACKGROUND**

The California Department of Parks and Recreation offers various competitive grant programs for both non-motorized and motorized trail uses, including grants via the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). The RTP grant is available to local and regional (county) jurisdictions on an annual basis. Eligible projects include acquisition, development and rehabilitation of trails and trailhead facilities, and the construction of new trails. There is no maximum or minimum grant request amount. If a grant is awarded, the local jurisdiction must provide a 12% matching fund. There is no maximum or minimum grant request. The application filing deadline for this year's grant cycle is October 1, 2008.

In accordance with the eligibility criteria established by State Parks, last year Staff identified a number of possible projects that could qualify for the RTP grant. However, after reviewing the State Park's award criteria and point system, Staff narrowed its grant proposals to two projects which Staff felt were most likely to be funded. One involved a trailhead and trail improvement project at Forrestal and the other involved a trail improvement project for the Sunnyside Trail segment between Sunnyside Road and Palos Verdes Drive East.

During the preliminary review process of the grant applications, the review committee expressed an interest in the Forrestal project by advancing the application to the next level and scheduling a site visit to tour the area. However, the Sunnyside trail project did not advance to the same level as the Forrestal project. During the final review process, the Forrestal project did not make the final cut and was not awarded the grant. It should be pointed out that approximately eighty (80) grant applications were submitted to the State from local and regional agencies and only seventeen (17) grant applications were awarded for a total of approximately \$5,350,000 during the previous grant cycle. The approved grant amounts varied from approximately \$32,800 to approximately \$600,000.

As a follow-up with representatives from the State, Staff learned that the Forrestal project was a strong contender against other competitive grant applications and was advised to reapply because of the project's benefits pertaining to public access. As such, Staff is proposing to file a new 2008 grant application for the trailhead and trail improvements at the City-owned Forrestal Reserve. Staff is of the opinion that the Forrestal trailhead and trail improvement project meets the grant application criteria and is a strong contender based on the project's benefits, including the provisions of ADA access.

The City Council is being asked to adopt a resolution that formally authorizes Staff to file the grant application to the State by the October 1, 2008 deadline. If the grant is awarded for the project, detailed plans for the project will need to be prepared, public input on the detailed plans will be obtained and the project will be subject to further review by the City Council at a future meeting before initiating project construction. Furthermore, as specified in the grant application, the City will need to match the grant by 12%.

## **DISCUSSION**

The following discussion pertains to the construction and estimated costs associated with

the development of detailed plans and construction of the Forrestal trailhead and trail improvement project, as described in the State trails grant.

### Project Description

The City-owned Forrestal Reserve (Reserve) is a part of the greater Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and is approximately 160-acres and the home to one of the City's best stands of undisturbed coastal sage scrub. The Reserve, including the network of trails approved by the City Council, is managed by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (PVPLC). Since the adoption of the original Forrestal Management Plan in 2001, the City Council has amended the Management Plan, specifically the Trails Network Plan, to address deficiencies and corrections to the existing trails. As specified in the Management Plan, as well as the Operating Agreement between the City and the PVPLC, reports on the management of the Preserve are submitted to the City Council annually for review and approval. As part of the Annual Report, the PVPLC identifies potential projects for the upcoming reporting year. According to the 2007 and the 2008 Trails Project List approved by the City Council at its January 30, 2007 and May 20, 2008 meetings, certain trail improvement projects were identified at Forrestal to correct deficiencies or to improve overall site conditions. Pursuant to the Council approved 2007 and 2008 project lists, staff has identified the following trailhead and trail improvements at Forrestal that could possibly qualify for the State's RTP grant:

- Development of a trailhead at the eastern entrance off Forrestal Drive (behind the existing yellow gate) consisting of the following:
  - Installation of an entry sign with a trails map of the Preserve (to be affixed to the wall proposed to screen the Verizon equipment)
  - Installation of a drinking fountain that connects to the water and sewer lines at the Ladera Linda Community Center
  - Installation of bench seating
- Realignment of the Crystal Trail (L11) around the recently repaired drainage swales.
- Construction of the pedestrian portions of the Forrestal and Intrepid Trails as ADA accessible trails to View Point No. 7 at the terminus of Intrepid Drive (portions of the trail may be located on property owned by the Palos Verdes Peninsula School District).
- Construction of View Point No. 7 at the terminus of Intrepid Drive

It should be pointed out that last year's grant application included the installation of traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of vehicles traveling along Forrestal Drive (within the Preserve) to the soccer field parking lot located at the end of Intrepid Drive. However, after the preliminary review of the grant application, Staff was contacted by representatives from the grant committee informing the City that roadway improvements, such as traffic calming measures, are not eligible for grant funds. As such, this year's grant application does not include the traffic calming improvements.

### Estimated Construction Cost

The total estimated cost for this project is \$200,000 for trailhead and trail related improvements (a detailed breakdown of the cost estimate is attached). As specified in the application, if the grant is approved for the proposed improvements at Forrestal, the City has to provide a 12% match which is estimated to be \$24,000. The construction of the proposed trailhead and trail improvements at Forrestal is anticipated to take approximately six months to complete. However, since the improvement of the Crystal Trail has the potential to impact sensitive habitat, construction work on the realignment of this trail can only occur outside the bird breeding season, as indicated in the Council adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration, between September 1<sup>st</sup> and February 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### Environmental Assessment

The RTP grant submittal requires the preparation of environmental documents pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, in accordance to CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared by Staff for last year's grant application for the proposed trailhead and trail improvements at Forrestal. Based on that Initial Study, it was determined that the project, specifically the realignment of the Crystal Trail, has the potential to impact sensitive habitat. As such, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was adopted by the Council at its September 18, 2007 meeting. According to CEQA, the Council adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration remains effective provided that the assessed environmental impacts do not result in new or intensified impacts. Since the current project evaluated under the Council adopted MND is exactly the same as last year's project, less the traffic calming improvements, Staff believes that no additional environmental review is required and that last year's adopted MND provides the appropriate level of environmental review for the proposed project.

According to the Council adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration, it was determined that the project related biological impacts to habitat could be mitigated on-site at a ratio of 3:1. Since it was determined that the proposed project would impact 0.10 acres of habitat, 0.30 acres of replacement habitat will need to be provided as mitigation. The City Council approved NCCP contemplates 5-acres of impacts to habitat within the City's NCCP Preserve due to trail related improvements. Since the Forrestal reserve is a part of the greater Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the impacts resulting from the proposed project will be counted towards the allowed impact area, which has been mitigated with the dedication of 309.8 acres of City-owned land into the NCCP Preserve.

#### Forrestal Advisory Board

On September 10, 2008, the Forrestal Advisory Board, at its regular public meeting, discussed the City's intent to file a RTP grant application for the trailhead and trail improvement projects at Forrestal. The Board was informed that the proposed project at Forrestal is conceptual because detailed plans have not been developed at this time. Staff indicated that if the grant were awarded to the City detailed plans would be developed for future review by the Forrestal Advisory Board.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Direct Staff not to file the State RTP grant application for this year's grant cycle;  
or,
2. Direct Staff to apply for another trail related project(s) as suggested by the Council for next year's grant cycle (there is insufficient time to prepare a grant application for another project for this year's grant cycle).

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact at this time. However, the grant application requires 12% matching funds (estimated at \$24,000), if approved. The attached resolution commits the future use of City funds for the grant matching funds. In other words, if the grant is awarded, the City will come back with a budget adjustment resolution appropriating the 12% matching funds for the grant project.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Draft 2008-\_\_ Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 2008-\_\_

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF AN APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM AND COMMITTING THE FUTURE ALLOCATION OF 12% MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE TRAILHEAD AND TRAIL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT THE FORRESTAL RESERVE, IF THE GRANT IS APPROVED AND THE GRANT FUNDS ARE AWARDED.

WHEREAS, the "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" provides funds to the State of California for Grants to federal, state, local and organizations to acquire, develop and/or maintain motorized and non-motorized trail Projects; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Parks and Recreation has been delegated the responsibility for the administration of the program within the State, setting up necessary procedures governing Project Application under the program; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the State Department of Parks and Recreation require the Applicant to certify by Resolution the approval Application before submission of said Application to the State; and

WHEREAS,. Pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), Public Resources Code Sections 21000 et. seq., the State CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15000 et. seq., the City's Local CEQA Guidelines, and Government Code Section 65952.5(e) (Hazardous Waste and Substances Statement), the City of Rancho Palos Verdes prepared an Initial Study and determined that, there is no substantial evidence that the approval of the Trailhead and Trail Improvement project at the Forrestal Nature Preserve would result in a significant adverse effect on the environment. The City Council, prior to taking action on the proposed Trailhead and Trail Improvement Project, independently reviewed, considered the Mitigated Negative Declaration and determined that the document was prepared in compliance with the requirements of CEQA and local guidelines, with respect thereto. Accordingly, on September 18, 2007, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 2007-102 adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration, including a Mitigation Monitoring Program, for the Trailhead and Trail Improvement Project at the Forrestal Reserve; and,

WHEREAS, the Applicant will enter into a Contract with the State of California to complete the Project; and,

BE IT, THEREFORE, RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES:

1. Approves the filing of an Application for the Recreational Trails program;

2. Certifies that the Project is consistent with the City of Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan or the equivalent planning document;
3. Certifies that said Applicant has or will have available prior to commencement of any work on the Project(s) included in this Application, sufficient funds to operate and maintain the Project(s);
4. Certifies that the Applicant has reviewed, understands, and agrees to the General Provisions contained in the Contract shown in the Procedural Guide;
5. Appoints the Director of Public Works as agent to conduct all negotiations, execute and submit all documents, including, but not limited to Applications, agreements, amendments, payment requests and so on, which may be necessary for the completion of the Project; and,
6. Agrees to comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations and guidelines.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THE 16th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2008.

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MAYOR

ATTEST:

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CITY CLERK

State of California                    )  
 County of Los Angeles                )ss  
 City of Rancho Palos Verdes         )

I, CARLA MORREALE, City Clerk of The City of Rancho Palos Verdes, hereby certify that the above Resolution No. 2008-    was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the said City Council at a regular meeting thereof held on September 16, 2008.

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CITY CLERK  
 CITY OF RANCHO PALOS VERDES  
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