

MEMORANDUM

TO: Transportation Commission

FROM: Eli Cooper, Transportation Program Manager

DATE: March 10, 2017

SUBJECT: Resolution to recommend submitting a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management for a Non-motorized Access in the Allen Creek Railway Berm Opening Project

Attached for your review and action is a resolution recommending the submission of a grant application to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management (MDNRGM) for a Non-motorized Access in the Allen Creek Railway Berm Opening Project.

There is currently not a safe and legal non-motorized connection between downtown Ann Arbor and its neighborhoods with the Border-to-Border (B2B)/Iron Belle Trail and the natural and recreational resources in and near the Argo Nature Area. Frequent trespassing occurs across the Wolverine Railroad corridor as the railroad corridor physically separates the north and west neighborhoods from the Huron River and associated recreational opportunities. The proposed project addresses safety and equity issues, by providing a grade-separated legal pedestrian access connecting the area. The connection will include nighttime security lighting, and be based upon universal design providing accessibility for all users.

The two main goals mentioned in the current Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan are to “ensure that the park system is comprehensive, inclusive and engaging” and to “provide a safe park system.” To do so, a recommendation in the Plan is to provide a direct connection between the North Main Street Corridor and the Border-to-Border/Iron Belle Trail.

The Allen Creek Railway Berm Opening Project will install two culverts under the railroad berm along the North Main Street corridor. A lower culvert, conveying stormwater, will lower the floodplain through the Allen Creek near Depot Street and North 4th Avenue. A higher culvert will serve as a non-motorized connection.

The City contribution to the project will be \$804,092.00. This project was the highest ranked Stormwater project in the Capital Improvements Plan.

The project has the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Award for the flood-control purpose. FEMA Award accounts for 53.04% (\$2,414,692.00) of the total cost of the project.

The City has applied for a Transportation Alternative Program grant from MDOT to offset some of the costs associated with the non-motorized elements of the project. Additional City funding will be provided from the Alternative Transportation Fund.

The preliminary overall budget estimate for the project is \$4,552,500.00 and includes design, equipment, construction, and landscape. Construction on the project would commence in summer 2018.

**RESOLUTION TO RECOMMEND SUBMITTING GRANT APPLICATION TO THE
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES GRANTS MANAGEMENT FOR
A UNIVERSAL ACCESS NON-MOTORIZED TUNNEL IN THE ALLEN CREEK
RAILWAY BERM OPENING PROJECT**

Whereas, The neighborhoods near the project site do not have a safe and legal non-motorized access to connect the urban center of the City of Ann Arbor with the Border-to-Border (B2B)/Iron Belle Trail and the natural and recreational resources in and near the Argo Nature Area;

Whereas, Unsafe trespassing behaviors need to be prevented and a safe alternative provided.

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

RESOLVED, That the Transportation Commission recommends that City Council directs the City Administrator to apply to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Grants Management for a Non-motorized Access in the Allen Creek Railway Berm Opening Project.