



# City of Huntington Beach

**File #:** 19-1214

**MEETING DATE:** 12/16/2019

## REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

**SUBMITTED TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**SUBMITTED BY:** Oliver Chi, City Manager

**PREPARED BY:** Chris Slama, Director of Community Services

**Subject:**

**Authorize staff to submit the design elements for the Bluff Top Park Improvement Project to the State, including the Design Review Board approved wood lodge pole guardrail system**

**Statement of Issue:**

Through the efforts of Assembly Member Cottie-Petrie Norris, an appropriation of \$1.7 million in State funding has been made available to Huntington Beach for improvements to the Bluff Top Park area of the State Beach under the City's operation. A key component of the overall improvement project includes the replacement of the existing guardrail. Staff is requesting City Council acceptance of the design and materials for the new guardrail as recommended by the Design Review Board.

**Financial Impact:**

\$1.7 million for the project is being funded out of the current State budget. There are no matching fund obligations from the City.

**Recommended Action:**

Accept the approved recommendation of the Design Review Board to utilize a wood, lodge pole guardrail design as part of the Bluff Top Improvement Project.

**Alternative Action(s):**

Do not approve the recommended action and direct staff accordingly.

**Analysis:**

Through the efforts of Assembly Member Cottie-Petrie Norris, the City has been allocated \$1.7 million in State funds to make improvements to the Bluff Top Park portion of the State Beach under the City's operation. Proposed improvements to the area between the sandy beach and Pacific Coast Highway from 9<sup>th</sup> Street to just south of Seapoint Street include:

- Widening and resurfacing of asphalt path to improve access and safety (9<sup>th</sup> Street to Seapoint Street)
- Extension of concrete sidewalk from 11<sup>th</sup> Street to Goldenwest Street to improve

- conditions around parking meters and address deteriorated turf conditions
- Landscape and demarcation enhancements at path intersection nodes
- Replacement of guardrail along the length of the bluff top

The existing multi-use path is heavily used by the public and is an important amenity for walkers, joggers and cyclists - linking the main City beach with Huntington State Beach to the south and Bolsa Chica State Beach to the north. The two components of the project with the highest priority are the improvements to the multi-use path and the replacement of the guardrail. Increasing the width of the existing 10-foot wide path will improve traffic conditions and safety, and create a more enjoyable experience for all users. It will also provide better maneuverability for the service and safety vehicles using the path.

Furthermore, given that Bluff Top Park was developed in 1996, coupled with the harsh conditions of the marine environment, the railing along the bluff has had to be replaced three times to date. Each time, staff has looked at various designs and materials in effort to determine the most durable material and to minimize site impacts in the area.

When Bluff Top Park was created in 1996, the guardrail was constructed of galvanized steel pipe. The railing began to show signs of failure as early as 2000. At that time, a reinforced PVC pipe design was considered as a better option than steel since it was not susceptible to corrosion from the salt air. While rust and corrosion were not issues, the structural integrity of the plastic material presented challenges. The upper and lower rails were easily broken from people standing on them, and the support posts were less sturdy than galvanized steel. After years of repair and replacing broken sections, the railing was replaced in 2006, with hot-dipped galvanized steel (current railing). At that time, the railing design was modified by installing the railing in 8-foot sections. This helped to lower the cost of repairs since a single panel could be replaced as opposed to cutting and welding in new pipe.

The current guardrail has severe corrosion at several locations along the approximate 7,600 lineal foot span. Given the poor performance of the previous designs, staff recently explored different options. Materials considered included the current hot-dipped galvanized steel, industrial coated galvanized steel, and powder coated steel. Other designs considered were a post and cable design with steel braided cable and steel posts and a wood lodge pole design.

In looking at the pros and cons of each design and materials, staff is suggesting that the wood lodge pole design is the most suitable option (see Attachment 1). Wood has the least amount of negative impacts from the marine environment and can easily be repaired. Repairing or replacing sections of the rail does not require special fabrication, as with steel pipe options. Wood is also more cost effective. The approximate lineal foot cost of \$75 for purchase and installation for wood lodge pole is substantially less than the other options. The estimated cost for hot dipped galvanized steel ranges from \$160 to \$180 per lineal foot - depending upon the type of coating. The estimated cost for a post and cable design is approximately \$120 per lineal foot.

The wood lodge pole design has been used in recent park improvement projects. It was installed as the new perimeter fence around Bartlett Park, as barriers around the Senior Center in Central Park

parking lot, the Shipley Nature Center lot and the refurbished lot at the Park Bench Café - all are located in Central Park. Wood lodge pole was also utilized at Harriet M. Wieder Regional Park. That railing has been in place since 1996, when the park was originally developed, and remains in sturdy condition.

While the State funding for the project is a special appropriation and not a grant, it is still being administered by the State Parks Office of Grants and Local Services. As such, the City is required to proceed with the normal State grant protocol. On September 16, 2019, City Council passed a Resolution 2019-58 approving the application for the specified funding. Staff is currently working on the grant application, which is due to the State by January 1, 2020. Depending upon final cost estimates, additional funds beyond the \$1.7 million in State funding may be needed to complete the improvement project. In that case, staff would return to City Council and request approval to appropriate Park Development Impact Funds to offset the difference.

Since the project area is located within the Downtown Specific Plan, the design of the guardrail was subject to approval by the Design Review Board (DRB). The DRB unanimously approved the design and material of the wood lodge pole on November 14, 2019. While projects going before the DRB do not require direct public noticing, Community Services conducted a public input meeting at the November 13, 2019, Community Services Commission meeting. Notices of the proposed improvements were sent to residents and businesses within 1,000 feet of the project area and were posted in the local newspaper, the City's public bulletin board, as well as on the Community Services Department webpage. Only one public comment was received at the Commission meeting, and no public comments were received at the DRB meeting.

Based upon the information provided, staff is recommending that City Council concur with the recommendation by the Design Review Board, and approve the design and material for the guardrail as presented.

**Environmental Status:**

Staff has reviewed the subject request and determined it to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to HBZSC 245.08(F).

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

Enhance and maintain infrastructure

**Attachment(s):**

1. Proposed Wood Lodge Pole Design