



# AGENDA REPORT

**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

**From:** Lynda Smith, JCCVB Chairwoman

**Date:** October 15th, 2019 (for October 21st, 2019 Work Session)

**Item:** **CVB Recommendations – FY2020 Projects for Tourism Product Development**

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## Issue

The Council must consider and approve or amend the Johns Creek Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)'s recommendations for FY2020 expenditures of tourism product development by March 1, 2020. The CVB has recommended (1) \$70,000 for Phase II installation of The Wall that Heals, (2) \$56,291 for improvements at Autrey Mill, (3) \$55,000 for a second gateway marker and (4) the balance of collected funds (budgeted at \$54,509) for creating a public art piece with half of historic Rogers Bridge.

## Background

The City has a 7% hotel/motel excise tax. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 48-13-51(a)(5)(A)(ii) the collected excise taxes are to be expended as follows: 32.14% for promoting tourism, 39.30% for tourism product development and 28.56% to the City. For FY2020, the amount budgeted for tourism product development, requiring Council action, is \$235,800. The City has designated the CVB as its partner for both the 32.14% of funds used to promote tourism and the 39.3% of funds used for tourism product development. Although the CVB has full discretion over the tourism promotion funds, the tourism product development projects must be approved by the City Council. The approved projects for the FY2019 funds were (1) \$75,000 for the Wall that Heals permanent installation, (2) \$40,000 improvements to Autrey Mill Nature Preserve in the areas of: Farm Museum Interpretive Plan, Animal Ambassador enclosure upgrades, Wayfinding throughout the park, and event rental upgrades, (3) \$13,000 towards the Bell/Boles Roundabout Public Art Sculpture, and (4) \$64,647.00 (plus any additional collected funds) for the Community Engagement Gateway Marker project.

## Update

Since the Council's April 22, 2019 authorization of the initial projects, the CVB has completed one of the projects and made significant progress on the other three. The full amount of funds for the Bell/Boles Roundabout Public Art Sculpture has been provided to the artist, who has the sculpture in progress. Improvements to Autrey Mill Nature Preserve are complete, which enhanced the Farm Museum Interpretive experience, helped create a home for live goats to be added to the Animal Ambassador program, updated wayfinding throughout the park, and resourced the park to better attract an accommodate special event

rentals. Phase I of the Wall that Heals is well underway and on schedule to open to the public this November. Finally, the Community Engagement Gateway Marker project is in progress, with an anticipated installation date set for January 2020.

### **FY2020 Project Recommendations**

The CVB met on October 11, 2019 and finalized their recommendations for FY2020 tourism product development projects. The CVB recommends the City Council authorize (1) \$70,000 for Phase II installation of The Wall that Heals, (2) \$56,291 for improvements at Autrey Mill, (3) \$55,000 for a second gateway marker and (4) the balance of collected funds (budgeted at \$54,509) for creating a public art piece with half of historic Rogers Bridge.

The funds proposed for Phase II of the Wall that Heals would go toward the installation of a granite facade and lighting at the memorial.

The improvements at Autrey Mill Nature Preserve meet prioritized needs from the Foundation's Board that align with the CVB's efforts to enhance the destination's appeal to heritage tourism travelers and functionality as a small event venue (weddings, small board retreats, etc.). The \$56,291 in improvements fits into three categories: (1) \$15K of the proposed improvements for passive interpretation and wayfinding for trails and heritage buildings; (2) roughly \$17K for improvements and additions to the indoor animal collections, and (3) roughly \$23K for venue rental improvements and lighting for evening events.

The recommendations for a second gateway marker would continue from the the first gateway marker project, set to be installed at eastbound State Bridge at Kimball Bridge in January 2020. The second marker is proposed for installation at westbound State Bridge at the Chattahoochee River. The CVB hopes to continue to work with artist William Massey (who coordinated the effort for the Medlock Bridge / SR 141 pedestrian tunnel mural, as well as the community engagement process for the first gateway marker design and installation) to begin planning for second marker. The CVB's intent would be to continue to collaborate with existing City art boards and organizations in the community to finalize a design that is well supported. The CVB has met with the Public Works Department and Community Development Department to understand constraints, regulations, and permitting process.

The CVB sees investing in designing a public art piece with half of the historic Rogers Bridge as a worthy project to create an experience for people to remember and reflex on the history of the area. The CVB's intent would be to engage with an artist to imagine how this portion of the bridge can best become a part of the park near the site of the new planned pedestrian Rogers Bridge. The CVB sees potential for an artwork of this scale to be something that visitors to the trail can walk through and experience a piece of the community's past.

## Analysis

Staff has reviewed the CVB's recommendations and finds the projects to be allowable uses under O.C.G.A. § 48-13-50.2(6) (included below for reference).

O.C.G.A. § 48-13-50.2(6)

“[T]he expenditure of funds for the creation or expansion of physical attractions which are available

and open to the public and which improve destination appeal to visitors, support visitors' experience, and are used by visitors. Such expenditures may include capital costs and operating expenses. Tourism product development may include:

- (A) Lodging for the public for no longer than 30 consecutive days to the same customer;
- (B) Overnight or short-term sites for recreational vehicles, trailers, campers, or tents;
- (C) Meeting, convention, exhibit, and public assembly facilities;
- (D) Sports stadiums, arenas, and complexes;
- (E) Golf courses associated with a resort development that are open to the general public on a contract or fee basis;
- (F) Racing facilities, including dragstrips, motorcycle racetracks, and auto or stock car racetracks or speedways;
- (G) Amusement centers, amusement parks, theme parks, or amusement piers;
- (H) Hunting preserves, trapping preserves, or fishing preserves or lakes;
- (I) Visitor information and welcome centers;
- (J) Wayfinding signage;
- (K) Permanent, nonmigrating carnivals or fairs;
- (L) Airplanes, helicopters, buses, vans, or boats for excursions or sightseeing;
- (M) Boat rentals, boat party fishing services, rowboat or canoe rentals, horse shows, natural wonder attractions, picnic grounds, river-rafting services, scenic railroads for amusement, aerial tramways, rodeos, water slides, or wave pools;
- (N) Museums, planetariums, art galleries, botanical gardens, aquariums, or zoological gardens;
- (O) Parks, trails, and other recreational facilities; or
- (P) Performing arts facilities.”