

# Agenda Report

**TO:** CITY COUNCIL **DATE:** February 4, 2002

**THROUGH:** FINANCE COMMITTEE

**FROM:** City Manager

**SUBJECT:** MWD Open Space Parcel: Appropriation of Funds  
for Environmental Review of Undeveloped Site  
Proposed for Passive Recreational Use

## RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

- (1) Amend the adopted 2002-2006 Capital Improvement Program by adding a new project, MWD Open Space Parcel, for the potential use of a 2.03 acre site on the east side of Linda Vista Avenues at its intersection with Glen Oaks Boulevard/Linda Glen Drive for passive open space uses.
- (2) Approve a journal voucher appropriating \$35,000 from unappropriated General Fund reserves to Budget Account 78035 (MWD Open Space Parcel) for carrying out the environmental review process, including preliminary engineering, for this project.

## RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION:

On January 4, 2001, the Recreation and Parks Commission voted unanimously to endorse the proposed use of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California land as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B attached hereto for passive open space uses.

## BACKGROUND:

In August 2000 in response to an inquiry from City staff, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD) advised that an undeveloped parcel of land in its ownership was available for open space or passive recreational use. The parcel is located in the Central Arroyo Seco in the vicinity of the intersection of Seco Street and West Drive and extends uphill to Linda Vista Avenue at its intersection with Glen Oaks Boulevard/Linda Glen Drive.

This 2.03 acre parcel is relatively steep, heavily vegetated, and fenced to exclude public access. It houses the subsurface 9'-8" diameter Colorado River Aqueduct Upper Feeder plus a concrete drainage channel and a subsurface 5'-3" diameter emergency discharge pipe that outlets at the Arroyo Seco Flood Control Channel. The parcel has been offered to the City for passive recreational use by means of a permanent easement subject to MWD's right to control use of the property in the event that it is necessary to repair, replace, or reconstruct its facilities.

The parcel could serve as a pedestrian trail connecting Linda Vista Avenue with the Central Arroyo and for passive uses such as bird watching. Uses that would be prohibited by the terms of the proposed permanent easement include skateboarding, equestrian trails, dirt or mountain biking, public restrooms, light standards, camping or campfires, a frisbee golf course, and other active recreational pursuits. The use of the site would be limited to daylight hours only.

A community meeting regarding the potential use of the site was held by in February 2001. It was attended by 23 local residents – primarily those who resided within 300 feet of the site – as well as representatives of the Recreation and Parks Commission, Public Works and Transportation Department, and Police Department. The residents who were asked to identify specific concerns about public use of the parcel listed the following issues: security, traffic, parking, fire and pedestrian safety, inconveniences to neighbors, wildlife impacts, liability, accessibility, and maintenance costs.

Action on the potential project has been deferred until now because of uncertainty about the availability of the funding needed to develop the site in light of the many unfunded park projects listed in the adopted Capital Improvement Program. It is now recommended that the project move ahead and that the environmental review process, together with related preliminary engineering, be undertaken before, rather than after, presentation of the proposed permanent easement to the City Council for acceptance. This will enable staff to better define the improvements that will be compatible with MWD's development standards, address the community's concerns, and conduct broad-based community outreach efforts.

The tentative scope of work consists of the removal of a selected number of trees and stumps, either because of their unsafe condition or to facilitate the construction of a hiking trail connecting Linda Vista Avenue with the Central Arroyo, the pruning of dead or diseased tree limbs, the removal of poison oak and other undesirable plants, the construction of the aforementioned hiking trail, minor grading and slope stabilization work, the installation of a temporary irrigation system, the planting of native trees and erosion control shrubs, the installation of fencing around the drainage channel, and the installation of new perimeter fencing and gates.

The estimated cost of the project at this time is as follows:

Environmental Review/Preliminary Engineering	\$35,000
Final Design Engineering	35,000
Construction	250,000
Construction Engineering	<u>25,000</u>
	\$345,000

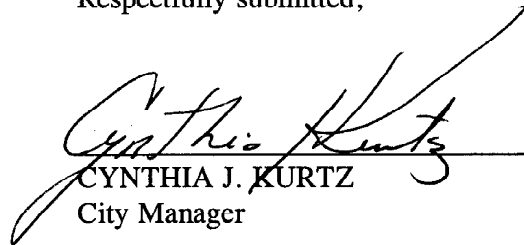
This figure will be refined during the environmental review/preliminary engineering phase of the project. It is estimated that this initial phase will take six to nine months to complete.

FISCAL IMPACT:

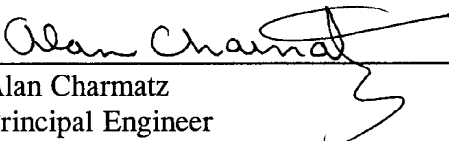
Sufficient General Funds are available to complete the environmental review/preliminary engineering phase of the project, whose cost is estimated at \$35,000, and will be appropriated by journal voucher to Budget Account 78035 (MWD Open Space Parcel). Approval of this journal voucher will reduce General Fund reserves to \$6,548,965 as shown on Exhibit C attached hereto.

Fund sources for the final design engineering, construction, and construction engineering phases of the project will be identified at the conclusion of the initial phase of the project and appropriated to Budget Account 78035 at that time or at a later date.

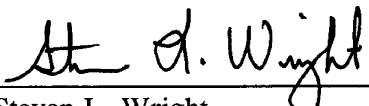
Respectfully submitted,

  
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ  
City Manager

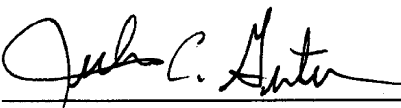
Prepared by:

  
Alan Charmatz  
Principal Engineer

Reviewed by:

  
Steven L. Wright  
Acting City Engineer

Approved by:

  
Julie A. Gutierrez, Acting Director  
Public Works and Transportation

Attachments

AC:rl  
100-1227-AC