****

Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation Grant Proposal Memo

Project: Silver Lake Boardwalk Reconstruction

Due Date: March 20th, 5:00 p.m.

**Request: Staff is requesting Commission Board approval to submit this grant proposal for some of the work at Silver Lake Boardwalk and Education Complex**

Background

The Office of Outdoor Recreation’s (UOR) Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant was created to help Utah communities build or restore recreational infrastructure that provides low-cost opportunities to be active outdoors. The Utah Outdoor Recreation Grant (UORG) expanded in 2018 with additional funding from the State’s Transient Room Tax (TRT). UOR states that many communities find that having nearby recreation opportunities adds to the quality of life of local citizens, helping to attract new residents, and can lead to an increase in local property values. Businesses, especially high-tech firms, consider having nearby outdoor recreation amenities as “absolutely vital” in attracting and keeping high-value employees.

The Central Wasatch Commission is applying for the Recreation Restoration Infrastructure Grant, which fund infrastructure projects that enhance outdoor recreation opportunities in Utah’s communities. State funding through this grant program is for deferred heavy maintenance, restoration or reconstruction of projects on public lands for developed recreation infrastructure, including trails, day-use areas, recreation or water recreation infrastructure. Up to $1 million will be awarded in 2020, and applicants can apply for funding amounts ranging from $1,000 to a maximum of $150,000 per project.

Projects must be on publically owned lands, and a working partnership between the land manager and the applicant should be solidified. A minimum of 50/50 match to be derived from cash, contributed funding, and in-kind resources is required to apply for UOR funding. Contributed funding of cash can go toward labor, equipment, supplies, or other expenses. Eligible in-kind resources for the project can include volunteer labor, contributions of construction equipment or vehicles. Half of the match from the applicant and partners should be cash; the remainder can be in-kind contributions.

The project must be completed within 24 months of contracting with the State. State funding is given after the applicant’s spend, with 75% of the matched monies eligible to be given before the completion of the project.

Purpose

Following the 2019 retreat of the Central Wasatch Commission Board, the Commission moved to create three committees that would focus on issues pertaining to the Central Wasatch National Conservation and Recreation Area Act and land tenure issues in the Central Wasatch, transportation issues to consider a model for a broader mountain transportation system, and short-term projects that would help further the goals of the Central Wasatch Commission by identifying projects that implement transportation and transit solutions, protect the ecosystems that originate in the Central Wasatch, steward recreational access, and sustain the economic viability of the Cottonwood Canyons. This grant application is a result of the goals set out for the Short-Term Projects Committee.

The Silver Lake Boardwalk, located within the Salt Lake City watershed in upper Big Cottonwood Canyon, is in need of significant restoration. The original boardwalk, which is approximately 2,500 feet long, was installed in the early 1990’s and is at the end of its life cycle. The total project includes nine reconstruction phases, and this proposal is for phases 2, 3, 8, and 9, and for interpretive signage. The phases include work on the picnic area path, the main boardwalk, and a fishing pier.

The area currently includes a visitor center, picnic areas, restroom facilities and an interpretive boardwalk/trail that encircles Silver Lake. The Boardwalk serves to protect the wetland, but is reaching the end of its life cycle. Stream banks and shore around the lake are highly compacted and eroded in several areas and need to be protected. The Boardwalk is slumped and warping in several locations and has become a safety concern. Railings are deteriorating, retaining walls and drainage devices are failing. Accessible interpretative displays and conservation education are needed to educate the public about watershed protection and match the investment in quality and theme of the indoor visitor center exhibits. The Boardwalk is advertised as handicap-accessible and ADA-approved, however, because the boardwalk is slumped and bowing, people in wheelchairs, baby strollers, and people using other assisted mobility devices cannot safely or easily make use of the boardwalk. Visitor use has been calculated by the Forest Service's National Visitor Use Monitoring program at 1300-1500 user visits per day in the summer.

The reconstructed project will improve safety, erosion, accessibility, wildlife viewing, exercise opportunities, fishing, interpretation/education and other day-use activities. School groups and other educational groups use the area and buses are sponsored by the local non-profit to bring school children and others to the site. This project will restore and protect shoreline areas and focus concentrated use in areas designed to sustainably accommodate the large volume of day use.

Three phases of the nine-phase reconstruction are proposed for this grant cycle in order to leverage funds dedicated the Silver Lake Boardwalk restoration project from partners like Salt Lake County, and Salt Lake City Public Utilities, and in-kind donations from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, and the United States Forest Service while acting on the opportunity to access State funds for this popular and multi-use recreation destination. Although we are not proposing work to reconstruct the entire Silver Lake Boardwalk project, it is the aim of the Central Wasatch Commission that by beginning to address some of the work necessary to fully reconstruct the Boardwalk, momentum behind the project builds within the larger community.

Local and federal governments including Salt Lake County and the United State Forest Service have applied for funding to address all of the reconstruction needs at the Silver Lake Boardwalk and Education Complex, but have yet to be successful. The Central Wasatch Commission is applying for funding to address three of the nine scoped phases of the reconstruction project in order to approach and complete pieces of the project, rather than wholly tackling the reconstruction at once.

Proposal Summary

The Central Wasatch Commission is applying for funds to work on the following portions of the Silver Lake Boardwalk project:

1. Boardwalk Reconstruction – Pier #7 (phase two, estimated $53,342 in 2015, ~$106,684 today)
2. Boardwalk Reconstruction – Pier #8 (phase four, estimated $51,715 in 2015, ~$103,430 today)
3. Picnic Area Path Reconstruction (aggregate surface) (phase eight, estimated $11,781 in 2015, ~$23,562 today)
4. Removal and Disposal of Existing Boardwalk -- Shoreline Access adjacent to main path (phase nine, estimated $3,000 in 2015, ~$6,000 today)
5. Additional interpretive signage (estimated $15,000)

* Total estimated cost: $254,676

*\*Please note: these cost estimates are based off of a 2015 cost estimate produced by the United States Forest Service. USFS staff estimate that current estimates are approximately double the 2015 cost projections. The first phase of work would include the Forest Service going out to bid for current cost projections for the above work.*

**\*The total estimated cost for these phases of the Silver Lake Boardwalk project is $254,676. Forest Service Engineers are in the process of updating the estimates for the proposed phases to reflect 2020/2021 construction costs.**

The Central Wasatch Commission has secured monetary partnerships with Salt Lake County ($100,000), and Salt Lake City Public Utilities ($15,000). The Central Wasatch Commission will commit $10,000 of its allocated funds for projects to the proposal. Dedicated skilled staff time from the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation, the United States Forest Service, and the Central Wasatch Commission will count as in-kind donations, and may be factored into the required 50/50 match in the grant application, up to 15% of our funding request, and unskilled volunteer labor may also be factored into the required 50/50 match.

* Total cash donations: $115,000
* CWC cash contribution (from the already budgeted funds for special projects) : $10,000
* In-kind donations: CWC staff time, Forest Service engineer time, skilled manual labor from community groups like the Cottonwood Canyons Foundation

Projected timeline

The deadline to submit this grant proposal is March 20th at 5:00 p.m. The Utah Office of Outdoor Recreation expects to make decisions on which proposals to fund May 1st, 2020. Awarded projects must be completed within 24 months of contracting.

Assuming we are awarded the requested project funds, work on the project could begin as soon as June 2020. Here is a projected timeline of the proposed project:

1. January – March 2020: Preparatory work for the grant application, and writing the application;
2. June – December 2020: Any necessary update to designs and cost estimates; necessary reporting and other administrative tasks required by the grant; construction contract preparation; opening the bid to contract;
3. January – June 2021: Bid review process and contracting; necessary reporting and other administrative tasks required by the grant;
4. July – December 2021: Construction work begins; necessary reporting and other administrative tasks required by the grant;
5. January – June 2022: Construction work reaches completion; reporting and grant administration reaches completion.

Project Management

The Central Wasatch Commission staff would be responsible for administering the grant as well as procuring any necessary work permits for the project, however, the Forest Service would be contracting to reconstruct the Boardwalk, and managing the construction and associated trail and revegetation work.