Memorandum 12-142 Kachemak Drive Path

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MEMORANDUM 12-142

To: Mayor Hornaday, Homer City Council
From: Kachemak Drive Pathway Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, Transportation Advisory Committee
Through: Julie Engebretsen, Planning Technician
Date: August 30, 2012

Summary: Request for the Kachemak Drive Trail to become a City of Homer construction project, and use HART funds to help pay for it.

Introduction
There is a long held desire in the community for a trail along Kachemak Drive. The project is currently in the City Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and one of the top 15 projects. In the CIP, the project is categorized as one the City expects the State to construct.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission formed the Kachemak Drive Path Committee, which has been meeting regularly since December 2010. The Committee, via the Commission, forward two resolutions to Council in 2011. The City Council approved Resolution 11-90(A) in May 2012, asking for more information and a recommendation of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, (P&R) and the Kachemak Drive Pathway Committee have subsequently worked hard to better define the project, and explore the idea of the City building the trail.

The Project
The project consists of approximately 3.5 miles of separated path, adjacent to Kachemak Drive. Most of the trail would be an eight foot wide compacted gravel trail, similar in design to the Homer Spit Trail.

The project would be split into phases for design and construction. The first phase would be from the end of the current Spit Trail at Kachemak Drive, east along Kachemak Drive to the long term airport parking lot. The City and the State are the only two property owners in this section and it's the most heavily traveled section of road. All three advisory bodies feel this first phase is the most important for public safety.

The remainder of the trail would follow utility easements where possible. Property owners would need to grant trail easements to the City for most of the route. Requesting easements from property owners could take years and not all property owners may want to grant easements. This could affect the location and design of the trail.

Question #1. Should the City design and build this trail? Or should it be left to the state?
- The state will not build this trail in the near future. It has been a project on the CIP for some time, and no action has been taken by the state. The state has limited right of way, and has shown no interest in acquiring more right of way in order to build a trail.
- This is an important project and merits the City's efforts to build it, rather than waiting on the state.
- A city project means city staff time, and city taxpayer expense, rather than state employees and state funds.
- The City Council's approval is required if this is to become a city rather than a state project.

Requested Action 1: City Council approval of the City pursuing construction of the trail

Question #2: If the City builds this trail, how will it be paid for?
HART Trail funds can be used to provide matching grant funds, pay for design, or pay for the whole project. This is a large project that will likely be planned and constructed in phases; its not necessary at this point to identify all funding sources. Staff always looks for grants and other funding sources to leverage Homer taxpayer dollars.

Requested Action 2: Approve the concept of using HART funds. Budget requests will follow the ordinance process.

Other information requested via Resolution 11-090(A)

Costs and funding
Costs - Project costs are likely to exceed $2,080,000. Some sections will likely be substantially more expensive than others. As with any project, design alternatives will be considered in those areas. The initial proposal is to use HART funding for project design, and then use HART funding to leverage grants and other outside funding sources.

Per Carey Meyer:
18,750 LF of 10’ wide gravel Kachemak Drive Trail should cost $85/LF

Design Cost = $ 150,000
Construction Cots = $ 1,600,000
Contingency (15%) = $ 240,000
Inspection Costs = $ 60,000
Administration Costs =$ 30,000
Total Project Cost = $ 2,080,000

Funding - There are several possible sources of funding for this project including grants, state legislative appropriations, and sales tax revenue via the HART program. As with any project, once design work is completed, the project is more likely to be successful with grant and legislative funding. With Council approval, HART funds can be used to initiate and leverage additional monies for this project.

This project will likely need to be completed in phases and may take several years. It has taken over ten years to build water and sewer along Kachemak Drive to date. The city would likely take the same approach with the trail: design the whole project, and implement it in stages as funding and easements are in place. The section between Homer Spit Road and the airport parking is considered “Phase One” and is the highest priority.

Maintenance
At this time, the City of Homer provides minimal winter maintenance on trails (with the exception of the Spit Trail). In the summer, City maintenance is generally limited to trash removal and brush clearing. Staff and volunteer efforts will be needed to accomplish summer maintenance.

Permitting
Acquiring federal, state and local permits for a trail is time consuming, and can be costly. But its not insurmountable. Please consider the permit process as part of the project cost. One of the first steps in this project will be a scoping letter to the various agencies, to find where the problem areas and issues are. The trail can be designed with these issues in mind.

Examples of permits
- Army Corps of Engineers
- State of Alaska Right of Way

What this project will take if the City Council approves this project becoming a city project:

Design Phase – funded via HART funds and other grants as available
1. Permitting. The first step is a scoping letter to the various agencies. They will provide comments about their

concerns. With their comments early in the design process, the city can incorporate their concerns. This will smooth the official permit process later in the project.
Cost: Staff time.

2. Design. Basic design work to determine the exact route and easements needed.
Cost: Engineering design contract for cost estimating and easement requirements.

3. Easement acquisition. Request easements from property owners.
Cost: significant staff time, recording fees, possibly some easement purchases

Construction Phase – funding via Hart funds and grants
1. Acquire permits
2. Contract with an engineering firm for engineer cost estimates and bid drawings
3. Acquire construction funds
4. Issue bid documents
4. Build!

Attachments:
Resolution 11-90(A)
Excerpt of the Transportation Advisory Committee minutes of August 21, 2012

Related Resolutions**Memorandum - Related Resolutions:** Resolution 12-080(S) Contract Award to Arctic General Contracting for Karen Hornaday Park Red Shed Removal

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