



City Council Report

City Council Meeting: December 19, 2023
Agenda Item: 11.A

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Rick Valte, Public Works Director, Public Works, Architecture Services
Subject: Award Request for Proposal and Enter into Agreement with Sasaki Associates, Inc. for Community Outreach Process, Visioning Services and Concept Design for the Airport Conversion Project

Recommended Action

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Adopt a finding of Categorical Exemption pursuant to Sections 15262 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.
2. Award RFP #SP2641 – Airport Conversion RFP to Sasaki Associates, Inc. for a community outreach process, visioning services, and a concept design (collectively, “the Process”), related to the future planning of the Airport land in anticipation of Airport closure, for the Public Works Department.
3. Provide direction and approve the scope of services for the Sasaki contract related to the RFP #SP2641, including the community outreach work.
4. Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement with Sasaki Associates, Inc. for a community outreach process, visioning services, and concept design, in an amount not to exceed \$2,070,000.00 (including a 12% contingency) for 21 months, as described in this report, with future year funding contingent on Council budget approval.
5. Approve the position and classification changes necessary to dedicate a project lead for the Airport Conversion project as described in the “Funding and Staffing Recommendations” section of this report.
6. Authorize budget changes as outlined in the Financial Impacts and Budget Actions section of this report.

Summary

The Santa Monica community has been resolute in its preference and intention to close the Santa Monica Airport (Airport) on January 1, 2029, as afforded in the [Consent Decree](#) and in accordance with [Resolution 11026](#) (Council’s adopted authorization to take all necessary steps to ensure Airport closure) and turn it into a “Great Park”

focusing on public open spaces and recreational facilities as noted in [Measure LC](#). Using this framework, and as directed by Council at the January 24, 2023, meeting (Attachment A), staff undertook a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) and subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) process to determine the best team of consultants to help the community and staff understand the existing conditions of the Airport, provide meaningful engagement with community members, and envision potential land-planning scenarios leading to a preferred design concept for the “Great Park.”

Staff recommends Sasaki Associates, Inc. (Sasaki) for the scopes of work defined in [SP2641- Airport Conversion RFP](#) as it is the best qualified firm to provide professional services. Sasaki has extensive experience with re-envisioning airports into parks and working collaboratively with community members, city leadership, and staff. The RFP originally intended that the community outreach portion of the work support the lottery-selected panel, however, as directed by Council at the October 10, 2023, meeting (Attachment B), the scope of work was revised to rely on an outreach process focused on the broader community instead of being focused on a panel. City Council requested an enhanced process that is as inclusive and robust as possible within a broader engagement framework.

Given the direction to reduce consultant support, significant staff time and resources would be required starting in 2024 to design, organize, and implement the community outreach work and manage this project effectively. Therefore, staff is recommending City Council approve and budget a Principal Design and Planning Manager (pending Personnel Board approval in January 2024) who can focus full-time on the “Great Park” for the Airport Conversion project.

Discussion

The City of Santa Monica has the authority and intention to close the Airport after December 31, 2028. This authority was established in 2017 through a settlement agreement with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) entered as a Consent Decree in U.S. District Court. This marked the end of nearly five decades of litigation and

resource investments to re-gain local control of the Airport's approximate 227 acres, originally purchased with a park bond.

For the past century, the Airport has operated as a general aviation facility that has played a significant role in the city's development. It is currently the home to 166 businesses across 43 various industries, contributing approximately \$20 million annually to the Airport Fund through aviation-related fees, commercial leases, and events.

The anticipated closure of the Airport presents a unique opportunity for our community. The “Future of Santa Monica Airport Project,” as directed by City Council earlier this year, endeavors to complete a multi-year effort to perform broad and deep engagement in order to determine how this space can best serve the City now and for generations to come.

Measure LC, approved in 2014 by 60% of the Santa Monica voters, prohibits new development of Airport land after all or part of the Airport is permanently closed until the voters have approved limits on the uses and development that may occur on the land. However, Measure LC does not prohibit the City from approving the development of parks, public open spaces, and public recreational facilities, and the maintenance and replacement of existing cultural, arts, and education uses.

This process would engage the community to define what the appropriate balance of open space, active and passive recreation, and other community needs should be after the Airport closes. Any concept brought forth would need to be analyzed for economic feasibility, community support, and Council authorization and should serve Santa Monicans now and in the future.

As directed at the January 24, 2023, meeting, Council affirmed the following goals, values, and principles to guide the planning process for the airport conversion project in service to Measure LC and a “Great Park”:

1. **City Council Values** – Establishing Standards for the Process
 - a. Accountability

- b. Equity
- c. Inclusion
- d. Resilience
- e. Stewardship
- f. Safety
- g. Innovation

2. **Sustainability and Resiliency** – Foundational Goals for the Future of the Airport

- a. Healthy for all elements of life.
- b. Nurturing and generous places that promote healthy lifestyles for everyone.
- c. Net Positive with respect to water and energy.
- d. Regenerative spaces for people and natural ecosystems.
- e. Places that are walkable, bike-able, and have affordable public transportation.

3. **The “Great Park”** – Goals for an Inclusive Community Space

- a. Connected
- b. Inclusive
- c. Flexible
- d. Sustainable
- e. Celebratory
- f. Incremental
- g. Self-sustaining
- h. Collaborative

With all the above in mind, as the community begins the visioning process for the airport, staff is recommending Sasaki to be its partner on this very important project for the City of Santa Monica.

Consultant Selection

As per Council direction on January 24, 2023, staff solicited a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the Airport Conversion Project on February 13, 2023, that received 27 responses before it closed on March 13, 2023. From those 27 responses, staff [short-](#)

[listed eight](#) (8) teams and invited them to submit proposals under the Request for Proposal (RFP) process on May 15, 2023. The chart below shows these eight teams. The deadline for responding to the RFP was June 29, 2023, and from the eight proposals received, five (5) teams were invited to participate in virtual interviews the week of July 14, 2023. Of the final five teams, staff selected a recommended proposer in August 2023, as noted below. At the October 10, 2023, meeting Council directed staff to abandon the lottery-selected panel and work with Sasaki to develop an outreach process. This staff report outlines the community outreach portion of work switching from a lottery-selected panel to a broad community effort requiring significant staff support.

RFQs Received (short-list in bold)		
Behnisch Architekten	Bjarke Ingles Group – (BIG)	Buro Happold
Cox, Castle, & Nicholson LLP	Fehr & Peers	Foster + Partners Limited
FXCollaborative	Gardiner & Theobald	Gensler
Hargreaves Jones Landscape Architecture	Healthy Democracy	Henning Larsen
HR&A Advisors	James Corner Field Operations	MIG, Inc.
NBBJ	Orion Environmental Inc.	Pamela Burton and Company
Raimi + Associates	RIOS	Sasaki
SITELAB urban studio	Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM)	Somos Group
Stoss Landscape Urbanism	SWA Group	The Office of James Burnett

RFQ Data				
Posted On	Posted On	Advertised In (City Charter & SMMC)	Vendors Downloaded	Date Publicly Opened
02/13/2023	City's Online Bidding Site	Santa Monica Daily Press	289	03/13/2023

Bidder Recommendation	
Best Qualified Person/Firm	Sasaki Associates, Inc.
Evaluation Criteria	Experience/technical competence, stability/references, work plans/timeline, project team, cost of services/cost control, and value added/breadth of service.
Municipal Code	SMMC 2.24.190

RFPs Received (Shortlist Only)		
Bjarke Ingles Group (BIG)	Gensler	Henning Larsen
James Corner Field Operations	RIOS	Stoss Landscape Urbanism
Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill (SOM)	Sasaki	

RFP Data				
Posted On	Posted On	Advertised In (City Charter & SMMC)	Vendors Downloaded	Date Publicly Opened
05/15/2023	City's Online Bidding Site	Santa Monica Daily Press	8	06/29/2023

RFP Justification to Award
Staff recommends Sasaki Associates, Inc. as the best-qualified firm to provide professional services based on their proven experience in converting airport into other uses, especially parks; project approach and understanding; competitive cost proposal; ability to provide an integrated team of consultants for all scopes of work including community engagement services.

Sasaki and Team

[Sasaki](#) is a well-known and respected landscape, planning, and architecture firm with over 350 professionals world-wide that focus on visionary pragmatism on the projects with which they work. They have worked on more than 10 airport conversion projects including the [Ellinikon project](#) in Greece that turned 600 acres of airport land into a 1,000-year park project. For this reason, staff recommends Sasaki as the provider of professional services for the scopes of work defined in the RFP for a multi-year conceptual planning and analysis process after assumed closure of the Airport. In Sasaki’s own words from its proposal “A process like this must be methodical in nature, building consensus every step of the way to ensure there is a solid foundation of site understanding, a clear and agreed upon set of guiding principles, a collective acknowledgment of the opportunities and constraints, a belief in the trade-offs that each scenario presents, an excitement around the final vision, and an agreement on the process to deliver. Our team sees ourselves as your strategic partner that can facilitate the complex conversations between the various stakeholders and the broader public. We are listeners first, storytellers second, and technicians third.”

At their core, Sasaki, and specifically the team proposed, believes that all design reflects the voices of those in a community. Sasaki believes that this is Santa Monica's park, and the team would help bring this vision to light as they have done on projects from Greenwood Park, Louisiana to Reid Park in Tucson, AZ and the Wilmington Waterfront Promenade here in California. In each effort, Sasaki has reached thousands of constituents and laid a strong foundation for supporting plan development and advocacy for the project.

The firm's work would aim to balance Santa Monica's interests in open space, cultural and educational facilities, and sustainable land use alternatives, as envisioned by the community, the City Council, and staff, consistent with Measure LC.

The Sasaki team brings deep knowledge and understanding of how projects of this scale progress incrementally from inception through full implementation. They have worked on multiple airport conversion projects of all sizes and scales resulting in park spaces that benefit communities in multi-cultural and multi-generational ways. They have extensive experience with landscape architecture, planning, project management, and engaging communities where they are and in a variety of ways to include as many voices as possible.

The team assembled by Sasaki brings together the following experts:

- Landscape architecture, planning, sustainability, ecology, project management, community engagement - Sasaki
- Supplemental Community & Stakeholder Engagement – [The Robert Group](#) (TRG)
- Historic and Cultural Resources – [Environmental Services Associates](#) (ESA)
- Transportation, Infrastructure, Utilities - [Arup](#)
- Cultural Planning – [Community Arts Resources](#) (CARS)
- Market and Economic Analysis - [HR&A](#)
- Soil Remediation - [Group Delta](#)
- Sustainability - [Atelier 10](#)

With the goal of delivering a Santa Monica-worthy “Great Park” consistent with Measure LC, Sasaki and team are proposing a 21-month process to listen to the community, provide existing condition information for consideration, conduct 60 different listening session opportunities (both in-person, virtually, and digitally) to discern guiding principles, then take those principles and turn them into multiple scenarios for further refinement with the community, provide economic feasibility studies, and ultimately end up with alternative concept scenarios that are presented to City Council for refinement and approval. Once a preferred scenario is identified, then the standard planning and environmental review process can begin before a final park design and/or land use scenario are adopted.

In accordance with the RFP, the scope of services proposed includes:

- **Document Review:** Reviewing relevant existing documents, including policy documents, project documents, facilities assessments, and past community outreach efforts related to the airport.
- **Existing Conditions:** Conducting an in-depth assessment of the existing conditions of the airport site. This includes environmental assessments, surveys, geotechnical studies, historical analyses, traffic studies, and more. The goal is to understand the resources and complications on and below the land's surface.
- **Community Outreach:** Providing numerous listening sessions in-person and virtually, as described in detail below, for the community to comment on what uses/activities should be considered in converting the Santa Monica airport. Informative learning sessions on sustainable and resilient land-use principles, regulatory frameworks, funding strategies, and other topics are included as well. This aims to create a deep understanding of the opportunities and constraints so that the guiding principles, that are consistent with Measure LC, can be realized effectively for a “Great Park.”
- **Scenario Planning and Analysis:** Developing a minimum of three alternative land-use scenarios (including at least one showing only park and/or open spaces with use of existing structures strictly for existing cultural / recreational / education uses) based on engagement with the community, City Council, and staff. These scenarios

will be visually rich and conceptually represent different types of recreation, infrastructure/mobility choices, design considerations, and economic feasibility approaches. The scenarios would be refined based on input and direction from the community, City Council, and staff culminating in a preferred scenario that has a Day-1 plan through full vision. This preferred plan would be the basis of the subsequent regulatory planning processes that would include: CEQA, a Specific Plan, General Plan updates, etc. in the future.

Key deliverables include comprehensive reports, educational materials, visual content, case studies, community workshops and interaction opportunities, economic feasibility studies for scenarios, mobility enhancements, incrementally phased plans, and refined hybridized scenarios leading to an actionable preferred scenario.

Proposed Scope of Services – Process Detail

The step-by-step process described in detail below would occur over the course of 21 months starting in early 2024 and includes space for listening and learning, technical reporting and analysis, as well as time for feedback and commentary on guiding principles that become planning scenarios to be reflected upon and considered deeply by the community and City Council. To do this Sasaki and team propose the following steps:

- **Phase 1:** Charting the Course – Project Kick-off, Alignment, Document Review, Future Needs & Desires (3 months)
- **Phase 2:** Discovering the Place and Setting the Stage – Existing Conditions Analysis, Guiding Principles (5 months)
- **Phase 3:** Defining the Future of Place - Scenario Testing and Plans (8 months)
- **Phase 4:** The Path Ahead – Potential Implementation Planning (3 months)
- **Phase 5:** Preferred Scenario Plan Vision Book (2 months)
- **Continuous Engagement & Community Outreach** – utilizing Outreach Milestones throughout the Process as illustrated in the diagram below (21 months)

Process Phases and Outreach Milestones Diagram:



Phase 1: Charting the Course – Project Kick-off, Alignment, Document Reviews, Future Needs & Desires

This phase involves an extensive review of pertinent, existing, background data to produce a summary memorandum outlining the prior documents' relevance to the project. This analysis aims to build a clear framework for further action and address the necessary forthcoming tasks. The process entails delving into policy documents, historical and cultural resource investigations, and an in-depth understanding of the site's environmental, cultural, and planning opportunities and limitations as well as what the community's needs and desires are. The work included in this phase:

1. Project Kick-off
2. Document Review & Data Gathering
3. Case Study Exploration
4. Document Review Memoranda
5. Community Engagement

Phase 2: Discovering the Place and Setting the Stage – Existing Conditions Analysis, Guiding Principles

This phase of the Process focuses on acquiring a comprehensive understanding of the current site conditions and financial parameters through new studies. This involves a comprehensive assessment of the current environmental conditions, existing transportation and infrastructure conditions, natural and cultural resources, regulatory frameworks, and other studies that are necessary in addition to the document review in Phase 1. The aim is to understand the intricate layers of the site's history and existing conditions to provide a strong foundation for subsequent planning decisions in pursuit of a “Great Park.”

Sasaki and team would also explore early options for financial considerations and funding strategies as a critical step. This analysis would help ensure that future planning aligns with realistic economic conditions, current and projected. Understanding various funding strategies (including local, regional, state, federal, etc.) and estimating the costs of constructing and maintaining the envisioned park project is essential. Sasaki and The Robert Group would also gather public input on what community needs may be missing on the site today and within the surrounding communities. The team would also create a series of virtual education sessions that would highlight the realities of the site and the city to set the stage for future planning scenarios. Topics for these educational sessions would include: sustainability and resiliency; cultural understanding and history; existing economic situation/constraints; transit and mobility; and regulatory frameworks that the city has adopted. These sessions would be recorded and available on the project website for everyone to digest at their own pace.

By establishing a robust understanding of both the site's current state and the financial landscape, the planning team and the Santa Monica community can develop a comprehensive vision and approach for the future transformation of Santa Monica Airport land. The work included in this phase:

1. Inventory and Base Mapping
2. Virtual Education Sessions
3. Site Opportunities and Constraints Analysis
4. Regulatory and Financial Analysis Parameters
5. Economic and Fiscal Impacts Baseline

6. Existing Conditions Report
7. Community Engagement

Phase 3: Defining the Future of Place - Scenario Testing and Plans

The process of scenario testing and planning is not merely about creating different site alternatives. It entails defining experiential typologies or models that represent the diverse potential experiences people might have within the re-envisioned airport land. These experiences could include cultural, recreational, ecological, infrastructural, or social elements that reflect the intended uses and functions of a “Great Park”. It also entails creating alternative land-use types by generating multiple models of open-space land-use scenarios, exploring different park typologies, features, and layouts. These alternatives would align with the guiding principles established in the community outreach work and be vetted with the community, City Council, and staff.

To determine the scenarios and the validity of the parts and pieces of each alternative, engaging with the community is crucial. Starting with broad, high-level ideas, the planning team would work with the community to refine these concepts into three feasible alternatives. These would be progressively narrowed down to a single recommended scenario plan through community feedback, ensuring alignment with environmental, sustainable, financial, and programmatic feasibility outlined in earlier phases.

The aim of this phase is to develop scenarios that not only offer alternatives for the site's future but also align closely with the established guiding principles and are thoroughly vetted ensuring they are environmentally sound, financially viable, and programmatically feasible. The work included in this phase:

1. Preliminary Opportunities & Kit of Parts
2. Trade-off Analysis
3. Planning Concept Alternative & Comparison Matrix
4. Scenario Feasibility & Economic Impacts Assessment
5. Rough Order of Magnitude (ROM) Opinion of Probable Cost
6. Develop Finalized Concept Scenario Plan Sketch

7. Community Engagement

Phase 4: The Path Ahead – Potential Phased Implementation

Once the preferred scenario is agreed upon by the community and City Council, staff and the team would set about defining a clear outline for the path to implementation. The objective here is to establish a detailed strategy for a phased implementation that takes into account regulatory, financial, and infrastructural considerations, while also considering innovative ways to initiate on-site activations from Day-1 of possession of the airport land on January 1, 2029.

The team would do this through community engagement, discussions with potential community and regional partners, and realistic phasing plans that would include Day-1 activation strategies. This includes quick, easy, and smart activation ideas that can be executed on-site, even without enhancing existing infrastructure. Drawing from past experiences in creating events in transitional spaces, Sasaki and team would provide recommendations on how to initiate on-site activations as soon as the City takes possession of the airport land. The work included in this phase:

1. Partnership Scenarios
2. Phasing Scenarios
3. Revised ROM Opinion of Probable Cost
4. Capital Planning Tool Development
5. Performance Guidelines
6. Community Engagement

Phase 5: Preferred Scenario Plan Vision Book

At the culmination of the project effort Sasaki and team would compile all documentation from the process into a comprehensive scenario plan vision book. The book would be the conclusion of this project scope and include the work from all phases to serve as the guide for future planning, entitlement, and environmental efforts to realize the preferred plan for the Airport Conversion Project.

Continuous Engagement & Community Outreach

Throughout the 21-month period, Sasaki, the city, team members, and community leaders, would conduct a variety of in-person events like community meetings, pop-up events, focus group sessions, and community celebrations with a focus on enhancing inclusivity. These events would offer direct and open engagement opportunities for community members to interact with the planning team and share their input at all phases of the Process. Simultaneously, a centralized project website would serve as a digital hub for the Process. It would feature relevant updates, informative materials, reports on engagement outcomes, and online avenues for community members to contribute ideas. This comprehensive approach aims to provide accessible paths for all

community members, whether they prefer in-person events or want to engage remotely at their convenience. All of these aspects of engagement would include interpretation.

Sasaki and team propose to work with the community, City Council, and staff using the following outreach milestones that occur within the first three phases of the Process. Each of these milestones have a distinct goal to keep the project on track and make recommendations back to City Council at each step.

The proposed outreach milestones, and phases they occur within, are:

- **During Phase 1 (3 months)**
 - **Outreach Milestone 1 - Future Needs and Desires:** Introduction to the project and team focusing on an extensive review of existing documentation, analysis of what's missing, and discerning what the community needs and wants in the future. The emphasis would be on listening and education.

- **During Phase 2 (5 months)**
 - **Outreach Milestone 2 - Opportunities, Constraints, & Guiding Principles:** Understand public desires for the airport land and existing conditions. These meetings focus on guiding principles and gain consensus around these mission statements. Virtual education sessions would provide the community with deep understanding of the existing conditions for the site and the city.

- **During Phase 3 (8 months)**
 - **Outreach Milestone 3 - Scenario Plan Alternatives:** The final guiding principles would be presented based on public feedback and City Council direction. Sasaki would present three (3) high level (and very different) design concepts based on feedback so far and solicit feedback on themes and elements within each scenario from the community and City Council. Bringing the community's ideas to light and ensure the future success/implementation of the airport conversion project.

- **Outreach Milestone 4 - Preferred Scenario Plan:** A final scenario would be presented to City Council as the preferred plan based on all feedback. Feedback would be collected on this preferred Concept scenario before presentation to City Council.

Leading up to each of the four outreach milestones noted above, the following types of activities are proposed to maximize community participation and reach a diverse group of stakeholders and community members in Santa Monica:

- **One (1)** Large community event (in-person)
- **One (1)** Virtual community event (virtual)
- **Up to One (1)** Digital survey (digital via project website AND in person when necessary)
- **Up to Five (5)** Diverse pop-up style events: these are to reach the broader community where they already are, such as PTA meetings, farmer's markets, community events, etc.
- **Up to Four (4)** Focus Group meetings: each focus group would be categorized around topic areas for more in-depth small group discussions and would be open to all.
- **One (1)** Presentation to three to five Boards/Commissions, as applicable to the milestone work
- **One (1)** Presentation to City Council (the culmination of the outreach activities for each milestone where Council gets to provide direction)

The fifth, and final, outreach milestone is the conclusion of all the research, planning, assessment, and community outreach completed as part of this Process and results in a final recommendation to City Council of the preferred scenario plan for approval.

This approach would provide up to 60 meetings with the community (more than 40 as events and approximately 20 as public meetings), over 21 months, taking place in a variety of formats and locations. Included are five presentations to City Council, one at the end of each milestone, to report out on progress and what the community has said to that point. This robust, creative, in-depth, outreach process designed to gain as wide

a variety of voices as possible from our community would be one of the largest and most inclusive to date and is designed to bring people together to create a “Great Park” that is in alignment with the goals, principles, and values set forth at the January 24, 2023 meeting, Measure LC, and Resolution 11026.

Anticipated Project Timeline

The anticipated timeline for the project is noted below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Date</u>
Anticipated City Council Contract Authorization (tonight)	December 19, 2023
Sasaki and Staff Project Kick-off	Early 2024
Phase 1: Charting the Course (3 months)	
First Community Engagements	Spring 2024
The team presents to City Council for comment	Summer 2024
Phase 2: Discovering Place and Setting the Stage (5 months)	
Second Community Engagements – Guiding Principles	Summer 2024
The team presents to City Council for comment	Early 2025
Phase 3: Defining the Future of Place (4 months)	
Third Community Engagements – Three Scenarios	Early 2025
The team presents to City Council for comment	Spring 2025
Phase 3: Defining the Future of Place (4 months)	
Fourth Community Engagements – Preferred Scenario	Spring 2025
The team presents to City Council for comment	Fall 2025
Phase 4: The Path Ahead (3 months)	
The team presents final scenario to City Council for approval	Winter 2025
Phase 5: Preferred Scenario Plan Vision Book (2 months)	
Community Celebration	Winter 2025

Funding and Staffing Recommendations

As mentioned during the October 10, 2023 City Council meeting, the Process to envision and deliver a “Great Park” that has been deeply considered and collaborated on by the community, whether done through a lottery-selected panel or a broader community outreach effort, exceeds what was originally projected and funded in the FY 2022-24 Biennial CIP Budget cycle (\$1,000,000). The current proposal, while significantly reduced from October, will still require an additional allocation of \$1,100,000 into the project CIP budget in order to proceed.

In addition, implementing the Process as described in this report would require significant work effort by staff. This would be one of the largest staff and community efforts the city has undertaken to garner community feedback and consensus. Further, document review preparation, existing conditions coordination, alternative scenario planning work and review and confirmation of the community’s preferred plan scenario would all require substantial staff time to review the consultant’s work product from the community meetings and communicate with the community, boards and commissions, and City Council.

The [Airport to Park Conversion Report](#) states the city should have a dedicated team to determine and then realize the community’s vision. Previous land-use plans, such as the General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan have required a team of 6-7 staff members, outside consultants, and financial resources dedicated exclusively to each project. By having dedicated staff focus on determining what the community supported future of the Airport is and facilitate the regulatory frameworks necessary to realize that plan, it would ensure this important project would be delivered effectively and efficiently in advance of the Airport closure. Further, as directed by City Council, at the October 10, 2023 meeting, staff would have a larger role in the Airport Conversion project than previously anticipated due to a more hands-on approach without a process fully run by a consultant team under the lottery-selected panel model. With the previously proposed method of community engagement staff augmentation was not anticipated to be necessary until 2025. Staff augmentation (in addition to managing the consultant work

described above), however is required in 2024 for the proposed Process due to this required work:

- Direct the community engagement process, with the Sasaki team, to ensure as many community voices are heard as possible by reaching out to diverse stakeholder groups to encourage folks to participate in-person or virtually, as their life circumstances allow.
- Analyze community partnership opportunities, consider if these opportunities are in the public's best interest, and then explore partnership opportunities deemed most impactful in realizing the "Great Park".
- Explore additional funding strategies at the local, state, and federal levels focusing on grant money, bond funding possibilities, and other innovative options as guided by the work of HR&A and community vision.
- Create an agreed upon stakeholder list for the focus groups and topics for consideration in collaboration with The Robert Group, City Council, and the community and manage coordination and collaboration with these groups.
- Manage, coordinate, communicate, up to 60 public outreach meetings for location, content/context, date/time, and services provided including presentation collaboration.
- Manage, print (when necessary), disseminate all supplemental hand-outs, boards, maps, etc. for the community meetings, pop-up events, focus groups, and Boards/Commissions/Council meetings.
- Take the feedback received from the community at each milestone and create a report out to Council including comprehensive reports, Staff Reports, and presentations to Boards/Commissions/Council.
- Amplify the work that Sasaki is doing with staff-led presentations, community event attendance, and other opportunities for the community to provide additional feedback and commentary throughout the process.
- Creation and management of the 'centralized project website' including the gathering, analysis, and reporting of the digital survey and oversight of preparing and posting recorded meetings and dissemination of information.
- Other activities/assignments as required throughout the 21-month process.

Upon the completion of the work with Sasaki and the community described above, project staff will continue to be dedicated to realizing the community supported plan through the regulatory frameworks (e.g. CEQA, General Plan update, Specific Plan, etc.) necessary for the preferred scenario to be implemented.

While the workload for this project is traditionally performed by a team of staff members, at this time staff recommends the addition of one full-time employee (1.0 FTE), a Principal Design and Planning Manager, focused on a “Great Park”, for the Airport Conversion project to lead the scopes of work described above as well as continue with the project through the regulatory frameworks that will be necessary after the preferred scenario is agreed upon. Staff would then evaluate the timing impacts on the current project workload as the project progresses with this proposed initial staffing change. The salary range for the proposed position is \$143,644 - \$179,808 and is recommended to be for a limited term of 5 years, aligning with the closure of the airport. The anticipated budget impact for this position, including fringe benefits (e.g. health insurance, pension, etc.) is approximately \$221,797 per year.

There are currently no available additional resources in either the General Fund or the Capital Improvement Program that could be allocated to these augmentations. However, if Council approves the expanded scope and limited-term position above, staff have identified the use of existing Parks and Recreation Development Impact Funds as the best path forward. Parks and Recreation Development Impact Funds can be used for all direct and indirect costs incurred by the City to construct parks and recreation improvements, including but not limited to, the cost of land acquisition, planning, legal consultation, engineering, design, construction, construction management, materials, and equipment. Staff recommends prioritizing the creation of the “Great Park” with these funds, and that Council authorize the additional budget appropriations for this project as noted in the Financial Impacts and Budget Actions section below.

Environmental Review

The award for planning and community engagement services for the Airport is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) of the CEQA Guidelines. Section 15262 exempts feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions. In compliance with Section 15004 of CEQA Guidelines, final design and approval of a preferred concept scenario would not begin until CEQA completion, and as such, the City would not be bound to a specific action, nor would it prohibit the City from considering any feasible mitigation measures and alternatives as required by the CEQA process. Environmental analysis will be required once a preferred concept scenario is identified. It is also anticipated that the environmental analysis will need to cover both the closure of the airport and the preferred scenario and alternatives before final Park design and any supporting land uses are approved.

Past Council Actions

While the Airport has been before City Council many times in the past decades, below are the previous dates that the Airport Conversion Project has been before City Council.

Meeting Date	Description
01/24/2023 (Attachment A)	Staff Report from the meeting where Council directed staff to begin working on the Future of the Santa Monica Airport
10/10/2023 (Attachment B)	Meeting Minutes showing Council direction to provide an enhanced traditional community outreach process by Sasaki

Financial Impacts and Budget Actions

Staff seeks authority to appropriate available funds from the Park and Recreation Development Impact Fund (Park Impact Fee) to implement the Airport Conversion Planning Project.

FY 2023-24 Budget Changes			
Release Funds		Appropriate Funds	
Account Number	Amount	Account Number	Amount
10.370334 – Park Impact Fee	\$2,100,000	C1008280.689000	\$2,100,000

With Council approval of the above budget changes, staff seeks authority to approve

funding from the Park and Recreation Development Impact Fund to award an agreement with Sasaki Associates, Inc. for services related to concept design, visioning, and an enhanced traditional community outreach process. Future year funding is contingent on Council budget approval.

Agreement Request		
FY 2023-24 Budget Request Amount	CIP Account #	Total Contract Amount
\$2,070,000	C1008280.689000	\$2,070,000*

*The difference of \$30,000 is allocated to direct owner costs.

If the additional staff position noted above is approved, the following budget and position changes are required. The prorated cost of the recommended staffing change for this fiscal year is approximately \$111,001, depending upon when the new position could be recruited and onboarded. The change would not have an impact on the General Fund, as it would be funded by Parks and Recreation Development Impact funds. Future year funding is contingent on Council budget approval.

FY 2023-2024 Budget Changes			
Release Funds		Appropriate Funds	
Account Number	Amount	Account Number	Amount
10.370334 – Park Impact Fee	\$111,001	01500010.51XXXX	\$111,001
		10800002.692360	\$111,001
		01800001.692360	(\$111,001)

FY 2023-24 Position Changes				
Fund	Department	FTEs	Title	Reason
General Fund**	Public Works	1.0	Principal Design and Planning Manager*** (5 year limited-term)	Add

** To be reimbursed through an inter-fund transfer from the Special Revenue Fund (Park Impact Fee).

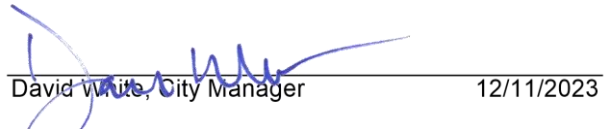
***Subject to the approval of the new classification by the Personnel Board, anticipated January 2024.

Prepared By: Amber Richane, Acting Chief Operating Officer – Special Projects

Approved

Forwarded to Council


Rick Valte, Public Works Director 12/7/2023


David White, City Manager 12/11/2023

Attachments:

- A. January 24, 2023 Staff Report (Web Link)
- B. October 10, 2023 Staff Report (Web Link)
- C. Oaks Initiative Form - Sasaki
- D. Written Comments
- E. PowerPoint Presentation
- F. Statement from Councilmember De la Torre