

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda date: February 2, 2009
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: East Bay Regional Parks District Measure WW

REPORTED BY: Penelope Leach, Recreation and Community Services Director

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That Council approve Resolution 09-2 regarding the Master Contract between the City of Albany and the East Bay Regional Park District for the allocation of the City's share of the Measure WW funds.
- (2) That the Council refer to the Parks and Recreation Commission for discussion, deliberation and recommendation regarding the use of Measure WW funds, with advice from the Waterfront Committee.

BACKGROUND

East Bay Regional Parks District (EBParks) Measure WW, which passed in November 2008, is an extension of Measure AA passed by East Bay voters 20 years ago. Measure AA helped preserve 34,000 acres of open space, developed over 100 miles of new trails, and funded hundreds of local parks and recreation projects. While much has been accomplished, the growing East Bay population further increases the need for acquiring new parklands, protecting and restoring natural habitat, and helping communities with their local park and recreation facilities. Measure WW will be used to continue to restore urban creeks; protect wildlife; purchase and save open space, wetlands, and bay shoreline; and acquire, develop, and improve local and regional parks, trails, and recreational facilities close to home for East Bay residents

The measure allocates funds to cities based on population. The City of Albany will be allocated \$771,363, and has up to 20 years to use the funds. Cities are able to submit projects to the East Bay Regional Park District in February and March of each year. This allows East Bay Regional Park District the ability to sell enough bonds, on an as-needed basis, to pay for the submitted eligible projects.

DISCUSSION

The approval of the attached Resolution enables the City of Albany to enter into a Master Contract with East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) regarding the allocation of Proposition WW funds. The Master Contract is an agreement between EBRPD and the City of Albany specifying the payment of funds by the District to the City of Albany. No

project(s) need to be identified at this time. The Resolution and the Master Contract are the initial steps the City needs to take in order to be eligible to submit project applications.

ANALYSIS

As the process for discussing the use of Measure WW unfolds, staff recommends that the Council have the opportunity to provide any policy direction it may have for projects to be considered for use of the funds. These ideas would be referred to the Parks & Recreation Commission, as the City body charged with advising the City Council on parks and recreation matters, for its discussion, addition of any other ideas, deliberation, and recommendations to the City Council. Additionally, it would be appropriate ask the Waterfront Committee to provide any suggestions it may have to the Commission, which could also be forwarded to the City Council.

By June 2009, staff would report back with recommendations for Council's consideration. This would allow staff time to gather the necessary items required for the application packet to be submitted to EBRPD in time for the Feb/Mar 2010 deadline for project submissions.

Due to recent inquiries from the public, the Parks and Recreation Commission has tentatively planned to discuss Measure WW at its February 12 meeting pending Council's referral to do so. Since Measure WW passed in November 2008, several projects have been mentioned for use of the funds. Suggested projects include further improvements to Memorial ball field, Ohlone Greenway improvements, assisting with the completion of the Tom Bates sports fields, the purchase of the property next to the Senior Center for additional recreational programming, Pierce Street Park purchase/improvements, etc.

As Council considers suggestions for Prop WW funds, please see attachment B which lists the projects from the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan that have been completed as well as projects that have yet to be completed. It should be noted that there was a recent suggestion from community members to use a portion of the funds for environmental upgrades to the pool project the School District is undertaking; however, Measure WW funds are not eligible for that project.

Given the current state of the economy and the fact that many State park grant funds have been frozen, this non-competitive per capita grant may be the last of its kind for a while. A thorough process for reaching a decision for how best to use the funds is extremely important.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Measure WW supports the continued restoration of urban creeks; protect wildlife; allows for the purchase of open space, wetlands, and bay shoreline as well as allows for the improvement and development of local and regional parks, trails, and recreational facilities close to home for East Bay residents. All of these potential projects support the values of sustainability.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact for approving the resolution. By approving the resolution the City has access to \$771,363 in grant funds.

Attachments

1. Draft Resolution #09-2
2. Recommendations from the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan