THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: March 14, 2023

Subject: Support resolution for a grant awarded to the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization to prepare a feasibility study for the Swannanoa River Greenway corridor.

Staff Resource(s): Ken Putnam, PE, Transportation Department DIrector
Lucy Crown, AICP, Transportation Planning Division Manager

Action Requested: Adoption of a resolution supporting a grant awarded to the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization from the North Carolina Department of Transportation to prepare a feasibility study for the Swannanoa River Greenway corridor.

Background:

- The French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) was recently awarded a $72,100 grant to prepare a feasibility study for a future section of the Swannanoa Greenway from the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) through its "Paved Trails and Sidewalks Feasibility Study" Grant Program.
- Although the grant was previously awarded, the NCDOT has asked the FBRMPO to obtain a resolution of support from the Local Government Agency in which the study will be located prior to proceeding with the study.
- This action will fulfill that request.
- The study will be managed and administered by the FBRMPO and does not require any City funding.
- Throughout study development, staff in the City's Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Public Works departments may be asked to attend a limited number of meetings.
- The Swannanoa River Greenway corridor is 7.5 miles long and spans from the Amboy Road / Meadow Road intersection to the Azalea Road / Tunnel Road intersection.
- It is the top priority greenway project in the GAP Plan.
- Two feasibility studies were completed in 2020 to study the corridor from Biltmore Avenue to the Azalea / Tunnel intersection.
- The City is currently preparing for the construction of a section of the corridor from the Glendale / Thompson intersection to the Bleachery Road / Swannanoa River Road intersection.
- Construction of this project is anticipated to begin in fall 2023 and is funded with General Obligation Bond funds and Tourism Product Development Funds.
- The study that FBRMPO has planned will focus on the section along Meadow Road between Short McDowell and Swannanoa River Road, and includes the intersection of Biltmore Avenue.
- Since this area has many constraints, the feasibility study will examine route alternatives, develop cost estimates, and make recommendations for use by both the City and NCDOT in developing designs for the Swannanoa River Greenway, as well as for future improvements to Swannanoa River Road, Meadow Road, and their intersection with Biltmore Avenue.

Council Goal(s):

- Improve / Expand Core Services

Committee(s): N/A

Pro(s):

- The feasibility study will be managed by the FBRMPO.
- No funds from the City are required.
- Findings from the study will be beneficial to the City in planning for the design and future implementation of the Swannanoa Greenway.

Con(s):

- A limited amount of staff time will likely be required to attend occasional meetings and review materials related to the FBRMPO's study.

Fiscal Impact:

- This action requires no City resources and will have no immediate fiscal impact.
- Any future sections of the greenway corridor will be planned and funded through the City's Capital Improvement Plan process.

Suggested Motion:

- Adopt a resolution supporting a grant awarded to the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization from the N.C. Department of Transportation to prepare a feasibility study for the Swannanoa River Greenway corridor.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 23-_____

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A GRANT AWARDED TO THE FRENCH BROAD RIVER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FROM THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO PREPARE A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE SWANNANOA RIVER GREENWAY CORRIDOR

WHEREAS, the NCDOT has developed a new discretionary grant program called the Paved Trails and Sidewalks Feasibility Study Grant Program for the purpose of helping communities move from conceptual planning to programming/implementation by providing funding for conducting feasibility studies; and

WHEREAS, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization (FBRMPO) applied for and was awarded funding to prepare a feasibility study where the planned Swannanoa River Greenway is to be located; and

WHEREAS, the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization requests the City of Asheville City Council adopt a resolution supporting their work to develop the feasibility study; and

WHEREAS, the Swannanoa River Greenway is one of the highest priority greenways in the City's adopted Greenway, ADA Transition Plan, and Pedestrian Plans (GAP Plans); and

WHEREAS, no funding or significant staffing resources are required from the City of Asheville for the FBRMPO to proceed with the feasibility study;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE THAT:

The City Council hereby adopts a resolution supporting a grant awarded to the French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization from the N.C. Department of Transportation to prepare a feasibility study for the Swannanoa River Greenway corridor.

Read, approved and adopted this 14th day of March, 2023.

_____ _____

City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney