



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: October 2, 2007

TO: Chairperson and Boardmembers

FROM: Housing and Redevelopment Division, Community Development Department

SUBJECT: Plaza Granada Design Contract

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Redevelopment Agency Board authorize the Deputy Director to execute a Professional Design Services Agreement, subject to approval of Agency counsel, with County Landscape & Design in an amount not to exceed \$25,000, to provide conceptual, preliminary and final design services for Plaza Granada, and authorize the Deputy Director to approve expenditures of up to \$2,500 to cover any cost increases that may result from change orders for extra work.

BACKGROUND:

On December 5, 2006, at a Joint Meeting of the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency Board, the Board approved a contract with Peikert Group Architects, LLC (Peikert) in the amount of \$46,000 for design and architectural administration services for site improvements adjacent to the Casas las Granadas affordable housing project, including the open space at 21 E Anapamu Street, hereafter referred to as Plaza Granada.

In April of 2006, a group of community leaders in the landscape architecture field led by Owen Dell, Meg Tibbets, and Stacey Isaac and unofficially known as the Fossil Free Landscape Group (FFLG), spent an afternoon on Agency-owned land at 125 State Street as part of a design charette, looking into possible fossil free landscape ideas for the site. The premise behind the FFLG was to design, construct, and maintain landscapes without the use of fossil fuels. Since that time, City staff (at the request of City Council) has been seeking to include the fossil free idea into a real world project.

In May 2007, staff began conversations with a community group to explore the feasibility of enacting their proposal to design, install and maintain Plaza Granada as a fossil free landscape: a first-of-its-kind public space, built and maintained without the use of fossil

REVIEWED BY: _____ Finance _____ Attorney

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fuels. Not an official organization, FFLG addressed the City's sustainability goals in a unique and ambitious way. Elements of the fossil free approach include:

- Incorporation of handmade hardscape and reclaimed waste-stream materials
- Harvesting of rainwater from adjacent structures for irrigation
- Construction using hand tools and non-fossil-fueled transportation
- Maintenance using hand tools and on-site green waste management

Over the following several months, Redevelopment Agency and Parks staff worked with FFLG to develop and test the feasibility of their proposal. The group's three principals produced an innovative conceptual landscape design that responded to the aesthetic and functional needs of a civic plaza. However, as the process evolved, it became clear that the fossil free approach was indeed ground breaking, and, as such, many of the project's details, from the group's organizational structure to implementation logistics, were uncertain and would require a significant amount of time to define. Given the large number of unknowns contained within the fossil free landscape proposal, and the fact that the Casas las Granadas housing development is scheduled to open for residency by January 2008, pursuing the original plan presented by FFLG was determined to be infeasible.

DISCUSSION:

Staff understands the desire of residents and business owners to complete work in the area, and also supports the unique opportunity to develop an innovative and sustainable landscape design at Plaza Granada. Therefore, the City received a proposal from County Landscape & Design, owned and operated by Owen Dell, to design Plaza Granada in a manner that builds upon previous fossil free work, promotes the fossil free landscape concept, and furthers the City's efforts to encourage inventive approaches to sustainability. Several elements of the fossil free landscape model will be retained or modified to facilitate implementation while still presenting pioneering solutions to civic landscape design. These elements include:

- Using recycled, salvaged or renewable building materials
- Installing locally sourced, native plants
- Installing plants that are pest and disease resistant, and properly sized to reduce long-term maintenance
- Catching local run-off in an on-site swale feature for groundwater recharge

The proposed design approach for this area has also received the expressed participation of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and the Arts Advisory Committee. By incorporating literal and interpretive elements into the design, aesthetic and educational elements will draw people into the plaza and keep them engaged as they pass through the space. Public art, interesting details, and educational signage will all contribute to a feeling of discovery. Further, these elements of interest inform the passerby about conserving natural resources and reducing pollution and waste generation, thereby supporting the City's goal to be a leader in creating a sustainable community.

Given this opportunity to support original practices in sustainable landscape design, staff is requesting that the Agency Board authorize a professional design services agreement with County Landscape & Design not to exceed \$25,000. Additionally, it is requested that an additional \$2,500 be authorized to cover any cost increases that may result from change orders for extra work.

Staff estimates that the fiscal impact of Plaza Granada will be less than \$10,000 annually.

Funding:

Staff is recommending that the funding for this contract come from a reallocation of an existing appropriation related to this same project. In December 2006, the Agency Board approved an appropriation of \$217,000 to fund the estimated cost of removing contaminated soil from the site. The Soil Remediation project was completed in early 2007 and came in on-time and under budget by approximately \$64,000. Staff is proposing to reallocate \$27,500 from the remaining funds in that account to fund the design services proposed by County Landscape Design.

Funding for the construction of the proposed improvements would come from the \$150,000 previously appropriated at the Redevelopment Agency Board Special Meeting of January 27, 2005, to the Anapamu Open Space Project account.

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Director/Housing & Redevelopment Manager/JTC

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Community Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office