

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



MEETING DATE: February 15, 2011

ITEM NUMBER: 5B

TYPE OF ITEM: Study Session

Digitally signed by
Karen Chandler
Date: 2011.02.10
15:18:44 -0700

PRESENTED BY: Dale Rademacher, Director of Public Works and Natural Resources, 303 651-8355
Karen Roney, Director of Community Service, 303-651-8633
Jeff Friesner, Recreation Manager, 303-651-8393
Paula Fitzgerald, Parks and Open Space Project Manager, 303-651-8448

SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE: Use of Conservation Trust Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Conservation Trust Fund (CTF) proceeds from the Colorado Lottery has several allowable uses. Longmont has historically used this funding for the St Vrain Greenway and its adjunct projects (trailheads and parks along the trail corridor). The St Vrain Greenway corridor is estimated to be complete within the 2012 to 2015 CIP period except for a portion that may need to wait until gravel mining is complete at the eastern end. Because of this, the time could be ideal to initiate a broad strategic conversation regarding the long term use of this important fund.

Tonight, staff would like to further explore this idea with City Council, including some suggestions from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and seeks Council direction about a possible public engagement process.

COUNCIL OPTIONS: Provide direction to staff.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS: N/A

FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION: CTF revenue for 2010 was \$750,000. The funding stream has varied over the years. In 1995 the fund revenue was \$500,000. That amount grew to nearly \$900,000 in 2006 when the revenues began dropping to the 2011 budgeted amount of \$700,000 which includes interest.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:

The Conservation Trust Fund and Colorado Lottery were started in 1983 and funded by the State Open Space Fund. In 1992 the Colorado Constitution was amended to require that the Colorado Lottery be used for state and local parks, recreation facilities, open space, environmental education, and wildlife habitats. In 1993, City Council directed that Longmont's CTF be used exclusively to fund the St Vrain Greenway trail around the time of the original St. Vrain Greenway Master plan adoption. Staff and City Councils have sustained that practice since 1993 and the CTF has been used for the development of the St Vrain Greenway and its adjunct projects such as Rogers Grove, Izaak Walton Pond and Sandstone Ranch District Park.



The allowable uses of the CTF are extensive but must be within allowable categories listed in the state Constitution. Expenditures must be for acquisition, development and maintenance of new conservation sites or for capital improvements or maintenance for recreational purposes on any public site. A partial list of eligible expenses includes:

- Acquisition for
 - Parks and Open Space
 - Community and Recreation Centers
 - Swimming pools, Skating rinks and Skate parks
 - Libraries and Museums
 - Campgrounds
 - Golf Courses
 - Shooting ranges
 - Easements.
- Development and construction of
 - Structures and buildings
 - Playgrounds
 - Paths and trails
 - Sports courts and Athletic fields
 - Permanent restroom facilities
 - Pavilions and shelters
 - Parking lots
- Salary of maintenance personnel for properties listed under Acquisition and Development
- Capital Improvements including
 - Playgrounds
 - ADA compliance
 - Picnic tables and Fencing
 - Recreation Center improvements
 - Maintenance equipment
 - Lighting and Security equipment
- Operation of a Television relay and translator facilities

In April 2010, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board requested information about the CTF and existing policies regarding its use and, at subsequent advisory board meetings, continued their discussions about other possible uses of this fund in support of other parks and recreation purposes once the Greenway was completed within the City of Longmont's jurisdiction. During these meetings, City staff and the PRAB also brainstormed ideas for soliciting public input from residents to help inform Council about the community's priorities for future parks and recreation amenities that could be funded from the CTF.

Staff believes it is important to get direction from Council regarding this issue prior to any community conversation. If Council supports this dialogue with the public, a process could be designed that is a demographically representative forum for community input. "Option Power" is a voting system that could be used to gather information from the community in a graphic and easily charted survey format. Questions could be asked based on project categories rather than individual projects. Categories for CTF use might include:

1. Existing Parks
2. Existing Parks and Recreation Properties or Facilities
3. New Park and Recreation Properties or Facilities

4. Trails

Once the information gathering is completed, staff would present the results to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council. It is hoped that the information gathered through this process will provide Council with input helpful for future policy decisions.

Staff would like to hear Council views on this topic and the potential for a community conversation regarding funding priorities. If you have questions concerning this process, please contact Jeff Friesner, Recreation Manager at 303-651-8393 or Paula Fitzgerald, Parks and Open Space Project Manager at 303-651-8448.

ATTACHMENTS:

None