

COLORADO SPRINGS PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

TOPS Working Committee

Date: August 3rd, 2022

Item Name: Request for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$275,000 for master and management planning and implementation at the consolidated Blodgett/Pikeview Buffer Open Space

Summary:

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department staff has developed a request for a supplemental appropriation of 2022 TOPS Open Space category funds for the Blodgett and Pikeview Buffer Open Space properties (hereinafter referred to as “Blodgett Open Space”) master and management plan. The 2022 TOPS budget was included within the City Budget and was approved in December of 2021 by City Council. The Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan supplemental appropriation of \$275,000 will be requested out of the current TOPS fund balance which has an estimated balance of \$5,772,815. This is the first presentation to the TOPS Working Committee. The TOPS Working Committee will consider the request for a supplemental appropriation for the Blodgett Open Space Master and Management Plan at its September meeting.

Background:

The TOPS Program acquired the initial 167 acres of Blodgett Open Space, on the northwest side of Colorado Springs, in the Spring of 2001. In 2003, a new master plan was developed for the purpose of providing public access, resource inventory, wildlife habitat, trail development, and resource conservation.

In 2018, the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services acquired 64 acres on the southern boundary of the existing Blodgett Open Space. In the following year, staff conducted an interim master plan for sustainable public access, public use, wildlife conservation and land management of the 64 acres. The Blodgett Open Space Interim Master Plan provided the addition of a 15-vehicle space trailhead, known as the South Blodgett Trailhead, the construction of approximately 800 linear feet of new trail for improved trail connections to the original open space, and the adoption of the existing access roads into the trail system for public use.

In the fall of 2020 and spring of 2021, the TOPS Program acquired an additional 153 acres (in two phases) adjacent to and further south of Blodgett Open Space. This portion of the open space, referred to as the “Pikeview Buffer” abuts the Oak Valley neighborhood to the east, and the Pikeview Quarry to the west and has historically been used socially for hiking, biking, enjoying wildlife and dog walking.

With the recent acquisitions, the significant need and opportunity has grown for the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Department to conduct a new master and management plan for this entire area of open space. The new master and management plan allows the Department to conduct a holistic public process for the 384-acre open space. This will include planning for future conservation and development of the entirety of the Blodgett Open Space, balancing public access and use with the preservation and conservation of the natural and

cultural resources as well as development and implementation of a strategic land management plan. The new master and management plan will provide guidance over the next 10-15 years.

The need for an updated Blodgett Open Space master and management plan was identified over the last few years through dialog with the Friends of Peregrine Parks and Open Spaces, adjacent neighbors, and community members. During consideration of the 2023 TOPS CIP budget development presentations, several of the TOPS Working Committee and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services board members expressed their support for a new master plan for Blodgett Open Space.

In accordance with the TOPS Ordinance, the TOPS Working Committee is responsible for recommending projects for the expenditure of TOPS funds. The supplemental appropriation request for the master and management plan is for \$275,000 from the TOPS fund balance, currently estimated at \$5,772,815.

The supplemental appropriation request is scheduled for presentation to the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Advisory Board on August 11th, 2022. The item will then be considered for action and approval by the TOPS Working Committee on September 7th, 2022, and the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Advisory Board on September 8th, 2022.

The supplemental appropriation request is anticipated to be presented at a City Council Budget Committee hearing on September 13th, 2022, a City Council Work Session on September 26th, 2022, with a first and second reading on October 11th, 2022, and October 25th, 2022, respectively.

Stakeholder process:

The TOPS Working Committee meetings and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meetings provide opportunity for public comment on the request for a supplemental appropriation from 2022 TOPS funds.

Financial Implications:

If approved, this supplemental appropriation will reduce the TOPS fund balance of approximately \$5,772,815 by \$275,000 leaving a remaining estimated fund balance of \$5,497,815. Of the \$275,000 requested, approximately \$200,000 is anticipated for the planning process and the remainder of the funds would be expended on implementation of initial master and management plan recommendations.

Alternative:

This item is for presentation only.

Recommendation:

Staff will recommend approval of the request for a supplemental appropriation in the amount of \$275,000 for the Blodgett Open Space master and management planning process and implementation when this item is presented for action in September.

Proposed Motion:

This item is for presentation only.