



## **PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

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### **CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT**

Meeting: October 15, 2019

#### **Subject**

Update on revised Community Garden Improvements Project at McClellan Ranch Preserve and provide any input. Status update on the investigation of creating community gardens at other parks in the City and provide any input.

#### **Recommended Action**

Review the revised design and proposed construction approach for the Community Garden Improvements Project and provide input. Receive status update on the investigation of creating community gardens at other parks in the City and provide any input.

#### **Discussion**

The Community Garden at McClellan Ranch Preserve was established in 1974 and was a popular amenity in the City for many years. However, over the years, the garden fell into a state of disrepair and the local wildlife (i.e. ground squirrels and other rodents) proliferated, forcing gardeners to install wire cages and screens in order to protect their plots and their produce.

The fence around the Community Garden was failing in many places and was unreliable as a secure enclosure. The impact of rodents on garden produce was pervasive and persistent. The garden irrigation system was past its useful life, becoming maintenance-intensive and insufficient to meet the needs of the garden. The existing garden plot sizing was variable and needed to be reconfigured for regular plot sizes.

The purpose of this project is to develop a new vision for the garden including more regular-sized garden plots, new irrigation and new fencing.

An earlier garden design, that was the result of several meetings with the gardener community between September 2017 and January 2018, was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on April 5, 2018 and was issued for bidding on August 31, 2018. On September 18, 2018, three bids were received, and all bids exceeded the construction budget. Staff then directed the design consultant, Callander Associates, Landscape

Architects, to repackage the project and turn some of the work into bid alternates in order to bring the project within budget, with the intention of re-bidding the project. However, at the October 18, 2018 City Council meeting, the project was de-funded and shelved to fund design services for a New City Hall.

Since the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, the proposed New City Hall project was reprioritized and several CIP projects that were defunded, including the Community Garden, were proposed for this year's CIP budget. Staff proposed a budget of \$1.5 million for project design and construction, based on the bids that were received in the previous year. At the June 18, 2019 City Council meeting, Council reduced the budget for the Community Garden at McClellan Ranch Preserve to \$1.2 million and directed staff to allocate \$300,000 to explore opportunities to build other community gardens at other locations within the City. Further, Council directed staff to utilize volunteer efforts to help build the community gardens in order to reduce cost.

With these parameters, staff directed the design consultant to revise the Community Garden layout to meet the new budget and to consider where and how volunteer forces can be used during the construction phase. The proposed conceptual layout presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission on October 3, 2019 provided a total 120 plots, which includes 6 in-ground plots, 8 ADA raised beds, and 106 non-ADA raised beds. This is an increase from the previous design which had a total of 88 plots (14 small, 47 medium, 15 large, 7 master gardener and 5 ADA plots)

Construction is proposed to be sequenced as follows:

<b>Task</b>	<b>By Contractor</b>	<b>By City</b>	<b>By Volunteers</b>
1. Project startup/mobilization	●		
2. Demolition	●		
3. Erosion control	●		
4. Earthwork and grading	●		
5. Install underground hardware cloth	●		
6. Construct perimeter fence and gate(s)	●		
7. Install new irrigation controller, lines and risers, including a hose bibb at every other plot	●		
8. Construct ADA raised beds	●		
9. Install decomposed granite (DG) pathways	●		
10. Stake the corners of in-ground and non-ADA planter beds	●		
11. Construct concrete pads and tool sheds	●		

12. Install sheet mulch underlayment for wood chipped pathways	•		
13. Procure lumber, fasteners, hardware, top soil, wood chips, tool sheds (2) and ADA picnic tables (2)		•	
14. Fabricate planter bed kits (pre-cut lumber and pre-drill holes)		•	
15. Construct non-ADA raised beds		• (assist)	•
16. Fill planter beds with top soil		•	• (assist)
17. Place wood chips on pathways			•
18. Assemble picnic tables			•

The construction budget for this revised Community Garden design at McClellan Ranch Preserve is \$900,000. The remaining \$300,000 will cover soft costs including fees for the landscape architect, biological monitoring and bird surveys, and staff time.

To assist with keeping construction costs under the budget, individual volunteers and/or organizations will be sought to assist with construction of the gardens. Volunteers will assemble the non-ADA raised beds and picnic tables. They will also assist with filling the beds with top soil and spreading wood chips on garden pathways. Upon completion of the gardens, gardeners will be expected to volunteer a certain amount of time to keep the gardens organized and free of weeds in the pathways.

At the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting the proposed conceptual layout of 120 plots, exceeded the approved budget by approximately \$75,000. The Commission accepted the revised conceptual design and acknowledged the use of volunteers and bid alternates to facilitate construction of the project within the approved budget. Based on comments received at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting, staff made minor revisions to the layout reducing the total number of plots to 107 and they raised the hardware cloth, that protects the entire garden from burrowing rodents, from 2-ft deep to 1-ft deep. This resulted in significant cost savings which resulted in a base bid cost estimate within budget. Additive alternates will be included in the bid schedule to allow for additional planter beds (Phase 2), site furnishings and a shade structure should bids come in lower than estimated. Attachment A details the proposed conceptual layout for both the base and additive alternates.

The next steps for the project are to finalize the design and prepare construction documents. The construction contract will then be issued for competitive bidding.

The target completion date for the project is Memorial Day 2020. In order for the project to meet this schedule, construction will need to begin in January 2020 in advance of the bird nesting season that begins in February 2020.

As directed by City Council, staff is also investigating the possibility of creating community gardens at other parks in the City. Wilson Park, Creekside Park, and Portal Park are currently under consideration for satellite gardens. Staff is currently researching community garden programs in other communities to develop the best options for implementation and will return to Council with additional information at a later date.

**Sustainability Impact**

The Community Garden Improvement project is consistent with General Plan Policy RPC-2.5: Range of Park Amenities, and General Plan Strategies RPC-2.5.1: Special Needs and RPC-2.5.3 Community Gardens. Additionally, the project proposes to repair old and leaking irrigation lines, thus minimizing waste of water resources.

This project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sections 15301 (repair and minor alterations of existing facilities and topographical features), 15303 (new construction or conversion of small structures), and 15304 (minor alterations to land)).

**Fiscal Impact**

Funds for the redesign and reconstruction of the Community Garden at McClellan Ranch Preserve are allocated in the FY19-20 Capital Improvement Program. No additional budget allocation is needed.

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**Prepared by:** Alex Acenas, Public Works Project Manager

**Reviewed by:** Chad Mosley, Assistant Director Public Works Department

**Approved for Submission by:** Deborah Feng, City Manager

**Attachments:**

A – Revised Conceptual Plan October 2019