



Agenda Report

October 29, 2018

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Public Works
SUBJECT: THREE YEAR LEASE EXTENSION AGREEMENT WITH CALTRANS FOR THE ARLINGTON GARDEN LOCATED AT 275 ARLINGTON DRIVE

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find the project to be categorically exempt under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1, existing facilities), that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class, and therefore there are no unusual circumstances, and authorize the City Clerk to file a Notice of Exemption for the project with the Los Angeles County Clerk; and
2. Authorize the City Manager to extend the lease agreement between the City of Pasadena and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for the property located at 275 Arlington Drive (Arlington Gardens) for an additional three years at a cost of \$100 per year.

RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION

The Recreation and Parks Commission voted unanimously to support the extension of the lease between the City of Pasadena and Caltrans at its October 2, 2018 meeting.

BACKGROUND:

On December 15, 2003, the City of Pasadena entered into a five year lease agreement with Caltrans, for the property located on the northwest corner of Pasadena Avenue and Arlington Drive known as Arlington Gardens. The agreement authorized the City to develop and maintain the property as a drought-tolerant demonstration garden for an annual payment of \$100.

A small dedicated group of community members worked with staff to design a plan for the property to be developed into a Mediterranean garden. The volunteers raised funds and participated in the planning, planting and maintenance of Arlington Garden. Over the first five years of the lease, the Departments of Water and Power and Public Works

provided funding for the purchase of drought tolerant plants, the installation of water service to help establish the plants and various improvements to the garden.

The garden has been planted with various native and drought tolerant trees and shrubs that have been developed into themed outdoor rooms which consist of a formal Mediterranean olive tree allee, a succulent desert garden, a wildflower meadow, an oak grove, a seasonal arroyo wash, a citrus grove and a vernal pool. The educational and sustainable components in the garden include: the use of solar power to run irrigation and a water fountain, and a low flow and Netafim irrigation system. Improvements include solar-powered fountains, recycled concrete garden walls and steps, and mulch to mitigate weeds.

The garden is managed by the Arlington Garden in Pasadena (Garden), a non-profit organization, which consists of community volunteers. That organization is responsible for the ongoing management of the garden and receives assistance from the City through a combination of financial support and in-kind services. Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Garden, the City contributes \$21,100 annually for landscape maintenance services, provides trash disposal services, utilities at the site and pest control services.

The initial lease with CalTrans was extended in 2008 and is scheduled to expire on December 14, 2018. The proposed action would extend the term of the lease to December 14, 2021.

Arlington Garden is located on one of CalTrans's SR-710 surplus properties. If the property becomes available for sale, the City, as the current tenant, will be given the first priority to purchase the parcel. In 2017, the City Manager sent a letter to CalTrans expressing the City's interest in acquiring the property. After the lease is renewed, staff will follow up with CalTrans in an effort to begin negotiating property acquisition.

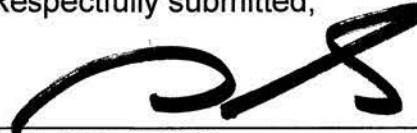
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The project is categorically exempt from CEQA in accordance with Section 15301 (Class 1— existing facilities) of the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3). Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination. In addition to this action falling within this exemption as an extension of an existing lease, it is also covered by subsection (h), which specifically applies this categorical exemption to maintenance of existing landscaping. There are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

FISCAL IMPACT:

City support for the Garden is approximately \$30,000 and includes water and trash disposal expenses as well as an annual subsidy of \$21,100 for landscape maintenance services. Sufficient funds are available for the three years of the lease in the Park and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Public Works budget, account number 10122034-811400 and Water and Power account number 41208170-813900.

Respectfully submitted,



ARA MALOYAN
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Stacy Houser, D.P.A.
Management Analyst

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager