

Meeting Agendas/Info

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION:	ITEM _____
01-515	OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA
AGENDA:	SYNOPSIS -
OCTOBER 8, 2001	Approval of the re-alignment and authorization to begin acquiring right-of-way and easements necessary for the construction of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Phase III.
SUBJECT:	FISCAL IMPACT -
GAY LEA WILSON TRAIL PHASE III RE- ALIGNMENT AND ACQUISITION OF RIGHT-OF-WAY	Total project cost is estimated at \$1,100,000-\$550,000 is available from grants awarded to the City from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT). The City's contribution from the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) will be approximately \$550,000 and is available in the CIP.
TYPE:	RECOMMENDATION -
<u>RESOLUTION</u> ORDINANCE RECEIVE/FILE	Approval.
SUBMITTED BY:	BACKGROUND -
DONALD M. TRIPP PARK & RECREATION DIRECTOR	The Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Phase III, runs along Four Mile Creek from Easton Boulevard to the City's northern boundary at Aurora Avenue. In September 1998, the City Council, by Roll Call No. 98-2949, approved an alignment for the Four Mile Creek Trail Phase III (now known as the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Phase III) that meandered along both sides of Four Mile Creek and involved the construction of two large bridges, one just south of Easton Boulevard and one midway between Easton Boulevard and Hubbell Avenue. An at-grade crossing on Hubbell Avenue was also necessary to allow the trail to proceed north to its terminus at Aurora Avenue. Total cost of this proposed alignment was estimated at \$1,400,000. After preliminary design, it was realized that the cost of the two

new bridges could be more than double the projected \$200,000. Total project cost rose to over \$1,600,000. In the interest of possible cost savings, a re-examination of the trail alignment was made. It was discovered that a construction project to replace the vehicular bridge over Four Mile Creek at Hubbell Avenue had just been approved. By adding the bicycle/pedestrian trail to this bridge, modifying the existing pedestrian walkways on the vehicular bridge at Easton Boulevard, and keeping the trail completely on the eastern side of Four Mile Creek until it reached Hubbell Avenue, both of the proposed bicycle/pedestrian bridges and the at grade crossing at Hubbell Avenue could be eliminated. The trail alignment from Hubbell to Aurora remained on the west side of the creek. The project cost decreased significantly, and is now estimated at \$1,100,000.

Of the 18 landowners along the full length of trail, only ten are impacted by this change in alignment. Staff met several times with all 18 property owners along the two-mile length of proposed trail and was made aware of safety, trespass, increased ATV activity, and loss of privacy concerns.

These issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of both the owners and adjacent neighbors by the inclusion of fencing along portions of the trail and with patrolling by the Police Department's trails enforcement team.

On May 22, 2001, the Park and Recreation Board, at its regular monthly meeting, approved the realignment of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Phase III. Staff recommends that the City Council also approve the revised alignment and authorize the Real Estate Division to begin the necessary acquisition of property to allow construction of the Gay Lea Wilson Trail, Phase III.

It is anticipated, from discussions held with several landowners at one or more of the public meetings, that some property owners will choose to sell the needed trail right-of-way while others will request an easement. The total cost of land acquisition/easement is estimated at \$50,000. Although authorization by condemnation is proposed as an option in the roll call, it is anticipated that condemnation will not be necessary.

It is envisioned that trail construction will begin in the spring of 2002 with the trail opening by late fall of 2002.
