



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Award of Contract for General Plan Amendments - Open Space and Conservation and Recreation (OSCR) Elements Update

1. Motion authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Olin Partnership, Ltd. ("OLIN") in the amount of \$875,000 for the OSCR Elements Update.
2. Resolution of appropriation to appropriate \$675,000 in Measure A grant funds from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District for the OSCR Elements Update.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Consent Item

Approved for May 20, 2025 **calendar**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of the General Plan Amendments (GPAs) for Glendale's Open Space and Conservation Element and Recreation Element (OSCR Elements Update) is to establish a guiding framework which reflects community priorities for the next twenty years and stands as a cohesive reference document in alignment with the other General Plan Elements. The last comprehensive update to the Open Space and Conservation Element occurred in 1993, and to the Recreation Element in 1996.

Staff issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to obtain the services of a well-qualified firm to prepare the GPAs for the OSCR Elements Update. The RFP sought firms with experience in Planning, Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Parks, Community Engagement, and/or Engineering industries with a project team that will be responsible for facilitating the planning process, drafting the updates to the GPAs, conducting the requisite environmental review per CEQA, and coordinating the public outreach and adoption processes with the City. After an extensive review of the proposals, culminating in interviews with multiple consultant teams, staff recommends entering into a Professional Service Agreement (PSA) with Olin Partnership, Ltd. ("OLIN") for the OSCR Elements Update.

RECOMMENDATION

Pass a motion authorizing the City Manager to execute a Professional Service Agreement (PSA) with OLIN in the amount of \$875,000 for the OSCR Elements Update and appropriate an additional \$675,000 in Measure A grant funds from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District.

ANALYSIS

The City is entering into an exciting time of growth with several new park and open space revitalization projects and recreation facilities planned or proposed over the next several years. As the City works to expand and improve its parks and recreation amenities, as well as expand and preserve its open space and natural resources, cultivating comprehensive OSCR Elements is at the forefront of Community Services & Parks' (CSP) efforts to guide these initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The Open Space and Conservation Element coordinates planning and management of natural resources and the improvements that complement them. It provides a broad overview of existing conditions, issues, and opportunities—and a comprehensive approach to the management of the identified resources. State law requires an Open Space Element to contain detailed information about several categories of undeveloped land, including natural resources (i.e., archeological, biological, geologic, hydrologic, visual, mineral), managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, military support, and tribal resources.

The 1993 Open Space and Conservation Element established 13 goals and 65 objectives related to preservation of open space in Glendale. In 2002, the CSP established a Strategic Planning Committee, which analyzed the Open Space and Conservation Element and used community and staff input to create nine strategic categories and map amendments to develop goals for the next five years. These updates were added to the element in 2005 and integrated into the Downtown Specific Plan in 2006. As of today, the City has over 5,000 acres of open space (mostly in mountainous areas), over 30 miles of fire roads, and 7.5 miles of single-track hiking trails.

The Recreation Element addresses planning for parks, recreational land, and associated improvements. It provides a broad overview of existing conditions, community needs, issues and opportunities, and suggests a comprehensive approach for the development and management of public recreational resources.

Additionally, in 2016, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation undertook a countywide Parks Needs Assessment for LA County. The assessment looked at Glendale's Southside and Northside study areas, and Glendale's southside was identified as an area deficient of park space, emphasizing the need for an updated park standard. The assessment also led to a parks funding ballot initiative - Measure A, which passed in 2016. Now cities like Glendale receive an annual appropriation of Measure A funds dedicated to parks and open space needs.

The 1996 Recreation Element established seven goals with ten objectives and 39 policies to provide recreation opportunities throughout Glendale. In 2006, the CSP's Strategic Planning Committee established new goals and maps that were added to the Recreation Element and the Downtown Specific Plan. As of today, the City has 286 acres of developed park land, and the CSP manages 47 parks and park facilities, including 37 parks, the Civic Auditorium, four community centers, six sports facilities, and four historic buildings.

A summary of key goals from the Open Space and Conservation Element (1993) include:

- Identify, acquire, and protect open space.
- Protect sensitive open space from impacts of development.
- Establish a management program for open space.
- Ensure maximum public participation in planning and implementation of open space projects.
- Develop and integrate a trail system consistent with mobility plans.

A summary of key goals from Recreation Element (1996) include:

- Expand the quantity and quality of recreational experiences.
- Supplement existing park land assets with acquisition and development.
- Continue management of existing facilities.
- Provide access to all recreational facilities for all residents.
- Coordinate programs with cooperative use of existing assets.
- Develop walkways and trail system consistent with mobility plans.

STATUS UPDATE

The City will now begin the process of updating the OSCR Elements to capture a common vision for an inclusive future and to establish goals and priorities for Open Space, Conservation and Recreation for the coming decades.

Staff issued an RFP to obtain the services of a well-qualified firm to prepare the GPAs to update the City's OSCR Elements and make these Elements consistent with the updated General Plan Guidelines. The RFP sought firms with experience in Planning, Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Parks, Community Engagement, and/or Engineering industries with a project team that will be responsible for facilitating the planning process, drafting the updates to the GPAs, conducting the requisite environmental review per CEQA, and coordinating the public outreach and adoption processes with the City. After an extensive review of the proposals, culminating in interviews with multiple consultant teams, staff recommends entering into a Professional Service Agreement with OLIN and its consultant team including The Robert Group, Michael Baker International, ETC Institute (OLIN team) for the General Plan Amendments to update the City's OSCR Elements.

Glendale's urban community sits at an urban-wildland interface, and therefore requires extensive analysis of existing conditions, community engagement and assessment, financial prioritization, and full adoption of amendments. The OSCR Elements have been referenced in various City planning documents, including the Safety Element, Climate

Adaptation Action Plan, and Environmental Justice Element. Updating the City's OSCR Elements is the next step to ensure accuracy of biological, social, and cultural data and adaptability of the suggested policies, goals, and objectives. In turn, the updated OSCR Elements can uphold current and future community priorities within Glendale's General Plan and ensure the General Plan follows new state regulations.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The General Plan Amendments - OSCR Update RFP was originally issued and posted on the City website on May 13, 2024, with two addenda issued on July 8, 2024, and August 14, 2024. The deadline for proposals was September 20, 2024.

The RFP sought qualified consultants to provide technical services involving policy development and planning that will be incorporated into GPAs to the OSCR Elements. The GPAs are intended to provide both a near-term and a long-range vision for the City's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. The Scope of Work is as follows:

1. Project Initiation and Project Management
2. Community Outreach and Engagement
3. Existing Conditions Analysis
4. Research and Analysis
5. Preparation and Adoption of Amendments to the Open Space and Conservation Element and to the Recreation Element
6. Environmental Review Preparation

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The OSCR Elements Update is necessary to re-evaluate goals in the context of a growing community, changing environment, and the needs and opportunities of parks, open space, and recreational programs in the city.

Through improved research and analysis, the OSCR Elements Update will build on the history of parks, open space, and recreation planning and will include over two decades of planning and implementation efforts since the last update. The RFP asked respondents to address the following major objectives and focus areas:

- 1. Project Initiation and Project Management:** Ensure ongoing communications and regular meetings with project leads and supporting staff (Steering Committee) occur throughout the duration of the project. This includes 2-3 internal work sessions with the Steering Committee. Consultant will be prepared to attend and present up to eight updates to commissions (Parks, Recreation & Community Services (PRCS) and Planning) and the City Council at meetings, which will be scheduled for discussion, project status updates, study sessions, and consensus-building. Goals and content framing will guide timeline and target setting, and outline opportunities, constraints, and policymaking priorities.
- 2. Community Engagement and Outreach:** A public outreach and engagement plan will involve a robust regional and local level strategy to engage residents,

stakeholders, and public, both in-person and virtually, with a variety of creative and inclusive methods to understand community values. It will reach participants who are typically underrepresented in government decision-making and focus on the formulation of priority policy goals and objectives that support the conservation, preservation, and celebration of cultural, historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources through collaborative planning. The OLIN team will work with staff to develop parameters for the Community Outreach Plan and will provide guidance for successfully conducting community and focus group meetings.

The Community Outreach Plan strategy will, at a minimum, include the following components:

- a. Formation of issue-based working/focus groups; and
- b. Community workshops, events, and meetings to gather stakeholder vision, ideas and comments on the proposed OSCR Elements Update.

Additionally, the OLIN team will prepare targeted community assessments to determine the community's interests, needs, and concerns about existing and potential open space, conservation and recreation programs and facilities. As part of the Community Assessment process, the OLIN team will:

- a. Conduct survey(s) and use any other proven information-gathering methods/activities to engage the community and to gather stakeholder feedback; and
- b. Conduct and facilitate a minimum of six (6) community meetings, five (5) community pop-up events, and up to five (5) focus groups, and conduct stakeholder interviews with individual and stakeholder groups to solicit input on the proposed GPAs, gather data, and prepare summaries of the results.

In terms of public information, OLIN will develop strategies to communicate the process for and status of the GPAs to Stakeholders using media outlets and creating social media engagement packages that employ informative graphics and/or short videos that can be posted on the City website and on other dedicated website(s) or platform(s). Information and updates to OSCR Elements will be posted on <https://www.glendaleplan.com/>.

- 3. Existing Conditions Analysis:** A thorough review and collection of data from existing resources and databases will be crucial in acquiring the necessary knowledge of the City and its processes. Included in this task are a Community Profile, Park Needs Assessment and Inventory, a Recreation Program and Services Assessment, and an Open Space and Conservation Assessment, which involves a habitat conservation plan and a Biological Resources Assessment as a standalone report (and will incorporate the findings into an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration). The Open Space and Conservation Assessments will present results of the literature review to determine baseline conditions and field reconnaissance (two days in the field) to verify existing data. This report will update

the applicable regulatory setting for the City and document vegetation communities/habitat types occurring within City boundaries as well as the presence of major aquatic/hydrological features (e.g., streams, lakes).

This task includes an assessment of City parks and recreation facilities trends utilizing LA Parks Needs Assessment data and exporting and review of static data on the City's park visitation from Placer.AI, the programs and services currently provided, opportunities and constraints in recreational needs, and inventory of public and private memorials, historic and cultural resources. Additionally, assessment of baseline hydrology, connectivity and access, ecology, existing operations and maintenance and trail inventory of open spaces will guide processes of the next Research and Analysis Task.

- 4. Research and Analysis:** The OLIN team will develop and update the goals, issues, policies, strategies, and priority criteria and methodology in each of the OSCR Elements based on the vision for the City's parks captured from the Community Outreach and Assessment tasks. Part of this task will involve developing financial cost estimates, alternative funding strategies, and optimal financial plans for implementation of future programs and projects. For the Recreation Element, the outcomes of the process will be more successful and innovative recreation program offerings that result in: increased registration, customer satisfaction, customer retention, and increase in revenue. For the Open Space and Conservation Element, ensuring it conforms with the state Office of Planning and Research General Plan Guidelines and supports sustainable recreation (trails and trail access), wildfire resiliency, habitat preservation and expansion, and wildlife corridors will support the City's vegetation management efforts and prepare the City to be competitive for grants related to wildfire resiliency and habitat restoration.

OLIN will complete a park and open space expansion and acquisition feasibility study, which will study the feasibility of, and make policy recommendations for, the use, maintenance, and acquisition of open space or underutilized urban land for park development and/or conservation (e.g., prioritizing land that has high ecological value or provides opportunities for enhancing native habitat).

OSCR Element goals, policies, and priorities recommendations will be evaluated by the OLIN team. Additionally, the team will make recommendations on ways to expand existing parks through acquisition and joint-use, and/or long-term lease. A Project Implementation Plan will identify programming, staffing, responsible agencies, funding sources, implementation time frame, and other strategies for effective implementation.

- 5. Preparation and Adoption of Amendments to the Open Space and Conservation Element and to the Recreation Element:** The OLIN team will develop administrative drafts of each of the GPAs, staff reports for commission and City Council meetings, administrative draft GPAs following review and input,

and final GPAs following completion of the environmental review process in preparation for the City Council's final hearing and vote to adopt the plan.

- 6. Environmental Review Preparation:** A review of all potential environmental impacts will be performed, as required by the CEQA. The OLIN team will work with the City to formally initiate the environmental review process and will prepare an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), leveraging data from the OSCR Element development process.

The OLIN team will coordinate with City staff regarding the required technical analyses and get approval before proceeding. The technical analyses will be prepared by the OLIN team and incorporated into the IS/MND. The OLIN team assumes that the following technical analyses are required:

- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources (Archaeological, Historical, Tribal)
- Energy
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise

Technical analyses for Air Quality, Energy, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Noise will be incorporated into the IS/MND (no standalone reports) with accompanying modeling appendices. Technical analyses for Biological Resources and Cultural Resources will be provided in standalone reports.

RESPONSES TO RFP

The RFP successfully attracted three well-qualified consultant teams, each with firsthand practical knowledge of drafting a General Plan document toward adoption, that will guide the City in responding to the needs of Glendale residents and sustain parks, open space, and recreation's critical systems.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

A five-member selection committee comprised of representatives from CSP and CDD's Planning Division scored the three proposals based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated project understanding, thoroughness in addressing the RFP requirements, and clarity of the proposal
- Strategy and creativity in the approach
- Experience of firm and team members working on similar projects
- Experience of firm and team members conducting in-depth resource assessments and analysis
- Experience of firm and team on complex projects with involvement of multiple stakeholders and governmental agencies
- Project management and expertise of key personnel (prime and sub-consultants)
- Fee proposal demonstrating maximum value for services

Each member of the selection committee scored the proposals individually and the scores were tallied to determine which consultant teams would be invited to interview with the panel. All proposals received met the review criteria and demonstrated their planning expertise and relevant experience; therefore, all three proposers were invited to interview with the panel.

THE FIRM INTERVIEWS

The three firms—Placeworks, OLIN, and Rincon—and their subconsultant teams have substantial experience in complex planning and General Plan drafting which boast portfolios of work with projects that illustrate outstanding interagency and multidisciplinary coordination to achieve significant analyses, community engagement, and element planning. The teams were asked to prepare a presentation highlighting what makes their teams uniquely qualified for the project; the creative, place-based approach they would take to engage Glendale's community and determine OSCR values and priorities; and the project management capabilities and organization to complete CEQA review, address ecological concerns by planning for habitat conservation, consider historical/cultural aspects, and uphold technical requirements of relevant state legislation. The interviews were conducted on February 25, 2025, and scored based on the following review criteria:

- Presentation
- Organization
- Clarity and Communication Skills
- Technical Understanding
- Responses to Questions

At the conclusion of the interviews and the calculation of the panel scores, the firm with the highest ranking was OLIN. The OLIN team has over four decades of experience crafting open space plans and has worked on the Glendale Garden River Bridge Project and on the adjacent LA River Master Plan. The panel noted that the OLIN team was highly creative, with excellent communication skills and an impressive team dynamic. OLIN Labs, an innovative research-oriented section of the firm, aims to constantly improve OLIN's methods. Additionally, the team's park-focused implementation plan for Glendale, based on successful funding and revenue strategies, offers great value to the project. The OLIN team also demonstrated that it has the ability to execute detailed and visionary planning documents with a project list that includes:

- Culver City Parks Plan, *Adopted February 2025*
- LA River Master Plan, *Adopted June 2022*
- Fort Collins Parks and Recreation Master Plan, *2019-2021*
- Cleveland Parks and Recreation Plan, *2023-2024*
- Sepulveda Basin Vision Plan, *2021-2024*

The OLIN team will be joined by several qualified subconsultants for the project, including The Robert Group for an extensive and creative public outreach campaign, PROS Consulting for fiscally strategic recreation management, Michael Baker International for

environmental review preparation, CEQA compliance, and to provide a compliance review at key milestones for compatibility of the elements with state requirements, and ETC Institute for community research and survey data analysis. The OLIN team has also performed extensive research on land use patterns in LA County, the State of California, and nationally, which will serve as an advantageous perspective on land conservation, parkland acquisition strategies, and joint uses for the City of Glendale. It comes equipped with an extensive GIS database and world-class leaders in planning and design, as well as hyper-local firms that know Glendale intimately.

The OLIN project team is eager to fold the updated OSCR Elements seamlessly with other recently completed and forthcoming plan elements the City has led. OLIN's team will consist of local, Los Angeles-based project managers, planning specialists, designers, public engagement specialists, and expert consultants with additional support from specialists in east coast offices. Jessica Hansen, as partner-in-charge of OLIN's Los Angeles office, will be the project manager. She is a certified planner and registered landscape architect who has extensive experience in Los Angeles, including leading the LA River Master Plan, Culver City Parks Plan, City of LA's Park Needs Assessment, and Sepulveda Basin Vision Plan. She is also a professor of a landscape and planning studio at USC. This local presence is invaluable, providing hands-on familiarity and involvement that is essential for a project of such complexity and value.

NEXT STEPS

Development of the General Plan Amendments – OSCR Elements Update including the requisite environmental review is anticipated to take approximately two years to complete.

The OSCR Elements Update will begin with a kick-off meeting with City staff to review the project timeline, refine goals and framework, establish project management and communication, and assemble a Steering Committee. The OLIN team will meet with City Staff to immediately begin developing a robust Community Outreach Plan to obtain input from residents, community stakeholders and the public.

There will be at least three (3) status updates and check-ins with the City Council as project milestones are reached. The first status update will occur following the initial existing conditions analysis, anticipated in Fall 2025.

STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

The Community Outreach Plan will include notifications and engagement activities throughout the Project using effective communication tools geared to the Glendale community, including traditional tools (e.g., fliers, announcements, etc.) and modern approaches (e.g., web, social media, etc.), and should build in iterative feedback from the public. The Community Outreach Plan strategy will, at a minimum, include formation of issue-based working/focus groups and community workshops, events, and meetings to gather stakeholder vision, ideas and comments on the proposed GPAs.

The OLIN team will prepare targeted community assessments to determine the community's interests, needs, and concerns about existing and potential open space,

conservation and recreation programs and facilities that consider all types of parks, athletic fields/courts, bike lanes, trails, open space areas, historical/cultural resources, and other recreation facilities and services (“Community Assessment”).

As part of the Community Assessment process, the OLIN team will:

- Conduct survey(s) and use any other proven information gathering methods/activities to engage the community and to gather stakeholder feedback. Such engagement activities will include, for example, a “walk audit” with a return rate that accurately represents a sampling of the total population and community areas to best identify community needs and issues across the City.
- Capture demographic data and projections, assess the community’s short and long-term needs and vision for open space, conservation and recreation. This process will yield results that are statistically validated. A survey analysis report will be prepared to summarize the survey results and findings.
- Conduct and facilitate a minimum of six community meetings, five community pop-up events, and up to five focus groups, and conduct stakeholder interviews with individuals and groups to solicit input on the proposed GPAs, gather data, and prepare summaries of the results.
- Be prepared to attend and present up to eight updates on the status of the GPAs to the PRCS Commission, other boards and commissions as applicable, and the City Council meetings, special meetings, and/or study sessions if requested.
- Produce all digital and printed materials, including but not limited to social media text and posts, event announcements, newsletter updates, website updates, flyers, meeting presentation, etc., which will be reviewed and approved by CSP and City Manager’s office, and be translated into English, Armenian, and Spanish.
- Focus on reaching participants that are underrepresented in governmental decision-making such as youth, underserved or disadvantaged communities, people with disabilities, and individuals with limited or no-English proficiency. This includes up to two engagement events.
- Focus on the formulation of policy goals and objectives for the GPAs that support the conservation, preservation, and celebration of cultural, historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources through collaborative planning with key stakeholders, such as historical societies and tribal communities, as linkages to community identity.

In terms of public information, OLIN will develop strategies to communicate the process for and status of the GPAs to stakeholders using media outlets and creating social media engagement packages that employ informative graphics and/or short videos that can be posted on the City website and on other dedicated website(s) or platform(s). Information

and updates to OSCR Elements will be posted on <https://www.glendaleplan.com/>.

FISCAL IMPACT

The General Plan Amendments – OSCR Elements Update PSA will cost \$875,000. There is currently \$200,000 budgeted for this project. The existing appropriation is outlined below:

Existing Appropriation		
Amount	Account String	Funding Source
\$200,000	43110-1010-CSP-0020-P0000 CSP01313AN	General Fund

Staff is requesting appropriation of an additional \$675,000 in Measure A grant funds from the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District.

The request of appropriation is outlined below:

Requesting Appropriation			
Amount	From (Account String)	To (Account String)	Funding Source
\$675,000	34301-4130-CSP-0020-P0000 CSP01313BG	43110-4130-CSP-0020-P0000 CSP01313BG	Measure A Fund

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CEQA/NEPA)

The action being considered constitutes only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the City has not approved, adopted, or funded; thus, it is statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15262. Further environmental review will be conducted as part of the Project.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the City Campaign Finance Ordinance, Exhibit 2 shows the names and business addresses of the members of the board of directors, the chairperson, CEO, COO, CFO, Subcontractors and any person or entity with 10% interest or more in the company proposed for professional services agreement in this Agenda Item Report.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATION

- 1: The City Council may choose not to approve awarding a PSA to OLIN and select another firm that submitted a proposal.
- 2: City Council may choose not to select another consultant and to have staff re-release the RFP, which will delay the OSCR Element Update.

CS3: Consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

Onnig Bulanikian, Director of Community Services & Parks

Prepared by:

Joseph Gonzalez, Park Planner

Cindy Camberos, Assistant Project Manager

Approved by:

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

EXHIBITS/ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Schedule and Scope of Work
2. Campaign Finance Disclosure
3. OLIN Presentation