



**CITY OF SALINAS
COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

DATE: AUGUST 15, 2017
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC WORKS
FROM: MICHAEL RICKER, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE PLANNER
TITLE: ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT AWARDS

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Approve a Resolution accepting the Youth Soccer and Recreation Development Program and CALFIRE Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grant Funds.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve a Resolution to accept grant funds from the California Department of Parks and Recreation for improvements at Cesar Chavez Park, and from CALFIRE for the planting of trees and preparation of a forest management plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Public Works staff have secured two grants, one for the construction of active play areas at Cesar Chavez Park. The other grant is for tree planting and preparation of a forest management plan. Together the two grant awards total \$1,171,382.00, with \$998,264 dedicated to Cesar Chavez Park improvements. These two grants will help implement City Strategic Initiatives, including the City's Neighborhood Vibrancy-Urban Greening Plan.

BACKGROUND:

Cesar Chavez Park is a neighborhood resource that could become the neighborhood gathering place and recreation hub envisioned in the City's recently adopted Neighborhood Vibrancy - Urban Greening Plan. Two large, vacant fields offer the potential to meet neighborhood desires for soccer. Acceptance of the State Parks Youth Soccer Program Grant would enable Salinas to merge the neighborhood need with the new resource. Youth Soccer grants are intended to develop active play areas and recreation opportunities in heavily populated areas of need. The proposed park improvements for Cesar Chavez Park will do just that.

In February of this year, Salinas lost over 400 trees from a severe winter storm. Most of these trees were mature—over twenty-years old. It will take time and sustained commitment from the City to recover from the storm and replace the trees. Given the many benefits that trees provide, which are noted below, regenerating the City's urban forest is timely and a positive step in the right direction.

In 2012, California established the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to receive State Cap and Trade Auction proceeds. The Governor's office assigned a portion of the funds to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, aka CALFIRE. Projects funded must further the goals of AB 32, the Global Climate Warming Solution Act and meet the strategies contained in the Air Resources Board Updated Scoping Plan. One strategy is to implement forestry projects that lead to increased carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. The goal for all projects is to ensure California's forests continue to be significant carbon storage sinks (where carbon is sequestered) and to reduce or avoid GHG emissions due to pest damage, wildfires, and loss of forest tree cover from development to non-forest uses.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Not a Project. The City of Salinas has determined that the proposed action is not a project as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines Section 15378).

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

The two proposals relate to the following City Council's Strategic Plan Initiatives:

1. **Economic Diversity and Prosperity:** Improvements to Cesar Chavez Park and the planting of trees will help foster transformation towards vibrant neighborhoods. The significant presence of street trees on residential streets has shown to increase residential property values by 3-15%. In addition, studies have shown that the presence of trees in commercial shopping districts can increase retail sales by 9-12%. (Kathy Wolf, University of Washington / US Forest Service, June 2016, *Green Cities: Good Health*).

2. **Safe, Livable Community:** Improvements proposed for Cesar Chavez Park and the addition of street trees will help provide well-being benefits and stress relief, and calm traffic. (Wolf, 2016).

3. **Well Planned City and Infrastructure:** street trees are the backbone of "green infrastructure". Trees sequester carbon, improve water quality, reduce traffic speeds, provide stress relief and reduce crime levels (Kathy Wolf, 2016). As part of the City's streetscape and neighborhood form, they mightily contribute to a well-planned city.

4. **Quality of Life:** Proposed Park improvements and restoring the City's Urban Forest enriches the quality of life for Salinas' residents and businesses.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Acceptance of the grants commits the City to expend staff time as well as other resources. Specifically, while Public Works staff project that the \$998,264 State Soccer Grant is sufficient to fund all (100%) construction cost, the grant does not pay for project pre-construction cost. The pre-construction costs are estimated to be \$150,000. In addition, development of the project will require Public Works' staff time to manage project design and construction. Grant funds will not cover this expense nor City administrative overhead cost. Funding to compensate for staff time

will come from the City's adopted 2017-2018 FY Budget. It is anticipated that Measure G carry-over funds from the City's 2017-2018 FY Budget will be adequate to meet pre-construction cost and staff time expense.

The CALFIRE Greenhouse Gas Reduction Grant provides \$173,118 in funds to the City for tree planting and preparing a forest management plan. Fiscal impacts include the capital purchase of a piece of equipment long deferred due to the recession. City Forestry will need to purchase a water truck to ensure trees once planted survive. Forestry has sufficient funds in its budget to address this past deferred expense. Similarly, the Greenhouse Gas Fund for tree planting will require that the City cover its administrative overhead and project staff time. The City's FY 2017-2018 Operating Budget is sufficient to address these costs.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution