



MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: December 4, 2019

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VI(h): Consideration of resolution authorizing an amendment to the professional services contract with Withers & Sandgren, Ltd. for Elysian Valley Gateway Park Improvements, Los Angeles.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing an amendment to the professional services contract with Withers & Sandgren Ltd. in the amount of \$105,660.00 for Elysian Valley Gateway Park Improvements, Los Angeles.

Background: Located in Elysian Valley at the terminus of Knox Avenue, Elysian Valley Gateway Park was the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (MRCA) first Los Angeles River park. Much has changed at the River and after twenty-four years, it is in need of rehabilitation and updates. In 2018, the Conservancy authorized a \$850,000 grant of Proposition 1 funds for capital improvements at Elysian Valley Gateway Park.

Withers & Sandgren, Ltd. was retained to analyze the site and prepare conceptual alternatives based on community input received during workshops held in 2017 with local residents, many of whom have lived in Elysian Valley for over 20 years. The concepts also reflected updates for today's accessibility standards and ideas for stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). Withers & Sandgren Ltd. had been placed on a short list for landscape architects after submitting a response to MRCA's Request for Qualifications. Withers & Sandgren has been involved with Los Angeles River projects since the late 1990s when they authored the County's *Los Angeles River Master Plan Landscaping Guidelines and Plant Palettes*, a document that led the way to the development of sustainable sites through the use of native plants, local materials and stormwater runoff filtration prior to reaching the river. Withers & Sandgren is a certified Woman-Owned Business Enterprise and a Small Business Enterprise.

Three concept alternatives prepared by Withers & Sandgren were discussed with community members at a workshop and open house held in September and October of this year. The next step in the park rehabilitation process will be to create a final concept, based on this community input along with feedback from park professionals, budget and schedule considerations, and relevant context from larger river planning and policy initiatives. Staff is currently planning for a community outreach effort to gather feedback on the final concept, and subsequently to move the project forward into construction.

Section 5.3 of the MRCA's Procurement Policy states that the selection of consultants to perform professional services shall be on the basis of demonstrated competence and the professional qualifications necessary for the satisfactory performance of the services required. As the firm that developed the concept design options for this project, Withers & Sandgren Ltd. is the most appropriate firm to continue into construction, and the work performed previously on this project is satisfactory. Their services will also include support with community outreach, construction documents, permitting, and construction administration.

Withers and Sandgren Landscape Architecture submitted a proposal in the amount of \$105,660.00 for these services, including a geotechnical engineering evaluation (by sub-consultant Ninyo & Moore) and preparation of Low Impact Design (LID) plans and specifications.

Consideration: The proposed action would authorize an amendment to the professional services contract with Withers & Sandgren Ltd. in the amount of \$105,660.00.

Fiscal Impact: The proposed contract will be funded by an existing Proposition 1 grant. The expenditure was anticipated in the fiscal year 19/20 budget, and in the grant budget. The improved park will remain under the operation of MRCA and SMMC. There is no impact on the general fund.