



Legislation Text

File #: 17-0208, **Version:** 2

Resolution to Approve a Grant Application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF) Program for the Allen Creek Railroad Berm Opening Project

Attached for your review and action is a resolution to approve a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management (MDNRGM) for funding from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Program for the non-motorized element of the Allen Creek Berm Opening Project.

In order to implement the findings and recommendations of The Allen Creek Berm Opening Feasibility Study, the City is seeking to apply to the MDNRGM for funding for the construction of a non-motorized culvert along with a stormwater culvert through the existing railroad berm north of Depot Street. The stormwater element of this project has received partial funding from a grant through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). For the non-motorized access element of the project, partial funding may be available through the Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) from SEMCOG and MDOT. The City has applied for a grant from the FY2018 TAP program for that purpose.

This Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Program grant application seeks an award to facilitate the installation of two culverts through the railroad berm near the Allen Creek opening along the Huron River. A lower culvert will lower the floodplain through the Allen Creek near Depot Street and North 4th Avenue, just west of the Ann Arbor Amtrak station. A higher culvert will serve as a new non-motorized connection linking downtown Ann Arbor and its neighborhoods with the Border-to-Border (B2B)/Iron Belle Trail and the natural and recreational resources along the Huron River.

To notify the public about this recommendation and the grant application, a public meeting will be held by the City's Parks Advisory Commission.

Prepared by: Eli Cooper, Transportation Program Manger

Reviewed by: Craig Hupy, Public Services Area Administrator

Approved by: Howard S. Lazarus, City Administrator

Whereas, The railroad berm near the mouth of Allen Creek is oriented perpendicular to the flow of flood water and causes the floodplain depth to be as deep as 10 feet, while upstream of the influence of this berm, flood depths are more typically in the 3 to 5-foot range;

Whereas, There is also an improvement recommended in the City's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and general desire within the community to provide a shared-use non-motorized path through the railroad berm from the North Main Street/Depot Street area to the Huron River/DTE site area on the north side of the railroad berm;

Whereas, The non-motorized path is designed to provide a pedestrian connection linking downtown Ann Arbor and its neighborhoods with the Border-to-Border (B2B) Trail and eliminate the existing trespassing behavior on the railway due to the lack of a pedestrian access;

Whereas, In December 2012, the City hired OHM-Advisors to study the feasibility of opening up the railroad berm, including analyzing the feasibility of incorporating pedestrian access within the berm opening project, and the study determined that it is feasible to open the railroad berm and provide a pedestrian access;

Whereas, If the pedestrian access was provided, the project would complete a non-motorized transportation network in a larger region and introduce additional transportation choices, and personal health, pedestrian safety, economic viability, and air quality would be enhanced;

Whereas; The preferred recommendation from the feasibility study proposes a large culvert to pass flood water and another for pedestrian passage at a cost of \$4,305,000.00;

Whereas, The cost attributable to flood mitigation is \$3,085,550.00 and the cost attributable to pedestrian access is \$1,219,450.00;

Whereas, The North Main-Huron River Corridor Vision Task Force recommended an under-rail pedestrian passage to allow pedestrian access through the berm be built north of Depot Street between North 4th Avenue and North Main Street in conjunction with the City's flood mitigation efforts;

Whereas, The City was notified by letter dated June 27, 2016 that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has awarded the City of Ann Arbor a \$2,314,163.00 grant which represents 75% of the flood mitigation portion of project cost; and

Whereas, Grants are also available through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management to assist in funding improvements such as the Non-motorized part of this project;

RESOLVED, That City Council direct City staff to submit a grant application to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund program for the non-motorized/pedestrian improvements, such as the shared-use connection and tunnel portion of this project and authorizes City staff to execute all documents required for, or incidental to, the application process.