



Legislation Text

File #: 20-048, **Version:** 2

Ordinance No. 20-15 Amending Ordinance No. 19-87 (2020 Appropriation Ordinance) for a Supplemental Appropriation to the Trails, Open Space and Parks Fund in the Amount of \$241,300 for Acquisition of Approximately 40 Acres of Property for the Purpose of Public Open Space and Trails

Presenter:

Britt Haley, TOPS Program Manager, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department

Summary:

Acquisition of approximately 40 acres from Colorado Springs Utilities to help connect the Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park to the Corral Bluffs Open Space.

Background:

One of the identified priorities of the Trails, Open Space and Parks (TOPS) Working Committee has been to focus on candidate open space parcels that would link the Corral Bluffs Open Space to the Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park. Colorado Springs Utilities (Utilities) has begun the process to dispose of properties it acquired in the early 2000s for a reservoir project but which are no longer needed by Utilities for that purpose. This proposal involves an acquisition for appraised value of one additional property to make this vital connection and secure habitat and open space conservation across this remarkable landscape.

In October 2019, the TOPS Working Committee and the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board unanimously considered and recommended acquisition of twelve (12) properties located between the Corral Bluffs Open Space and Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park which were being disposed of by Utilities for their fair market value. An additional property, which was subject to a right of first refusal in the prior owner has become available for purchase. This prior property owner chose to accept an offer made by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (Parks) to purchase their right of first refusal and to incentivize them to remove personal property located on the parcel.

This is a 40 acre parcel identified by tax schedule number 53-000-00-322. It is improved with a large red metal barn. It also has some of the prior owner's personal property on site. While the barn is useful, the personal property would need to be removed at the cost of Parks if the prior owner failed to remove it. Upon learning that the prior owner intended to exercise his right of first refusal to purchase the property from Utilities, Parks staff offered him \$5,000 to purchase a right of first refusal for Parks. Parks staff also made an alternative offer to buy out the right of first refusal and to require the prior owner to remove the personal property for \$25,000. This offer was made based on a cost estimate to remove the personal property and the value of the right of first refusal to Parks. Originally, the owner preferred the offer to sell a right of first refusal in that property to Parks. However, ultimately he chose to accept the buyout offer instead. The parcel appraised for \$216,300. The TOPS program would also pay \$25,000 making the total acquisition cost for this parcel \$241,300.

Previous Council Action:

On November 12, 2019, City Council voted to authorize Utilities to transfer control of surplus Jimmy Camp Creek Reservoir properties to Parks via Intra-City Transfer at appraised value. This authorization is found in Resolution 124-19.

Financial Implications:

Acquisition of the 40 acres will require funding of \$241,300 from the TOPS Open Space Category.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

At its January 8, 2020 meeting, the TOPS Working Committee voted to unanimously recommend acquisition of this parcel. At the January 9, 2020 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meeting, the Board voted to unanimously recommend acquisition of this parcel.

Stakeholder Process:

The TOPS Working Committee meetings and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Advisory Board meetings provide opportunities for public comment. In addition, TOPS staff worked with the Corral Bluffs Alliance, the friends group associated with the Corral Bluffs Open Space to evaluate these potential acquisitions. The Corral Bluffs Alliance provided a letter of support for this project including the property under consideration today.

Alternatives:

Do not approve the requested Supplemental Appropriation for this property.

Proposed Motion:

A motion to recommend acquisition of an additional 40 acres currently owned by Colorado Springs Utilities for a total cost of \$241,300 to help link the Corral Bluffs Open Space to the Jimmy Camp Creek Regional Park.

A Supplemental Appropriation to the Trails, Open Space and Parks Fund in the Amount of \$241,300 for Acquisition of Approximately 40 Acres of Property for the Purpose of Public Open Space and Trails