

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

DATE June 18, 2015

APPROVED
JUN 18 2015

BOARD OF RECREATION
PARK COMMISSIONERS

NO. 15-140

C.D. 14

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: ASCOT HILLS PARK – APPROVAL OF CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN FOR THE HABITAT RESTORATION AND GREENING PROJECT; MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT WITH NORTH EAST TREES; AND EXEMPTION FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

R. Adams _____
for *R. Barajas CBP _____
H. Fujita _____
V. Israel _____
K. Regan _____
N. Williams _____

M. Shue
General Manager

Approved ✓ Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Board:

1. Approve the conceptual design for the Ascot Hills Park Habitat Restoration and Greening Project, as described in the Summary of this Report and shown on Exhibit A;
2. Approve the proposed Memorandum of Agreement with North East Trees, substantially in the form on file in the Board Office, specifying the terms and conditions of each party for the design, construction and maintenance of the proposed Project subject to the approval of the Mayor, City Council, and City Attorney as to form;
3. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the proposed Agreement to the Mayor, in accordance with Executive Directive No. 3, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review as to form;
4. Authorize the Board President and Secretary to execute the Agreement upon receipt of the necessary approvals; and
5. Direct Department staff to work with staff from the Department of Water and Power to seek an amendment to extend the Lease Agreement issued to RAP for the operation and maintenance of Ascot Hills Park to satisfy the twenty (20) year site control requirements

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of the Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program grant awarded to North East Trees; and,

SUMMARY:

Ascot Hills Park is a 92.44 acre park located at 4371 Multnomah Street in Northeast Los Angeles (Exhibit A). It is an unstaffed park that contains a parking lot, restroom facilities, outdoor classrooms, and nature trails. The park has been developed on land owned by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power (LADWP). The Department of Recreation and Parks (Department) currently operates and maintains the property through a twenty (20) year lease agreement with DWP which was executed in 2010.

In 2013, North East Trees, a non-profit community-based organization, submitted the Ascot Hills Park Habitat Restoration and Greening Project grant application for funding under the State of California Strategic Growth Council's Urban Greening for Sustainable Communities Grant Program.

North East Trees was founded in 1989 to restore nature's services in resource challenged communities, through a collaborative resource development, implementation, and stewardship process. Their projects throughout the years have included design, construction, planting, and maintenance of parks, greenbelts, watershed revitalization projects, and storm water cleanup and infiltration projects. They specialize in working with local, underserved communities to identify degraded areas and derelict parcels of land and work collaboratively to successfully transform them into safe, inviting and healthful areas.

The proposed project's concept is to enhance about forty (40.0) acres of Ascot Hills Park through the restoration of about fourteen (14.00) acres of native habitat; the creation of two (2) natural storm water infiltration areas by constructing swales, berms, and infiltration basins along the natural topography of the park; the planting of about nine hundred fifty (950) trees and 5,000 shrubs; and, the installation of interpretative signage. The project is designed to help restore the native flora of Ascot Hills Park, attract native fauna back to the park, capture storm water runoff and allow for natural infiltration, and improve air quality through the planting of native plants and trees throughout the park (Exhibit B).

Recently, North East Trees was notified that their grant application was approved and they would have to provide certain documentation in order to begin drawing upon the grant award to begin the design process. The grant amount awarded to North East Trees totaled \$989,000.00. The total project cost for the proposed project is \$1,651,486.00. In addition to the State Grant, North East Trees has also been awarded a \$100,000.00 Los County Tree Planting Grant and a \$150,000.00 CALFIRE Demonstration Raingarden Grant. They are also contributing \$161,120.00 worth of In-kind services and materials. The Department, as a supporter of this

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endeavor, is contributing \$251,366.00 worth of In-kind services spread out through the initial design phase and maintenance services during the service payback period of twenty (20) years.

In order for North East Trees to begin the design process and avail of the funding awarded through the grant, the Board needs to make a CEQA determination on the proposed project. The Board will also need to approve the proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with North East Trees that specifies and indicates the terms and obligations of each party for the design, construction and maintenance of the proposed Project. As indicated in their grant application, North East Trees complete all the design and construction of the proposed project. The Department will provide assistance and cooperate in the design process and will maintain the improvements during the service payback period.

As mentioned above, the grant awarded to North East Trees requires a service payback period of twenty (20) years. The lease agreement with DWP is in the fifth (5) year of a twenty (20) year term and therefore will need to be amended to add the additional time required by the grant. Should the Board approve this report, Department staff will work with DWP staff on obtaining this amendment.

Staff has determined the proposed project will consist of minor alterations to land in the creation of two (2) vista points within the existing park, and new landscaping to enhance the existing upland habitat. The project will also involve the issuance of a MOA for project design and construction. Therefore, the project will not have significant effect on the environment with the use of standard environmental mitigation measures to protect unanticipated archaeological resources and existing biological resources, and is, therefore, categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the Article III, Section 1, Class 4(2, 3, 7) of the City CEQA Guidelines. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the Los Angeles County Clerk upon approval of the project.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

The maintenance of the proposed park improvements can be performed by current staff with no overall impact to existing maintenance service at this facility.

This Report prepare by Cid Macaraeg, Sr MA II, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Branch.

Ascot Hills Park

Project Site

Huntington Drive North

Eastern Avenue

Soto Street

Mission Road

Park Entrance

Union Pacific Alameda Corridor East

Metrolink San Bernardino Line

Please note that for graphic clarity, each symbol represents several trees from the associated plant communities.

