



Date: Monday, January 27, 2020
To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: Melissa Barry, Southern Idaho Tourism

ACTION ITEM

Request:

Consider a request for City of Twin Falls to contribute \$10,000 in matching funds for an Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation Recreational Trail Grant to complete a pedestrian bridge across the Snake River connecting Auger Falls Heritage Park and the area below Yingst Grade.

Time Estimate:

Presentation will take approximately 10 minutes. Requester recommends allowing some time for questions and discussion.

Background:

For about 10 years there have been efforts to connect the south and north side of the canyon at Auger Falls Heritage Park. ITD constructed a bridge to help transport materials across the river during the development of I-84. After its completion, most of the bridge was destroyed. The center structure remains, but it lacks on ramps, safety railing or cleared access. During low water users climb up the metal stairs and cross the river. This is not efficient or safe for the public.

Jerome County, with the help of Southern Idaho Tourism, will be submitting a proposal to IDPR's Recreational Trails Program Grant for funds to rehabilitate the old Auger Falls/Interstate bridge for pedestrian access. This would connect Auger Falls Heritage Park to the Snake River Canyons Park at Yingst Grade for man powered recreation.

The Recreational Trails Program Grant is designed to help build and maintain trails throughout the state. A committee of user groups with regional representation review grant requests and award them to the highest scoring applicants. The applications must show project value, user support and buy in through match funding. We have worked closely with IDPR and the committee to ensure the project's highest level of success – including two site visits and several conference calls.

IDPR and the RTP Committee share a lot of excitement about the bridge project and the possibility of collaboration between the two counties. The overarching loop trail is also a very well received idea and there are several other local groups interested in pushing this effort forward. Those factors coupled with our work to survey park users, line up permitting, locate American Made Steel, source match from multiple partners and have buy in from the community has positioned the application in a very favorable position.

The City of Twin Falls manages the Auger Falls Heritage Park and proposed access for the bridge. This is one of the department's most loved parks and is heavily used. Patrons mountain bike, hike, fish, rock climb, whitewater raft and do many other outdoor activities. The north side grade is used by patrons for elevation training and many of the same activities as Auger. The bridge would provide additional access

to the park and allow current users to cross to the north side's amenities as well. It is a natural connection to make and enhances both sides with new terrain, access to additional parking and an easy connection to a newly proposed Snake River Canyons Park mountain bike area.

There has been a lot of momentum in the past several months and the project has moved forward relatively quickly – especially considering its 10 year history. We see this as a huge opportunity to utilize current efforts to make this connection a reality. We ask that the City of Twin Falls help support the project with the commitment of a 5% monetary match. This shows buy-in as well as support for the project. Awards will be made in June of 2020. If our application is successful, construction will begin immediately.

Total RTP Grant request is \$220,000, with a 60/40 match from the applicant. We are requesting \$10K toward the 40% match to be made from the City of Twin Falls. This represents 5% of the total project - EHM Engineers, MaVTEC, Jerome County, Jerome 20/20 and Southern Idaho Tourism will provide the remaining funds needed for the project. The official request from IDPR will be around \$220,000, with \$132,000 coming directly from the grant.

Approval Process:

A simple majority will approve this request.

Budget Impact:

Approval of this request will dedicate city funds to be used for project match.

Regulatory Impact:

Approval of this request will commit the City of Twin Falls to the grant application and provide necessary match funds to do the project.

History:

N/A

Analysis:

N/A

Conclusion:

The applicant requests that the Council approve the item as presented.

Attachments:

1. SIT fund request - photos