CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: February 19, 2008
Reviewed by: *BP*

SUBJECT: **Authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with the Restoration Design Group for Restoration Design And Engineering Services For Phase 3 of the Lower Codornices Creek Restoration Project in the amount of $250,000.**

REPORT BY: Judy Lieberman, Assistant City Administrator

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Administrator to enter into a contract with Restoration Design Group (RDG) Restoration Design And Engineering Services For Phase 3 of The Lower Codornices Creek Restoration Project in the amount of $250,000.

BACKGROUND

1. Update on Status of Codornices Creek Project: The Codornices Creek Restoration Project is a joint project with the City of Berkeley and the University of California to restore lower Codornices Creek between the Union Pacific Railroad Tracks on the west and San Pablo Avenue on the east. Initial planning for the project began in the mid-1990's, in conjunction with the adoption of the "Joint Watershed Goals Statement" by the cities of Albany, Berkeley, El Cerrito and Richmond in 1995, and the passage of Measure R to fund such projects in 1996.

   The project was developed as a result of concerns over redevelopment plans at University Village that called for a trapezoidal flood control channel. Community and environmental involvement changes this concept to a more sustainable and community oriented approach of creek restoration and trail development. A significant population of steelhead trout reside in the channel, so the project also represents ecological restoration benefits for the federally listed/threatened Central California Coastal steelhead trout. Flood control is also an extremely important aspect of the project, and prior flooding issues (including lawsuits) have resulted in this area. Currently the widening of the flood plain, removal of culverts, and the increase in meanders have resulted in a more natural hydrological system that is more effective in handling stormwater flows. Phase 3 will continue to widen the floodplain and to restore natural meanders to the creek.

Grant Funds from the Coastal Conservancy and CalTrans (for trail design) began the environmental background work and original schematic design. A $985,123 grant from the Department of Water Resources initiated the construction of the project in 2003/2004, and was followed by another $815,000 from the Coastal Conservancy, and most recently a $2.2 million grant from the California Resources Agency. Measure R Creek Restoration funds have been used for construction of the project, and the City of Berkeley and the University have pledged approximately $625,000 from a joint account for specific aspects of the Creek project, including soil assessments, work related to easements, and maintenance and monitoring of the project.

Project implementation began in 2004, and could not have occurred without the assistance of the ballfield user groups who co-exist with the creek restoration project. Phase 1 of the project, from the UPRR tracks to 5th street, was started in August of 2004, and is now completed. This section included creek restoration, floodplain widening, alterations to Fielding fields to the north of the creek, a pedestrian bridge at 4th street, and a maintenance road and foot path between 5th and the RR Tracks. Phase 2, from 5th street to 6th street, was completed in 2007, and included creek restoration, floodplain widening, a pedestrian/small vehicle bridge at 5th street, and an asphalt path on the south side of the creek.

2. Phase 3 of Codornices Creek Project: Phase 3 of the Codornices Creek Project includes the continued restoration of the creek between 6th and 8th streets and the construction of a Class I bicycle/pedestrian trail along this segment, connecting to the Berkeley Bicycle Path network. In order to create room to widen the floodplain for hydrology purposes, and to have room for the trail, the project also includes the following: 1) the relocation and reconstruction of a portion of the Post Office wall between 7th and 8th Streets; 2) the relocation of the UC Village maintenance shed, and 3) the potential redesign of some portions of the UC Village Child Care Center (run by the Albany Unified School District). The total estimated project cost for Phase 3 is $2.2 million, all of which is provided by a California Resources Agency grant via the California River Parkways Grant Program.

3. Other related Codornices Creek projects: It should be noted that other projects are occurring all along the Codornices watershed. The presence of Steelhead trout (estimated at over 500, including spawning anadramous fish coming from the ocean.) led to a grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Foundation at the request of the National Marine Fisheries Service. This grant, provided to the Codornices Creek Watershed Council will begin the preparation of plans for the stream reach all the way down to the SF Bay. Downstream of the UPRR culverts, the regulatory agencies also required that the cities approve a plan for short term and long term improvements of the creek, including widening the right-of-way and working with CalTrans to add culverts under 1-80 to resolve capacity and flooding issues. The Urban Creeks Council also recently received a grant to develop an interpretive master plan for education and signage along the trial. The city will be working with the Urban Creeks Council on this project as complementary to the

City's existing restoration and trail construction project.

DISCUSSION

The Restoration Design Group, in conjunction with the Waterways Restoration Institute, a non-profit institute specializing in planning and construction of creek restoration projects, has been the project's advocate, consultant and designer since the earliest stages of project planning. WRI was the non-profit co-sponsor of the original Department of Water Resources grant ($985,123) for construction of Phase 1. RDG has been instrumental in both getting grants for the project and in navigating the difficulties of the permitting process.

Based on past experience, WRI and the City have worked carefully together to develop a realistic scope of work and associated cost. This process was significantly aided by the experiences of Phases 1 and 2. Fees are to be billed on a lump sum basis per task item, not on an hourly basis. Billings will show invoice amounts and the remainder of the contract amounts. The Scope of Work, including the proposed timeline and budget per task item, is included as an attachment.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total cost of the contract is $250,000, all of which will be reimbursable from the $2.2 million River Parkways grant received by the City in 2007.

Attachments

1. Joint Watershed Goals Statement
2. Aerial Photograph, Phase 1 in construction
3. Photographs of Phase 2, newly completed
4. Draft Scope of Work for RDG
5. Site Location Map, with Phases