



City of Culver City

Staff Report

File #: 16-072, Version: 1

Item #: A-3.

CC - (1) Presentation by Larry Moss & Associates of Two Proposed Drought-Tolerant Schematic Plans to Replace City Hall's Landscaping; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.

Meeting Date: August 8, 2016

Contact Person/Dept: Joe Susca, Public Works-Administration
Phone Number: 310-253-5636

Fiscal Impact: Yes No

General Fund: Yes No

Public Hearing:

Action Item:

Attachments:

Commission Action Required: Yes No

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (08/02/2016); Larry Moss & Associates Landscape Architects (07/20/2016); (E-Mail) the following e-mail distribution list subscribers: Residential Parkway Landscaping Guidelines, Urban Forest Management Plan, Community Gardening, Sustainability/Environmental Issues, the Culver City Chamber of Commerce and Public Notifications (08/02/2016).

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson (07/28/16)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) receive a presentation from Larry Moss & Associates of two proposed schematic designs to replace City Hall's foliage with drought-tolerant landscaping; and (2) provide direction to the City Manager regarding their modification.

BACKGROUND

In recognition of several years of continuous drought and resulting potable water shortage in California, the City developed a Water Conservation Plan to achieve targeted water use reductions at City facilities and to provide information to community members to encourage a reduction in their water consumption. CIP No. PO002 *Citywide Water Conservation Programs* was created with \$200,000 in funds for FY 2015/16 and \$175,000 in additional funds were added in FY 2016/17 to further the effort, which includes the following components:

- Mailing a postcard to businesses and residents announcing mandatory water use restrictions and directing them to the City's website (www.culvercity.org/waterconservation <<http://www.culvercity.org/waterconservation>>) to obtain detailed information about water conservation programs. (Completed).
- Establishment of an incentive program to encourage turf removal and its replacement with drought-tolerant landscaping. (This program expired on 6-30-16).
- Modifying or replacing fixtures and irrigation systems at various City parks and facilities to reduce water use. (Completed).
- Hiring a Landscape Architect to prepare drought-tolerant landscaping plans for City Hall that will become a template for use at other City facilities.
- Hiring a Landscape Contractor to purchase and plant the drought-tolerant species developed by the architect.

On November 23, 2015, staff released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to six landscape architecture firms to complete the following scope of work (the "Project"):

1. Landscape Palette: Create a separate, drought-tolerant palette of plants and ground cover suitable for the Southern California region. The Landscape Palette developed will replace City Hall's existing water thirsty plants and portions of the lawn and shall be:
 - a. Aesthetically pleasing;
 - b. Comprised of indigenous plants (where feasible) and/or climate appropriate plants;
 - c. Species known for their long life;
 - d. Require a minimum amount of water and maintenance; and
 - e. Offer a variety of color, including some flowering plants.
2. Schematic Plans: Using the Landscape Palette, prepare two alternative schematic landscaping plans that include modification of the existing irrigation system to better suit their needs and reduce water waste. The Schematic Plans are to focus on modification of the softscape and incorporate reuse of the existing hardscape, drainage, lighting and electrical, benches, public art, water features and trees; all of which shall remain in place.
3. Presentation: Present the two alternative Schematic Plans to the City Council for consideration.
4. Construction Documents: Once a Schematic Plan is selected, prepare digital and hard copy construction documents suitable for bidding and to obtain any required permits.
5. Watering Schedule: Prepare a watering schedule that reflects the needs of the new plantings for each of the four seasons.
6. Bid Package: Prepare a bid package that includes the construction documents as an exhibit for release to competing Landscape Contractors. The Bid Package shall include removal of the applicable softscape, irrigation system modifications, purchasing replacement foliage/groundcover, use of fertilized; light-weight soil suitable for on-structure applications and payment of prevailing wages for the labor necessary to complete the work.
7. Construction Observation: Review bid submittals, approve plant selections, perform inspections and attend construction meetings to ensure the work is completed in a manner that adheres to the construction documents.

On February 8, 2016, the City Council approved a \$45,540 agreement with Lawrence R. Moss & Associates (LRM) to complete the Project.

DISCUSSION:

LRM has prepared two proposed schematic designs that are being presented to the City Council this evening to consider (See Attachments 1 and 2).¹ Both plans work well with existing site conditions such as sun exposure, tree cover, existing plant materials, and soil conditions. Both native drought tolerant options outlined below will become a pleasant destination that informs and educates the public.

1. *Option 1: The Garden at City Hall (Garden)* - The Garden design includes curving paths that weave throughout the space suggesting a natural landscape as a counterpoint to the architecture of City Hall. Meandering paths widen to create sitting areas. Sunny open areas closer to the sidewalk are planted with coastal sage scrub plants that will be individually identified by plant markers. A woodland demonstration garden in the shade zone along the building will demonstrate the understory plants associated with the coastal sage plant community.
2. *Option 2: A Community Park at City Hall (Community Park)*. The Community Park design includes an arching path that invites pedestrians from the sidewalk to walk through the Community Park, complementing the strong design of City Hall. Sitting areas are arranged off of the main path. Sunny open areas within the arc demonstrate coastal sage scrub plantings, a native plant community to the City that will be individually identified by plant markers. A woodland demonstration garden in the shade zone along the building demonstrates the understory planting associated with the coastal sage plant community and includes meandering paths.

The Community Park option includes installation of Bentgrass, which is a ground cover similar to turf however, when compared to traditional grass it requires half the amount of watering. If the Bentgrass does well in these areas that do not receive foot traffic, LRM recommends it replace the courtyard turf that is used by attendees of the City's Boulevard Music Summer Festival concerts and other special events.

Both options include:

- Removal of the invasive Pampas Grass from atop the column planters located at the entrance to the Mike Balkman Council Chambers. As a result of their height, the foliage in these planters has not been regularly maintained and it is recommended they become a sculptural element only, without plants.
- Since plants and trees require different watering devices and schedules, their watering zones will be separated.

LRM estimates implementation of either design will cut City Hall's landscaping water use by at least 50%.

Next Steps:

The two schematic designs will be modified to reflect input received this evening from the City

Council and members of the community. A recording of the presentation this evening, along with the two schematic designs will be posted onto the City's website. An online survey will invite the public to view tonight's presentation and the two schematic plans in PDF format, with a request they vote for the one they prefer. At a future City Council meeting, staff will announce the results of the vote and request the City Council adopt one of the designs. Once a design is adopted, LRM will proceed to prepare the necessary construction and bid documents to release to competing landscape contractors to complete the work.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

LRM indicates that both designs are comparable in cost to implement and staff anticipates sufficient funds remain in CIP No. PO002 *Citywide Water Conservation Programs* to hire a landscape contractor to remove City Hall's old softscape, perform irrigation system modifications, and to purchase and plant the replacement foliage and groundcover.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Option 1: Garden Schematic Design
2. Option 2: Community Park Schematic Design

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Receive a presentation from Larry R. Moss & Associates of two proposed schematic designs to replace City Hall's landscaping with drought tolerant plantings; and
2. A. Direct staff to modify one or both of the schematic designs; and/or

B. Direct staff to prepare and release a survey inviting members of the community to vote for their preferred design.

NOTES:

¹The schematic plans in the attachments are depicted without color to clearly delineate their hardscape differences however, LRM's presentation will depict them in color, along with the species contained in the plant palette and the rationale behind their selection.