



Agenda Report

Fullerton City Council

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2021

TO: CITY COUNCIL / SUCCESSOR AGENCY

SUBMITTED BY: STEVE DANLEY, ACTING CITY MANAGER

PREPARED BY: ALICE LOYA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION

SUBJECT: UNION PACIFIC PARK RIGHT OF WAY PARCELS AND TRAIL

SUMMARY

Discussion of potential solicitation of options for the disposition of the Union Pacific Right of Way parcels and trail.

RECOMMENDATION

City Council discuss and provide direction on whether it would like to explore additional options for the development of the Union Pacific Park Right of Way parcels.

PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statement/s:

- Infrastructure and City Assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

City Council approved construction of the Union Pacific Right of Way Trail in August 2020. The cost to complete the trail project is estimated at \$2.1 million, of which \$1.78 million comes from the Urban Greening grant program. The City's required match equals an estimated \$320,000. The Park Dwelling Fund has funds available.

BACKGROUND

The Union Pacific Park and Right of Way Trail property begins just south of the Transportation Center and extends 0.8 miles west to Independence Park, between Truslow and Walnut avenues and totals 1.7 acres. The Fullerton Redevelopment Agency purchased the first parcels in 1993 and the remaining parcels in 1998. The Redevelopment Agency transferred both the park and trail parcels to City ownership in 2016 after the State dissolution of redevelopment agencies.

On September 7, 1999, the City Council / Redevelopment Agency approved a plan for the Union Pacific Right-of-Way Park and Trail Project and the application for grant funding from the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation. The project intended to provide a safe alternate route for residents to walk or bike between the Transportation Center and the Richman Park and Independence Park neighborhoods for residents. The plan included a Class 1 bikeway, recreational trail, one-acre neighborhood park and parking lot. The City received grant funding in 2001 for the development and construction of Phase I of the trail from the Transportation Center to Highland Avenue. The trail project was part of a larger project that included the Union Pacific Park. The total cost of the project equaled \$1.5 million, with \$1.3 million provided from redevelopment funds.

City Council named the park and trail “Union Pacific Park & Trail” in 2001. At that time, the City’s General Plan included both the park and trail and the trail was added to the City’s Master Plan of Bikeways, Orange County’s Major Riding and Hiking Trails and Orange County’s Bikeway Plan. The park and trail continue to maintain these designations within these approved plans. City Council dedicated the Union Pacific Park & Trail in late 2003 and the City completed construction in early 2004.

DISCUSSION

The disposition of the Union Pacific Park and adjacent portion of the improved trail had been the subject of several discussions over the years. In 2018, the City Attorney’s office confirmed, that because of previous improvements to Union Pacific Park and Trail funded with State, local and Federal funding, any sale of park property would be subject to the provisions for the disposition of public park land contained in California Government Code Sections 38440-38462 and would require a 2/3rd vote of the residents. The recently established City Council-appointed UP Park ad-hoc committee will discuss park revitalization.

Some Council members have expressed interest in issuing a request for proposals (RFP) to determine if other viable and productive uses of the two remaining unimproved right of way trail parcels exist. These remaining parcels have previously been identified as Phase II of the trail improvement project. The remaining parcels are located between Truslow and Walnut Avenues and start at Highland to Richman Avenues, and then Richman Avenue to Independence Park.

These two remaining City-owned parcels are part of a larger plan to acquire the entire Union Pacific right of way that would continue westward to Hunt Branch Library, then head north along the trail trestle crossing Malvern Avenue to Bastanchury Park, then northwest along Bastanchury Road crossing under Harbor Boulevard, coming out at the Fullerton Golf Course, then heading north past Hermosa Park and crossing Imperial Highway behind the former Beckman Instruments buildings to Lambert Road and ending at the Brea Tracks trail, which is part of the OC Loop. Prior City Councils intended to acquire the entire right of way to create a complete trail system that connects the existing trails in Fullerton to the Fullerton Transportation Center and to the OC Loop. This project would connect most of the neighborhoods in Fullerton, including the disadvantaged communities in south Fullerton, thereby creating an alternate mode of transportation and outdoor recreation opportunities.

The City has received four grants from State Parks, Caltrans and the California Natural Resources Agency for this project(s) because of its potential to connect to multiple parks,

outdoor recreation, transportation, areas of employment and services such as medical centers. The City received the following grants :

- \$200,000 in 2001 from State Parks for Phase I (Harbor to Highland)
- \$300,000 in 2008 from Caltrans for Phase II (Highland to Independence Park)
- \$350,000 in 2010 from Caltrans for Phase II (Highland to Independence Park)
- \$1.78 million in 2021 from California Natural Resources Agency for Phase II.

The City completed the conceptual plan for Phase II of the trail project from Highland to Independence Park in 2011 as well as engineering drawings for Highland Avenue to Richman Avenue. Soon after the completing the plans, the City put the project on hold as requested by the California High Speed Rail Authority due to its proximity to their proposed rail line. As a result, the City had to cancel the two grants awarded by Caltrans.

UNION PACIFIC RIGHT OF WAY TRAIL PHASE II – HIGHLAND TO INDEPENDENCE PARK

The California Natural Resources Agency for the Urban Greening Program awarded the Fullerton Parks and Recreation Department grant funds to construct Phase II of the Union Pacific Trail from Highland Avenue to Independence Park. The trail project proposes a ten-foot wide concrete trail, a five foot wide decomposed granite trail, site lighting, trees, native and drought tolerant landscaping and irrigation. The project intends to transform an existing 50 to 80-foot wide, blighted corridor into a greenbelt trail that provides alternate transportation linking the Transportation Center and several parks, including Independence Park at its terminus. This proposed trail would align with the Hunt Branch Library to the west, providing potential future linkages as described above to the OC Loop. The total estimated cost of the project equals \$2.1 million. City Council approved the grant application on August 18, 2020, through a resolution. City Council more recently accepted the grant funds on May 4, 2021.

CURRENT PLANNING FOR UNION PACIFIC RIGHT OF WAY TRAILS

A new City Council was seated in December 2020. This agenda item seeks to discuss whether a majority of councilmembers would like to continue with current plans to build a trailway on the Union Pacific Park right of way parcels or would like to explore additional options for developing the rights of way by releasing an RFP soliciting those options.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Union Pacific Park and Trail Aerial
- Attachment 2 – Union Pacific Trail Phase II Concept Plan
- Attachment 3 – Fullerton Recreational Trails General Plan Map
- Attachment 4 – Fullerton Proposed Bikeways General Plan Map
- Attachment 5 – OC Bikeway Plan
- Attachment 6 – OC Regional Trails Master Plan
- Attachment 7 – City Council Resolution No. 2020-73