

APPROVED

MAR 20 2019

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

BOARD REPORT

NO. 19-061

DATE March 20, 2019

C.D. 4

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: GRIFIFTH PARK HORTICULTURE LEARNING CENTER (AKA GRIFFITH PARK – HORTICULTURAL LEARNING CENTER) RENOVATION (PRJ21006) (W.O. #E170160F) PROJECT – APPROVAL OF FINAL PLANS – CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA) PURSUANT TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 1, CLASS 1(2) [MINOR ALTERATION OF EXISTING ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS], CLASS 4(1) [GRADING ON LAND WITH A SLOPE OF LESS THAN 10%], CLASS 4(3) [NEW LANDSCAPING AND PLANTING], CLASS 4(12) [MINOR TRENCHING AND BACKFILLING] AND CLASS 11(1) [ON PREMISE SIGNS] AS WELL AS PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 19, SECTION 15301(b), 15304 (a),(b) AND (f), SECTION 15311(a) AND SECTION 15331 OF CALIFORNIA CEQA GUIDELINES.

<i>for</i>	AP Diaz _____	V. Israel _____
	*R. Barajas <u><i>CEC</i></u>	S. Piña-Cortez _____
	H. Fujita _____	N. Williams _____

David Y. Yee
General Manager *for*

Approved X Disapproved _____ Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve final plans and specifications, substantially in the form on file with the Board Office, for the Griffith Park Horticulture Learning Center (AKA Griffith Park Horticultural Learning Center) – Renovation (PRJ21006) (W.O. #E170160F) Project (Project);
2. Find that the proposed Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and direct Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) staff to file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) with the City and the Los Angeles County Clerk’s Office;
3. Authorize the RAP Chief Accounting Employee to prepare a check to the Los Angeles County Clerk in the amount of Seventy-Five Dollars (\$75.00) for the purpose of filing a NOE; and,
4. Authorize RAP's Chief Accounting Employee to make technical corrections as necessary to carry out the intent of this Report.

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SUMMARY

The Griffith Park Horticulture Learning Center (AKA Griffith Park Commonwealth Nursery) – Renovation (PRJ21006) (W.O. #E170160F) Project (Project) is a Proposition K – L.A. for Kids Program Competitive Grant funded project (8th Cycle; Proposition K ID #C216-8). The approved Proposition K scope is: renovate a portion of the existing nursery on Commonwealth Avenue. The Project is funded by Proposition K.

Griffith Park is located at 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, in the Los Feliz community of the City. This 4,282 acre Regional Park provides a variety of recreational and environmental programs and activities for the local community and the City at large. Approximately 18,155 residents live within one-half (1/2) of a mile walking distance of Griffith Park. Due to the size of the park, and the facilities, features, programs, and services it provides, Griffith Park meets the standards for a Regional park, as defined in the City's Public Recreation Plan. As a regional recreational facility, Griffith Park serves the entire City of Los Angeles. City residents from the entire City visit Griffith Park, as do visitors to the City of Los Angeles from all over the country and the world.

The Griffith Park Horticulture Learning Center is located within Griffith Park, within Council District 4. The Griffith Park Horticulture Learning Center's address is 2560 Commonwealth Canyon Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024. The site is bounded by Commonwealth Canyon Drive, Commonwealth Canyon Avenue, Vista Del Valle Drive, and private unnamed service roads.

RAP is proposing to renovate a portion of the existing Griffith Park Horticulture Learning Center. The existing facility has not been operational since the 1980's, and only three dilapidated greenhouse buildings and a deteriorated terraced nursery/planting area remain. RAP intends to restore and renovate the nursery/planting area into a state-of-the art Nature Center, providing on-site recreational gardening, environmental stewardship and educational opportunities for children and park patrons. Due to funding constraints, only the existing terraced nursery will be restored and renovated as a part of this Project. The remaining area of the facility will be restored when additional sufficient funding is identified.

This Project will renovate an approximately 1.8-acre portion of the existing terraced nursery, and will include grading, installing small garden retaining walls, new irrigation, electrical upgrades, and interpretive graphics. New walking paths incorporating the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements will also be installed. Since this Horticulture Center is a part of Griffith Park, and Griffith Park is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monuments No. 942, the historic nature of the facility will be integrated into the Project.

Studio-MLA (formerly Mia Lehrer and Associates) prepared the plans and specifications, and obtained all of the necessary permits for the Project, under the direction of the Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering (BOE), Architectural Division. As required by the Proposition K Program, three (3) Local Voluntary Neighborhood Oversight Committee (LVNOC) meetings were conducted on March 4, 2015, January 28, 2016 and November 15, 2016. Over 18 persons, six to eight of whom were community members, attended each of the LVNOC

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meetings. The LVNOC members included representatives from the Friends of Griffith Park. Representatives from the Los Angeles Parks Foundation and The Nature Conservancy also attended the LVNOC meetings. The community, the LVNOC, and Council District No. 4 are in full support of the project. As discussed above, the project was designed to be consistent with the historic status of the nursery, as well as the surrounding Griffith Park.

After reviewed by staff of RAP and BOE, it was determined that the work can be performed by RAP's pre-qualified on call contractors. Staff recommends the Project be constructed by the on call contractors and recommends that BOE provide construction management services during the construction of these improvements.

Sufficient funds are available for the construction and construction contingencies from the following funds and accounts:

<u>FUNDING SOURCE</u>	<u>FUND/DEPT./ACCT. NO.</u>
Proposition K – Year 18	43K/10/LM11
Proposition K – Year 19	43K/10/MPCA
Proposition K – Year 21	43K/10/PPAB

TREES AND SHADE

Three (3) trees are to be removed in order to construct access paths and gathering spaces (patio areas). There were also four (4) trees located on site that were still in their nursery boxes that will be removed, because they were deemed ruined (the trees had been left in their nursery boxes for many years, the roots have grown through the boxes and this ultimately destroyed the trees). The tree species to be removed include: pink trumpet tree (1), karee tree (1), white alder (1), and Chinese pistache (4). None of the removed trees are considered as protected trees. Due to potential bird nesting within the project area, tree removal will occur outside of the nesting season (February 15 through September 15). If avoidance of tree removal within this time period is not feasible, the following additional measures will be employed:

1. A pre-construction nesting survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist within 3 days prior to the start of construction activities to determine whether active nests are present on the trees or directly adjacent to the construction zone. All nests found shall be recorded;
2. If active nests are found, a qualified biologist will monitor the nest on a weekly basis and tree removal will be postponed until the biologist determines that the nest is no longer active;
3. If construction activities must occur within 300 feet of an active nest of any passerine bird or within 500 feet of an active nest of any raptor, a qualified biologist will monitor the nest on a weekly basis and the construction activity shall be postponed until the biologist determines that the nest is no longer active.

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If the recommended nest avoidance zone is not feasible, the qualified biologist shall determine whether an exception is possible and obtain concurrence from the appropriate resource agency before construction work can resume within the avoidance buffer zone. All work shall cease within the avoidance buffer zone until either agency concurrence is obtained or the biologist determines that the adults and young are no longer reliant on the nest site.

Nine (9) new trees will be planted to replace the trees being removed. The species for the new trees include: Catalina Cherry (3), Coast Live Oak (4), and Engelmann Oak (2). Tree replacement will follow the Department of Recreation and Parks Tree Protection Specifications. There will be little or no impact on shade at Griffith Park due to this project.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed project consists of grading, installing small retaining walls, new irrigation, electrical upgrades, and interpretive graphics and will occur in a contributing element of an Historic Cultural Monument of the City of Los Angeles (Griffith Park, HCM #942). As such, RAP staff recommends that the board determines that the project is exempt from the provision of the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Article III, Section 1, Class 1(2); Class 4(1), Class 4(3), Class 4(12) and Class 11(1) of City CEQA Guidelines as well as pursuant to Article 19, Section 15301(b), 15304(a),(b),(f), 15311(1) and 15331 of California CEQA Guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed construction project is fully funded by Proposition K funds. When completed, the Project will provide improvements to an existing, but non-operational horticultural nursery. RAP staff will have to request additional staffing and funding for operation and maintenance in RAP's General Funds.

This Report was prepared by Richard Campbell, Project Manager, and reviewed by Neil Drucker, Proposition K Program Manager, Architectural Division, BOE; Mahmood Karimzadeh, Deputy City Engineer, BOE; Deborah Weintraub, Chief Deputy City Engineer, BOE; and Cathie Santo Domingo, Superintendent, Planning, Maintenance and Construction Branch.