



INTERIM MAYOR TODD GLORIA

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 6, 2013
TO: Tom Tomlinson, Interim Director, Development Services Department
FROM: Interim Mayor Todd Gloria *Todd Gloria*
SUBJECT: City Heights Canyons Enhancement Project

This memo is to request official expedited status for the City Heights Canyons Enhancements and Trails Project #333312.

This is a public benefit project in City Heights that restores/enhances 14 acres of habitat and provides safe, gently sloping trails for the community where they are currently using dozens of eroding and steep renegade trails to take short cuts through the canyons to key destinations, including schools, grocery stores and parks. Not only is this critical new infrastructure that ensures access to parks and canyons for all City Heights residents, but also it provides safe, sustainable walking trails for a disadvantaged community that relies on safe walking routes.

It is essential that this project be expedited so that planting can begin this year and the project applicant can meet the performance criteria required under the grant for the areas of restoration. The project applicant must spend all \$365,000 of the Urban Greening Grant Agreement project funds by May 2016, and areas for planting of native plants need at least 2.5 years of establishment period (maintenance, watering, weeding) to meet the project performance criteria. Because the areas for restoration are spread out between four canyons, watering during the first few years will be challenging. They must take advantage of the winter rains this year. If they have to wait until next winter (2015) we will only have a year and a half for plant establishment with no more funding past May 2016.

The project manager, Tim Daly, has told the applicant that it could be as late as February (or later) before the CEQA Notice of Determination is filed with the County Recorder. The state of California will need 30 days after this notice is filed to review the documents before giving San Diego Canyonlands the green light to construct the project. If we wait this long, they will have missed the winter rains and our chance to plant this year.

SD Canyonlands has worked closely with the City Open Space Division over the last three years on the details of this project and as the land managers, they have already finished their review and approved the project. They have communicated thoroughly with other city departments as well. The City Heights Area Planning Committee has also requested that this project be expedited.

I would appreciate any effort you can make to prioritize and expedite the approval process to allow the planting to begin this year. Thank you for all the hard work you do for the residents of San Diego.

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