

Claremont City Council
Agenda Report

Item No.: 9.
Reviewed by: _____
City Manager _____
Finance Director _____

TO: TONY RAMOS, CITY MANAGER

FROM: KATHLEEN SALGUERO TREPA, COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES DIRECTOR

DATE: JULY 9, 2013

SUBJECT: CLAREMONT HILLS WILDERNESS PARK MASTER PLAN SCOPE OF WORK

SUMMARY

At its January 12, 2013 priority setting workshop, the City Council discussed the need to develop a master plan for the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park (CHWP). The City Council directed staff to retain a consultant to prepare a master plan for the Wilderness Park and requested that staff bring back a scope of work for Council's consideration and approval. This scope of work (Attachment A) will be incorporated in the formal Request for Proposals (RFP), which will be issued in July upon City Council approval of the scope of work.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the tasks set forth in the scope of work for the CHWP Master Plan Request for Proposal and direct staff to finalize and send out the RFP.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION

In addition to the staff recommendation, there are the following alternatives:

- A. Approve individually selected tasks in the scope of work for the CHWP Master Plan Request for Proposal.
- B. Request additional information.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Costs for park master plans can vary widely depending upon the scope of work and individual community goals; therefore, staff is hesitant to provide an estimate for this project. The attached scope of work has been designed with individual tasks so that, depending on proposed costs for each task, the City may elect to proceed with only specific tasks or all, as deemed appropriate and as funding allows.

Because the master plan was not planned for the current budget cycle, funding has not been appropriated to complete this project. Therefore, when the bid responses are received and staff brings forth a recommendation for contract award, a request to appropriate funds for this project will be included for consideration at that time.

Several staff participated in compiling the information to complete this report. Costs to research and prepare this report are estimated to be \$3,905. These costs are included in the operating budget of the Community and Human Services Department.

ANALYSIS

At the City Council's priority setting workshop on January 12, 2013, the Council discussed a variety of issues associated with the Wilderness Park. For several years, the City Council, Community and Human Services Commission, staff, and the community have been grappling with a number of issues related to the dramatic increase in park users in recent years.

In October 2012, the City Council authorized a contract with ALTA Planning to conduct a formal census count of park users to determine more accurately how many and what type of users (hiker, biker, horse rider) visit the CHWP each year. The first census count was conducted on a weekend in early December 2012 and the second census count occurred the weekend of June 8, 2013.

At the time of the priority workshop, the City Council had just approved revised hours of operation for the park, but committed to re-evaluating those hours after the first year due to the desire of many park users to visit the park for sunrise, sunset and even full moon hikes. In addition, after significant public dialogue, the construction of the north parking lot was well underway while the neighborhoods adjacent to the N. Mills entrance were heavily impacted by pedestrian and vehicular traffic. However, after the new lot opened, many were concerned that parking impacts would be felt in neighborhoods adjacent to the CHWP's entry points as people sought to avoid the planned parking restrictions and permit program.

Scope of Work

On January 12, 2013, City Council directed staff to prepare a master plan for the Wilderness Park. The master plan would update the current management plan for the Wilderness Park and incorporate into one plan the various documents and agreements that guide the operation and maintenance of the wilderness areas owned by the City of Claremont. The goal is to create, through community dialogue, one unified vision for the management, maintenance, and expansion of the Wilderness Park, one which balances utilizing the hillsides as a recreational opportunity while preserving this natural resource for environmental purposes.

Staff from various City departments, the Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation and the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy assisted with developing the scope of work. Staff has designed the scope of work to include individual tasks so that all or select tasks can be authorized based on proposed costs and available funding. While the goal is to include the entire scope of work in the master planning process, because estimated costs are unknown, the individual tasks provide the flexibility to authorize specific items based on available funding.

The Scope of Work proposes the following tasks:

- Task 1: Review Existing CHWP Documentation
- Task 2: Public Participation Plan
- Task 3: Inventory of Existing Conditions
- Task 4: Carrying Capacity
- Task 5: Environmental Baseline and Additional Options
- Task 6: Park Expansion
- Task 7: Park Usage and Amenities
- Task 8: Parking Evaluations and Options
- Task 9: Site Map
- Task 10: Volunteer Engagement
- Task 11: Funding Options
- Task 12: Final Master Plan Preparation

Staff anticipates releasing the RFP in July and bringing a contract back through the Community and Human Services Commission to the City Council for award in the fall.

RELATIONSHIP TO CITY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Staff has evaluated the agenda item in relationship to the City's strategic and visioning documents and finds the following:

Council Priorities – This item relates to the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park.

Sustainability Plan – This item complies with the following goals of the Sustainability Plan:

- 5.1 - Protect Natural Open Space – Maintain, improve and protect natural open space resources throughout Claremont.
- 5.2 - Expand and Improve Our Network of Constructed Open Spaces - Develop and maintain a constructed open space system diverse in services, uses and opportunities which conserves natural resources; provides passive and active recreation; offers a fair distribution of parks, pathways and public gathering places throughout the community; increases the aesthetic quality of the community and provides for urban agriculture.
- 5.4 - Protect the Urban Forest - Protect, improve, and expand our urban forest.
- 5.5 - Inform the Public - Instill the importance of open space and smart land use in our community along with an understanding of how to manage our resources for a more sustainable City and planet.

Economic Sustainability Plan – This item does not apply to the recommendations outlined in the Economic Sustainability Plan.

General Plan – This item addresses Chapter 5 Open Space, Parkland, Conservation, and Air Quality Element of the General Plan and furthers goals:

- 5-1- Our Vision Valuing Our Natural Resources and the Open Spaces that Define Claremont;
- 5-1 - The Underpinnings of Community Sustainability Open Space and Parkland;
- 5-3 - Preservation and Enhancement;

5-24 - Conservation A: Comprehensive Sustainable Approach to Resource Preservation and Enhancement;

FY 2012-14 Budget – This item does not apply to the Department Work Plan Goal.

Youth and Family Master Plan – This item complies with Goal 8 of the Youth and Family Master Plan: Provide a Safe, Secure and Sustainable Environment. Safe neighborhoods are essential to a healthy community.

CEQA REVIEW

The Community Development Director has determined that this matter is covered by the general rule that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) applies only to projects that have the potential of causing a significant effect on the environment in accordance with Section 15061 (b) (3) of the Guidelines. The development of the CHWP Scope of Work for a Master Plan will not, in and of itself, have a significant effect on the environment as the action by itself will not result in or lead to a physical change in Claremont. Therefore, no additional environmental review is needed.

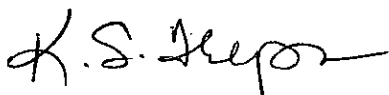
COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

At its June 5, 2013 meeting, the Community and Human Services Commission approved staff's recommendation: to approve the tasks set forth in the scope of work for the CHWP Master Plan Request for Proposal, and forward to the City Council for consideration and approval. The recommendation was supported by a 6-1-0 vote. Commissioner Winnick was absent (Attachment B).

PUBLIC NOTICE PROCESS

This item has been noticed through the regular agenda notification process. Copies are available at the City Hall public counter, the Youth Activity Center, the Alexander Hughes Community Center, the City website, and the Claremont Public Library.

Submitted by:



Kathleen Salguero Tropa
Community and Human Services Director

Prepared by:



Bill Pallotto
Community and Human Services Manager

Attachment A: CHWP Master Plan RFP Scope of Work
Attachment B: June 5, 2013 Community and Human Services Commission Minutes

CHWP Master Plan RFP Scope of Work | 2013

The City of Claremont is requesting proposals from qualified firms to prepare a comprehensive master plan for the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park (CHWP). This plan is to update the current management plan for the Wilderness Park and incorporate into one master plan the various documents and agreements that guide the operation and maintenance of the wilderness areas owned by the City of Claremont.

The following is a list of tasks to be completed as part of preparing the master plan for the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park. In some cases, multiple options are presented within a task. Consultants are to provide proposals and costs for all listed options. Consultants are also encouraged to present innovative concepts to achieve the goals set forth in the Request for Proposal (RFP) and to seek collaborative partnerships with vested community stake holders as part of the proposal. Each task should include a separate cost, a detailed discussion of proposed activities with sub-costs if appropriate, any assumptions that are included, particularly as they affect cost, and a timeline for completion.

Task 1: Review Existing Documentation

Consultant is expected to be familiar with the following documents:

- CHWP Management Policies and Guidelines,
- CHWP Vegetation Management Plan,
- Draft Conceptual Area Protection Plan,
- James P. Higginbotham & Sycamore Canyon Park Master Plan,
- Grant deeds for various properties that now comprise the CHWP to understand land use restrictions,
- Map of the open space area, including the various acquisitions (Sycamore Canyon, Johnson's Pasture, Gale Ranch, Claremont Hills Wilderness Park, McKenna – CHWP expansion, Rancho and De Los Amigos Property – CHWP expansion acquisitions)
- General Plan, Chapter 5 – Open Space, Parkland, Conservation and Air Quality Element,
- Municipal Code, Chapter 11 related to the public parks and facilities including the CHWP,
- CHWP Parking Permit Policy,
- Palmer Canyon Settlement Agreement,
- Pomona Valley Protective Association Lease (for the N. Mills "North" lot),
- Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation Goals and Objectives,
- Census Count Final Report from ALTA Planning (estimated delivery is July-August 2013),
- Staff reports related to the CHWP and the issues associated with its escalating usage,
- And other relevant policies and documents which may be identified during discussions.

Task 2: Public Participation

Develop a public participation program that is consistent with the traditions of the Claremont community, which should include community forums, workshops, focus groups, and surveys from residents and park users alike to maximize community dialogue. The public should have ample opportunity to fully engage in the process of evaluating and determining recommendations for the tasks delineated below. While a number of competing interests and priorities associated with park usage have been expressed by various stakeholders, the goal of the master plan is to determine the best balance of utilizing the park as a recreational opportunity while preserving this natural resource for environmental purposes. The expectation is to develop a forum for

collaboration with the community and vested stake holders. The consultant will be responsible for conducting meetings, developing agendas and surveys, and interacting with members of the public as necessary. Issues that are identified during the public participation process will need to be addressed in the final master plan.

Task 3: Inventory of Existing Conditions

The consultant shall document conditions in the CHWP and all access points to the park area, including the main entrance at N. Mills as well as at Pomello Drive, Mountain Avenue, Via Santa Catarina, Higginbotham Park, Indian Hill Boulevard, Marshall Canyon, Evey Canyon, Palmer Canyon, and along the Thompson Creek Trail (TCT). The City has vehicle counts by various locations, which will be provided to the consultant. Areas to be inventoried include, but are not limited to, those listed below. Consultant should base final list on observations and prior experience.

- **Parking Locations:**
 - Parking lots – two on N. Mills, top of Indian Hill Blvd, La Puerta Park.
 - Surface Street Parking along N. Mills, Via Santa Catarina, Pomello, Via Padova, Strasburg Ct, top of Indian Hill Blvd, Mountain adjacent to the TCT, at N. Towne above Baseline (west shoulder area).
 - Note: See Task 8.
- **Trails** – the trail network within the park itself, including the fire roads and the new official single track from Sycamore Canyon, as well as the unofficial single track bike trails that have become established. Regional linkages shall also be noted.
 - Note: Concerns have been expressed by some regarding environmental damage associated with new single track trails being established by bikers while others have expressed a desire for new, formally established and maintained trails.
- **Facilities** - shade covers on top of main loop, benches, water fountains, bike racks, gates, trash containers, portable restrooms at main entrance, etc.
- **Signage** – on all trail segments, the kiosks at the north and south lots on N. Mills, parking lots, including trail names, directional, informational. and the possibility of adding educational signage.
- **General environmental conditions** –
 - Impacts related to litter and debris, vegetation management, erosion issues (associated with unofficial bike trails and elsewhere), brush clearing, fire risk mitigation.

Task 4: Carrying Capacity

The consultant shall recommend a carrying capacity for the park's trail system, working with community members and stake holders, in the context of any national or state standards or what has been established for any other similar parks. The carry capacity shall include a maximum estimated capacity for the main loop from the N. Mills entrance, the fire roads, and the official and unofficial single track trails. If the determined carry capacity is less than the various trail segments can currently support, the consultant shall recommend options for controlling attendance or mitigating impacts.

Task 5: Environmental Baseline & Resource Management Plan

Task 5a: General assessment of the conditions of the park.

Consultant shall perform a general environmental assessment of the Wilderness Park area, particularly as it relates to human impact to habitat and wildlife. Any areas of concern shall be noted with recommendations for mitigating measures. Areas of potentially significant habitat value or locations of documented sensitive or endangered species shall be included in the Site Map listed as Task 9. Consultant shall review documents made available from the environmental resource agencies and include any references to such documents in relevant findings.

Task 5b: Resource Management Plan

Consultant shall prepare a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Wilderness Park to be used to guide conservation of the park's natural resources during the City's management and maintenance of the park and its amenities. The RMP shall include the baseline description of the site developed during Task 5a as well as recommendations for the protection and enhancement of water resources (wetlands and riparian areas), habitat quality, wildlife (including shelter, food and migration routes), vegetation (including invasive species control) and significant natural and cultural resources.

Task 6: Park Expansion

Working with staff from the City Manager's Office, the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy, and the Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation, consultant shall assess contiguous and nearby privately owned parcels and prioritize for possible acquisition to expand the park, improve access points, and provide additional parking options.

Task 7: Park Usage & Amenities

Consultant shall evaluate park usage and amenities and make recommendations related to the following, factoring in community input, cost considerations, and other factors deemed relevant. Consultant shall compare current and proposed amenities and usage to other similar parks in Southern California as reference:

- Types of users – hikers, bikers, equestrian riders. Should trail segments be restricted to various user types and how should those segments be signed and restrictions enforced? Consultant shall refer to the ALTA Planning census study referenced in Task 1.
- Hours of operation – Recently the hours were changed from dawn to dusk to twelve specific times by month to aid in enforcing park hours. Nighttime use of the park is currently prohibited although requests have been submitted for nighttime use, such as full moon hikes.
- Sponsored activities – Currently, organized groups greater than 20 are required to obtain a permit; and competitive and fund raising activities are prohibited.
- Site furnishings – shelters, benches, tables, trash receptacles.

- Signage – Evaluate current in-park directional signage and make recommendations regarding style and placement. Suggestions have been received to change in-park signage to be more “back country” in nature. Evaluate options for incorporating educational and informational signage highlighting habitat and animals, unique vistas, and the history of the area.
- Educational Programming – In addition to education signage on the trail, provide recommendations and estimated costs to develop educational information and programming at the Wilderness Park, such as mobile applications, guided hikes, and printed and electronic public information.
- Restroom facilities – Lease restrictions prevent any structures on the land leased for the north parking lot at N. Mills; therefore, only portable restrooms are permitted in the current location. In addition, the deed for the transfer of the original 1,220 acres of the original CHWP acquisition prevents the installation of any significant structures within those boundaries. However, the need is clearly evident along the “main loop” from the entrance on N. Mills to establish sanitary facilities along this popular 5 mile hike.
- Trail Network – Evaluate current official and unofficial trail segments. Provide recommendations on any additional trail segments which could be developed and how to manage the establishment of unofficial trails. Evaluate regional linkages and opportunities to facilitate other access points to the San Gabriel foothills.

Task 8: Parking Evaluation & Options

Parking to access the CHWP has become a significant concern for neighborhoods adjacent to access points. Consultant will assess current parking locations compared to need. City will provide additional parking location options. As part of the community participation process, consultant will assess parking options with various neighborhoods. Community Development will then undertake an engineering study to evaluate any acceptable parking options, which would be incorporated into the master plan.

Consultant should also suggest and evaluate other creative parking options to allow visitors to access the CHWP, such as weekend use of other nearby parking lots or through shuttle transportation to the CHWP.

Task 9: Site Map

Consultant shall prepare a GIS based site map illustrating the trail network, site amenities, access points, significant habitat or natural or cultural resource features, and any proposed improvements. An initial Site Map shall be prepared early in the project to document the existing park conditions for use during the community participation process, which will then be expanded upon as tasks are completed. The City will provide GIS layers (geodatabase or shape file format) for existing layers, which include land acquisitions, trail segments, and topographical information. Site amenities, signage, and cultural and natural resources have not been mapped.

Task 10: Volunteer Engagement

Consultant shall, through community dialogue, outline options to engage volunteers to help support park operations, including suggestions to expand and manage the current Park Ranger program, to solicit

volunteers for ongoing maintenance and / or special projects, such as reforestation, invasive species removal, and vegetation management, to guide educational hikes or support programming opportunities, or any other ideas that have community and staff support.

Task 11: Funding Options

Consultant shall identify funding opportunities for land acquisitions, site improvements, and trail expansion as well as a phasing plan for capital investments. Funding options for ongoing operations shall also be discussed.

Task 12: Master Plan

Based on the tasks approved in the contract and the outcomes above, consultant shall prepare a master plan that extends over a 5 – 10 year time frame, includes at a minimum, the following items and any costs associated with recommended investments.

- Introduction
- Purpose, goals and objectives
- Community outreach summary
- Recommendations regarding:
 - Trail system
 - Parking
 - Site amenities
 - Signage
 - Parking
 - Hours of operation
 - Acceptable uses and programming opportunities
 - Operations
 - Maintenance/renovation
 - Enforcement of rules and regulations
 - Public information
 - Staffing Plan
 - Open space management, including erosion control, habitat preservation, wildlife management
 - Partnerships
 - Expansion opportunities
 - Park map indicating current and future locations of trails, site amenities, significant features, parking options, etc.
 - Phasing plan for capital investment or major studies based on current financial resources, internal and private funding options, and public grants.

(Draft approved 6/28/13)

There was no public comment.

Commissioner Gottuso moved that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the following staff recommendation:

- 1. Continue to refer and adhere to the current Commissioner Handbook, which compiles relevant information from the Municipal Code Chapter 2, and related administrative policies and**
- 2. Discontinue the use of additional operating norms in a separate document.**

The motion was seconded by Commissioner Miletich and passed on a 6-0-1 vote with Commissioner Winnick absent.

9. Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Master Plan Scope of Work

Community and Human Services Manager Bill Pallotto reviewed the report and provided a brief history on how the idea of a Master Plan for the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park came about.

Manager Pallotto reported that City Council discussed the need for a Master Plan at its January 12 priority setting workshop and directed staff to retain a consultant to begin this project.

Manager Pallotto thanked the Wildlands Conservancy and the Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation with providing valuable information that assisted in compiling this report.

Commissioner Forester inquired as to if the National Recreation Area (NRA) status will be affected.

Manager Pallotto stated that Claremont is part of the NRA and the normal jurisdiction, rules, and guidelines that are already in effect will not change.

Director Tropa stated that the NRA area designation does not usurp local jurisdictional control for land use and indicated that regardless of what happens with the Master Plan, the NRA by itself would not change our control or use of the Wilderness Park.

Commissioner Gottuso inquired as to what type of feedback staff has received from the community and outside the community regarding the new parking policy.

Director Pallotto stated staff is finding that the parking meters are being used more than the parking passes.

Director Pallotto also reported that staff is keeping a record of all emails and phone calls received regarding the Wilderness Park.

Public Comment**Lissa Peterson – Claremont Wildlands Conservancy, President**

Ms. Peterson stated that the Conservancy is pleased that staff has come forward with a proposal for a Master Plan. She commended staff for moving forward with this project. Ms. Peterson also voiced her concern that issues in the park have been handled one piece at a time. The goal should be to create one unified vision and complete an over-all plan for all areas in the park. She also recommended going outside the City limits and work with neighboring cities related to the wilderness area to link the trails. This would help prevent over-crowding.

Dean McHenry – Claremont Wildlands Conservancy Board Member

Mr. McHenry feels that the objectives that are being pursued are contradictory regarding the desire to expand the trails but yet preserve the park. He also stated that the restrooms are an issue and recommends an additional restroom being added at the top of the trail.

Nancy Hamlett

Ms. Hamlett emphasized the importance of invasive plant control. She spoke about how these plants are coming into the area and displacing the native plants and ruining the water flow by consuming more water than the natural plants. Ms. Hamlett supports the project and concurs with Ms. Peterson's comments.

Mark Von Wodtke – Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation Board Member

Mr. Von Wodtke stressed that the City needs to recognize the Eco System and Climate Change and study and determine the watershed throughout the area when developing this Plan.

There was no further public comment.

Director Trepa stressed the goal of creating a public dialog on this issue.

Chair Henderson inquired as to if there will be working drafts available for public review before the final form comes before Commission and Council.

Director Trepa indicated that there will be drafts for various components of the Plan.

Commissioner Forester moved that the Community and Human Services Commission approve the tasks set forth in the scope of work for the Claremont Hills Wilderness Park Master Plan Request for Proposal, and forward to the City Council for consideration and approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bourne and passed on a 6-0-1 vote with Commissioner Winnick absent.

10. **2013 4th of July Celebration Update**

Human Services Senior Leader Amber Guzman provided a brief overview of the planning efforts underway for the 65th annual 4th of July Event. The theme for this year's event is "Claremont Rocks the 4th".