THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Staff Report

Council Meeting Date: May 24, 2022

Subject: Tourism Product Development Fund Grant Request 2022

Staff Resource(s): Jade Dundas, Capital Projects Director and Chris Corl, CREF Director

Action Requested: Adoption of resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) grants and receive awarded funds up to the amount of $6,867,000 for the following capital projects: 1) Municipal Golf Course, 2) Swannanoa Greenway, 3) WNC Nature Center Farm and Butterfly Experience, and 4) Coxe Avenue Green Street.

Background:

- The Buncombe County Tourism Authority provides grants for projects that support tourism in Buncombe County.
- This is an excellent source of funding to supplement municipal projects.
- The City has a developed list of capital projects, many of which not only improve the quality of life for residents but they also support tourism and thus are eligible for TPDF funding.
- The following four projects have been identified as candidates for this year's funding request and are listed in priority order.

1. **Asheville Municipal Golf Course Improvements - $1,000,000 requested**
   - Revitalization of a historic Donald Ross designed golf course
   - First integrated golf course in the south which hosts the longest running Black owned/operated professional tournament in the Country
   - Improvements needed include stormwater infrastructure, water collection, tee box upgrades, green and sand trap improvements
   - Improvements will help to restore the original course design and will include historic/educational markers.

2. **Swannanoa Greenway Phase One - $2,300,000 requested**
   - First phase of a 7.5 mile greenway that will connect with the Wilma Dykeman (RADTIP) greenway
   - This project is nearly shovel ready. The funds will be used to make up a funding gap.
   - If awarded, the TDA funds will allow the City to complete the whole project on one timeline, rather than breaking it into two projects in order to wait for more funds.
   - This section of greenway will connect the intersections of Glendale Ave and Thompson St. to the existing greenway at Bleachery Rd.
   - The Swannanoa River Greenway is an important greenway for our City; but also the greenway plans for the County, the region and the state.

3. **WNC Nature Center Gateway to the Southern Appalachians Enhancement - $567,000**
   - This exhibit will help to improve the gateway experience at the Nature Center and continues the renewal of the facility.
   - Improvements will help to develop space that will accommodate large events and gatherings. This will help this facility to become more marketable as a regional attraction.

- Previous improvements to the facility, which have been funded in part, using TPDF funding have resulted in immediate and sustained increases in attendance.

4. **Coxe Avenue Green Street**
    - This is the full infrastructure reconstruction of Coxe Ave from north of the Transit Center to where Coxe Ave meets Southside Ave.
    - The project will support public art, entertainment, and local businesses.
    - Pedestrian and bicycle safety are also important considerations for this corridor and will be incorporated into the design and construction.
    - Infrastructure improvements are also a key piece of this project. While replacing and restoring deteriorated infrastructure is necessary, modern green infrastructure solutions will also be included, making this project a show piece.
    - Additions to the African American Heritage trail are also planned for this project.

Vendor Outreach Efforts:
- This is a request for grant funding. Although outreach is not applicable for the funding request, efforts will be made to be inclusive in the design and construction of these projects.

Council Goal(s):
- Equitable and Diverse Community
- A well-planned and livable community
- A clean and healthy environment
- A thriving local economy

Committee(s):
- N/A

Pro(s):
- The use of grant funds allows the City to complete more projects with its limited resources
- These funds help the City to complete some much needed projects
- These funds utilize a source of revenue that is generated from the hotel and occupancy tax which is only available to the City of Asheville through this program.

Con(s):
- Focusing the funding request on these projects prevents other projects from receiving funding

Fiscal Impact:
- TPDF grants require one-for-one matching funds be provided by the City in order to qualify for grant awards.
- This requirement is met for the individual projects in the following way:
    - Municipal Golf Course - funding match is included in the Proposed FY23 Capital Budget
    - Swannanoa River Greenway - matched with currently budgeted General Obligation Bond (GO) funds
    - WNC Nature Center - matched with a combination of City capital funds that are already budgeted and funds from friends of the Nature Center
    - Coxe Avenue Green Street - matched with a combination of capital funds that are already planned and MPO funding

Suggested Motion:
- Motion to adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to apply for Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) grants and receive awarded funds up to the amount of $6,867,000 for the following capital projects: 1) Municipal Golf Course, 2) Swannanoa Greenway, 3) WNC Nature Center Farm and Butterfly Experience, and 4) Coxe Avenue Green Street.

Attachment(s)

- Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. 22-_____

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO APPLY FOR TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FUND (TPDF) GRANTS AND RECEIVE AWARDED FUNDS UP TO THE AMOUNT OF $6,867,000 FOR THE FOLLOWING CAPITAL PROJECTS: 1) MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE, 2) SWANNANOA GREENWAY, 3) WNC NATURE CENTER FARM AND BUTTERFLY EXPERIENCE, AND 4) COXE AVENUE GREEN STREET.

WHEREAS, the City of Asheville has authority pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A -17.1 to apply for and receive grants, and to enter into contracts for the administration of said grants; and

WHEREAS, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Administers the Tourism Product Development Fund grant program in Buncombe County and the City of Asheville is an eligible candidate of TPDF grant funding; and

WHEREAS, four capital projects meeting the eligibility requirements for this funding source have been identified and the City is eligible to apply for $6,867,000; and

WHEREAS, the City requires City Council authorization to receive grant funds in the event that they are awarded;

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

The City Manager is hereby authorized to apply for Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) grants and receive awarded funds up to the amount of $6,867,000 for the following capital projects: 1) Municipal Golf Course, 2) Swannanoa Greenway, 3) WNC Nature Center Farm and Butterfly Experience, and 4) Coxe Avenue Green Street.

Read, approved and adopted this the 24th day of May, 2022.

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City Clerk Mayor

Approved as to form:

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City Attorney