



# Information Item

**Date: September 21, 2009**

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Lee E. Swain, Director of Public Works

Subject: Palisades Garden Walk and City Hall Town Square Design Team Selection Process

## **Introduction**

This report updates the City Council on the process for selecting a design team to program and design Palisades Garden Walk and the City Hall Town Square.

## **Background**

On [June 28, 2005](#), the City Council adopted an update to the 1993 Civic Center Specific Plan (CCSP) setting forth planning policies and land use and development regulations for a 67-acre area bounded by Pico Boulevard on the south, Fourth Street on the east, Ocean Avenue on the west and Colorado Avenue on the north.

An important element of the CCSP is the creation of new parks and open space. This includes creating a new 6-acre park, Palisades Garden Walk, north of Olympic Drive, west of Main Street and east of Ocean Avenue, as well as a 1-acre Town Square in front of City Hall that is oriented to civic and community activities. In addition, improvements to the surrounding streetscapes and widening of the McClure Tunnel bridge deck will be an integral part of the new park.

On [June 10, 2009](#), the City Council approved a list of Redevelopment Agency funding priorities which included \$2.5M for planning and design of Civic Center projects, \$25M for construction of Palisades Garden Walk, Town Square and the surrounding streetscapes, and \$2M for capping the I-10 Freeway at the McClure Tunnel.

Subsequently on [June 23, 2009](#), the City Council adopted the FY09-10 Budget including these capital improvement projects.

## **Discussion**

Public Works and Community & Cultural Services staff will utilize a design team selection process targeted to attract accomplished designers. The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will emphasize the unique qualities of the project site and will be widely-distributed, publicized in professional design journals and posted on PlanetBids and other broadly read websites. Twelve weeks will be provided for design teams to respond to the RFQ to provide time for wide distribution and media attention. The RFQ will include the names and titles of professional peer members of the selection panel to communicate to the potential applicant pool that the City has included outside experts in the field and is serious about selecting an innovative and accomplished team of design professionals for this remarkable opportunity. The selection panel will review the submitted qualifications and develop a short list of the most qualified applicants. Evaluation of the submitted materials will be based on the following selection criteria which will be clearly stated in the RFQ:

- Ability of the team to deliver a project of the highest caliber design.
- Experience in successfully designing and delivering similar projects in terms of context, size, scale, budget and program.
- Critical acclaim, awards, exhibition, and publication of projects planned, engineered, designed and managed by team members.
- Demonstrated ability to innovatively engage communities for effective outcomes.
- Demonstrated commitment to sustainability and green building standards.
- Demonstrated ability to work successfully with artists in the public realm.
- Ability of the team to successfully complete the full scope of work on time and within budget.
- Evidence of a productive team dynamic.
- Understanding of the project goals and approach and the importance of the project to the community.

- A design philosophy, approach and working style that is consistent with Santa Monica's commitment to creating unique and community-responsive public places.
- References from past clients (for short-listed firms only).

The short-listed teams will be invited for interviews with the selection panel. Teams will present their qualifications in adequate detail to show their commitment to designing unique public places, provide outstanding examples of relevant past work, and outline the project's organizational structure. The review panel may identify a design team through the interview process and request City Council authorization to enter into contract negotiations. Alternatively, if the review panel is unable to make a recommendation based upon the initial interview, the panel may reconvene and invite a list of finalist design firms to return for additional dialogue. Design teams may be asked to submit proposals or additional information, as needed, to enable the panel to reach a recommendation for City Council consideration.

Once City Council has selected the design team, contract terms will be negotiated for Council approval. Upon approval, a contract will be executed and the team will work with City staff to implement an effective, yet tightly scheduled, open community engagement process through well-publicized workshops to refine the program and vision for the new park and open space as set forth in the CCSP.

**Prepared by:** Jean Bellman, Architect