



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: David Gill, Parks and Recreation Director
DATE: August 25, 2020
SUBJECT: Merrimack River Greenway Trail (CIP543)

Recommendation:

Accept this report and funding resolution and set for a public hearing in October.

Background

Starting in 2015, the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail working with staff from the City Engineering Division looked at various options to build an elevated walkway from Terrill Park north over the wet lands towards Loudon Road. In all, six options were considered and prices ranged between \$1.7 million to just over \$2 million dollars (2017 prices). Building the boardwalk over the wet lands was considered the first priority as it was needed to allow the trail to connect between Terrill Park and the corn fields south of Loudon Road. However, due to the cost of the boardwalk the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail approached the City last year to help build Phase One of the Terrill Park Master Plan.

Phase One of the new Terrill Park Master Plan included building the first section of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, new dog park and new upper parking lot. This project was funded in partnership with the Friends of Merrimack River Greenway Trail, Concord Rotary Club, the City of Concord along with a grant from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. This phase will be completed by the end of September 2020.

Discussion

City staff along with the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail recommends a new approach for the next phase of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail. We recommend the final design and

permitting for the trail south from Loudon Road, along the Merrimack River to a common connection point allowing the trail to be connected with the future boardwalk. In addition we recommend working with the cities Conservation Commission to build a hiking trail that will create a loop around the corn fields. The area on the east side of the corn fields is ideal for bird watching and offers unique views of the State Capital (see map and pictures below). Building the Greenway Trail and the hiking trail will not affect the current farming activities.

It is recommended the FY20 funds (\$23,972) continued to be used to review a possible new boardwalk route and with an additional \$90,260 from the Community Improvement Reserve to design and permit the Merrimack River Greenway Trail from Loudon Road south along the river and the design of the entire boardwalk route that will reduce impacts on wet lands and reduce long term maintenance costs. Having a final design and all required permits for the trail from Loudon Road south to Terrill Park would allow the City of Concord to be ready for future grant opportunities as the project would be “shovel” ready.

Map of Merrimack River Greenway Trail and Hiking Trail around corn field



Red = Greenway Trail, Blue = hiking trail



Yellow = proposed route of Greenway Trail

Pictures from east side of corn field – along route of new hiking path.

