

DATE: October 10, 2016

AGENDA ITEM # 4

To: City of Los Altos Environmental Commission
From: Alyssa Robins
Subject: Girl Scout Gold Award Project: Drought Tolerant Demonstration Garden

BACKGROUND

As an Ambassador Girl Scout in Los Altos Troop 60321, I am in the process of planning and executing my Gold Award, a Girl Scout service project designed to address a local issue and make a positive, sustainable impact on the community. The objectives of the project are to demonstrate to the community the possibilities and benefits of drought-tolerant landscaping by the creation of an educational demonstration garden at Woodland Library

The service project is designed to impact the overuse of water on traditional grass lawns and landscaping by: 1) creating a drought-tolerant demonstration garden at Woodland Library in Los Altos; 2) inviting partnerships into the program; 3) providing a landscape for the community to view water saving techniques; and 4) providing resource materials through displays inside the Woodland library.

Sustainability of the garden is an important feature and can be accomplished if grants can be obtained from various sources. In addition, the garden provides an opportunity for collaboration with decision makers such as the Los Altos Environmental Commission, City staff, the Los Altos Community Foundation, GreenTown Los Altos, the Girl Scouts of Northern California, Cal Water and various community organizations interested in the benefits of water conservation and landscape efficiencies in the new normal of drought. Most importantly, I can learn life skills such as working with a business model, creating a work plan, and creating synergies acquired through collaborating with a variety of organizations to accomplish a goal.

DISCUSSION

For this project, I will design the layout and content of the demonstration garden with the help of local landscape designers, nurseries, and City staff. The garden will highlight several elements of drought-tolerant gardening practices, such as a rain garden, vertical garden, examples of lawn alternatives, and different varieties of California native plants. I will also create educational material (i.e. signs and brochures) to augment the educational aspect of the garden and lead community members to further resources inside the library.

Once planned, volunteers from Los Altos Girl Scout Troop 60321, the Los Altos Community Foundation, GreenTown Los Altos, Cal Water and/or City staff will be invited to assist in the installation of the demonstration garden. The installation is tentatively planned for February 2017.

In order to fund the purchase of necessary materials such as plants, rain and vertical garden materials, and educational material, grant funds will be required. Perhaps the Environmental Commission Education Fund could be considered. This grant will be used for the initial installation

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of the garden, and any funds remaining after installation will be used for ongoing garden maintenance. Funds will also be requested to establish an endowment fund for yearly maintenance costs in order to insure project sustainability.

I will work with the City of Los Altos Public Information Coordinator to develop content for the City's website and social media accounts, and for articles in local newspapers in order to attract community members to the garden and exhibit the collaboration between the City and local non-profit organizations.

I look forward to this exciting project and partner collaboration to achieve the Girl Scout Gold Award in an effort to support my local community and enhance the understanding of water conservation for gardens and landscapes.

Attachment:

A. October 10, 2016 – 2016/17 Drought Tolerant Demonstration Garden Work Plan

2016/17 Drought Tolerant Demonstration Garden Work Plan
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Goal	Objective	Activity	Timeline	Status
Plan Development	Develop site plan in coordination with City of Los Altos at Woodland Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define garden boundaries and measurements Determine pathways, ADA compliance, type of demonstrations i.e. grasses, drought tolerant plants, rain garden, vertical garden, garden markers, library display resources 	Aug. – Oct.	Meeting with City 9-27-2016, EC 9-12-2016, 10-10-2016
	Add partners in the project, Cal Water and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine plant types and quantities, irrigation, materials and other necessary supplies 	Sept – Jan	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw up and finalize garden blueprint 	Sept – Jan.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner with Cal Water, GreenTown Los Altos to design rain capturing/catchment system. 	Sept – Jan.	
	Obtain assistance from volunteer to develop materials, list of resources, organization of materials, scribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit organization assistant/scribe from City volunteers 	Sept – Jan.	Stacey Chaney
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop summary material, PowerPoint, work plan, presentation to Environmental Commission and other potential partners 	Sept – Oct.	In progress
Establish a Budget	Determine the budget for initial installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request funds: possible resources: Environmental Commission, LACF, GTLA, Cal Water, other 	Sept – Jan.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase plants and other materials 	TBD	
	Determine budget for ongoing maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as above 	Sept – Jan.	
	Obtain appropriate liability insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase Girl Scout Plan 2 insurance for non-Scout volunteers 	January	

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Installation	Build and train volunteer team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit volunteers from Troop 60321, GTLA, LACF, Acterra, Cal Water and/or City 	Aug. – Dec.	Troop leaders notified
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train Troop 60321 volunteers at working party 	December	
	Complete pre-installation work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City build pathway around garden area (ADA accessible) 	Before Feb.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City remove bushes and/or trees according to site plan 	Before Feb.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine installation dates 	September	
	Install garden with volunteer assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend soil with City assistance 	February	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City - Alter irrigation if necessary according to site plan 	February	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate volunteers and plant 	February	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create rain garden (possibly pre-installation for runoff water harvesting) with partners 	Jan. – Feb.	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install signage, educational content, and garden map 	Jan. – Feb.	
Communications and Media	Get published	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create content for online media (City and Woodland Library websites.) 	March	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create content for print media (newspaper and magazine articles.) 	March	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicit article space in local newspapers and magazines 	March	
	Host on-site event at garden opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize event with City staff 	March	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize event in print and online 	March	