



City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: May 27, 2025

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Approved By: Gabriel Engeland

Subject: Execute an Agreement Amendment with Grassroots Ecology for Stewardship Services in Redwood Grove Nature Preserve

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- ☐ Public Safety
- ☐ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☒ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Housing
- ☒ General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt the Resolution authorizing the City manager to execute an amendment that extends the agreement with Grassroots Ecology an additional 3-year term for Redwood Grove Stewardship services.

FISCAL IMPACT

The amount of this amendment is \$313,587 for a 3-year term.

In addition to the compensation amount in the original agreement, the total amount of the 5-year agreement will be \$504,587.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The approval of this agreement with Grassroots Ecology is exempt from review under the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities) in that the only work required under the agreement is limited to the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use, and none of the circumstances identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 applies.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

June 27, 2023 - Initial 2-year term of this agreement

BACKGROUND

The City of Los Altos owns Redwood Grove Nature Preserve; 5.7-acre nature preserve located off University Avenue. The City has contracted with Grassroots Ecology to assist in preserving and

maintaining this valuable community asset. The term of the first term of this agreement with Grassroots expires on July 1, 2025.

The stewardship that Grassroots Ecology provides as part of their scope of work for this agreement includes important aspects of care for Redwood Grove. Here are a few very important items that Grassroots staff and volunteers take care of in Redwood Grove.

In the late spring and early summer, Grassroots Ecology removes invasive weeds through scything or hand-pulling. Left unattended to, these weeds would not only become unsightly, but would increase the fire hazard in the area. Removing these weeds without chemicals is very time consuming and could not be handled by Maintenance staff at this time.

Grassroots Ecology has transplanted native plants to the area that require attention when initially planted for the root system to gain a foothold. There is not an automatic irrigation system in the area to provide the water and care needed. Grassroots has provided this attention and plan to continue to provide that attention. Additional native plantings that Grassroots Ecology would install are also planned in the future through matching grants that are secured by them.

The health of the redwood trees in the Redwood Grove is also something that Grassroots staff and volunteers assist the City with. The redwood trees undergo intense stress during the hot dry summers, as they were planted over 100 years ago out of their natural range (the coastal fog belt). As a result, this natural asset relies on continued irrigation utilizing specialized watering machinery that is set up by Grassroots Ecology staff. Without regular watering in the summer, the redwoods could suffer significant strain in health, which could contribute to their unhealthy appearance and create limb hazards.

ANALYSIS

Parks Maintenance staff works with the stewardship services contractor on the care and maintenance of Redwood Grove and has found success working with Grassroots Ecology in recent years. City crews do not have the expertise and are not staffed at a level that can provide the maintenance a contract steward can for this nature preserve. Grassroots Ecology has also provided expert advice on other items within the nature preserve that City staff maintains.

DISCUSSION

The attached Resolution is authorizing approval of an amendment to the original agreement with Grassroots Ecology that expires on July 1, 2025. The amendment is adding three years to the original agreement with an increase in price from \$95,500 to \$104,529 annually. Like many businesses and organizations today, Grassroots is facing increased staff and materials costs. Staff feels that the approximately 9% increase from the agreement two years ago is reasonable and responsible and is contracted now through fiscal year ending 2028. Grassroots Ecology works well with the City in their stewardship services and community involvement in Redwood Grove.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution