

TO: Michael C. Van Milligen, City Manager
FROM: Laura Carstens, Planning Services Manager 
SUBJECT: LWCF Grant Application for Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector
DATE: February 26, 2019

INTRODUCTION

This memo transmits for City Council review and approval, an application to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for a \$175,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant to complete the Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector. The project will connect the bike/hike trail systems of the Upper and Lower Bee Branch Creek Greenway segments via a crossing under the railroad tracks along Garfield Avenue. Enclosed are the application, project location map, detailed budget, and a resolution.

BACKGROUND

On February 5, 2019, the City received five bids for the Upper Bee Branch Creek Railroad Culverts Project, the final contract associated with the Upper Bee Branch Creek Restoration Project (Phase 7 of the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project). Tricon General Construction, Inc of Dubuque, Iowa submitted the low base bid of \$25,900,000.00, which is 1.24% over the engineer's estimate.

As part of the Railroad Culverts project, the City will be installing 6 steel pipes that are 8 feet in diameter and approximately 160 feet long. The improvements will allow for the efficient flow of floodwaters from the recently completed Upper Bee Branch Creek improvements, through pipes under the railroad yard on Garfield Avenue, to the Lower Bee Branch Creek. This new improved hydraulic connection under the railroad tracks will make the existing two stormwater box culverts functionally obsolete in terms of needed hydraulic capacity.

The construction contract budget for the Upper Bee Branch Creek Railroad Culverts Project was set to match the engineer's base bid estimate of \$25,582,982.00. The construction contingency budget to be used to cover unexpected work that might arise during construction was set to be \$1,279,149.00 (5% of the construction contract budget).

Because the low base bid received is 1.24% (or \$317,018.00) more than the proposed budget, there isn't funding within the budget to do the additional work outlined in the alternate bid items. But as the project proceeds toward completion, and the need for the contingency funding is better understood, it may be possible to re-bid the alternate bid item improvements and construct them with contingency savings.

The City will also continue to look for grant funding assistance to help cover the cost of the alternate bid item improvements.

DISCUSSION

The Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector project was Bid Alternate 3 for the Upper Bee Branch Creek Railroad Culverts Project. Bid Alternate 3 -Trail and Tunnel Modifications involves paving the trail, improvements to the box culverts to make them suitable for a trail, and adding tunnel lighting and cameras.

The Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector project will convert the twin stormwater box culverts into a bike/hike trail crossing under the railroad tracks. It serves as the “missing link” to connect the Upper and Lower Bee Branch Creek Greenway trail sections.

This Trail Connector will provide a safe crossing for all users of the citywide multi-use trail system, by eliminating the need to use the at-grade track crossing at 16th Street -- which sees an average of 7-9 trains daily. The Trail Connector is part of a multi-phase trail project along the restored Bee Branch Creek that will extend connections to two regional trails -- Dubuque Heritage Trail and Mississippi River Trail – as well as to the citywide trail system.

BUDGET IMPACT

The Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector project was a part of the bid package for the Railroad Culverts project, which is a phase of the Bee Branch Watershed Flood Mitigation Project. Since the selected bid was slightly above the City’s budget, we need to find additional funds to build the trail connector under the tracks. We identified LWCF.

LWCF is a highly-competitive federal pass-through grant program from the National Park Service that funds many outdoor recreational facilities. The City of Dubuque is eligible for up to \$175,000 in a LWCF grant, which must be matched one to one. The City previously has received LWCF grants for projects at the E.B. Lyons Interpretive Center and Eagle Point Park.

Civil Engineer Deron Muehring has identified that Sales Tax Increment funds in the Railroad Culverts project’s contingency can provide \$293,880 (63%) of the estimated total project costs of \$468,880. A LWCF grant of \$175,000 would provide the remaining 37% as shown below.

Project Revenues	Amounts
Sales Tax Increment	\$293,880
<u>LWCF Grant</u>	<u>\$175,000</u>
Total Project Costs	\$468,880

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends City Council approval of an application to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources for a \$175,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant to complete the Bee Branch Creek Trail Connector.

REQUESTED ACTION

The requested action is for City Council approval of the enclosed resolution in support of this grant application, and authorization for the Mayor to sign the application on behalf of the City of Dubuque.

Enclosures

cc: Jenny Larson, Budget Director
Steve Sampson Brown, Project Manager
Deron Muehring, Civil Engineer