Memorandum 20-089

TO: Mayor Castner and Homer City Council
THROUGH: Rick Abboud, Acting City Manager
FROM: Jan Keiser, PE, JD, Director of Public Works
DATE: June 16, 2020
SUBJECT: Proposal to Fund the Small Works Trails Maintenance Program

I. Issue: We propose to (1) systematize a Trails Program, with accompanying Trails Financial Plan as well as (2) create a Small Works Trails Maintenance Program for Homer’s trails, funded out of the HART-Trails Fund.

II. Background:

A. Resolution 17-092(A) and Resolution 17-092(A) established a minimum set aside budget from the HART-Trails fund to be used for capital construction and maintenance of trails. A minimum of $550,000/year was to be set aside from sales tax revenues to fund the construction of new, and maintenance of existing, roads and trails. Of this, $500,000/year was to be set aside for roads and $50,000/year was to be set aside for trails. As of March 31, 2020, $674,618.94 has accumulated in the HART-Trails fund. We propose to use some of this money for a Small Works Trails Maintenance Program, which would be used for spot repairs or minimal enhancements of existing trails.

B. The City Council adopted the HART Policy Manual. The HART Policy Manual identifies a set of nine criteria for projects that may be considered for HART funding, which could apply to maintenance of existing trails. The criteria, which would be met by the Small Works Trails Maintenance Program, include:
   • Improves life, safety and traffic flow
   • Corrects deficiencies of existing systems
   • Completes traffic circulation pattern
   • Encourages economic development
   • Corrects Drainage Problems
   • Reduces maintenance costs

C. A systematic Trails Program and Trails Financial Plan needed. While the Policy Manual identifies a basic system for nominating and selecting trail projects that are eligible for
HART funds, there is no provision for a trails financial plan. And, the Manual doesn’t specifically address how levels of effort for maintenance will be gauged.

A system is needed to assess (1) the condition of existing trails and identify maintenance needs as well as (2) the desirability and feasibility of new trail construction. Such a system would be used to program the use of HART-Trail funds in a mindful and financially sustainable manner. Groundwork for this effort has already been laid by the Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission. We will follow up on that work to systematize the process and develop an accompanying Trails Financial Plan.

D. In the meantime, some of Homer’s existing trails need immediate attention. Trails, over time, deteriorate – they lose their tread, suffer from drainage issues, become overgrown with brush, etc. The City’s existing budget allocated $25,000 from the HART-Trails Fund to the General Fund. However, this was not allocated as a line item dedicated for trails maintenance. The reality is that we spend more than $25,000/year in normal trail maintenance activities – snow removal, sanding, sweeping and mowing, so that allocation was quickly absorbed.

There is a line item of $12,444 in the Parks Budget for labor for trails maintenance, but this isn’t enough to do substantive work, such as: build up tread, address drainage issues, cut brush, replace signage, etc. For this work, we need to purchase filter fabric, acquire gravel base and occasionally engage 3rd party contractor support.

We propose to create a Small Works Trails Maintenance Program, specifically funded by the HART-Trails Fund that can be used do perform substantive maintenance work. For example, immediate attention is needed on the following trails:
- Poopdeck Trail, segment #1 – Retreading – needs filter fabric and gravel
- Poopdeck Trail – segment #2 (Land Trust Ext.) – Drainage– needs pipe & aluminum grating
- Reber Trail – Brush cutting – needs 3rd party contractor support

E. Dedicated funding is available. There is currently $674,618.94 in the HART-Trails Fund that could be used to fund the Small Works Trails Maintenance Program. I propose an initial budget of $36,000 for this program. Funds that are not expended from this “bucket” would remain in the HART Fund.

III. Action Recommended: That the City Council pass the proposed ordinance authorizing expenditure of $36,000 from the HART-Trails Fund for the Small Works Trails Maintenance Program and calling for the development of a Trails Program, to include a Trails Financial Plan.
HART - Trails

Money dedicated to trails maintenance in the past

Fund Balance thru 3/31/20 $674,618.94

Small Works Trails Maintenance Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>$36,000.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>$12,444.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remaining Fund Balance</td>
<td>$626,174.96</td>
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</tbody>
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HART Small Works Trails Maintenance Program