

City Council Introduction: 12/11/17
 Public Hearing: 12/18/17
 Date Factsheet Prepared: 12/6/17

FACTSHEET

TITLE: Memorandum of Understanding between the
 City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South NRD
 for the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch project

BOARD/COMMITTEE: N/A

APPLICANT: Parks and Recreation Dept.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: For

OTHER DEPARTMENTS AFFECTED: none.

SPONSOR: Parks and Recreation Dept.

OPPONENTS: None known

REASON FOR LEGISLATION

Approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Lincoln and the National Audubon Society through its Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center (SCPAC) office for the Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch project. (This item is related to the resolutions for an Interlocal Agreement with the Lower Platte South NRD and for the transfer of funds to the Parks Foundation for an endowment).

DISCUSSION / FINDINGS OF FACT:

The Prairie Corridor on Haines Branch is a tallgrass prairie passage and trail that will build on the City's nationally recognized trail and greenway system and will link two of Lincoln and Lancaster County's premier environmental resource and education centers. It will follow the Haines Branch of Salt Creek from the Pioneers Park Nature Center, to the Conestoga Lake State Recreation Area, extend down through the Village of Denton and on to the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center. The Corridor will support economic development, build on Lincoln's nationally recognized trail system, support environmental education and promote the enhancement and preservation of one of Nebraska's most valuable resources--tallgrass prairie.

First conceptualized as part of the Lincoln-Lancaster County 2040 Comprehensive Plan, project implementation began in 2013 with the award of a 3-year Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET) Grant. Since that time the City has received a second NET grant and is working with a collation of over 20 public and private partners who are providing funding and in-kind contributions. The City and SCPAC have worked informally as partners since the project started. As the project has moved forward, it is desirable to formalize this relationship.

The proposed Memorandum of Understanding defines the roles of the City and SCPAC to work cooperatively toward meeting the goals of the project. The term is proposed to be 20 years, which is consistent with the proposed interlocal agreement with the NRD and appropriate as the three primary operational project partners work together to implement and manage the project. The City will serve as the lead agency for implementation, and SCPAC will serve as a primary project partner with the City. SCPAC will contribute staff time toward all the major project components and may assist in overseeing contracts and preparing grant applications as needed. The parties will work cooperatively on the acquisition of land and easements on a case-by-case basis. Cooperation for a trail easement to facilitate the he lower end of the trail connecting to the Spring Creek Prairie Audubon Center destination is contemplated by this agreement, but details and actual grant of the easement would require prior separate approval by the Audubon Board.

POLICY OR PROGRAM CHANGE: ___Yes XNo

OPERATIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: The agreement supports the continuation of a current project and partnership into the future.).

COST OF TOTAL PROJECT: To be determined. The total cost of the project will depend on the balance of land conserved through fee simple acquisition and conservation easements. A preliminary cost estimate for all project elements is \$22 million. It is anticipated that the project will be a long-term project funded over a period of years and primarily supported by grant and private funds. To date, \$4.5 million of this cost has already been committed to the project.

RELATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS: No additional cost.

SOURCE OF FUNDS:

CITY: N/A

NON CITY: N/A

FACTSHEET PREPARED BY: Nicole Fleck-Tooze

REVIEWED BY: Lynn Johnson

DATE: December 6, 2017

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