



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 28, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Louise Lowry Davis Center Renovation Project

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation on the concept plans for Louise Lowry Davis Center Renovation Project.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The Louise Lowry Davis Center, located at 1232 De La Vina Street, includes a shared parking lot, patio courtyard and a one-story structure. The 4,189 sq. ft. structure provides two large multi-purpose rooms, two offices, restrooms and a warming kitchen. Originally built in 1923, the structure housed the first public school dedicated to vocational training. In 1933, the City received permission from the Board of Education to use the facility as a community recreation center. After over 30 years of recreational use, the building was deeded to the City in 1969. Louise Lowry Davis, an outstanding City Recreation Supervisor of women's sports, raised and donated a quarter of the funds to refurbish the interior and to provide recreational activities for adults. In 1991, the property was declared a Structure of Merit. In 2005, heating and partial air-conditioning was installed, the roof replaced, the electrical system upgraded, and building code compliant restrooms and ramp were installed. This facility shares the same block as two other City-owned parks and recreation community assets, the Spencer Adams Park and Lawn Bowls Facility and the 1235 Teen Center.

The Louise Lowry Davis Center currently hosts a variety of activities for citizens 50 and older including bridge, chess, knitting, yoga, tai chi and several senior-focused informational lectures. In addition, Santa Barbara County and the Community Action Commission use the facility to provide free hot lunches to low-income seniors Monday through Friday. The facility also offers affordable meeting space to non-profit organizations, and a venue for business functions and private events such as weddings, receptions, and parties.

Renovation Project Objectives

In fall 2015, the Parks and Recreation Department (Department) developed a facility renovation concept and scope of work as a guide to promote a more functional community resource. The proposed interior improvements focus on enhancing the building's circulation, storage, temperature control, lighting and programming flexibility. The exterior improvements concentrate on refining site safety, building aesthetics, signage, accessibility, and drainage while maximizing use of the existing southeast patio. The overall project goal is to expand the functionality of the facility as a community resource while respecting the historic integrity of the structure.

Concept Plan

On June 7, 2016, City Council executed an agreement with Bildsten Architecture and Planning Inc. to develop conceptual and preliminary design drawings to identify the Project's full scope of work and estimated construction costs. After meeting with staff, caterers, regular venue renters and seniors who frequent the facility, the architect created a conceptual plan. The exterior changes include converting the De La Vina Street entrance into a small balcony, fencing in the southwestern patio, creating two sets of doors connecting the patio with the building and providing shade with a new pergola. The interior changes include replacing the two offices on the south side of the building with one smaller office and reception area; installing a movable partition wall to create a more flexible multipurpose room; remodeling the storage and janitor closet to be more efficient; exposing the original steel trusses in the larger multipurpose room to better balance the scale of the space; and, making changes to the kitchen cabinetry in response to caterer recommendations. These building improvements will help the Department better serve the city's growing senior population with a safe, accessible, inviting facility while maximizing the functionality of a community resource.

Next Steps

Once the conceptual plan is refined, the project will be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission for compatibility, the Planning Division for California Environmental Quality Act compliance, and the Creeks Division for Storm Water Management Program compliance. Without any significant obstacles, it is anticipated the design and Planning Division entitlements could be complete within six months. At that time, the Department will evaluate the preliminary design and construction estimate to determine the full scope of work prior to proceeding with construction documents and evaluating funding options.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

Council appropriated \$100,000 of General Funds in FY15/16 for the design of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) eligible projects. The Neighborhood Improvement Task Force prioritized this project for FY 16/17. The Bildsten Architecture and Planning Inc. preliminary design contract amount is \$59,510. Final design and eventual construction are anticipated to be funded by the General Fund and grants, including the CDBG program. The construction cost estimate is expected in November 2016.

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