



Council Agenda Report

From: Freda Berman, Public Works Director

Subject: Approval of Resolution Authorizing an Agreement with L.A. Christmas Light Installers to Install Year-Round Decorative Lighting in the Downtown City Park

CEQA Determination: Staff recommends that the City Council find that this action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Sections 15061(b)(3) and 15301.

Date: March 5, 2024

Facts

1. On November 24, 2023, the City unveiled new City Park holiday lighting in conjunction with Paso Robles Downtown Main Street Association's traditional Downtown Lighting Ceremony. The lighting design included lighting on 17 trees, the Gazebo, Carnegie Library, the restroom building, park monuments on 12th Street, and the photo op area.
2. Public response to the new holiday lighting was overwhelmingly positive with large crowds in City Park until the lights were turned off on January 8, 2024. Initial indications are that merchants and hoteliers saw an uptick in business and occupancy rates during that period. Recent data shows that Transient Occupancy Tax increased by 20% in December. Patrons expressed a greater sense of safety with the family atmosphere created by the festive lighting.
3. At the City Council meeting on December 5, 2023, and through comments continuing through the New Year's Eve Concert and Bonfire event, Council indicated a desire to bring year-round lighting to City Park.
4. City staff contacted L.A. Christmas Light Installers (LACLI), the designers and installers of the City Park holiday lights, to propose year-round lighting that creates an aesthetically pleasing and vibrant public space that fosters a sense of community.
5. On February 16, 2024, LACLI installed lights in an oak tree behind the Carnegie Library as proof of concept (Attachment 1). The full proposal includes 21 City Park trees (Attachment 2) and emphasizes lighting in the large heritage oaks. Depending on tree size and structure, anywhere from 30 to 150 lights will be installed in the designated trees.
6. The proposed lighting uses readily available, durable and waterproof lights. The lights are easily removable for the holidays, allowing holiday lights to be installed.
7. The cost for design, materials and installation of the year-round lights is \$115,964.85.

Options

1. Take no action;
2. Authorize an agreement to install year-round lighting in the Downtown City Park to L.A. Christmas Light Installers in the amount of \$115,964.85; or
3. Provide alternative direction to staff.

Analysis and Conclusions

The 2023 holiday light installation brought energy and a sense of community to historic City Park. Merchants and hoteliers benefitted from the magical lights while the community as a whole enjoyed the revitalized, brightly lit atmosphere.

The vision for the year-round installation is to mimic that sense of wonder, but in a completely different way. The year-round lighting and the holiday lighting need both to inspire awe but be special in their own right – it is crucial that the appeal of the Downtown Lighting Ceremony be maintained.

Moreover, the year-round lighting equipment is easily maintained, durable, is low voltage, and can be removed to install the holiday lights in the Fall.

Fiscal Impact

The cost for design, materials and installation of year-round lighting in City Park is \$115,964.85, proposed to be allocated from General Fund Reserves. Maintenance and power costs are expected to be minimal and can be accommodated in the existing Public Works Facilities Maintenance budget.

L.A. Christmas Light Installers was selected for the holiday light installation in a formal Request for Proposal process, based on their design sense, qualifications of the staff assigned to the project, ability to perform quality work, control costs, and meet time schedules and ability to work effectively with City staff.

LACLI now have unique knowledge as to the peculiarities of the City Park electrical service, tree restrictions and installation requirements. Moreover, the year-round lights will have to be removed and reinstalled for the holiday light installation, making the services of another lighting contractor unrealistic and burdensome on the City. Staff is recommending that the one-time year-round lighting installation be sole sourced to LACLI under the City's purchasing policy because the City is best served by a particular vendor for the reasons described above.

CEQA

Staff recommends that the City Council find that this action is exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. Staff further recommends that the City Council find that this action is categorically exempt from CEQA under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15301 because it entails a minor alteration to an existing park facility.

Recommendation

Approve Resolution 24-XXX, authorizing an agreement to install year-round lighting in the Downtown City Park to L.A. Christmas Light Installers in the amount of \$115,964.85 to be allocated from General Fund Reserves and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement, subject to any minor, technical, or non-substantive changes as approved by the City Manager and City Attorney.

Attachments

1. Proof of Concept
2. Tree Installation Map
3. Resolution 24-XXX – Year-Round Lighting