



## Legislation Text

File #: 2020-681, Version: 2

### Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, October 06, 2020

Consent

#### **SUBJECT:**

**CONSIDER AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH INTERWEST CONSULTING GROUP IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50,000 TO CONDUCT PUBLIC OUTREACH, COORDINATE THE COMMUNITY DESIGN PROCESS AND PERFORM TURNKEY GRANT WRITING FOR FOISIA PARK AND CARRIAGE CREST PARK APPLICATIONS (CITY COUNCIL)**

#### **I. SUMMARY**

In 2018, California voters passed Proposition 68 (Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018), which established a Statewide Program to issue bonds for, among other types of projects, new and improved parks statewide. Though a portion of this money was distributed on a per capita basis to jurisdictions in California, the majority is being distributed through a competitive grant process.

The current grant cycle (called Round 4) is intended by the State to be the last round of opportunities for cities to access these bond proceeds. The State intends to award \$395.3 Million dollars in funding. This is a very competitive process that requires significant effort and strict adherence to State criteria to present a viable project. Part of the criteria is that the proposed projects themselves go through an exhaustive public participation process to be considered “bottom up” projects, i.e. designed based on the desires of the park’s stakeholders, not just the City. This requirement makes Prop 68 applications significantly different than others that the City has applied for in the past.

Staff believes that there are two parks in the City that may produce competitive projects and recommends City Council consider moving forward with applications on each park. The City does not have the in-house expertise or staff time to conduct the proper public outreach or the intense grant writing effort to be able to submit a competitive grant and believes that outside expertise is required.

Interwest Consulting Group (ICG) is already under contract with the City to provide management and advisory services in the Public Works and Community Services Departments under a contract approved by the City Council on July 7. ICG also has experience writing grants for this program and is well versed in the requirements of a competitive project. In fact, in Round 3, ICG submitted a grant that was awarded the

maximum \$8.5 million for a city, one of only 9 grants statewide to be awarded the maximum.

Although it is impossible to know whether Carson's projects will be awarded any funding because so much depends on the competing submittals from other agencies around the state, staff believes that this grant opportunity is so important and unique that the City should employ maximum effort to submit the best projects possible. In addition, the grant application is due December 14, 2020 and given the time required to conduct all of the public outreach, develop the conceptual design, and then write the grant, it is most expeditious to move forward with this contract as an amendment to an existing contract. It is important to note that only a portion of the scope is the actual grant writing, but the value added brought by ICG is the coordination of the public outreach, design, and drafting, which is a different set of services than currently provided by the City's grant writers. A full RFP process to procure a full-service firm would not allow sufficient time to undertake the community outreach and prepare a competitive grant application.

The proposed award for City Council consideration is for an amendment to an existing contract with Interwest Consulting Group to provide public outreach, grant writing and conceptual design for Foisia Park and Carriage Crest Park (potentially with the adjacent Sanitation District Leased Property) in the amount of \$50,000. If the City Council would prefer to submit only one park application, the contract amendment would be for \$30,000. There are some combined activities and economies of scale that would be achieved by doing two parks at the same time.

## **II. RECOMMENDATION**

Take the following actions

1. APPROVE the proposed Amendment No. 2 to the Professional Services Agreement with Interwest Consulting Group in the amount of \$50,000, to conduct public outreach, coordinate design activities, and perform turnkey grant writing for applications to the State of California's Proposition 68 grant funds (Round 4) for Foisia Park and Carriage Crest Park potentially with the adjacent Sanitation District Leased Property).
2. AUTHORIZE the Mayor to execute all documents related to the Amendment.

## **III. ALTERNATIVES**

The City Council may take other actions as follows:

1. Approve a proposed Professional Services Contract with Interwest Consulting Group in

the amount of \$30,000 to conduct public outreach and perform turnkey grant writing on either one of the following parks: Foisia Park or Carriage Crest Park with or without the adjacent Sanitation District Leased Property; or

2. Take any other action deemed appropriate.

#### **IV. BACKGROUND**

In the first cycle of competitive grants within the Prop 68 program (called Round 3), 478 grants applications in the amount of \$2.9 Billion were submitted and \$254.9 Million (8.8% of grant requests) was awarded to 62 (13% of applications) park projects throughout the State. The awardees included cities, counties and special park districts. Agencies in Los Angeles County were awarded 15 grants, 9 of which were awarded to the City of LA, the County of LA or the LA Neighborhood Land Trust. This is a good indication of how competitive the program is. During this cycle, the City of Carson applied for \$5.3 Million dollars for improvements and renovation of Foisia Park. The City was not awarded the grant.

This cycle (Called Round 4), is intended to be the last cycle in the program with the State planning to award \$395.3 Million in park grants. Other key elements of the grant:

- There is no required local match for the grant. This is very unusual for a grant program and part of what makes this grant so attractive and creates so much competition for the funds;
- The grant awards are more heavily weighted to new parks and park expansions, however there is a goal of 20% of the money being used for park renovations;
- The intent of the State is to award grants where the local communities are heavily involved in the design of the parks and thus gives great weight to community design. The grant requires a minimum of 5 community outreach meetings that must show significant design input, so this element of the grant is critical;
- The State also places emphasis on parks that:
  - Contain cultural and community education components
  - Foster inclusivity
  - Embrace diversity
  - Improve community health
- Community outreach costs including professional services will be reimbursed by the grant in the case of a successful grant application; and
- The proposed project, together with all grant close-out paperwork, needs to be completed by June 30, 2025

The heavy weighting to community outreach and participation in the design process is one of the things that make this grant significantly different from other parks grants and part of the recommendation to use a firm like ICG to spearhead the application process. While the City did some community outreach for the 2019 application for Foisia Park, it was less than what is being proposed here with a more robust community design process that more precisely meets the requirements of the grant. Even if the City did not get grants for either

or both parks, the community input will still be of value to the City as it moves forward with any projects for these two parks.

## **V. FISCAL IMPACT**

The cost of professional services for this contract is available in the General Fund and can be absorbed in the department budget. If one or both of the grant applications are successful, a portion of these costs will be reimbursed through the grant.

## **VI. EXHIBITS**

1. Amendment No. 2 to a Professional Services Agreement with Interwest Consulting Group (pgs.5-13)

1.

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