



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & MARINE



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selected **best in the nation**

February 19, 2015

MEMBERS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file the February 2015 El Dorado Nature Center Entry Improvements report.

DISCUSSION

The El Dorado Nature Center (EDNC), located near the confluence of the San Gabriel River and Coyote Creek, is an approximately 110-acre environmental education facility designed to be a natural setting that provides wildlife habitat and a place for people to reflect and learn about nature. The EDNC includes a museum/classroom facility, a quarter-mile accessible paved trail, two miles of natural trail winding around two lakes, and a meandering stream. Attachment A shows the location and context of the EDNC.

The EDNC has been heavily used during the nearly 50 years since its construction. Changing needs and the passage of time have left the EDNC in need of rehabilitation. Recognizing this need, the City commissioned a master plan, which was adopted in the spring of 2003. Elements of the Master Plan that have been implemented to date include restoration of the one-half-mile stream that connects the two Nature Center lakes, including replacement of five pedestrian bridges (completed in 2010), replacement of the pedestrian bridge connecting the museum building island to the start of the trail network (completed in 2012) and on-going habitat restoration throughout the EDNC.

The next element of the Master Plan to be implemented is enhancement of the entry and replacement of the bridge connecting the entry to the island. Plans are being developed by AHBE Landscape Architects. A variety of concepts were presented to the community in November 2014. Based on extensive verbal, written, and emailed feedback, the concepts were honed into one concept that was presented to the community in December. The concept was well received and is shown in Attachment B.

To enhance visitors' "sense of place," the design is based on the concept of confluence. Multiple accessible paths provide different visitor experiences, with all paths eventually

MEMBERS OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

February 19, 2015

Page 2

meeting to pass over the new bridge to the museum island. The design features a direct main path from the entry to the museum island and an alternate path that meanders through a nature play area. A separate entry and path for staff-led groups leads to an amphitheater that will have a stage for presentations and rustic seating for approximately 80. In addition to school and other groups, the amphitheater will accommodate other EDNC special activities. The design also features a relocated entryway with a bridge over a bioswale that will treat runoff from the parking lot. Enhanced landscaping, including a signature tree and large boulders, will complement the other features to create an inviting welcome and encouragement to explore the rest of the Nature Center. Restriping the parking lot will improve the experience for visitors arriving by foot, bike, car, or bus. Redesign and repaving of the parking lot is beyond the scope of the current project. Regulatory approvals (including the California Environmental Quality Act, or CEQA) are in progress, as is preparation of construction documents. Following additional City and regulatory review, full plans, specifications, and cost estimates should be completed by June 2015. Construction is anticipated to begin in October 2015 and be completed by May 2016.


FISCAL IMPACT

The EDNC Entry Project is being funded by a grant under the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84) through the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and by General Funds appropriated in the FY13 and FY14 Capital Improvement Plan budgets.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

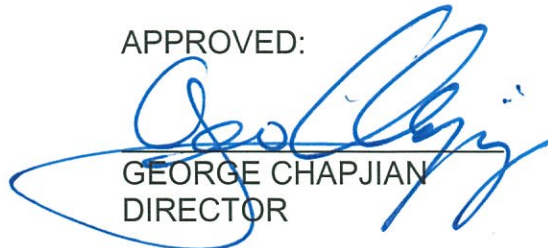
Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



STEPHEN SCOTT
MANAGER
Business Operations Bureau

APPROVED:



GEORGE CHAPJIAN
DIRECTOR

GC:SS:sg

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Attachments