



# Agenda Report

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, February 21, 2023

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR CALUBAQUIB  
SENIOR UTILITIES ENGINEER BERRY

**THROUGH:** CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

**SUBJECT:** RESOLUTIONS ACCEPTING AND APPROPRIATING STATEWIDE  
PARK DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION  
PROGRAM GRANT FUNDS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$3,349,595 AND  
AWARDING CONTRACT TO SSA LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
FOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SERVICES FOR  
THE CITY PLAZA

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## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Council:

1. Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to accept the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program Grant funds in the amount of \$3,349,595 for the Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization project and to execute all required documents, future non-substantive amendments, if any, and appropriate the funds to the grant budget; and
2. Adopt a resolution awarding a contract to SSA Landscape Architects for landscape architectural design services for the Watsonville City Plaza Revitalization project in an amount not to exceed \$499,924 and authorizing and directing the City Manager to execute same.

## BACKGROUND:

On February 11, 2020 the City adopted Resolution No. 13-20 which approved the City of Watsonville 2020 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, which included the Ramsay Park concept plan and the City Plaza concept plan. The City then focused on implementing both Ramsay and City Plaza conceptual plans into design documents for construction. As part of the process of preparing the strategic plan, staff secured the Administrative Use Permit with Design Review and Environmental Review (PP2019-448) for 350 Main Street, the City Plaza Site, from the City's Community Development Department. Included with that review was an approved Initial Study – Mitigated Negative Declaration, meeting CEQA criteria.

In the fall of 2020, Council approved the application for a grant to the State of California Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program (Resolution No. 171-20).

In December of 2021, Parks and Community Services was awarded a grant in the amount of \$3,349,595 for this project. With both Council and planning approval of the project, along with a funding source, the next steps were to select an architect to produce construction documents.

## **DISCUSSION:**

In November of 2022, staff sent out a Request for Proposal for Landscape Architectural Design and Consultant Services for the City Plaza Revitalization project. The proposal was sent to a handful of consultants we have worked with in the past along with being advertised in the RFP section of EBidBoard. In describing the project RFP states: *The City Plaza Revitalization Project weaves together the space's rich history with the community's current and modern use of this culturally significant asset. Known as the "heart of the city," this downtown plaza has been the focus of community gatherings and celebrations for well over a century. Watsonville City Plaza is on the National Register of Historic Places, with its classic design, which includes a bandstand (gazebo) and fountain. The community proposes to restore these features to their historic grandeur, preserving them for the enjoyment of future generations. Integrating new recreational features and upgrading the park's infrastructure will serve to accommodate 20+ annual events and weekly farmers' market in and around the plaza. This project will increase recreational opportunities and protect a safe green space for residents, while augmenting the site's historical and cultural significance for one of Watsonville's densest and most disadvantaged neighborhoods.*

Improvements included:

- Seismically retrofit and cosmetically refurbish the gazebo
- Repaving of gazebo surface and surroundings with permeable pavers and landscaping
- Refurbishment of the fountain area with a brick plaza, park benches, and interpretative signage
- Installation of 18-inch high permanent stage facing out from the gazebo toward Main Street with removable stage portion with paver pattern and guardrail.
- ADA-accessible spectator area, permeable pavers, and a sloped ramp with guardrails to the stage
- Installation of a game table area south of the gazebo
- Installation of a group picnic area east of the gazebo
- Repaving of existing pathways with brick accent
- Installation of a historic/art element pedestal at the corner of Main Street and East Beach Street
- Installation of new public art (to be coordinated with City selected artist)
- Drinking fountain with bottle-filling station
- Bicycle parking

- Improved electrical infrastructure to accommodate cultural performances, holiday lighting and upgrades and expansion of existing park lighting.
- Planting of six 15-gallon sized trees, 14 smaller ornamental trees, and four large staturated shade trees
  - 17 existing trees will be maintained on site, including three trees designated under Chapter 7-13, *Preservation of Historical Trees*, of the Watsonville Municipal Code.
  - 16 trees will be removed from the site, including nine unhealthy trees, and two trees will be relocated.

Proposals were due on December 23, 2022. Five consulting firms submitted packages for review:

- SSA Landscape Architects / Santa Cruz
- Verde Design / Santa Clara
- RHAA Landscape Architects / San Francisco
- SWA Group / San Francisco
- The Wallace Group / San Luis Obispo

A team was established to review the proposals and interview the firms. This team was comprised of staff from Parks and Community Services, Public Works, and the Planning section of the Community Development Department. There was also a member of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association.

All firms were invited to be interviewed. These meetings took place at the Parks and Community Services offices on January 30 and 31, 2023.

Upon completion of the interviews and internal discussion, staff chose to award the project to SSA Landscape Architects of Santa Cruz. The committee liked their straightforward approach to the project, in terms of site review investigation, execution of design, and experience in construction management. SSA has a great track record of projects with Santa Cruz County and the Pajaro Valley.

- Callaghan Park Renovation / Watsonville – 2009
- Pajaro Neighborhood Park / Pajaro– 2014
- Heart of Soquel Plaza Park / Soquel– 2015
- Chanticleer Neighborhood Park / Live Oak – 2020
- Watsonville Slough Farm / near Pajaro High School – in Design

There was one final project which impressed staff, which was the Paso Roble City Park, completed in 2016. This was a renovation of a park very similar to the City Plaza, and work included renovation of their historic bandstand.

Based upon their approach to this project and their experience in similar projects, staff is recommending the Council to award the design contract for the City Plaza Revitalization project to SSA Landscape Architects in the amount of \$499,924.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The Council's adoption of this resolution is consistent with the Council's priorities of:

- 3 - Infrastructure & Environment – Renovation of significant City infrastructure.
- 4 -Economic Development – The Plaza serves as a gathering place and focal point for events and social life in the downtown.
- 5 - Community Engagement & Well-Being – Parks support community well-being.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

The State of California Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Grant awarded will be appropriated to account 0260-337-7361-09053 in the amount of \$3,349,595. The contract with SSA Landscape Architects will be charged to this account in the amount of \$499,924.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

The Council may choose to:

- Not accept the grant and not award this contract with SSA Landscape Architects.
- Accept the grant and not award this contract with SSA Landscape Architects.
- Accept the grant and award this contract to another firm.

**ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

None.