

Agenda Report

September 11, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Finance Committee

FROM: Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE ALL AGREEMENTS WITH METRO AND NATURE FOR ALL ASSOCIATED WITH THE RECEIPT OF \$747,245 GRANT FUNDING FOR THE MT. WILSON EXPRESS PILOT PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the following proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines per Section 15061 (b)(3);
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute all agreements with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) associated with the receipt of \$747,245 in grant funding for the Mt. Wilson Express Pilot Route;
3. Amend the City's budget to recognize and appropriate the grant funds as detailed in the Fiscal Impact section;
4. Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract, without competitive bidding pursuant to City Charter Section 1002(F), contracts for professional or unique services, with Nature for All for planning, community and stakeholder engagement, in a total amount not-to-exceed \$299,730; and
5. Grant the proposed contract(s) with Nature for All an exemption from the Competitive Selection process pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 4.08.049(B) contracts for which the City's best interest are served.

BACKGROUND:

Through the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District (RPOSD) Recreation Access 2022 grant cycle (administered by Metro), Pasadena Transit, and co-applicant Nature for All (NFA), were awarded funds for the development and operation for up to one year of a bus route to the Angeles National Forest called the Mt. Wilson Express.

First formed as the San Gabriel Mountains Forever coalition, NFA has been working to protect the public lands and green, open spaces around Los Angeles and connect Angelenos to nature since 2008. As a local community-based organization, NFA has led the vision for the Mt. Wilson Express project and has been successful in securing over \$1.1 million in state and federal funding for this project.

Pasadena Transit and Nature for All

After NFA received the state and federal funding referenced above, NFA approached Pasadena Transit as a potential partner in developing and operating the route. As a result, the City of Pasadena partnered with NFA to apply for the RPOSD grant for operating funds and were successful.

The grant award includes \$447,515 for Pasadena to fund the operation of a weekend pilot route anticipated to operate from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. between the Metro A Line Memorial Park Station in Pasadena to several sites in the Angeles National Forest, including the Mt. Wilson Observatory, via Northwest Pasadena. It is anticipated that zero emission vehicles will be utilized by Pasadena Transit to operate the route. The route is expected to launch in April 2025 and operate approximately 6 months. The route will be evaluated by the following performance measures: ridership, service 5,000 youth and that riders have a meaningful experience in nature (data to be gathered via survey). Continued operations of the route will depend on identifying funding, which staff is pursuing.

The grant award also contains \$299,730 for planning, community and stakeholder engagement and to hire a design consultant to develop Mt. Wilson Express branding, wayfinding and website. Branding and website will be developed in line with the City of Pasadena and Pasadena Transit style guides. Once the pilot is launched, NFA will take the lead in organizing group orientation trips, narrating on board buses to emphasize recreating responsibly and setting up public outreach tables at trailheads and City sponsored events.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This proposed action supports the General Plan guiding principle, "Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without a car" and will directly assist the Department of Transportation in implementing major objectives of the Mobility Element, including promoting a livable community and encouraging transit as a non-auto travel alternative.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The recommended action to adopt the subject resolution is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines per Section 15061 (b)(3), the "General Rule" that CEQA only applies to projects that may have an effect on the environment.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The cost of the program is \$1,936,463, \$747,245 funded through the RPOSD Recreation Access grant, \$1,121,218 from NFA and \$68,000 from the City's local match. The grant funds will be administered by the City of Pasadena and the local match will be programmed in the FY24 and FY25 Department of Transportation operating budget using Proposition C transit funds (Fund 209). This program will have no impact on the General Fund. The table below shows the amount of the grant funding and local match.


Funding Source	Amount
Metro – RPOSD Recreation Access Grant	\$ 747,245
Nature for All Federal Grant	\$ 1,121,218
City of Pasadena Local Return Proposition C	\$ 68,000
Total	\$ 1,936,463

The one-time grant award of \$747,245 will be addressed by:

- Increasing revenue by \$747,245 in account 20924039-702300-95097 to receive the grant funds; and
- Appropriating \$747,245 to expenditure account 20924039-811400-95097.


The City's administrative cost to administer this program will be absorbed within the Department of Transportation Operating Budget. It is anticipated that the entire grant award amount of \$747,245 will be expended by December 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



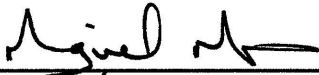
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