

Agenda Report

May 9, 2011

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: CALTRANS LEASE FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 721 PASADENA AVENUE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the lease of property located at 721 Pasadena Avenue is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to enter into a five year lease agreement with the State of California Department of Transportation for property located at 721 Pasadena Avenue.

BACKGROUND:

The 2007 Green Space, Recreation and Parks Master Plan reported that community gardens are one of the top recreational facility needs in Pasadena. Currently, there are no public community gardens in the city. The only existing community garden is privately owned and is not accepting new members at this time.

In early 2010, Pasadena Community Gardens (PCG), a community-based group interested in creating public community gardens, approached the City to discuss the possibility of such a project. At that time, staff indicated a willingness to continue the discussion and PCG continued their search for suitable properties.

Recently, PCG approached Caltrans about leasing their undeveloped parcel at 721 Pasadena Avenue. Caltrans indicated support for a community garden at the location, but would not lease the land directly to PCG and prefers to lease the land to the City. PCG also conducted a community outreach effort and obtained signatures of support from over 30 residential and business neighbors.

The action proposed herein is the lease of a 35,963 square foot Caltrans parcel along the west side of Pasadena Avenue between California Boulevard and Bellefontaine

Street. Currently, the site is unimproved with the exception of some existing trees and shrubs, and a perimeter fence and gate. At this time, no trees are proposed for removal. The condition of the trees will be assessed by the garden operator at the time of application for the CUP. There are no utilities to the site, although there is a water line in the adjacent right of way available to the property.

Once the property is leased, the City will then enter into an agreement w/ a community garden group to build/operate a community garden. The garden group would be responsible for obtaining a CUP at that time. If, through the CUP process, additional environmental effects are identified beyond those described herein, the community group will also be responsible for seeking appropriate further environmental review.

Community garden activity would consist of small individual garden plots in ground-level or raised planter beds. Irrigation would be provided by a manually controlled irrigation system. Garden supplies and tools would be housed in a pre-fabricated shed located onsite and small garden amenities such as benches would be included. The garden membership is estimated to be 40 people.

Water for the garden will be provided through a new water meter which will be installed prior to operation of the garden. Currently there is no off-street parking available. At this time it appears that adequate parking is provided on Pasadena Avenue.

Caltrans has prepared a draft lease for the vacant land located at 721 Pasadena Avenue for a term of five years. The terms and conditions of the draft lease include an annual rent payment of \$100, limiting the use of the parcel for a community garden. The City of Pasadena will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the property, as well as providing the appropriate insurance coverage. Both of these responsibilities would be transferred to PCG through an agreement. Subsequent to leasing the property, the City will work with PCG to enter into an agreement where PCG would develop and operate the community garden.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The following Council policies would be advanced under the proposed action:

- Green City Action Plan environmental stewardship policies adopted by the City Council in September 2006

Action 10 – Access to recreational facilities

Action 17 – Locally produced food

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This project has been determined to be exempt from environmental review pursuant to the guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land. This section specifically applies to minor alterations in the condition

Alterations to Land. This section specifically applies to minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. The lease will allow an existing vacant parcel to be used by a community group for a community garden. No trees are proposed to be removed and no permanent structures will be located on the site.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Sufficient funds are available for the first year of the lease of \$100 a year in the Parks and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Public Works budget number 765400. No further costs are anticipated.

Respectfully submitted,



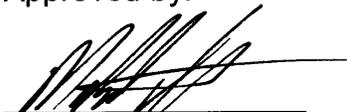
JULIE A. GUTIERREZ
Assistant City Manager/
Acting Director
of Public Works

Prepared by:



Loren Pluth, Project Manager for Parks
and Landscape

Approved by:



MICHAEL J. BECK
City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A – Location map



721 S. Pasadena Avenue

May 9, 2011 - N.T.S.

