



CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM

Report: Verdugo Wash Visioning consultant recommendation and funding allocation.

1. Motion awarding a contract to Imelk, and authorize the Interim City Manager or his designee to execute a Professional Service Agreement with Imelk in the amount of \$440,000 for the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study.
2. Resolution of appropriation of \$200,000 in Measure M funding to be used towards the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study for a contract total of \$440,000.

COUNCIL ACTION

Item Type: Action Item

Approved for October 27, 2020 **calendar**

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Submitted by:

Philip S. Lanzafame, Director of Community Development

Prepared by:

Bradley Calvert, Assistant Director of Community Development

Reviewed by:

Michele Flynn, Director of Finance

Michael J. Garcia, City Attorney

Approved by:

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

RECOMMENDATION

1. Approve the attached Motion awarding a contract to Imelk, and authorize the Interim City Manager or his designee to execute a Professional Service Agreement (PSA) with Imelk in the amount of \$440,000 for the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study, including an expanded scope of service.
2. Approve a resolution appropriating \$200,000 in Measure M funding to be used towards the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study for a contract total of \$440,000.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT

The Verdugo Wash Visioning offers a unique place-making opportunity that would significantly reshape the urban framework and character of a major area of Glendale. It is a first step towards paying homage to the Wash's original path to the LA River and Griffith Park and beyond. In the 1930s, the County of Los Angeles transformed the tributary from its natural form into its present man-made utilitarian form as a flood control channel encased in concrete and mostly open to the sky. Though the community is accustomed to its presence, the wash often presents itself as a structural and visual disconnect between differing parts of the city, the downtown, and even between neighborhoods and neighbors along its approximately 9.5 miles of length.

The reimagined Verdugo Wash would be transformative in character – a new urban linear park energizing the existing urban framework and fabric of Glendale with seamless connections and visually pleasing experiences while it continues to perform the important function of ensuring storm water runoff is safely conveyed. It would create a walking / cycling route with access to business and entertainment venues while enjoying nature, people, places, and culture as it interweaves several important city centers, services, and a multitude of neighborhoods that make up a large core of Glendale. The visioning is the opportunity to embrace and advance an urban design experience that will create memorability and recognition as a 'must visit' urban experience. As envisioned it would make a significant contribution towards furthering the City's recognition as a unique and livable community.

Following City Council direction, staff developed a RFP to identify a well-qualified firm to assist in establishing the vision for the Verdugo Wash. The RFP sought experience in urban design, landscape architecture, and placemaking while crafting a team to respond to the transportation, sustainability, engineering, and outreach needs of the project.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

The RFP (Exhibit 1) for the Verdugo Wash Visioning was issued on August 10, 2020 with posting on the City's website and also the American Planning Association website. Additionally, direct emails were sent to over forty firms that included some of the most highly creative and respected urban design and landscape architecture professionals across the country.

The purpose of the RFP was to obtain the services of a consulting firm or a consultant team to create a high level vision, including but not limited to, conceptual design, programming, and integration of the Verdugo Wash into the existing and anticipated land use framework as a linear park and spine of the City's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. To that end, the consultant team would assist the city to:

- Advance a vision of the Verdugo Wash as a pedestrian and cyclist oriented linear park/nature trail;
- Develop a unifying design strategy that reaches beyond the defined Verdugo Wash to connect people, places & culture in other corners of the city along its path;
- Inform the city on strategic land use elements and implementation strategies;
- Envision a new, bold, and innovative statement for a significant piece of infrastructure within the City; and
- Aspire to create a landmark place-making and identity feature for the City.

Council authorized \$250,000 to be used towards the Verdugo Wash Visioning study as part of the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget. A RFP was issued with a budget not to exceed of \$240,000, with the remaining \$10,000 set aside to cover anticipated costs related to public engagement and the creation of materials such as graphics, flyers, and webpages. The original RFP asked for a high level visioning and design for the Verdugo Wash, serving as a multi-modal corridor as well as a linear park that would incorporate habitat restoration. It is important to note that the original scope did not include extensive studies of the hydrology of the wash, critical to understanding any improvements that may alter the composition of the infrastructure.

Additionally, noted elements such as branding, sustainability, and a more robust public and stakeholder engagement strategy were absent in the original scope in an effort to control cost. It should also be noted that this project will engage many different agencies such as the United States Army Corps of Engineers, City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District. As discussed later in this report, staff has identified additional funding that could be used towards this project, that would not impact the General Fund, and would allow for the development of a much more complete and technically accurate vision that will create a path to success and implementation. A high-level scope based on the RFP requests and the additional tasks that have been identified is attached to this report (Exhibit 2).

RESPONSE TO RFP

On September 9, 2020 the City's RFP successfully attracted twenty-one responses with teams composed of design, environmental, engineering, and economics professionals of national and international stature. These firms/teams have headquarters in Los Angeles, San Diego, the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, Boston, Philadelphia, Denver, and New York with many also having multiple national and/or international offices. Interestingly, the safer at home/work restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting global use of virtual meetings to interface, made access and the ability to work with teams from across the country possible. It opened up a national pool of innovative and creative professionals. In the past, high cost of travel expenses would have prevented this

outreach to distant consultants.

The firms that submitted their qualifications are some of the most recognized in the country and across the world. These firms specialize in groundbreaking and innovative open space interventions, as well as transformations of waterfronts, riverfronts, and utilitarian infrastructure. These projects have created iconic respites from dense urban environments, social gathering spaces that establish cultural and civic pride, and public spaces that are iconic and synonymous with the cities they are located in. A few examples of these noted projects include:

1. The New York High Line (New York City)
2. Eisenhower Memorial (Washington, DC)
3. Governor's Island (New York City)
4. Klyde Warren Park (Dallas, TX)
5. Campa De Los Ingleses Park (Madrid, Spain)
6. Seattle Central Waterfront (Seattle, WA)
7. Los Angeles River Revitalization (Los Angeles, CA)
8. Railroad Park (Birmingham, AL)
9. Riverfront Park (Spokane, WA)
10. Tyufuleva Roschcha Public Realm (Moscow, Russia)
11. Chattahoochee Riverlands Greenway (Atlanta, GA)

The caliber of firms, as well as project experience, demonstrates the exciting potential for the Verdugo Wash to serve as a defining feature in Glendale's urban fabric.

CONSULTANT SELECTION PROCESS

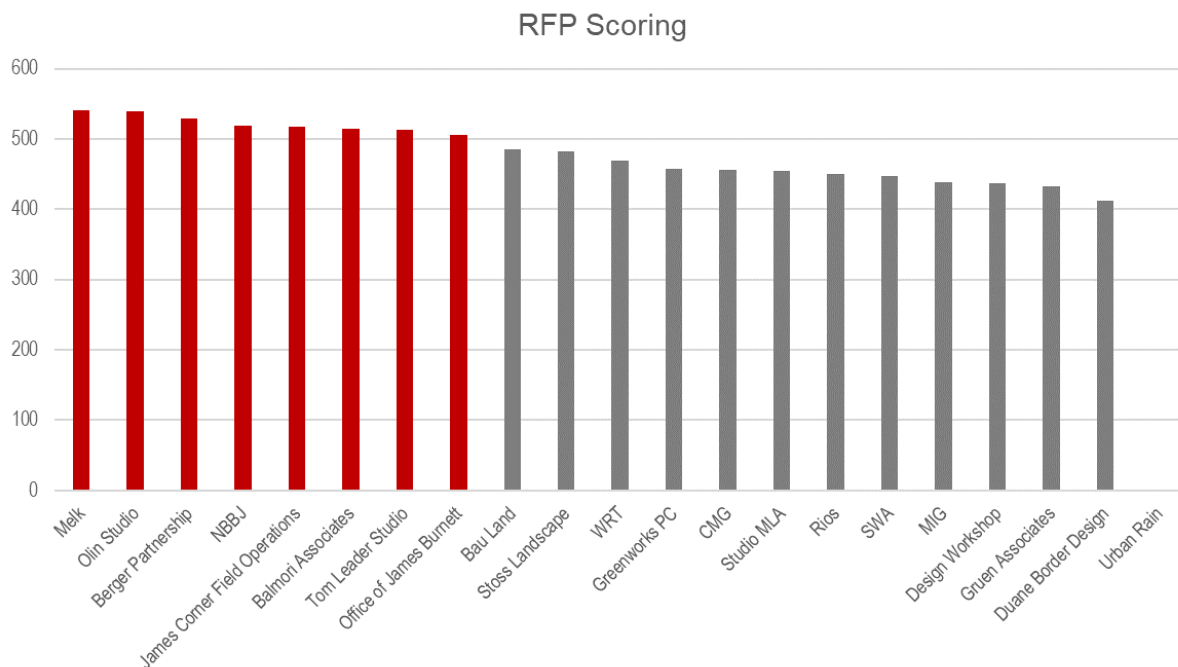
A six-member selection committee composed of representatives from the departments of Community Development divisions of planning, mobility, and urban design, Community Services & Parks, and Public Works scored the proposals based on the following review criteria as outlined in the RFP and listed below:

- Demonstrated project understanding,
- Experience of firm and team members working on similar projects,
- Expertise of key personnel (prime and sub-consultants) to be used on the Project,
- Experience of firm and team on built versus conceptual projects,
- Level of creativity,
- Quality of presentation graphics,
- Completeness of response, and
- Fee proposal

Eight teams topped the list of twenty-one at the completion of scoring the written proposals. One team was disqualified for not meeting the minimum requirements of the submittal and proposed supplemental services that were not solicited for as part of the process.

The final scores were based on the composite of all six panel members individual scores.

A natural break in the scoring created a delineation between the 8th and 9th place teams, justifying interviewing of the leading eight firms.



THE FIRM INTERVIEWS

The firms shortlisted for interviews included:

1. Imelk, New York, NY
2. Olin Studio, Los Angeles, CA
3. Berger Partnership, Seattle, WA
4. NBBJ + SCAPE, Seattle, WA + New York, NY
5. James Corner Field Operations (JCFO), San Francisco, CA
6. Balmori, New York, NY
7. Tom Leader Studio (TLS), Berkley, CA
8. Office of James Burnett (OJB), San Diego, CA

The above teams have produced a formidable body of highly acclaimed projects. Many have been rewarded with numerous national and international design awards. These practices have consistently produced significant contributions to the profession through their innovative award winning projects. Of the eight interviewed firms, five were noted by the online publication *Architizer* as leading international design firms, and part of their *Groundbreakers: 15 Landscape Architecture Firms You Should Know*. Three of the firms have been recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architecture as the *Firm of the Year*.

The complexity and large-scale size of the Verdugo Wash study demands that the selected team is agile at resolving complicated issues, synthesizing enormous amounts of data, managing a large project team of varied disciplines, graphically illustrating the

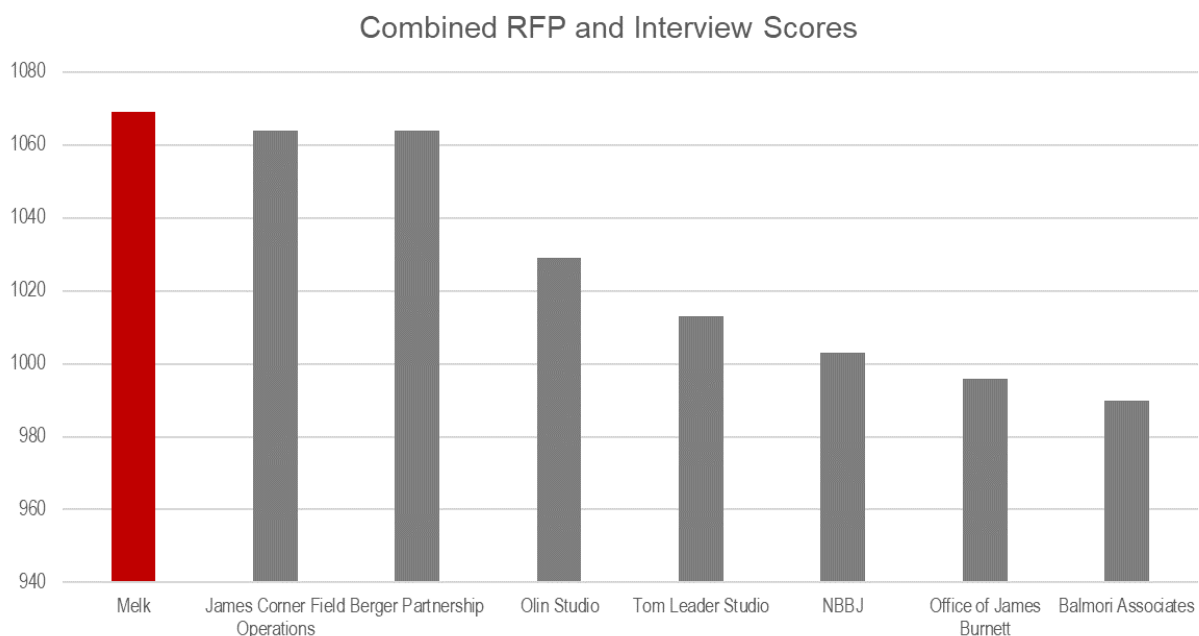
visual concepts, and communicating with and gaining consensus of stakeholders all while delivering the highest level of creative thinking that is seasoned with sound technical judgement.

Interviews were conducted over 2-days on October 7th and 8th, 2020 using a virtual meeting setting. Each interview was 60-minutes in length and included:

- 10-minutes for the team presentation, using one related project that embodies their design philosophy and approach;
- 40-minutes for seven questions from the panel to evaluate their spontaneous responses to questions regarding their team's skills and involvement in the project, anticipated challenges and solutions, their decision-making process, public outreach ideas, and budget considerations; and
- 10-minutes for questions from the design firm.

The 10-minute presentations were an opportunity for each firm to give an in-depth look at a completed project from start to finish highlighting examples of graphic illustration techniques, community workshop approaches, project details and imagery of demonstrated activated spaces. From the interview panel's view it was an opportunity to witness the firm's creative thought process and understand the finished project in greater depth. The team presentations were evaluated on three criteria: quality, clarity, and communication skills each worth up to up to 10 points (30-points total).

Final interview scores were the combined team presentation and the 7-questions which were each worth up to 10 points (70-points total). At the conclusion of the interviews and compilation of the panel scores for both the interview and the RFP review, the firm/team ranking order was as follows:



Upon completion of interview and RFP scoring, New York-based Imelk received the highest combined score amongst the panel. The panel noted that the team's creativity stood amongst the highest of all firms that submitted, while also encouraged by their highly successful public engagement and ability to build a broad consensus and support for their innovative projects. Imelk's impressive portfolio includes transformative private and public sector visions and projects that include:

1. Pier 97 (New York, NY)
2. Parque Lineal del Rio Manzanares (Madrid, Spain)
3. Prince Bay Waterfront Promenade (Shenzhen, China)
4. Tyufuleva Roschcha Public Realm (Moscow, Russia)
5. 5M Open Space (San Francisco, CA)
6. The Barn (Sacramento, CA)
7. Echo Bay (New Rochelle, NY)

Imelk brings an innovative and creative approach to creating spaces that are contextually sensitive, while incorporating engaging designs that are ecologically responsible. Their RFP response demonstrated a balance of creative and iconic visioning, with completed and built projects that have proven successful and transformative. The interview process allowed the team to exhibit their collaborative nature of working, and their innovative approach to design and public engagement that generates excitement in their projects while creating a vision that the community and stakeholders and coalesce around. Joining Imelk will be the firm of BuroHappold which will provide expertise on hydrology, engineering, transportation, and economics. Team members from BuroHappold bring experience from Los Angeles County and West Hollywood Climate Action Plan's, as well as transportation innovations for projects such as the Moscow Bike and Pedestrian Plan.

The consultant selection committee for the Verdugo Wash Visioning is pleased to make a recommendation to the City Council that the firm Imelk be approved to enter into a contractual agreement with the City of Glendale as the Urban Design/Landscape Architecture consultant for this study.

Following Council direction, staff would refine the scope of work with the consultant team, including project schedule, final deliverables, and public engagement plan.

Additional Funding and Scope

Staff is also requesting consideration to include additional funding for the visioning study, utilizing Measure M funds.

Hydrology

As part of the development of the scope it has been identified that additional study would be needed to better understand the hydrology of the channel and corresponding engineering requirements. This work will be necessary to ensure that the vision developed in this phase represents something that can be implemented and has considered the many challenges and aspects of the Verdugo Wash's role for flood control. Staff proposes to enhance the scope of work (Exhibit

2, changes have been highlighted in blue bold) to provide a greater level of analysis and data collection to ensure that the proposed design is feasible and implementable.

Public/Stakeholder Engagement and Agency Coordination

Staff also proposes to enhance the scope for public engagement. The original scope of work called for a limited number of public meetings, that was commensurate with the proposed budget. Recognizing that the project will not only impact 18 neighborhoods within the city of Glendale, it will also require coordination amongst a multitude of stakeholder and technical agencies that will require a significant amount of coordination and collaboration. This includes the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Flood Control District, and the many business and civic organizations along or impacted by the wash visioning. Additional funding will allow for a broader and more comprehensive outreach program with the public, as well as the coordination necessary with technical and governmental agencies.

Branding and Identity

Lastly, establishing an identity and brand for the project will be essential for it to become a recognizable initiative. Branding, such as logos, color schemes, and other elements that will be consistently used to identify the project will reflect the unique and defining vision that will be created, while evoking opportunities for civic pride and engagement from the broader community. Comparable projects around the country have used branding as a means to develop the local identity and messaging that promotes and encourages a project of such significance to advance through multi-year implementation phases.

The additional funding would come from a reallocation of Measure M funds. Money previously dedicated to the Circulation Element Update, Traffic Impact Fee, and SB743 compliance will go unused for this year. This does not impact the timing of the aforementioned projects, but rather funding that will not be needed until next year as the initiatives continue to advance. As part of next year's Measure M budgeting, staff will be able to reallocate the money towards these projects. It is recommended that \$200,000 of that unused funding be reallocated to the Verdugo Wash Visioning, and next year a new \$200,000 appropriation will be allocated for the work related to the Circulation Element Update and Traffic Impact Fee when needed. This appropriation of funding will have no impact to the General Fund, and will ensure that the vision created will be something that is technically sound and positioned to advance to implementation phases and the pursuit of grant funding. This will also ensure that multiple phases will not be necessary to determine feasibility of the project.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total estimated cost of the Verdugo Wash Visioning study is \$440,000. This includes the expanded scope which staff believes will be necessary to create a complete and technical sound vision. As part of the FY 2020-21 budget, the City Council approved an

appropriation of \$250,000 for the Verdugo Wash study, of which \$10,000 of this amount was programmed for printing, graphics, and public outreach services. The remaining \$240,000 is available for the study in the Contractual Services, General Fund, Community Development Department, Measure S CDD, Measure S Verdugo Wash Study account: 43110-1010-CDD-2524-P8008-T0000-F0000-0000-0000.

It is requested that \$200,000 be derived from transferring \$200,000 from Contractual Services, Measure M Local Return Fund, Public Works Department, Projects account 43110-2220-PWD-0020-P0000-T0000-F0000-0000-0000; 52103-BUDGET-0000 to Contractual Services, Measure M Local Return Fund, Public Works Department, Projects account; 43110-2220-PWD-0020-P0000-T0000-F0000-0000-0000- 52179-BUDGET-0000. This funding will have no impact to the General Fund or to current projects in progress through Measure M funding.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: The City Council may choose to approve the attached Motion awarding a contract with an expanded scope, for the Verdugo Wash Visioning to !melk and authorizing the Interim City Manager or his designee to execute a PSA with !melk, and to approve the resolution to appropriate an additional \$200,000 to accommodate the expanded scope, utilizing Measure M funds. The total contract will be for \$440,000.

Alternative 2: The City Council may choose to approve the attached Motion awarding a contract with the original scope for the Verdugo Wash Visioning to !melk and authorize the Interim City Manager or his designee to execute a Professional Services Agreement with !melk but to not approve the resolution to appropriate an additional \$200,000 of Measure M funds. The total contract will be for \$240,000.

Alternative 3: The City Council may choose not to approve the attached Motion awarding a contract to !melk and not authorize the Interim City Manager or his designee to execute a PSA with that company. This would require selecting another firm, or conducting another RFP process. The Council may choose to not approve the use of Measure M funds for the expanded scope, requiring additional future phases of work.

Alternative 4: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the City Campaign Finance Ordinance, 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 contract in this Agenda Item Report as applicable are included as Exhibit 4.

EXHIBITS

1. Verdugo Wash Visioning RFP and original scope of work
2. Proposed updated Verdugo Wash Visioning scope of work
3. !melk Project Portfolio
4. Campaign Disclosure

