

Title

Resolution to recommend approval of a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management for the replacement of the South Barton Pedestrian Bridge

Memorandum

Attached for your review and action is a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management (MDNRGM) for the replacement of the South Barton Pedestrian Bridge in Barton Nature Area.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (NRTF) grant program provides up to \$400,000 for the development of public outdoor recreation facilities, including picnic areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, tennis courts, and trails. Applications are evaluated based on established criteria such as natural resource access and conservation, proximity to population centers, committed matching funds, financial need, and alignment with Trust Fund Board priorities—particularly regional trail connections such as the Border to Border Trail, which is part of the statewide Iron Belle Trail.

The South Barton Bridge is a 304-foot-long pedestrian bridge spanning the Huron River within Barton Nature Area. The bridge serves as a key connection along both the Border to Border Trail and is located near the recently completed Barton–Bandemer Pedestrian Tunnel. With the tunnel now open and providing enhanced access to Barton Nature Area, trail use across the bridge has increased significantly.

Constructed in 1991, the bridge has experienced deterioration of its steel support structure and has reached the end of its useful life. In addition to structural concerns, the existing 8-foot clear width does not meet current bicycle and pedestrian design standards. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommends a 14-foot clear width for shared-use bicycle facilities. Replacement of the bridge provides an opportunity to bring the structure up to current standards and improve the overall trail and park user experience.

City staff retained OHM Advisors to conduct a bridge alternatives analysis and develop a preferred concept design and cost estimate. The recommended replacement is a steel beam bridge with a concrete deck. Total project costs, including design and engineering, are estimated at approximately \$5,000,000.

Given the scale of this capital investment within the City's park system, outside funding partnerships are essential to advancing the project. An NRTF Development grant could provide up to \$400,000 toward total project costs. Staff

will continue to pursue additional grant opportunities and funding partners to support full project implementation.

A public meeting was held on February 12 to present the proposed improvements, and attendees expressed support for the project.

Budget/Fiscal Impact:

Funding in the amount of \$4,600,000 is available in the approved Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements fund—providing well over a 100% match and 92% of the anticipated total project cost.

Staff

Prepared by: Hillary Hanzel, Landscape Architect / Park Planner

Reviewed by: Josh Landefeld, Parks & Recreation Services Manager

Body

RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF A GRANT APPLICATION TO
THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GRANTS
MANAGEMENT FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF THE SOUTH BARTON
PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

Whereas, The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant program provides up to \$400,000 for the development of public outdoor recreation facilities;

Whereas, The bridge serves as a key connection along both the Border to Border Trail and is located near the recently completed Barton–Bandemer Pedestrian Tunnel;

Whereas, The bridge has experienced deterioration of its steel support structure and has reached the end of its useful life;

Whereas, The existing 8-foot clear width does not meet current bicycle and pedestrian design standards;

Whereas, Replacement of the bridge provides an opportunity to bring the structure up to current standards and improve the overall trail and park user experience;

Whereas, City staff retained OHM Advisors to conduct a bridge alternatives analysis and develop a preferred concept design and cost estimate;

Whereas, Total project costs, including design and engineering, are estimated at approximately \$5,000,000;

Whereas, Given the scale of this capital investment within the City's park system, outside funding partnerships are essential to advancing the project;

Whereas, An NRTF Development grant could provide up to \$400,000 toward total project costs;

Whereas, A public meeting was held on February 12 to present the proposed improvements, and attendees expressed support for the project;

Whereas, Funding in the amount of \$4,600,000 is available in the approved Park Maintenance and Capital Improvements fund providing well over a 100% match and 92% of the anticipated total project cost;

RESOLVED, That the Park Advisory Commission recommends City Council direct the City Administrator to apply to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management for replacing the South Barton Bridge at Barton Nature Area and authorizes the City Administrator to execute all documents required for or incidental to the application process.