SUBJECT: Albany Neck and Bulb Transition Improvement Plan

REPORT BY: Claire Griffing, Sustainability & Transportation Coordinator
            Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

SUMMARY

This agenda item provides the Council an opportunity to accept a grant award from the State Coastal Conservancy for development of a Transition Improvement Plan for the Albany Neck and Bulb, and authorizes the City Manager to enter into a contract with Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT) to prepare the Transition Improvement Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Council:

1) Adopt Resolution No. 2014-92 approving grant funds from the State Coastal Conservancy for the preparation of the Albany Neck and Bulb Transition Improvement Plan; and

2) Authorize the City Manager to enter into a contract with Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT) for consulting services related to preparation of the Albany Neck and Bulb Transition Improvement Plan.

BACKGROUND

The City owned portion of the Albany waterfront is designated to be part of the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park; however, the transition has not been implemented due to concerns regarding uneven ground, protruding metal, unregulated art projects, construction debris, and recent homeless encampments.

The City has received a grant of $168,000 from the California Coastal Conservancy to develop a plan for improving the Albany Neck and Bulb to enable this area to become part of McLaughlin Eastshore State Park. The preparation of a transition plan is a critical step towards the implementation of the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park. The plan will help form the basis for subsequent agreements to transfer property. In addition, the plan will facilitate budgeting and applications for grant funding to eliminate hazards, protect the
integrity of the landfill, and other activities necessary to facilitate implementation of the State Park.

DISCUSSION

A Resolution accepting the grant funds is required by the State Coastal Conservancy to move forward with a contract for the project, and is provided as an attachment to the staff report.

Per Council direction, the City issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Albany Neck and Bulb Transition Improvement Plan on July 31, 2014. The RFP was circulated to professional landscape and open space design consultants and engineers. The City received proposals from the following firms:

- Bionic
- Groundworks
- MIG
- Questa
- SWA
- WRT

The City selected four firms to interview (Bionic, MIG, Questa, and WRT) based on prior relevant experience. Interviews took place on September 15, 2014. All firms were qualified and presented thoughtful proposals. WRT stood out because of their prior work with the EBRPD on the Eastshore State Park General Plan completed in 2002.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

Pursuant to the requirements of the grant funding from the Coastal Conservancy, the consultant will analyze climate change impacts to the waterfront and determine greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the proposed changes. The plan is expected to lay the groundwork for environmental improvements through the elimination of hazards and erosion, enhanced vegetation management, and habitat restoration.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

As part of the scope of work, the consultant team will provide a technical memorandum to evaluate the applicability of one or more potential categorical exemptions provided under CEQA Guidelines. The City has not predetermined the outcome of the environmental analysis and will exercise its independent judgment when making any final determination as to the appropriate level of environmental review.
FINANCIAL IMPACT

The contract with WRT is not to exceed the grant amount of $168,000, and does not require a match. Staff estimates that the City will provide $60,000 in in-kind contributions in the form of staff time for project management, venues for community meetings, and document production costs.

Attachments

1. Request for Proposals for Planning Consulting Services for the Albany Neck and Bulb Transition Improvement Plan
2. Proposal submitted by WRT