



Agenda Item No. _____

File Code No.

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Item 6

AGENDA DATE: November 25, 2014

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Engineering Division, Public Works Department

SUBJECT: Approval Of Findings Pursuant To City Charter Section 520 For Groundwater Well Siting

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Find that the design proposed for the Alameda Park Well Relocation Project is compatible with the use and character of Alameda Park; and
- B. Make the following findings pursuant to City Charter section 520: The well relocation is compatible with and accessory to the purposes to which the property is devoted because: A) a portion of the water supply developed by the well will be devoted to park irrigation and maintenance, thus rendering the well accessory to the park use; B) the findings made above pursuant to SBMC section 28.37.025 demonstrate that the well location is compatible with park uses; C) use of the well will be by agreement between the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments, and fully regulated by the City; and D) permission for the well will be contingent upon the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Department reaching agreement to the satisfaction of the City Administrator on all relevant construction and use issues, including appropriate compensation for the use of the park land.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The City of Santa Barbara (City) relies on groundwater as an important water supply for meeting the needs of its customers. Groundwater is especially important during times of drought, when surface water supplies may be restricted. The Alameda Park Well was constructed in 1990 to access the City's groundwater supply. The original construction was permitted by the Community Development Department and approved by Council. In February of this year, the well began pumping sand due to a failure in the well structure. The well has since been out of service.

Proposed Project

Considering Santa Barbara is currently experiencing a record drought, the Public Works Department desires to relocate a new Alameda Park Well within the vicinity of the failed well to re-establish the Alameda Park Well as a productive City groundwater facility.

The Engineering Division contracted with Pueblo Water Resources (PWR) to develop design plans and specifications for relocating the groundwater well. As recommended by Parks staff, PWR was required to retain the services of a licensed Landscape Architect and Certified Arborist for the project. Per standard well drilling practices, the new well must be drilled at least 25 feet from the existing failed well.

The design team developed a well-siting study, tree protection plan, landscape restoration plans, construction plans, and specifications for public bidding. The well-siting study determined a location for the new well that maintains the appropriate hydrogeology and minimizes the impacts to park landscape and recreational use. The proposed well location is approximately 100 feet from the existing failed well (see Attachment). The tree protection plan, developed by a Certified Arborist, was used for the well-siting study. The plan defines appropriate protection measures for trees in or near the proposed construction area. The landscape restoration plans, developed by a licensed Landscape Architect, incorporate all tree planting recommendations from the Street Tree Advisory Committee (STAC).

Understanding the importance of the park to the community, Engineering staff has worked with Parks and Recreation staff to determine a project timeline that minimizes the impact of the well construction to park services.

Project Review and Approval

At their regular meeting on July 14, 2014, the Water Commission supported staff's recommendation of the conceptual design for the Alameda Well Relocation Project (Project).

At their regular meeting on August 7, 2014, the STAC recommended approval to the Parks and Recreation Commission to remove five trees, providing that they be replaced with:

- One Giant Bird of Paradise with five trunks at least half the size of the original tree to be removed
- One Giant Bird of Paradise with three trunks at least half the size of the original tree
- Two King Palms with at least eight feet of brown trunk height
- One Butia Capitata Palm with at least eight feet of brown trunk height

At their regular meeting on September 10, 2014, the Historic Landmarks Commission approved the project design for the Project.

At their regular meeting on September 24, 2014, the Parks and Recreation Commission approved the tree removals and the proposed project landscape plan, made findings pursuant to SBMC section 28.37.025 to approve relocation of the existing groundwater well, and recommended that Council make the findings pursuant to City Charter section 520 that the well relocation is compatible with and accessory to the purposes to which the property is devoted.

At their regular meeting on November 10, 2014, the Board of Water Commissioners voted **X-X-X** in concurrence with the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation of supporting the Project.

The contractor will obtain a building permit issued by the Building and Safety Division, and a Public Works permit issued by the Public Works Department for the Alameda Park Well Relocation Project.

Recommendation to Council

That Council make findings supporting the relocation of the groundwater well in Alameda Park, and that the project is compliant with City Charter section 520, Disposition of Real Property or a Public Utility. The well relocation project is "compatible with and accessory to the purposes to which the property is devoted", as the well provides a public benefit in the form of clean, safe, drinking and irrigation water directly to the park as well as the surrounding community. The existing well will be destroyed and the park land that was encumbered by the well, will be returned to park use. The relocated well will occupy the same size area as the original well, but in a different location, thereby maintaining the conditions of the permitted use. Moreover, the well will be installed after an appropriate agreement is reached between the Parks and Recreation and Public Works Departments. The City Attorney advises that this agreement must be to the satisfaction of the City Administrator on all relevant construction and use issues, including appropriate compensation for the use of the park land. The proposed project meets all the requirements of subsection A, section 28.37.025 of the Municipal Code for findings of appropriate usage for property zoned for Park and Recreation.

Council approval of these recommendations is needed to award contracts for the Drilling and Construction, and the Infrastructure and Site Restoration. Staff anticipates returning to Council in December to award the contract for construction of the well. Project construction would begin in January 2015 and be completed by April 2015.

ATTACHMENT: Layout Of Well Siting

PREPARED BY: Linda Sumansky, Principal Civil Engineer/AF/mj

SUBMITTED BY: Rebecca J. Bjork, Public Works Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office