



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Jason Simpson, City Manager

Prepared by: Shannon Buckley, Assistant City Manager

Date: November 14, 2023

Subject: Grant Application, Acceptance, and Execution of the Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Critical Library Infrastructure Project

Recommendation

Adopt A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE ELSINORE, CALIFORNIA, AUTHORIZING THE GRANT APPLICATION, ACCEPTANCE, AND EXECUTION OF THE GRANT FUNDS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

Background

On September 25, 1908, the first Library was opened by Altha Merrifield in a corner of her father, C.S. Merrifield's hardware store on Main Street. When her father's store burned down in late June of 1909, citizens saved the book collection by carrying it across the street to City Hall. The Library moved five times until 1989 when it was located at 600 West Graham Avenue and Renamed the Altha Merrifield Memorial Library.

On May 28, 2019, the City Council voted to purchase vacant land on Sumner Ave between Main Street and Spring Street, hoping to receive a grant to build a new Library.

In 2022, the County of Riverside and the City partnered on the Building Forward Grant Round 1 application for the Lake Elsinore Library Relocation Project. The Building Forward Grant Program is the single largest investment in California's libraries in over 20 years.

The State Library received 275 applications for funding in Round 1 and conducted a deliberate and rigorous review process, including review by an independent advisory panel of experts and opportunities for applicants to provide clarifying information. On September 12, 2022, the County was notified that our application was not accepted for Round 1 Phase 1 funding but remained under consideration for Phase Two. On October 11, 2022, the County was notified that the Building Forward Round 1 Phase Two application submitted for the project at Lake Elsinore Library was not selected for funding.

Library Grant

In mid-March 2023, the State Library released the Building Forward Round 2 Library Infrastructure Grant Guidelines. On May 17, 2023, City Staff partnered with the County of Riverside to apply for Building Forward Round 2 for the Lake Elsinore Library Relocation Project and applied for funding for \$10 million.

On October 9, 2023, the California State Library awarded the City of Lake Elsinore the Building Forward Round 2 Grant for building a new 10,000-square-foot two-story Library. The City was awarded \$9,999,447. The State Library has also reviewed and approved our request for a 75% reduction in the required local match contribution for the project. Matching funds of \$2,499,862 are required, with the City contributing \$1,499,862 and the County contributing \$1,000,000.

In this round, more than \$172 million was awarded to 34 local libraries to address critical maintenance needs, improve energy efficiency and sustainability, and expand digital and physical access in 29 cities across 18 counties. Seven new library buildings will be constructed, 27 will make energy efficiency upgrades, seven will expand or redesign spaces for public programming, and 12 will repair critical roof, foundation, or exterior building issues.

Discussion

Altha Merrifield Memorial Library, established in 1989, attracts an average of over 5,800 monthly visitors and organizes 87 educational and social programs annually. Despite being a vital institution in this disadvantaged community, the Library's crucial structural and maintenance issues discourage residents from fully utilizing its resources. The current facility spans 6,100 square feet and features a detached all-purpose meeting room closed to the public pending mold assessments. However, the existing building fails to meet ADA standards, lacks a building-wide sprinkler system, and requires immediate repairs such as roof and sewer replacement, addressing ongoing flooding, repairing interior concrete structural slabs, fixing unsupported ceiling tiles, updating the HVAC system, upgrading electrical components, and improving lighting energy efficiency. The unsafe conditions associated with these issues pose a risk of closure by the City's Building Official and Structural Engineer.

The City and Riverside County Library System (RCLS) have spent several years discussing plans for the current Library, and due to the critical infrastructure deficiencies and maintenance, it was determined that the best course of action would be to construct a new Library. The newly constructed 10,000 SQFT Library will include ADA-compliant accessibility throughout the entire interior and exterior of the building. Energy-efficient lighting and air-conditioning units will be installed. Seismic bracing will be included on all bookshelves to mitigate tipping risks. In addition to the main Library area, the Library will include one community meeting room, two study rooms, a children's area, a teen area, and a public work room with individual workstations. The new Library will provide the opportunity for signature architecture that reflects and celebrates the role of RCLS in the community and will have a unique design that highlights the City's history and residents. The new structure will be spacious, inviting, efficient, sustainable, flexible, adaptable, and, most importantly, free of critical maintenance needs.

Library Grant

The next step is to Adopt a resolution of the City of Lake Elsinore authorizing the grant application, acceptance, and execution of the grant funds from the State of California.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact for the City of Lake Elsinore is the required 25% local matching funds. This amount will be split between the City and the County of Riverside. The City's portion of \$1,499,862 is budgeted in the 2023-24 to 2027-28 Capital Improvement Program budget.

Attachments

Attachment 1 - Resolution