



# **Grant from the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program (CBBEP) for Improvements to the Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge**

City Council Meeting  
November 14, 2023



# Background

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- The Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge is a well-known park with a 1.3-mile nature trail for observing & exploring the diverse, coastal ecosystem of the Oso Bay.
  - Parks & Recreation, in conjunction with the Grants Program, submitted a proposal to the CBBEP's Human Uses Team for necessary improvements to the Refuge.
  - The proposal included much needed improvements to the current asphalt trail & shoreline management to address erosion (southside of the site).
  - The proposal was approved by the Human Uses Team in August 2023.
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# Nature Trail



- It is proposed to resurface/convert the current trail to an 8-foot-wide, concrete trail (ADA accessible).



- The new trail will improve safety & resiliency to sustain inclement weather; improve accessible tourism and recreation.





# Shoreline Management



- Erosion has become a hazard along the trail at the water's edge where a portion has collapsed or washed away.
- Shoreline protection (i.e., riprap/grid installation) along with relocating the trail further from the bay & implementing a living shoreline can help stabilize/reduce further erosion.
- Well managed access areas help reduce natural resource damage & maintain wildlife habitats.





# Proposed Timeline

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- CBBEP estimates the funds will be made available by December 2023.
  - The Ordinance will proceed to appropriate the funds with a tentative date scheduled in December 2023 for Mayor & City Council consideration.
  - Staff have determined that a two-year timeline for project completion is achievable.
  - Construction bids for the erosion improvements will take first priority after passage of the Ordinance.
  - Construction bids for the trail improvements will follow to avoid trail damage which can be caused by the heavy equipment used for erosion improvements.
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# Policy Alignment

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- The Refuge provides a unique opportunity to use the area's natural resources for a successful, nature-based recreation & tourism program.
  - Nature-based recreation/tourism strategies can increase revenues & strengthen economic development by creating & supporting local nature businesses/hospitality industries.
  - A strategy of the 10-year Parks & Rec Master Plan is to utilize partnerships with birding businesses to promote/advertise birding activities & tours.
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# Recommendation

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- Staff recommends approval to accept Grant funds from the CBBEP for improvements to the Hans & Pat Suter Wildlife Refuge.