

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

NO. 02-01

DATE January 9, 2002

C.D. 12

BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: LIMEKILN CANYON PARK: TEMPORARY RIGHT-OF-ENTRY PERMIT APPROVAL TO ALLOW THE NORTH VALLEY FAMILY YMCA TO ACCESS AND GRADE A PORTION OF PARK PROPERTY

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General Manager

Approved \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board:

- 1) Approve the Plans submitted by the North Valley Family YMCA for the proposed grading and landscaping of a 4,500 square foot area of Limekiln Canyon Park;
- 2) Find that the proposed issuance of the attached temporary Right-of-Entry Permit is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA); and,
- 3) Authorize the General Manager to issue the attached temporary Right-of-Entry Permit to the North Valley Family YMCA, allowing the YMCA and their contractors to access and grade a specified area of Limekiln Canyon Park.

SUMMARY

The North Valley Family YMCA (YMCA), located at 11336 Corbin Avenue in Northridge, recently requested that the Department of Recreation and Parks (Department) issue them a temporary Right-of-Entry Permit (Permit), allowing the YMCA to access a 4,500 square foot area of Limekiln Canyon Park, to grade approximately 1,100 cubic yards of soil, to assist and facilitate the proposed expansion of their existing parking lot. The YMCA intends to maintain the expansion of the parking lot entirely on YMCA property and will not require the future use of park property. The subject area consists of a berm located along the south-westerly ridge of Limekiln Canyon Park in Porter Ranch. Plans depicting the location of the subject berm (Exhibit-A), illustrating the grading scheme (Exhibit-B), and landscaping scheme (Exhibit-C) are included as exhibits to the proposed Permit and have been included as attachments to this report.

Although the current request for a temporary Right-of-Entry Permit was recently submitted by the YMCA, the intent to expand the subject parking lot, with the Department's cooperation dates back approximately one year.

## REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2

NO. 02-01

On November 6, 2000, the North Valley Family YMCA submitted a letter to the Department proposing that the Department issue a 50 year lease to the YMCA, for a 0.66 acre portion of Limekiln Canyon Park, so that they could expand their existing parking lot onto park property. The existing YMCA membership had outgrown the facility's capacity, making the existing parking lot inadequate to accommodate the current number of member vehicles using the parking lot. That situation currently continues. Being that the original 0.66 acre area in question consisted of dedicated parkland, a lease to the YMCA was out of the question. Therefore, the Department and YMCA subsequently explored ways in which the project might materialize through a possible shared use agreement. The intent was to solve the YMCA's parking dilemma, while providing a recreational benefit to the community. However, when the project was presented to the surrounding community in a public forum, significant community concerns were raised, primarily relating to the proposed removal of 19,000 cubic yards of soil and the loss of the berm's natural aesthetics. Additionally, the YMCA was unable to meet the Department's proposed terms for shared use. In light of the community's concerns and because the YMCA and Department were unable to reach a mutually beneficial agreement for shared use, the YMCA retracted its original proposal to expand their parking lot onto park property.

The current YMCA project is a much reduced version of the original, no longer requiring the future use of park property. The original project involved the use of 0.66 acres of parkland and the removal of 19,000 cubic yards of soil, as opposed to the current project which involves only temporary access to a 4,500 square foot area of park property and the excavation and grading of 1,100 cubic yards of soil. The original project involved completely leveling the subject berm, opening a direct line of sight to and from the existing residential community across Limekiln Canyon and the YMCA facility, whereas the current proposed project does not present a significant reduction in berm height.

Staff from the Department's Planning and Construction Branch have reviewed the proposed Plan for the grading (Exhibit-B) of the subject area and have determined that there will be no significant loss of berm height under the proposed plan. There will be an initial reduction in berm height of approximately 2 to 4 feet when the grading is completed. However, to mitigate this effect and calm any community concerns relating to an exposed line of sight to and from the YMCA facility and neighboring residences across the Canyon, the Department is requiring the YMCA to landscape the affected area with specific trees, plants, and foliage, which will work to restore the berm height and stabilize the berm's soil. Department staff have reviewed the proposed landscaping Plan (Exhibit -C) and have found the plan to be appropriate and acceptable. Department staff provided the YMCA with the required plants, trees, and foliage for the Landscaping Plan.

The grading of the subject berm will be done according to Department of Building and Safety standards for designated hillside property. As part of the original project to remove 19,000 cubic yards of soil, a geologic and geotechnical review by GSC Geosoils Consultants, Inc. was performed on the subject area in April, 2001. The review revealed that the excavation and grading of the subject area was feasible from a geologic and geotechnical engineering standpoint, provided that certain recommendations were to be followed. The report further revealed that the originally proposed project would not adversely affect the stability of the surrounding off-site areas. Therefore,

REPORT OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3

NO. 02-01

taking into account that the current project is no where near the magnitude of the originally proposed project, staff perceives the current project to also pose no threat to park property or the surrounding off-site areas.

The Department's Environmental Management Unit has determined that the proposed issuance of Permit No. 517 to the North Valley Family YMCA is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), pursuant to Article VII, Section 1, Class 4 (2)(3)(7) of the City CEQA Guidelines.

This project and the issuance of this Permit is supported by Councilmember Hal Bernson of the 12<sup>th</sup> Council District and the Superintendent of the Valley Region.

This report was prepared by Joel Alvarez of the Department's Real Estate and Asset Management Division.