



City of Gilroy

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item Title: **Authorization to Approve Application to Receive Grant Funds from the California Youth Community Access Grant Program**

Meeting Date: August 21, 2023

From: Jimmy Forbis, City Administrator

Department: Recreation

Submitted By: Adam Henig, Recreation Manager

Prepared By: Adam Henig, Recreation Manager

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

Ensure Neighborhood Equity from City Services

RECOMMENDATION

Motion to authorize the application to receive grant funds from the California Youth Community Access Grant Program.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Gilroy applied to receive funds for The Youth Community Access Grant Program, a state-sponsored initiative that awards funding for youth to access natural or cultural resources with a focus on low-income and disadvantaged communities. The City applied for the grant and has advanced to the third and final round. Per the grant requirements, the City Council is requested to authorize the application in order for the City to receive funding if awarded.

BACKGROUND

The City has applied to receive funding from the Youth Community Access Grant Program, a state-sponsored initiative funded from Proposition 64 ("Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act"), which was passed by California voters in 2016. A portion of the funding was appropriated to the California Natural Resources Agency, which is sponsoring a competitive grant program to support youth access to natural or

cultural resources with a focus on serving low-income and disadvantaged communities. These programs are designed to educate and facilitate recreational opportunities for young people who have limited access to natural outdoor spaces.

The project that Gilroy is proposing is a two-year program that will offer 80 Gilroy youth the opportunity to attend free nature field trips while learning about the importance of conservation, culture and developing survival skills. The program will encourage youth from economically disadvantaged neighborhoods to explore beautiful, natural destinations in the Santa Clara County region and beyond. Each year of the program will include three-day-long trips (each site will be different) and one multi-day overnight nature trip. Youth will learn about conservation and other natural and cultural resource-related concepts in a classroom setting prior to each trip. Each classroom activity will be between 1 and 3 hours. The classroom activities and nature area trips will be led by City Recreation staff and a contracted naturalist from a local nonprofit educational organization who has experience working with underprivileged youth and teens. Classroom sessions will include team-building games and lessons about the cultural history and impacts of climate change on the nature sites that will be visited.

Each year's program will have two cohorts – 15 to 20 middle school and 15 to 20 high school students. Destinations may include state and national parks within California such as Mt. Madonna (of Santa Clara County), Henry Coe State Park, Point Lobos State Reserve, and/or Yosemite National Park.

ANALYSIS

If awarded, this grant program will be aimed at improving access to natural destinations for youth and teens from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many students in Gilroy have yet to have the opportunity to experience and explore the outdoors beyond city limits. The City is planning to focus on recruiting youth with existing juvenile arrest records or truancy concerns based on reports provided by the County and other local nonprofit organizations that serve students under the age of 18.

By providing free nature access programs for disadvantaged youth, the program has the ability to improve outcomes for students who are at risk of falling behind in school and being exposed to the criminal justice system. Collectively, these trips provide a sense of purpose, an opportunity for youth to lead one another and cultivate a desire to think beyond their immediate surroundings—for example, how their day-to-day lives impact the planet.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council can decide not to approve the application, which would prevent the City from moving forward in the grant program. Staff does not recommend this option.

FISCAL IMPACT/FUNDING SOURCE

If awarded, the City is requesting \$284,227 to cover the costs of the two-year program, which includes staff, a contract provider, transportation, and supplies.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Not applicable.

NEXT STEPS

The City will submit the remaining grant documents. The State will inform applicants of its status in October 2023.

Attachments:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Grant Application