

**CITY COUNCIL
COMMUNICATION:**

ITEM _____

02-189

**OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER
CITY OF DES MOINES, IOWA**

AGENDA:

APRIL 8, 2002

SYNOPSIS -

Approval of a re-alignment and authorization to begin acquiring right-of-way and easements necessary for the construction of the Walnut Creek Trail, Phases I-B and II.

SUBJECT:

WALNUT CREEK
TRAIL PHASES I-B
AND II RE-
ALIGNMENT AND
ACQUISITION OF
RIGHT-OF-WAY

FISCAL IMPACT -

Total project cost for phases I-B and II is estimated at \$1,160,000 for approximately 1.3 miles of trail with \$613,000 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 \$547,000 and is available in the CIP, CP040/PKS990000/PKS045. Phase I-A is being constructed and paid for by West Des Moines and Windsor Heights under a 28E Agreement with the City of Des Moines. Phase I-A is estimated to cost \$462,000 and is approximately 0.6 mile.

TYPE:

RESOLUTION
ORDINANCE
RECEIVE/FILE

RECOMMENDATION -

SUBMITTED BY:

DONALD M. TRIPP
PARK AND
RECREATION
DIRECTOR

Approval.

BACKGROUND -

On October 26, 1998, the City Council, by Roll Call No. 98-3367, approved the Walnut Creek Trail Master Plan and the alignment for Phases I-B and II. The trail meandered along both sides of Walnut Creek and involved the construction of two large bridges, one just north of Grand Avenue and one midway between Grand Avenue and North Valley Drive. In addition, a small segment of trail was to be constructed from 61st Street west to 63rd Street and then run south along the east side of 63rd Street to Lincoln Drive. Total cost of this proposed alignment was estimated at \$1,320,000.

After preliminary design, it was realized that the cost of the two new bridges could be more than double the projected \$160,000 each. Total project cost rose to an estimated \$1,660,000. In the interest of possible cost savings, remodeling of the bridge sites on Walnut Creek to support less expensive, alternative bridges has begun, and a re-examination of the trail alignment has been made. Consequently, it has been decided to eliminate the bridge midway between Grand and North Valley Drive and extend the trail along the north side of Walnut Creek to North Valley Drive. Even with the minimal cost of additional right-of-way, the project cost has decreased significantly, and is now estimated at \$1,160,000.

Of the seven landowners along the entire length of trail, only two are impacted by this change in alignment. Staff has met with both property owners and was confronted initially with concerns of safety, trespass, and loss of privacy. Whether these issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of both the owners remains to be seen. Both, however, are now open to negotiation for easements or fee-simple acquisition of their respective properties.

On April 2, 2002, Park and Recreation Department staff held a public meeting to inform residents living near the proposed trail of the desired alignment changes. Members of the various neighborhoods in attendance were very receptive of the proposed changes. It was noted that a future trail connection from the Frisbie Park Neighborhood directly to the Walnut Creek Trail at the North Valley Drive bridge would be desirable.

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the revised alignment and authorize the Right-of-Way Division to begin the necessary acquisition of property to allow construction of the Walnut Creek Trail, Phases I-B and II. It is anticipated from discussions held with 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 \$40,000. Authorization by condemnation is proposed as an option in the roll call, and it is anticipated that it will be necessary in obtaining one parcel located in the proposed change of alignment.

It is anticipated that trail construction will begin in the Fall of 2002 for Phases I-B and II, and the trail fully open by Fall of 2003.
