



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: DECEMBER 8, 2015

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WARDS: 4 AND 5
DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: GREENBELT ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM TO SUPPORT
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRATICES AND APPLICATION FOR GRANT
FUNDING FROM THE WELLS FARGO ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS FOR
COMMUNITIES GRANT

ISSUE:

City Council is asked to consider authorizing staff to transfer administration of the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program from Riverside Public Utilities to the Community & Economic Development Department, transition the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program into the new Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program ("Program") and authorize a Wells Fargo Environmental Sustainability for Communities grant application.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Authorize staff to transfer administration and marketing of the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program from Riverside Pubic Utilities to the Community & Economic Development Department;
2. Authorize staff to transition the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program into the Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program; and
3. Authorize staff to prepare and submit an application for grant funding to the Wells Fargo Environmental Sustainability for Communities program in the amount of \$80,000 for the new Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, City Council approved the creation of the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program funded with \$50,000 from the General Fund to provide incentives up to a maximum amount of \$5,000 per property to offset the infrastructure costs for the installation of water supply pipeline and associated pressurized water system from the Gage Canal to the property. At the time of the program inception, Riverside Public Utilities was tasked to administer and market the program to farmers in the Arlington Heights Greenbelt.

Staff is requesting to transfer administration and marketing of the program to the Community & Economic Development Department in coordination with Grow Riverside agricultural initiatives.

Staff proposes to merge the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program with a new Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program.

The Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program will provide low interest loans to incentivize innovative, cost-effective irrigation and cultivation practices that enhance sustainable stewardship on private land in the Arlington Heights Greenbelt. Loans will be contingent on the following criteria:

- a. The planting of at least 80% of a parcel with food crops.
- b. Installation of an irrigation system or water infrastructure that enhances water quality and quantity while maintaining or increasing agricultural productivity.
- c. Installation of irrigation system or water infrastructure that results in soil conservation practices, while maintaining or increasing agricultural productivity.
- d. Installation of green agricultural infrastructure resulting in increased agroecosystem stewardship and conservation practices or renewable energy and energy efficiency technology that results in maintaining or increasing agricultural productivity.
- e. Grant recipients will be required to enter into a Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program Loan Agreement with the City and agree to maintain the improved agricultural operations for a minimum of ten years.
- f. If the applicant's property borders Victoria Avenue, a minimum of three rows of citrus trees will be required facing the street to preserve the linear citrus park.
- g. Participants must comply with all City ordinances and land use guidelines required with the RA zone.

The Community & Economic Development Department will administer and market the Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program.

To procure additional funding for the Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program, staff proposes to identify and pursue outside funding sources. One such funding source is the Wells Fargo Environmental Sustainability for Communities Grant. Staff proposes to submit a grant application in the amount of \$80,000 to fund the Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program.

The proposed Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program is aligned with several of the grant's funding priorities, including: supporting sustainable agricultural practices and private land stewardship; facilitating investments in green infrastructure; conserving water resources and improving local water quality; and encouraging broad-based citizen and youth participation in project implementation. Funds from the General Fund supplemental appropriation in 2013 for the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program along with contributions from staff time and services for program management enables the City to meet a 1:1 match grant requirement.

The Public Utilities General Manager concurs with the report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Supplemental appropriations of \$50,000 from the General Fund was approved by City Council in 2013 to fund the Greenbelt Preservation Grant Program. The funds remain unapplied and

available, and will be used to fund the Greenbelt Environmental Stewardship Program. There is no fiscal impact to make an application to the Wells Fargo Environmental Sustainability for Communities grant.

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