



Agenda Item #: _____



Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Ward and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Richard Thompson, Interim City Manager

FROM: Sona Kalapura, Environmental Programs Manager

DATE: September 21, 2010

SUBJECT: Consideration of a Drought Tolerant Garden Installation as Part of the 10-10-10 Sustainability Summit

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council approve the installation of a drought tolerant learning garden at City Hall as part of the 10-10-10 Sustainability Summit.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

The City of Manhattan Beach recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Foundation (SMBRF) to fund the drought tolerant garden installation, should City Council approve the project. The grant will cover any expected costs associated with the garden installation (site design, purchase of plants, soil, and equipment) so the City will not have to dedicate funds for the project. The City will incur some costs in advertising and educational materials for the 10-10-10 Summit, which will include the garden project if approved.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council has been very supportive of community based events that seek to educate its community on the need to sustain the environment and the economy. With the success of its Environmental Task Force, and positive participation in events like the International Day of Climate Action and Earth Hour, the City has taken a lead role in promoting environmental protection to its community.

On August 3, 2010 City Council decided to endorse the City's participation in the 10-10-10 Sustainability Summit and Eco-Fair so the community would benefit from the opportunity to learn more about protecting our environment, while participating in a global day of environmental action centered around the 10-10-10 date. The Sustainability Summit is focusing on a theme of: "Climate. Oceans. Community. *Working Together to Protect Our Planet,*" and will consist of informational sessions that focus on Climate Change and Water Conservation through Efficient Landscape Design, and an Eco-Fair. The Eco-Fair will bring environmental organizations and vendors to the community to help us learn about solar panels and renewable energy, water efficient tools, and sustainability.

DISCUSSION:

The Sustainability Summit is designed as an easily accessible example of what individuals can do to “go green,” and will include discussions with experts in the areas of climate change and sustainable landscaping. In addition to the Summit, staff recommends adding a hands-on component to the event. By installing a drought-tolerant garden at City Hall we will illustrate how individuals can take action to save water and energy, reduce monthly utility bills, and their environmental impact, by rethinking the way we design our outdoor space.

The Manhattan Beach Botanical Garden (Botanical Garden) and Enviroscape have volunteered to work with staff to design the garden site and provide the labor to install the garden as part of the Sustainability Summit. The grant funds awarded by SMBRF will pay for any costs associated with the garden installation. Furthermore, the Botanical Garden, Enviroscape, and the South Bay 350 Climate Action Group have volunteered additional resources and funding to help make this project a reality, should Council decide to approve it.

The garden area being considered is the landscaped space in front of the City Hall entryway. This area is suggested due to its high visibility to the public, small containable garden space, and proximity to the 10-10-10 Sustainability Summit and Eco-Fair. Staff proposes replacing a small area (approximately 400 sf) during the 10-10-10 event (see map in Attachment A), as a demonstration project for the community to learn about California-friendly gardening. The current area is landscaped with birds of paradise plants, which are medium-water users. City staff will work with the Botanical Garden to select low-water use/drought tolerant plants that are ideal for California-gardens. Depending on the site design, these plants could include: different species of sage, poppies, pride of madeira, and others (see plant images in Attachment B). Staff further recommends irrigating the garden with water saving tools, such as drip irrigation, to help conserve water, and show the community how they can easily do the same to their properties.

The goal of replacing the area with drought tolerant plants and water saving features is to show the community the benefits of sustainable landscaping and that the City is committed to putting into practice its statements on water conservation. The SMBRF funding will cover the installation of this garden, along with the adjacent area in front of City Hall (to be completed at a later date), as well as the printing of signage denoting the garden and its sponsors, the types of drought tolerant plants included in the garden space, and other educational materials for the public.

CONCLUSION:

The addition of a garden installation project to the 10-10-10 Sustainability Summit provides a unique and informative way for the City to continue teaching its community about the value of environmental protection. This project also provides the opportunity for the City to strengthen its partnerships with local environmental organizations, and will continue to make Manhattan Beach a leader in environmental sustainability. Staff recommends that City Council approve the installation of a drought tolerant garden in front of the City Hall complex.

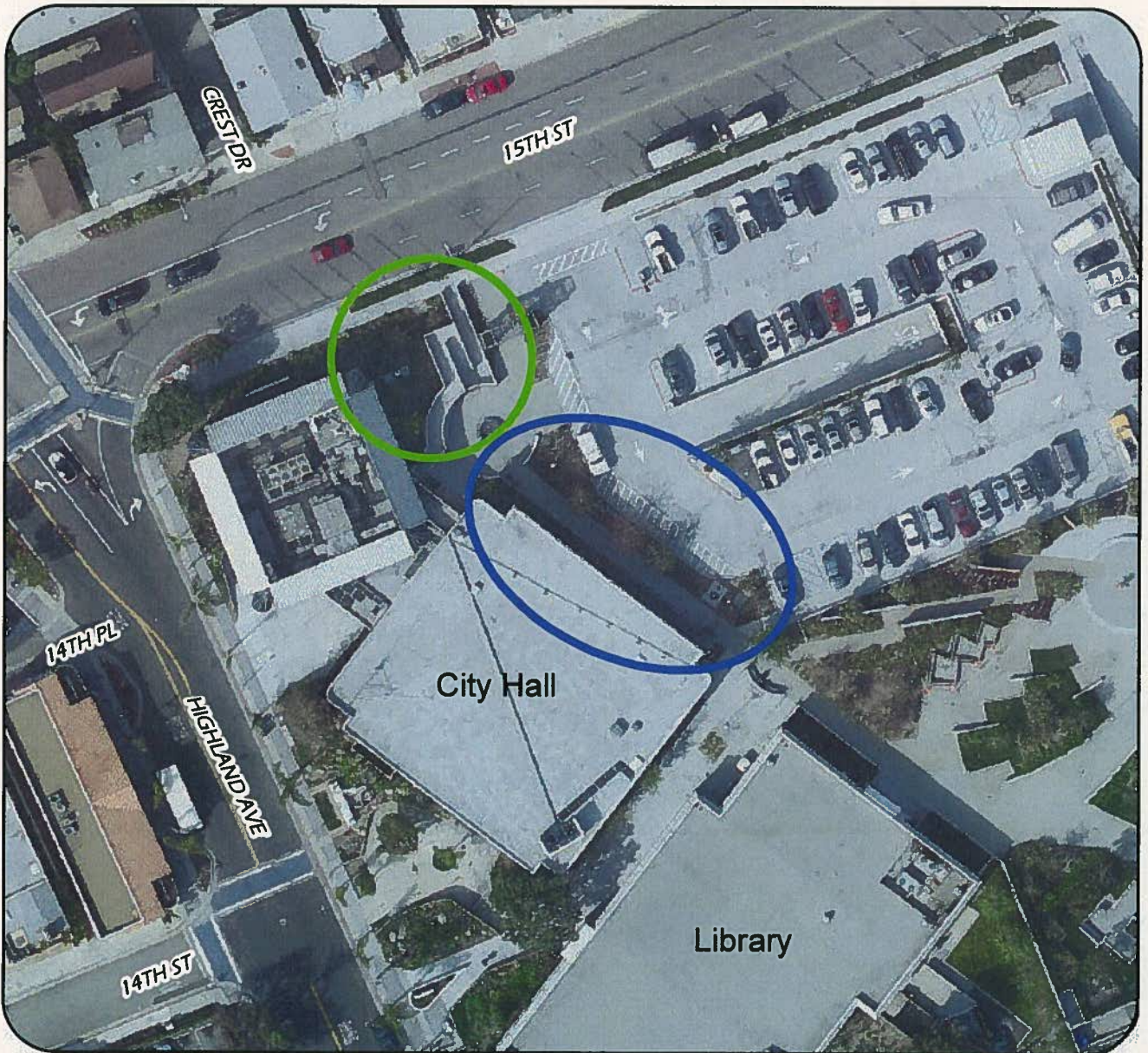
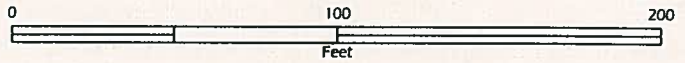
Attachment A: Map of Civic Center Landscaped Area

Attachment B: Drought-Tolerant & Native Plants

cc: Jim Arndt, Public Works Director
Laurie Jester, Acting Community Development Director

City of Manhattan Beach

Civic Center Landscaping



Attachment B: Drought-Tolerant & Native Plants

"BEE'S BLISS SALVIA": Evergreen ground cover, 12" high, full sun



"CALIFORNIA BUTTERCUP" ~ *Ranunculus californicus*: Perennial, 12"-18" tall, sun or partial shade, goes well mixed with grasses and wildflowers



"CALIFORNIA POPPY" ~ *Eschscholzia californica*: Wildflower, 12"-18" tall, full sun, blooms close at night or with shade



"HUMMINGBIRD SAGE" ~ *Salvia spathacea*: Evergreen perennial spreader, 1'-2' high x 1' wide, full sun to partial shade

