



REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION
New Business

MEETING DATE: January 20, 2022
PREPARED BY: Ben Jaszewski, Parks and Planning Superintendent
AGENDA ITEM: Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Application

PREVIOUS ACTIONS:
None.

RECOMMENDED PARK BOARD ACTION:

Motion by _____ to authorize staff to prepare and submit an application for Conservation Partners Legacy Grant for the Arbor Lakes area and approve the proposal from Stantec to assist in the grant application process.

COMMENTS:

Over the past several years staff have observed increased perennial noxious weeds taking over portions of the native shoreland areas around Arbor Lake, West Arbor Lake, North Arbor Lake, and Central Park Lake. Varied attempts to manage phragmites, purple loosestrife, thistle, and other noxious weeds within current internal capabilities have been unsuccessful. In early 2021 staff began working with Stantec Consultant Services division of natural resources to develop a plan and provide a detailed management program to eliminate weeds and restore the native plantings around these highly visible downtown lakes.

The goal for staff and consultant was to determine the current state of the native plantings and identify undesirable plants overtaking the native grasses and flowers planted many years ago. It was determined that a Natural Resources Management Plan with an overall goal of increasing cover by native prairie vegetation, enhancing long-term sustainability, and reducing long-term maintenance costs would be viable over a 5-year period of corrective and specialized management. The plan provides management recommendations and data in formats that enable straightforward implementation to begin in late May/early June of this year and continue for a 5-year period. The plan and supporting information will ultimately serve as a template for developing and tailoring natural resource management activities and approaches for the other areas with similar management challenges. The 5-year plan provides a cost estimate based on current industry standards and has a total cost of \$256,499.

The Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) grant administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is a program providing funds to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands, prairies, forests, and

habitat for fish, game, and wildlife. Applicants can apply for up to \$400k over a three-year period and requires 10% matching funds. Based on the Natural Resources Management Plan, years one through three are estimated to cost \$146,321, the request for CPL funding and City matching contributions are as follows:

2022 - \$58,545(CPL request) + \$6,505(City matching contribution) = \$65,050

2023 - \$45,221(CPL request) + \$5,025(City matching contribution) = \$50,246

2024 - \$27,922(CPL request) + \$3,103(City matching contribution) = \$31,025

The request for funds from the CPL grant total \$131,688. The 10% match from the City general fund totals \$14,633 over the three-year period. If the grant is awarded and the project provides the anticipated results, another grant application for funding would be needed in 2025 to complete the 5-year plan.

Due to the specialized knowledge and expertise required for this project staff requested a proposal from Stantec to assist in the grant application process, details can be viewed in Attachment D. The proposal outlines a cost of \$2,295 to prepare the application and administer the submittal. Stantec has had great success helping to secure CPL funding for several other City's with similar project initiatives. Applications are due February 21, 2022. Awards are announced February 25, 2022 If successful the project would be initiated the summer of 2022.

An increase to the park maintenance general fund budget of \$6,000 was approved to facilitate the costs of restoring and maintaining the native areas around Arbor Lakes. This would continue as part of the general fund annual request.

Staff recommends the Board authorize staff to move forward with the grant application and approve the proposal from Stantec Consulting Services to assist in the grant application process.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A – Program Map

Attachment B – Natural Resources Management Plan Estimate

Attachment C – Stantec Grant Proposal