

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Meg Williamson, Assistant to the City Manager
SUBJECT: Salinas River Corridor Grant Authorization
DATE: June 6, 2006

Needs: For the City Council to consider a Grant Application for the potential acquisition and restoration of 260 acres along the Salinas River corridor.

Facts:

1. The General Plan established a need to “Create and adopt a Salinas River Corridor Plan to address such issues as recreation, conservation, use, public access, and educational outreach”.
2. Efforts continue on the preparation and completion of the Salinas River Corridor Plan, with a draft concept plan anticipated in the fall of this year.
3. Of the approximate 4 miles of river corridor that runs through the City, over half is in private ownership.
4. Recently, an opportunity to consider a substantial conservation and restoration project has presented itself as a result of exploratory talks between a Private Property owner and The Trust for Public Land.
5. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national non-profit land conservation organization founded to acquire land for public use. The TPL works closely with environmental organizations, community groups, public agencies, and businesses to mobilize support for conservation properties. The TPL’s approach is to act as a third party in real estate transactions, assisting in the completion of appraisals, purchase agreements and fund raising.
6. The TPL does not own or manage land over the long term, and therefore partners with a public agency willing and able to assume ownership of the land.
7. The TPL only works with willing sellers - they are continuing discussions with the owners of 260 acres of property that lies mainly within the channel and floodway of the river corridor, stretching for approximately 1.5 miles in the southern portion of the City (see attached map).
8. Key funding components of a TPL acquisition are public agency grants. The TPL has approached the City, requesting that we partner with them to pursue Grant funding for a land acquisition should they be successful in negotiating a purchase agreement for this 260-acre property.
9. The State Water Resources Control Board has approximately \$51 million in funding available within its Integrated Watershed Management Program

(Proposition 40 funds) to focus on water quality improvement projects. Land acquisition and restoration would qualify for this program.

10. Filing a grant application with the State Water Board would not be binding in any way on the property owner or the City of Paso Robles. The filing will, however, retain the opportunity to secure \$4 million in funding should the TPL reach an agreement for purchase that is acceptable to the land owners.
11. The deadline for filing applications with the State Water Board is June 9, 2006, and requires formal authorization by the City Council. It is unknown when an opportunity to file for such a significant amount of funding might present itself again.
12. The City has partnered with non-profit groups in the past to apply for State funding. In December 2004, the City Council authorized partnering with the Upper Salinas Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (RCD) to obtain a grant that could be used to enhance public access to and education about the river. The River Parkway Project is currently under construction on 1.5 miles of public land adjacent to the river, between Larry Moore Park and ending just north of the Niblick Bridge. The RCD would be an additional partner to the TPL and City in this State Water Boards grant.

Analysis
and
Conclusion:

The potential transfer of this 260-acre parcel from private to public ownership would present community opportunities consistent with General Plan policies on recreation/conservation, the preliminary River Corridor Plan vision, Storm Water Management Plan and the City's Integrated Water Resources Plan (under development). Those opportunities include conservation of important vistas and habitat, creation of recreation potential, and implementation of water quality improvement strategies.

Participation in this grant is not intended to presume the outcome of the on-going discussions between TPL and the private property owner. Those discussions will continue at their own pace, with hope that a mutually beneficial agreement may ultimately be reached. In the meantime, the opportunity for a significant amount of grant funding for an acquisition and restoration "project" has been presented.

Filing for Grant funding keeps the door open to implement water quality improvements along a 1 ½ mile stretch of the river corridor at the southern end of the city. City Council support is needed for the grant to be successful. Once completed, the project could be used as a model for additional funding opportunities.

Policy
Reference:

General Plan (Adopted 2003)
City Council Goals for Fiscal Years 2004-2007 (Adopted 2/18/03)
Council direction to proceed with preparation of River Corridor Plan (2005)

Fiscal Impact: The purchase price for the 260-acres must be confirmed through a formal appraisal and agreed upon through a purchase agreement, but is expected to exceed \$6 million. The Grant application proposed to be filed with the State Water Board is for \$4 million. The required “match” for that amount by the public agency (City) would be \$1 million. The State will allow matching funds to be assembled through other public resource grants (other than State Funds). The TPL has requested/offered to work with the City to pursue matching funds through Federal programs such as the Transportation Enhancement (TE) program. The City’s match can also be offset through provision of “in-kind” staff time to implement the project.

If the City is successful in competing for the State Resources Grant, there will be an opportunity to evaluate the funding opportunities and budgetary impacts before accepting the grant. Authorizing the grant filing will commit staff resources to project development over the coming weeks and months.

- Options:
- a) For the City Council to adopt the attached resolution 06-XXX authorizing the City’s filing of a Grant Application with the State Water Resources Control Board for \$4 million in funding to acquire 260-acres of land and implement associated restoration enhancements aimed at water quality improvements along the Salinas River corridor.
 - b) Amend, modify, or reject the forgoing options.

Attachments:

1. Resolution 06-XXX authorizing grant application with State Water Resources Control Board
2. Property Location Map (Exhibit A to Resolution)
3. Information on Trust for Public Land

RESOLUTION NO. 06-XXX

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
AUTHORIZING A GRANT APPLICATION WITH THE STATE WATER RESOURCES
CONTROL BOARD FOR ACQUISITION AND RESTORATION OF 260-ACRES OF
LAND ALONG THE SALINAS RIVER CORRIDOR

WHEREAS, the General Plan established a need to “Create and adopt a Salinas River Corridor Plan to address such issues as recreation, conservation, use, public access, and educational outreach” and

WHEREAS, efforts continue on the preparation and completion of the Salinas River Corridor Plan with a draft concept plan anticipated in the fall 2006; and

WHEREAS, of the approximate 4 miles of river corridor that runs through the City, over half is in private ownership; and

WHEREAS, recently an opportunity to consider a substantial conservation and restoration project has presented itself as a result of exploratory talks between a Private Property owner and the Trust for Public Land (TPL); and

WHEREAS, the subject property consists of 260 acres of property that lies mainly within the channel and floodway of the river corridor, stretching for approximately 1.5 miles in the southern portion of the City as shown in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the potential transfer of this 260-acre parcel from private to public ownership would present community opportunities consistent with General Plan policies on recreation/conservation, the preliminary River Corridor Plan vision, Storm Water Management Plan and the City’s Integrated Water Resources Plan (under development); and

WHEREAS, the TPL does not own or manage land over the long term, and therefore partners with a public agency willing and able to assume ownership of the land; and

WHEREAS, the TPL has requested that the City partner with them to file an application with the State Water Resources Control Board for the acquisition and restoration of the subject 260-acre property; and

WHEREAS, the filing deadline for an application with the State Water Resources Control Board is June 9, 2006.

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles, to authorize the filing of a Grant Application with the State Water Resources Control

Board for \$4 million in funding to acquire 260-acres of land and implement associated restoration enhancements aimed at water quality improvements along the Salinas River Corridor.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, to authorize city staff resources to work on project development related to the application over the coming weeks and months.

ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles at a regular meeting of said Council held on the 6th day of June 2006 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

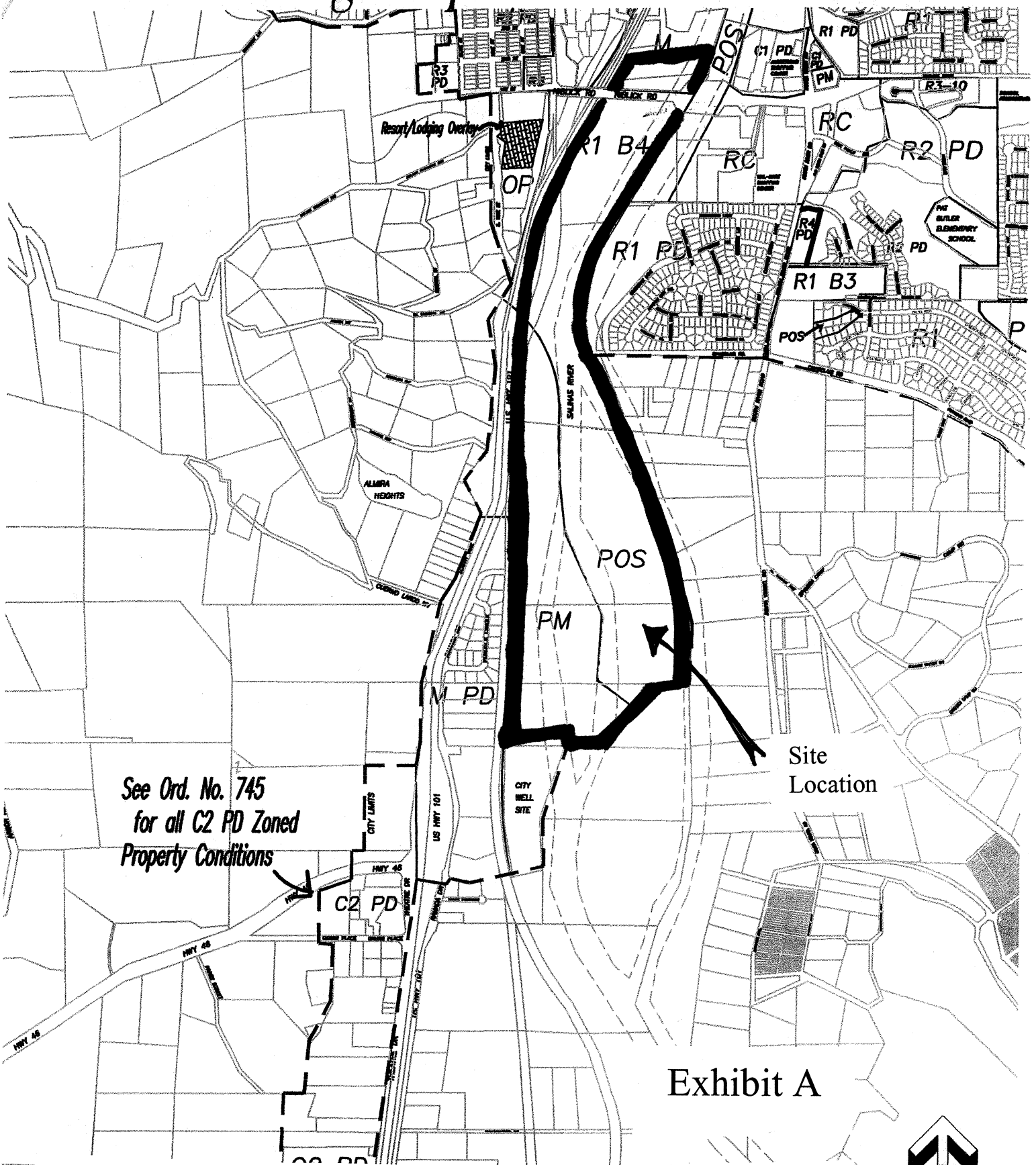
ABSENT:

Frank R. Mecham, Mayor

ATTEST:

Deborah Robinson, Deputy City Clerk

Zoning Map for Subarea 10



See Ord. No. 745
for all C2 PD Zoned
Property Conditions

Site
Location

Exhibit A

Location Map – Subject of Grant Application

12-6



Why do communities seek TPL's help?

There are many reasons to set aside open space from development: to create parks and provide recreation opportunities, guide growth, preserve local character, safeguard water supplies, protect wildlife, and conserve other important natural resources. But real estate transactions are rarely simple. TPL bridges the needs of landowners seeking to protect a special property and those of government agencies that acquire land for public benefit. Our depth of experience in land transactions, and the tools and techniques we develop and share, make TPL a powerful partner in any effort to conserve land for people.

What kinds of land does TPL acquire?

TPL projects range from small city lots for a playground, community park, or garden to hundreds or even thousands of acres for addition to a national park or forest.

Because TPL does not own or manage land over the long term, there must be a government agency or organization willing and able to assume ownership of the land.

In some instances, TPL may help landowners place conservation easements on their property. In such cases, the landowners continue to hold title to their property but forgo development rights.

What services does TPL provide?

"Greenprinting" is TPL's proactive approach to conservation. Through greenprinting, TPL can:

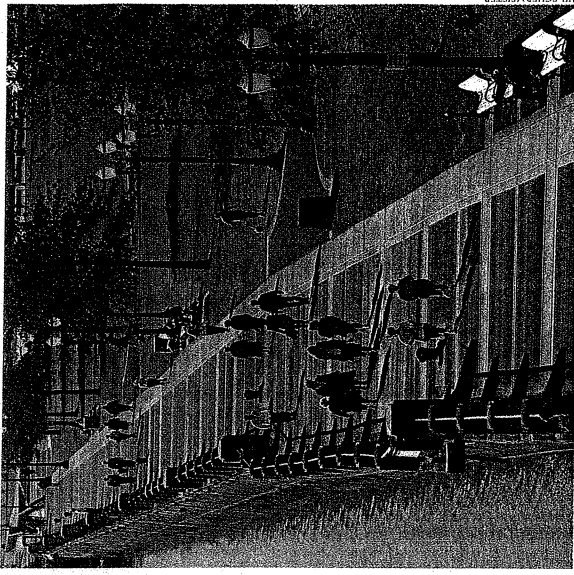
What is the Trust for Public Land?

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national nonprofit land conservation organization founded to acquire land for public use. We believe that connecting people to land through parks, recreation areas, working lands, and natural open spaces is key to livable communities, a healthy environment, and overall quality of life.

TPL was founded in 1972 as a new kind of land-saving organization: entrepreneurial, business-oriented, and able to move quickly to protect land in the marketplace.

TPL's experts in the law, finance, real estate, fundraising, government, and public relations work nationwide to help citizens and government agencies identify lands they wish to see protected and then help them accomplish their land-saving goals.

TPL has safeguarded more than a million acres of natural, scenic, and historic lands nationwide, with a fair market value of over \$1 billion.



Waterfront park in Portland, Oregon. TPL is dedicated to providing public parks, greenways, and open spaces nationwide.

"The Trust for Public Land understands our challenge. They're trying to raise money, trying to get things done. And there is so much they bring to the table that we at the local level don't have."

Charles Jordan
Director of Parks and Recreation
City of Portland, Oregon

"We struggled to preserve our 1,700-acre ranch but faced the prospect of subdividing it. TPL worked to secure the funds that made a public purchase possible. Their work will allow future generations to enjoy the land as we have."

Dr. Hughes Andrus, M.D.
Big Sur, California