

Where Are We on the Parkway?
Sacramento County

\$260,875.00

This proposal is to consider the allocation for a grant to the American River Parkway Foundation (Foundation) for improvements to public access and interpretation in Sacramento County.

LOCATION

The American River Parkway (Parkway) is a 4,800-acre regional park within the County of Sacramento Regional Parks (Regional Parks) system. It runs along both sides of the lower American River from Nimbus Dam to the confluence with the Sacramento River. The Parkway is classified into more than 30 vegetation types ranging from developed recreation areas to mature cottonwood forests. Millions of recreational users per year, 40 species of fish, hundreds of plant species, and 220 species of mammals currently use the Parkway.

A 23-mile paved bike trail meanders through the Parkway, crossing the American River at various points and passing by regional destinations within the Parkway such as the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, Soil Born Farms, and Camp Pollock. Currently, the paved bike trail does not provide any directional signage to help orient Parkway visitors to where they are on the Parkway, to help identify how they can find Parkway destinations, or to help visitors access streets and neighborhoods outside the Parkway.

The Foundation also oversees the Parkway's Adopt-A-Mile program, a trail stewardship program that completes clean-up, trail maintenance, weed removal, and reports any issues on the mile, and has "Adopt a Mile" signs on every mile of the paved bike trail.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2018 the Foundation commissioned a survey entitled "Perceptions of the Parkway." This survey found that the Parkway improves the quality of life for people in the region and that there is a need for improved signage to designate access. Access to the Parkway was stated as a barrier due to lack of knowledge of developed recreation areas and how to access the Parkway at specified locations. The greatest need is for wayfinding signs that mark locations along the river and to neighborhoods and streets. Respondents stated that if signage was apparent, they would feel safer on the trail and know where they are in case of an accident or emergency.

In response to the survey findings, the Foundation proposes to add new signage at every mile of the paved bike trail using the existing Adopt-A-Mile signposts. New signage would show a map of the Parkway, offer directional arrows with distance to access points and include recognition of the Adopt-A-Mile partner. The specific design that will be used is utilized in parks across the nation and will soon be used in the City of Folsom, providing consistency from one jurisdiction to the next.

The signage will not only bring directional awareness of the Parkway but will also highlight historical and interpretive sites. The Foundation is currently working with the National Parks Service to determine historical signage needs on the Parkway.

The American River Parkway Plan also recognizes various forms of signage and provides parameters for these structures. For example, it specifies that signage should blend in with the natural environment while being strategically located along trails and near access points so they can be easily seen. Structures should not visually impact the enjoyment and experience of the Parkway and should not include commercial advertising or lighting.

The Foundation has been working with Regional Parks to select the correct sign and will seek approval from the American River Parkway Advisory Committee before bringing the project to the Recreation and Parks Commission for final approval.

Once signage is installed, Foundation staff and volunteers, as well as Regional Parks maintenance staff, will work together to ensure the signs are maintained for at least 25 years.

Work will include sign design, sign approval by Regional Parks' American River Parkway Advisory Committee and Regional Parks' Recreation and Parks Commission, sign fabrication, removal of old signs, installation of new signs, and media coverage/outreach advertising the new signs to user groups and local schools.

PROJECT FUNDING

Project Task	WCB	Non-WCB Funds*	Total Cost
Task 1 – Design and Approvals	\$13,750	\$25,000	\$38,750
Task 2 – Fabrication and Installation	\$241,500	\$10,000	\$251,500
Task 3 – Outreach	\$5,625	\$10,000	\$15,625
Total	\$260,875	\$45,000	\$305,875

Project costs will be for design, Regional Parks approvals, sign fabrication and installation, removal of old signs, and social media outreach.

*Non WCB funds include in-kind contributions from the Foundation and Regional Parks, and cash contributions from Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District and the City of Sacramento.

CONSISTENCY WITH AMERICAN RIVER PARKWAY PLAN

In accordance with Public Resources Code section 5845.5, the American River Parkway Compliance Analysis will be completed for the project at the November 2019 Recreation and Parks Commission meeting.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Advisory Committee of the Lower American River Conservancy Program recommend augmenting the requested amount up to \$10,000

and funding approval specify that the Foundation conduct stakeholder outreach, evaluate specific sign locations, and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; additionally, recommend that WCB staff present this project to the Wildlife Conservation Board for approval at a 2020 Board meeting.