



## **CITY OF MENIFEE**

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SUBJECT: Resolution to Approve the Application for Grant Funds for the Urban Greening Program for Sun City Park

MEETING DATE: December 7, 2022

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Mariana Mitchell, Community Services Manager

REVIEWED BY: Jonathan Nicks, Community Services Director

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

1. Adopt Resolution authorizing the City of Menifee to approve the application for grant funds for the Urban Greening Program for Sun City Park; and
2. Approve and authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to execute all necessary agreements and other grant related documents thereof to the California Natural Resources Agency.

### **DISCUSSION**

The Sun City community has a history that spans decades before the incorporation of the City of Menifee. As a master planned retirement community built in the 1960's, Sun City has watched Menifee grow into the full service City it is today. Although many improvements have taken place involving the local infrastructure, few improvements relating to park and recreation amenities have occurred in this area. The opportunity to dedicate parkland and recreational amenities in Sun City surfaced as a need in the initial Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan initially adopted in 2016. Additionally, the need of a park in Sun City arose in the 2022 Strategic Visioning workshop with City Council and through community meetings pertaining to the current Parks Master Plan Update.

In late 2021, representatives from Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City reached out to City staff to discuss opportunities for the vacant 1.87 acres of land adjacent to the church facility. As discussions progressed, it became clear that the most beneficial use of the land would be a dedicated passive park for the local senior community should the City purchase the land from the church. The City obtained an appraisal of the market value of the vacant parcel in February 2022, however, due to other park capital projects moving forward at the time there was not enough

funding to allocate towards a recommendation to purchase the land. Not to be deterred, City staff began to seek opportunities for outside grant funding.

The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) issued a solicitation for project proposals for the Urban Greening Program in January 2022 and City staff identified a park in Sun City as the optimal project to apply for grant funds for the acquisition of the land adjacent to the Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City. With the grant focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing underserved communities, the Sun City Park project certainly met the criteria for the grant program. As an age restricted retirement community, Sun City was identified as a disadvantaged community with low-median income and a lack of accessibility to parkland within walking distance of the community. With many of the homes in Sun City lacking greenspace due to the prevalence of easier to maintain zero-scape and drought tolerant landscaping, the addition of a park with an abundance of plants and trees would create an area that reduces the heat island effect of the suburban neighborhood.

With the assistance of the Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City as the “willing seller”, the City submitted an Urban Greening Grant application in the amount of \$524,700 for the acquisition of land for the Sun City Park in March 2022. In August 2022, the City was notified by CNRA that the Sun City Park project was selected to move forward in the next phase of the selection process. Phase 2 would require an onsite visit and a presentation providing an overview of the project by City staff.

The site visit occurred on November 17, 2022 and involved City staff as well as representatives from the Senior Advisory Committee; Parks, Recreation, and Trails Commission; Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City; and CNRA. Aside from reviewing the proposed project of Sun City Park, CNRA staff informed City staff of the potential next steps for Phase 3, should the City be successful in this highly competitive process. With a tentative notification date of December 2022, it was recommended that the required resolution be brought forward for City Council consideration as soon as possible given the requirement to provide an approved resolution within 30 days of notification.

Although City staff is still awaiting notification of the grant application status, both Faith Lutheran Church of Sun City and City staff are hopeful for full or partial funding towards the land acquisition required to develop Sun City Park.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE**

Safe and Attractive Community

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. However, should the City be successful in the grant application process, the potential maximum funding is \$524,700 and would be presented to City Council for formal acceptance. Additionally, the City has already invested \$5,500 towards this project for the appraisal services completed.

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Resolution
2. Grant Application
3. Location Map & Conceptual Design