



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No. _____

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DRAFT

AGENDA DATE: July 3, 2012

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Water Resources Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Intent To Acquire Access To The Rear Of Hope Reservoir

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution Of The Council Of The City Of Santa Barbara Declaring Its Intent To Acquire Access To The Rear Of Hope Reservoir.

DISCUSSION:

Hope Reservoir (Facility) is a one-million gallon, water storage reservoir located at Centinela Drive, near Campanil Drive. It was constructed in a residential neighborhood in 1970, and has an architectural design that is compatible with adjacent homes.

The Facility is located on the highest ground in the southwestern part of the City. As a result, it has been used for the City's placement of critical communications equipment in the rear of the Facility serving Police, Fire, Public Works, Airport, and Water and Wastewater facilities. A vicinity map and site plan is attached.

Unfortunately, the Facility is almost as wide as the property itself. The only access to the rear of the Facility is via a 30-inch wide pedestrian path. To gain access, as needed, to clean the reservoir and to operate and maintain the City's critical communications equipment, City staff and vehicles have been crossing the adjacent vacant lot to the westerly side of the City's property without the benefit of an easement. Research into City files has not revealed why the temporary construction easement obtained by the City on the adjacent parcel to the west, which was used when the Facility was being built, was not retained permanently.

If and when the adjacent parcel on the westerly side of the Facility is developed, City staff would lose vehicular access to the rear of the Facility, which would severely compromise and impact City staff's ability to operate and maintain critical City communications equipment, as well as clean and maintain the reservoir.

Public Works staff sent a letter, dated November 15, 2011, to the owner of the adjacent parcel to the west to begin a dialogue regarding the City's periodic need to gain access to the rear of the Facility. In the letter staff suggested that a mutually beneficial solution such as a common driveway with a shared easement that can access both properties could be negotiated and constructed. The letter also identified that it might be necessary for the City to obtain an easement of necessity or purchase a portion of the real property to access the landlocked rear of the Facility. Unfortunately, there was no response from the property owner to the November 15, 2011 letter. Subsequently a second letter, dated February 12, 2012, was sent by certified mail. Receipt of the letter was signed by the property owner but there was no further response.

The approximate area needed for construction, landscaping, and fence for the proposed twelve foot wide driveway is 6,830 square feet (0.157 acre) (please see attached "Hope Reservoir Access" map). Staff believes that the best approach for the City would be to purchase the property, rather than purchasing an easement. If the City is successful in purchasing property for the driveway, the adjacent parcel's area would be reduced from the existing 1.153 acre to a net 0.996 acre. This net size is compatible with the neighboring subdivision's 11 parcels, which vary in size from 0.872 acre to 1.114 acre, with an average of 0.932 acre.

As a part of the process to acquire access to the Facility it is anticipated that staff will negotiate contracts with consultants for appraisal services, and right of way services. The desired services should be within the purchase order authority of the City Administrator. Staff will seek independent proposals from the respective specialists. There will be some associated costs for title reports, survey field work, and plats.

Staff is requesting adoption of the attached Resolution in order to demonstrate the City's desire to negotiate and acquire permanent access to the rear of the Facility. Upon successful negotiation with the property owner, staff will return to Council to seek authorization to purchase the property or easement.

On June 11, 2012, the Water Commission concurred (x/x) with this Council Agenda Report recommendation.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

There are sufficient monies in the Water Fund Operating Budget to cover appraisal and right of way professional services, and miscellaneous costs which are estimated to be less than \$15,000.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Vicinity Map
2. Site Map
3. Hope Reservoir Proposed Access

PREPARED BY: Rebecca Bjork, Water Resources Manager/RR/mh

SUBMITTED BY: Christine F. Andersen, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office