



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 10/02/2024
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members
FROM: Community Services Department

2024-74

REQUEST FOR CITY COUNCIL ACTION

SUBJECT:
INNOVATION CENTER AT THE CORONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This staff report asks the City Council to provide feedback regarding constructing an Innovation Center at the Corona Public Library. The Innovation Center is funded with a \$2.5 million grant from the State of California. The Innovation Center will enhance the library by providing a new programmable space for businesses, residents, and youth to access services, events, training, and technology.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the City Council provide feedback on the construction of an Innovation Center at the Corona Public Library.

BACKGROUND & HISTORY:

In 2023, the City of Corona received a \$2.5 million grant from the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (Go-Biz) to develop an Innovation Center. An Innovation Center is a dedicated space designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and development. These centers provide resources and services to the community, helping businesses, residents, and students to innovate and develop new products or services.

Pursuant to the Grant Agreement, Corona's Innovation Center will offer business services, events, training, and entrepreneurship development opportunities. It will also serve as a hub for innovation and will emphasize youth as it pertains to career pathways and introduction to STEM industries. Some eligible expenses allowed under this grant include renovations and related expenses, equipment, and furniture. This project supports the City's Strategic Plan to develop a Strong Economy by supporting local businesses, providing opportunities for new businesses, and ensuring there are opportunities for job seekers.

The City Council appropriated the full amount of this grant to the Corona Innovation Center Capital Improvement Project No. FC-2023-10 at its May 3, 2023 meeting. The total grant amount must be expended by June 30, 2026.

ANALYSIS:

Since receiving the funds, staff explored various locations for the Innovation Center. During this time, the Corona Public Library began its effort to develop a strategic plan, which included public engagement via surveys, focus groups, and discussions with government leaders. Much of the feedback received during the public engagement process included requests for technology classes and instruction opportunities, access to advanced technological resources (i.e. 3D printers and digital tools), and expanded workforce development opportunities at the library.

Given this input, staff proposes locating the Innovation Center at the Corona Public Library. Doing so provides numerous opportunities for the library, including:

- Enhancing the building by providing \$2.5 million in renovations and equipment.
- Placing innovation at the City's hub for knowledge and learning.
- Providing new programable spaces for youth, teen, and adult innovation activities.
- Introducing the library to a new demographic by offering varied programs aimed at those who may not visit the library for traditional purposes.

Additionally, the integration of the Innovation Center allows the library to be an active part of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, activating all four corners of the historic streets of Main Street and 6th Street.

Following the construction of the Innovation Center, the City will partner with local businesses and schools to offer business development, workforce development, and youth STEM programs to the community. By collaborating with local school and business partners, in tandem with providing passive activities, the Innovation Center will have a steady stream of programming and offerings to the Corona community. Staff is actively engaged with the Corona Norco Unified School District and local community colleges to ensure programming is in place when the Innovation Center is open.

The proposed area in the library for the Innovation Center is in the southeast corner of the main floor. This area is currently occupied with shelving for the adult collection. Staff is working with a design consultant to develop a floor plan for the Innovation Center that

will utilize and optimize space for the center, seating areas, and the adult area. The floor plan will include appropriate space for the current collection and its potential growth.

The estimated project timeline is as follows:

- October 2, 2024 - Presentation to the City Council
- November 2024 – August 2025 - Project design (including conceptual design, construction document development, plan check, and procurement of a construction contractor).
- September 2025 – May 2026 - Construction and acquisition of equipment
- June 2026 - Completion

Staff intends to minimize the impact on library users during the construction phase of this project by limiting possible closures to the greatest extent possible and coordinating construction with other maintenance efforts.

COMMITTEE ACTION:

The Corona Library Board of Trustees recommended that the City Council approve this project as presented at its meeting on September 24, 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The City Council appropriated the full amount of the grant funds to the Corona Innovation Center Capital Improvement Project No. FC-2023-10 at its meeting on May 3, 2023. The total grant amount must be expended by June 30, 2026. There is no additional fiscal impact associated with this recommended action.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This action is exempt pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the Guidelines for the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which states that a project is exempt from CEQA if the activity is covered by the commonsense exemption that CEQA applies only to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. Therefore, no environmental analysis is required.

PREPARED BY: DANIELL WHITTINGTON, LIBRARY MANAGER; NICOLE MCDANIEL, ASSISTANT TO THE CITY MANAGER

REVIEWED BY: DONNA FINCH, COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Exhibit 1 – Innovation Center Grant Contract
2. Exhibit 2 – Draft floor plan
3. Exhibit 3 – Presentation