



Board of Supervisors Memorandum

August 2, 2016

Purchase Agreement for Frick Property and Restricted Use of Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Funds

Background

On May 20, 2016, I provided the Board with a memorandum regarding the possible acquisition of the 276-acre Frick property, adjacent to Tucson Mountain Park along West 36th Street, using Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Funds. On July 5, 2016 the Board adopted a final budget for Pima County that included the use of these funds for a down payment on the Frick property this Fiscal Year, contingent on successful negotiations with the property owner and approval of a purchase agreement by the Board. A purchase agreement has been signed by the property owner and has been scheduled by Real Property for the Board's consideration on August 2, 2016. The total purchase price is \$2,075,000, with \$375,000 due at closing and the remainder due in three equal annual payments thereafter, with zero interest and no prepayment penalties.

Revenues from the Starr Pass Environmental Enhancement Fund will be used to pay for the Frick property. As explained in my May 20 memorandum, these funds are restricted by a development agreement between the County and the developer of the J.W. Marriott Starr Pass Resort, to be spent only on expanding and enhancing Tucson Mountain Park. To be clear, these funds cannot be used for pavement preservation or other County uses. To date, revenues from this fund have been used for a variety of eligible projects including a new trailhead, trails that connect the resort to the park's 60+ mile trail system, invasive species management, mountain lion surveys (at least 6 adult mountain lions use the park), interpretive signage and land acquisition.

The County has also applied for a grant from the Tohono O'odham Nation to accelerate payment to the seller and to reduce the amount needed from the Starr Pass fund.

Recommendation

I recommend the Board approve the purchase of the Frick property, expanding Tucson Mountain Park by 276 acres.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "C. Huckelberry".

C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/dr - July 28, 2016
Attachment

Frick Property

Tucson, Arizona



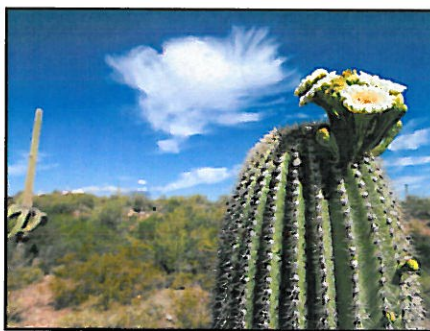
Frick property looking northeast towards a peak on an adjacent Pima County-owned property, with Tumamoc Hill and the Catalina mountains in the background.

Overview

The Sonoran Desert and its sky island mountain ranges are a hotspot for plant and wildlife diversity, and serve as a natural playground for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. Pima County owns and manages mountain parks and conservation areas around the Tucson metropolitan area. The 276-acre Frick property is privately-owned and located in the eastern foothills of the Tucson Mountains, just west of downtown. This area is known for its iconic saguaro studded slopes, rocky outcrops and scenic vistas. A diversity of wildlife are often seen in and around the neighboring Tucson Mountain Park, including recent sightings of bighorn sheep.

Plants, Wildlife and Water

The Frick property contains classic Sonoran Desert Uplands vegetation of saguaro, palo verde, ironwood,



and mixed cacti that is home to the Sonoran desert tortoise, a Priority Vulnerable Species for Pima County's Multi-species Conservation Plan. A recent tortoise nest site and recently used tortoise shelters on the property, show that the property provides important tortoise population connections for tortoises in Tucson Mountain Park. Rocky outcrops on the west portion of the property also may contain talus snails, another Priority Vulnerable Species. The property contains xeroriparian washes that

may provide habitat for several other Priority Vulnerable Species such as Abert's towhee, rufous-winged sparrow, and Arizona Bell's vireo. The property also provides habitat for a diversity of native wildlife including mule deer, coyote, javelina, grey fox, cottontail rabbits, black-tailed jackrabbits, bobcats, over 40 species of native birds and over a dozen different reptiles and amphibians.

Despite some ground disturbance on the western parcel associated with an old stone house and ongoing trespass ATV activity on the eastern parcels, the hydrological function of the property appears to be in relatively good condition. The San Juan and Enchanted Hills washes cross the property, originating on the slopes of the Tucson Mountains and flowing into the West Branch of the Santa Cruz River. Because of the important natural vegetation com-

munities and hydrological features, the geographic location of the Frick property makes it a priority acquisition to enhance wildlife corridors.

Recreation and Public Access

The property is easily accessible to adjacent neighborhoods, visitors to the nearby J.W. Starr Pass Marriott Resort, as well as the larger metropolitan area. Two of the parcels directly abut Tucson Mountain Park and its 60+ mile trail system. The western parcel can be accessed by an existing trailhead. The southern parcel abuts another part of Tucson Mountain Park, with trails connections to the Robles Pass section of Park, as well as the City of Tucson's more developed Kennedy Park. 36th Street and Mission Road provide easy access from The Loop – Pima County's multi-use

path system that circles the City.

The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan: Pima County's Commitment to Conservation & Economic Development

The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) is Pima County's community-developed, long-term vision for protecting the heritage and

natural resources of Pima County. Adopted in 2001, the SDCP has fueled a diversity of conservation actions including land acquisition, policy changes, environmental education, and land management and monitoring. Pima County has a proven record of conserving ranches and other important natural areas for long-term conservation and recreation. These properties also serve as mitigation for public and private development impacts to endangered species, per the County's new Federally-authorized Section 10 permit and Multi-species Conservation Plan. The County currently owns or manages over 230,000 acres for conservation, the majority of which has been acquired since 1997 using voter-approved bond funds exceeding \$200 million.



Hiking on the Frick property

