



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-556, **Version:** 1

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Staff Report for a Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Consulting Services Agreement with The Exploratorium for the Design and Installation of an Interactive Exhibit in Joaquin Plaza

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution to approve a Consulting Services Agreement and authorize the appropriation of \$235,000 of grant funds from the State of California - Department of Housing and Community Development for the Exploratorium to design, fabricate, and install an interactive musical exhibit in Joaquin Plaza.

### **BACKGROUND**

On November 20, 2014, the City of San Leandro was awarded a Housing-Related Parks Program Grant in the amount of \$1,376,600 from the State of California - Department of Housing and Community Development. This grant was awarded based on the creation of 746 low-income and 84 very low-income units, and will be used to fund three "Qualifying Park Projects," which are City parks and recreation facilities that meet the eligible use criteria for funding.

One of the "Qualifying Park Projects" submitted for grant funding was a project with the Exploratorium, a museum of science, art, and human perception located in San Francisco, California, for the installation of an interactive exhibit at Joaquin Plaza in Downtown San Leandro.

On October 14, 2014, the City and the Exploratorium entered into a Consulting Services Agreement for the development of an initial concept design document, to include elements necessary to move forward with the design development phase. In August, 2015, the concept design was completed and plans to initiate Phase II began.

### **Analysis**

Joaquin Plaza was selected for the Exploratorium installation because it provides an opportunity to activate a centrally-located public space in Downtown San Leandro. The plaza already includes successful use of outdoor dining; however, additional space remains that could be used as a gathering place for the community. This project will build on the ongoing efforts of the San Leandro Improvement Association (SLIA) to activate and beautify Downtown San Leandro. The SLIA's work so far has included the installation of additional outdoor tables and chairs and new planters and flower pots.

During the conceptual design phase, City staff worked with a team from the Exploratorium that included architects, landscape architects, and engineers to come up with a concept that works well for this particular public space. The team agreed on a musical concept that allows participants to

create musical tones by interacting with steel “tuning forks” that will be tuned to specific pitches. Particular attention will be paid to creating an installation that is audible enough to be heard in the plaza, but not so loud that it negatively impacts local businesses or visitors. The concept also includes fixed seating, ensuring that the plaza will remain an inviting public space, even for those who do not opt to interact with the exhibit.

The Exploratorium is committed to creating interactive installations based on scientific and/or educational components. The Exploratorium has completed comparable public space installations in San Francisco and Emeryville and is currently working with other cities in addition to San Leandro.

Per the grant agreement, the City is authorized to use its grant award to rehabilitate two of its community parks, Siempre Verde and Thrasher Park, and to create a science-based innovative and interactive Exploratorium art exhibit at Joaquin Plaza in Downtown San Leandro.

The next phase of the project will involve finalizing the design and constructing and installing the installation. The project is expected to be completed in Spring, 2016. The expenditure deadline for all awarded Parks Program Grant funds is June 30, 2016.

Exploratorium staff brought a prototype to the 2015 Cherry Festival to witness and learn from people’s interaction with the prototype. Staff presented and discussed the preliminary project designs with the City Council Facilities and Transportation Committee, the Downtown SLIA, and the San Leandro Downtown Association; positive feedback was received. Staff also plans to hold a meeting with businesses adjacent to Joaquin Plaza in an effort to field questions and concerns and receive feedback and suggestions, prior to finalizing the design.

### **Previous Actions**

- On January 6, 2014, the City Council adopted Resolution 2013-581 authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for State of California Department of Housing and Community Development’s Housing-Related Parks Program Grant Funds
- On October 14, 2014, the City and the Exploratorium entered into a Consulting Services Agreement for the development of an initial concept design document, to include elements necessary to move forward with the design development phase.
- On December 1, 2014, the City Council adopted Resolution 2014-132 authorizing the City Manager to execute a State standard agreement with the California Department of Housing and Community Development for a Housing-Related Parks Program Grant in the amount of \$1,376,600.

### **Committee Review and Actions**

- On September 1, 2015, the City Council Facilities and Transportation Committee was presented with the project and the preliminary design concepts.

### **Applicable General Plan Policies**

- 6.01 DOWNTOWN PLAN. In accordance with the adopted Downtown Plan and Urban Design

Guidelines and the Downtown San Leandro Transit Oriented Development Strategy, ensure that the new Downtown Development is attractive and creates an image conducive to revitalization.

- 44.06 PUBLIC ART. Encourage the siting of public art in civic open spaces, around public buildings, and within new development areas. Public art should reflect and express the diversity of the City.

### **Summary of Public Outreach Efforts**

- Staff presented project update to Facilities and Transportation Committee
- Staff presented project update to the Downtown San Leandro Improvement Association
- Staff presented project update to the San Leandro Downtown Association

### **Legal Analysis**

The agreement was reviewed by the City Attorney's Office and approved as to form.

### **Fiscal Impacts**

This project will cost \$235,000, which requires increasing the FY 2015-16 Budget by the same amount and will be funded by a grant from the State of California - Department of Housing and Community Development, resulting in no net impact to the General Fund.

### **Budget Authority**

The project will require an appropriation of \$235,000 in account 122-38-362. The expenditure will be reimbursed in full from grant funds.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

#### **Attachment(s) to Staff Report**

- Conceptual Drawings

#### **Attachment(s) to Related Legislative File**

- Consulting Services Agreement

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