



**Contra  
Costa  
County**

To: Board of Supervisors  
From: John Kopchik, Director, Conservation & Development Department  
Date: December 8, 2015

Subject: Contract Amendment with Urban Tilth for Park Dedication Funds to Help Fund the Development of an Urban Farm in North Richmond

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

AUTHORIZE the Auditor-Controller to release Park Dedication Funds in the amount of \$22,000 to the Conservation and Development Department for further development of an Urban Farm in North Richmond.

APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Conservation and Development Director, or designee, to execute a contract amendment with Urban Tilth, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, to extend the term from December 31, 2015 through December 31, 2018 and increase the payment limit by \$22,000 from \$435,000 to a new payment limit of \$457,000, to help fund the development of an Urban Farm in North Richmond.

DIRECT the Department of Conservation and Development to file a CEQA Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk and pay filing fees.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No impact to the County's General Fund. Funds are from the Park Dedication Trust Fund, North Richmond census tracts accounts (Account numbers: 8136 4213 36502, 8136 4208 36502, and 8136 4213 03780).

☒ APPROVE

☐ OTHER

☒ RECOMMENDATION OF CNTY ADMINISTRATOR

☐ RECOMMENDATION OF BOARD COMMITTEE

Action of Board On: **12/08/2015** ☒ APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED ☐ OTHER

Clerks Notes:

**VOTE OF SUPERVISORS**

AYE: John Gioia, District I Supervisor  
Candace Andersen, District II Supervisor  
Mary N. Piepho, District III Supervisor  
Karen Mitchoff, District IV Supervisor  
Federal D. Glover, District V Supervisor

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of an action taken and entered on the minutes of the Board of Supervisors on the date shown.

ATTESTED: December 8, 2015

David Twa, County Administrator and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

By: June McHuen, Deputy

Contact: Kristine Solseng (925)  
674-7809

cc:



## BACKGROUND:

**Urban Agriculture:** Urban agriculture is defined by the American Planning Association as the practice of growing, processing, and distributing fresh food products by people living in an urban area. The purpose of urban agriculture is to foster development of a local food system, to promote environmental sustainability, and to increase education and access to healthy foods for urban residents, particularly those living within a "food desert." The unincorporated community of North Richmond falls within the definition of a "food desert" because it is a low-income community where the residents are more than one mile from the nearest supermarket. To address this and other social issues, Urban Tilth, a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, is proposing to develop the Roots and Restoration Farm on a 3.1 acre site in North Richmond.

**Proposed Amendment:** Urban Tilth has requested \$22,000, in addition to the previously approved \$435,000 for predevelopment activities related to the proposed Roots and Restoration Farm in North Richmond. The \$22,000 will be used to prepare a Soils Management Plan along with other predevelopment work. Additional information is provided below.

**Project Sponsor:** Urban Tilth was founded in 2005 to help build a more sustainable, healthy, and just local food system in the Richmond area and has grown to be a local leader bringing together a variety of individuals, groups and other stakeholders interested in developing and operating initiatives based around urban farming. These initiatives have helped the community grow their own food; train and employ youth; teach local residents about the relationships among food, health, poverty, and justice; foster public foraging programs; forge partnerships with local small farmers to increase demand for their produce.

Urban Tilth uses its 13 school (including Verde School in North Richmond) and community gardens and small urban farms to teach and employ community members to grow, distribute, cook, and consume thousands of pounds of local produce each year, and to create a more equitable and just food system within a healthier and more self-sufficient community.

Supervisor Gioia's office has been working extensively with UrbanTilth in the development and implementation of this project. The idea came out of his visit to Zenger Farms, an urban farm partnership with the City of Portland.

**Proposed Project:** Urban Tilth's Roots and Restoration Farm ("Farm") is proposed to be a 3.1 acre Agricultural Park and Riparian Restoration Learning Center located at 323 Brookside Drive in North Richmond. The goal of the Farm is to provide the community a place to discover the power of the natural world by working, learning, playing, and cultivating an open, multifunctional site to grow healthy food while nurturing sustainable habitat and ecosystems.

The previously approved and proposed Park Dedication funds will be used for

predevelopment activities and preparation of a soil management plan required for a project application. Potential components of the project include a working farm, a "You Pick It" learning garden, an outdoor kitchen, creek and garden classrooms, and a youth-run market stand.

### **Project History:**

- On February 5, 2013, the Board of Supervisors (Board) approved the conveyance of the Brookside Drive site from the Contra Costa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to the County.
- In March 12, 2013, the Board of Supervisors approved allocating \$225,000 in North Richmond area census tract park dedication funds for the County to purchase the subject site from Flood Control. Urban Tilth leases the site from the County.
- On August 12, 2014 Urban Tilth signed a ten-year lease with the County for the subject property. The lease includes an option to extend for two additional 10-year terms.
- On September 23, 2014, the County Planning Commission approved a resolution recommending the Board adopt a General Plan Amendment to add new policies in the Contra Costa County General Plan Land Use Element for the North Richmond Area to support and promote urban agriculture.
- On October 7, 2014, the Board approved the recommendation from the Planning Commission. Consequently, community gardens, demonstration/education gardens, edible landscape, home gardens, processing incidental to agriculture, urban agriculture demonstration site, and urban farm are all permitted uses in North Richmond.
- On October 8, 2014, the North Richmond Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) voted unanimously to recommend that \$435,000 in park dedication funds be used for the Roots and Restoration Farm project. Note: The total project budget for the farm is approximately \$3.4 million. To date, Urban Tilth has raised over \$640,000, in addition to funds provided by the County. The requested park dedication funds will allow Urban Tilth to move to the next phase of the project including environmental and site analysis, project design/management, and construction of basic site infrastructure.
- On December 2, 2014, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors approved and authorized Urban Tilth to receive \$435,000 in Park Dedication Funds and enter into a contract for the implementation of those funds.
- In 2015, Urban Tilth approached the County requesting an additional \$22,000 to develop and implement a Soil Management Plan.

The table below shows how the \$435,000 are programmed as well as the proposed \$22,000 Park Dedication allocation.

### **Work Plan and Budget for Park Dedication Funds:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Environmental and Site Analysis/Studies	\$ 92,321
Architect and Engineering Design	\$195,520

Project Management/Coordination	\$147,159
NEW: Development and implementation of the Soil Management Plan	\$22,000
TOTAL	\$457,000

**Project Timeline:** The jobs tasks that will be paid for with park dedication funds were originally anticipated to be completed by the end of December 2015. However, the environmental testing and design phase is taking longer than anticipated. Construction of the entire project is expected to be completed by the end of 2018.

It is the policy of the County to utilize park dedication funds to meet local park needs. The use of park dedication funds to help finance the development of the Roots and Restoration Farm is consistent with that policy. If approved, the balance in the North Richmond park dedication account will be approximately \$1,000.

**CEQA:** The funding of predevelopment activities is exempt from the CEQA guidelines per the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant impact on the environment. This activity involved funding for predevelopment only. Once the plans for the project are defined, the project may be subject to further CEQA review.

#### CONSEQUENCE OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

Not providing Park Dedication Funds will negatively impact the ability of Urban Tilth to proceed with the proposed Roots and Restoration Farm project.

#### CHILDREN'S IMPACT STATEMENT:

The proposed project will support the following community outcomes established in the Children's Report Card: 1) Children and youth are healthy and preparing for a productive adulthood; 2) Families are safe, stable and nurturing; 3) Communities are safe and provide a high quality of life for children and families.