

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 04-355

DATE November 17, 2004

CD Various

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: USE OF EQUESTRIAN FACILITIES TRUST FUND TO MAINTAIN AND UPGRADE BRIDLE TRAILS ON PUBLIC LAND WITHIN THE CITY

K. Chan		J. Kolb	_____
* J. Combs		F. Mok	_____
H. Fujita		G. Stigile	_____



 General Manager

Approved _____ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board authorize Department staff to request the City Council to allocate \$55,000 for Recreation and Park use from within the Equestrian Facilities Trust Fund 212/ Department 88, Unreserved and Undesignated Account, into Account W201, within the same fund, entitled "Bridle Trail Maintenance and Upgrade," to pay for maintenance materials and salaries of three Special Program Assistants to maintain and upgrade existing bridle trails within the public lands in the City for fiscal years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006.

SUMMARY:

The Department of Recreation and Parks is responsible for the maintenance of public bridle trails on park land and public right-of-ways throughout the San Fernando Valley and Griffith Park. Hazardous conditions currently exist on this extensive network of trails. These conditions need to be addressed as well as routine trail maintenance and upgrades. It is proposed that funding for a part-time maintenance crew and maintenance supplies be allocated from the Equestrian Facilities Trust Fund, in absence of an allocated budget for trail maintenance and upgrades.

In 1973, the City of Los Angeles established an Equine License Fee which required all horse owners to pay a fee for horse keeping within the city limits. A committee was formed in 1986 to address the lack of maintenance of bridle trails in the public right of way. Representatives of the City Council, Department of Public Works, City Administrative Officer (CAO), Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA), and Recreation and Parks were assigned to the committee.

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As a result, the Equine Fee was developed into a special fund called the Equine Facilities Trust Fund. This fund allowed for the construction, acquisition, and maintenance of bridle trails in the public right of way. At the same time, it was determined by the committee that the Department of Recreation and Parks should be responsible for maintenance of all existing bridle trails in the public right of way. It was further determined that developers of new housing tracts in equestrian zoned communities should be required to provide equestrian trails as an amenity in the development area.

Three types of public bridle trails currently exist within the City of Los Angeles. These are the public right of way trails, park bridle trails, and public trails included in housing developments. In the San Fernando Valley alone, the Department of Recreation and Parks currently maintains 25 miles of bridle trails on public park land and an additional 14 miles of trails located in the public right of way. On a citywide basis, the Department maintains over 81 miles of bridle trails.

Public right of way trails usually are aligned near dedicated portions of public streets. They run through neighborhoods, along flood control channels, and even through undeveloped areas. Public park bridle trails are located in developed or undeveloped City parks or on property owned and operated by the Department of Recreation and Parks. As previously stated, the Department is responsible for maintaining bridle trails in both public right of way areas and on park land.

As of October 31, 2004, the total balance of the Equestrian Facilities Trust Fund was \$363,622. A portion of this total has already been encumbered for several bridle trail improvement projects throughout the City. These projects include new fencing and railings, master planning, sand, maintenance materials and supplies, and other related items.

Balance Breakdown

Total outstanding purchase orders	\$ 32,475
Total encumbered balance for projects	\$188,347
Total unencumbered balance available	\$142,799

Currently, the Department of Recreation and Parks does not have dedicated staff to adequately maintain existing bridle trails. The Department periodically relies on volunteers from the Equestrian Trails International (ETI) and other equestrian groups for maintenance of portions of some trails in the public right of way. The Department of Recreation and Parks is proposing an allocation of \$55,000 from the unencumbered balance of the Equine Facilities Trust Fund to support several part-time employees to maintain and upgrade bridle trails throughout the City. Supervision for this crew and equipment are not included in this allocation and will be provided by the Department.

The annual revenue generated from the equine license fee averages \$23,000. In 1986, the CAO and the CLA estimated that the cost to maintain a publicly dedicated bridle trail was \$1,000 per linear mile. Obviously, annual funding for equestrian trail maintenance will rapidly draw down the

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unencumbered balance of the equine license fee fund absent an increase in the revenue due to more licenses or higher fees or the identification of an alternate funding source. Should the Department successfully demonstrate that the crew dedicated to trail maintenance significantly improves the safety and conditions on existing bridle trails, a request to increase the Equine License Fee would be considered as a possible method to adequately fund routine bridle trail maintenance on an on-going annual basis from this account. At this time, only funding for the current and next fiscal year is requested, which can be covered by the unencumbered balance available as of October 31, 2004.

This report was prepared by Louis Loomis, Management Analyst II, Operations West.