

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

Date: September 29, 2003

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CALTRANS LEASE FOR ARLINGTON/PASADENA PROPERTY

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into a lease agreement between the City of Pasadena and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) at a cost of \$100 a year for the property at the corner of Pasadena Avenue and Arlington Drive.

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION:

The Recreation and Parks Commission voted unanimously to support the lease between the City of Pasadena and Caltrans at its May 6, 2003, meeting.

BACKGROUND:

One of the primary goals of the City is expanding usable open space. Staff continues to look for strategically located permanent sites to consider for acquisition. In the meantime, a temporary, low-cost opportunity has opened up that will provide some additional passive neighborhood park space with minimal City investment. The California Department of Transportation has recently indicated its interest in leasing a parcel of vacant land located on the northwest corner of Pasadena Avenue and Arlington Drive. This 2.5-acre parcel is within the boundary of the future 710 FWY extension, so acquisition of this property from the state is not feasible. Based on feedback from the community, the area would be a passive recreational space. Parking would not be provided on the site or on Arlington Drive, and instead people would be encouraged to walk or bike to the site.

Staff and community members have met to develop ideas for the parcel. After careful consideration, the group agreed that a Mediterranean Garden concept would meet the community's needs. Students from California Polytechnic University at Pomona prepared concept plans for the Mediterranean Garden as a class project. Their conceptual designs were reviewed by staff and the neighboring community members at a meeting held on May 3, 2003. This design concept would emphasize drought-tolerant plants, and incorporate a design to facilitate ease of maintenance. Neighbors have expressed a willingness to assist in the development and maintenance of the garden, offering to donate money, plants, benches,

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and time to care for the garden. Water and Power will install a water meter for the garden paid from conservation funds due to the emphasis on water conservation. In addition, they are currently assisting with preparing grant proposals to provide additional funding for planting the space based on the water-conservation nature of the design.

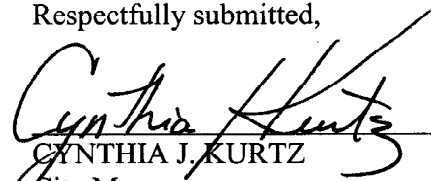
In developing the final plans for the landscape area, Caltrans will require that no permanent structures or facilities be constructed on-site, and that only landscaping and moveable items (benches, decomposed granite paths) be allowed on this parcel consistent with the lease. The community has provided feedback that will be used to pull the best of all of the student plans together and create a landscaping design that would be an improvement to the vacant land and a landscape area for the neighborhood to enjoy.

Caltrans has prepared a draft lease agreement for the vacant land located at 275 Arlington Drive with a term of five years. The terms and conditions of the draft lease include an annual rent payment of \$100.00, limiting the use of the parcel for a drought-tolerant garden to provide passive recreational use. The City of Pasadena will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the property as well as providing the appropriate insurance coverage.


FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of Public Works has allocated \$15,000 in the FY 2004 Parks and Natural Resources Budget for this project. These funds would be used to pay the first year lease payment of \$100.00. In addition, the first year cost of spreading wildflower seeds this winter and weed abatement at the site next spring and summer is estimated at \$7,000.00. The Department of Water and Power has agreed to provide for the installation of the water meter for the site at an estimated cost of \$250.00. The Department of Public Works, the Department of Water and Power, and the community groups are all working together to develop other funding to complete the design and development of this site. The remaining \$7,900 in the project budget would be utilized towards these efforts.

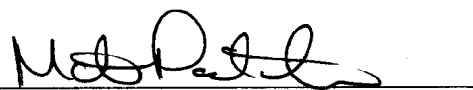
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
City Manager

PREPARED BY:


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Parks and Natural Resources

APPROVED BY:


MARTIN PASTUCHA, Director
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