



# REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL Of the City of Sacramento

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[www.CityofSacramento.org](http://www.CityofSacramento.org)

**CONSENT**  
**June 22, 2010**

**Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council**

**Title: Grant Application/Agreement: Proposition 84 Nature Education Facilities Fund Grants**

**Location/Council District:** Council District 1 & District 4

**Recommendation:** Adopt a **Resolution:** 1) authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute a memorandum of understanding with the Sacramento Tree Foundation regarding development of a proposed Urban Ecology Center at North Natomas Regional Park; 2) approving and authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute and submit a Proposition 84 grant application for the Sacramento Zoo's California's Backyard project; and 3) approving and authorizing the City Manager or his designee to execute all agreements with the California Parks and Recreation Department related to the Proposition 84 grant for the Zoo's California's Backyard project.

**Contact:** Camille Wise, Resource Development Specialist, 808-8830; Barbara E. Bonebrake, Director, 808-8225

**Presenters:** Not Applicable

**Department:** Parks & Recreation and Convention, Culture & Leisure

**Division:** Administration

**Organization No:** 19001011 & 17001011

## **Description/Analysis**

**Issue:** California State Parks is administering competitive grant programs funded through Proposition 84, the 2006 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act ("Prop. 84"). The Prop. 84, *Nature Education Facilities Program* ("NEF Program") will fund development projects that will increase the public understanding and knowledge of California's resources. The grant application deadline is July 1, 2010.

Proposed Urban Ecology Center Project:

The Sacramento Tree Foundation ("STF") is proposing to submit an application to the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation ("CA DPR") for a \$7 million grant under the Prop. 84 NEF Program to develop an Urban Ecology Center at the City's North Natomas Regional Park. As part of the grant application process, CA DPR requires an agreement between the City and the STF in which the City grants STF the right to construct, operate, and maintain the grant funded facility for 30 years. The proposed memorandum of understanding ("MOU") grants STF these rights contingent upon: 1) award of the grant; 2) completion of environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"); and, 3) STF receiving the land use approvals necessary to construct and operate the UEC.

Proposed California's Backyard Project

The Sacramento Zoo is proposing to submit a \$3 million grant proposal under Prop. 84 NEF Program to create a functional outdoor learning space and playground in the existing amphitheater and playground location that is focused on the cultural and environmental heritage of the Sacramento region, its plants, animals and river systems that is to be called California's Backyard.

**Policy Considerations:**

Proposed Urban Ecology Center Project: Recommendation is consistent with the City's approved Strategic Plan to achieve sustainability and livability and the 2001 North Natomas Regional Park Master Plan. The proposed project concept was presented to the "Friends of the Regional Park" on April 15, 2010, and on May 20, 2010 at a community meeting. Those in attendance at these meetings supported the submittal of the grant application by the Sacramento Tree Foundation assuming details of final design are to be further reviewed with the community should the Foundation be awarded a grant.

Proposed California's Backyard Project: Recommendation is also consistent with the City's Strategic Plan Goal to preserve and expand the arts and culture. Securing funding from outside sources to enhance city programs and facilities for public enjoyment is also a priority for the City Council.

**Commission/Committee Action:**

The Parks and Recreation Commission heard the STF proposal item at its June 3, 2010 meeting and supported DPR staff's recommendation to enter into an MOU with STF. The Zoo Board unanimously voted to support the application for the California's Backyard Project at their May 12, 2010 meeting.

**Environmental Considerations:****California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):**Proposed Urban Ecology Center Project

The City is entering into the MOU solely to facilitate STF's grant application; approval of the MOU by the City does not constitute the City's approval of the proposed project for CEQA or any other purpose. The City will act as the lead agency for all environmental review and approvals required by CEQA. Nothing in the proposed MOU prevents the City from exercising any of its rights and responsibilities as a lead agency with respect to approval of the proposed project. Furthermore, approval of the MOU does not obligate the City to: (i) grant land use approval required for the proposed project; (ii) approve the design, construction, or any other aspect of the proposed project; (iii) commit funding for any aspect of the proposed project; or (iv) negotiate or execute any other contract related to the proposed project.

Proposed California's Backyard Project

The proposed action consists of an application to create a government funding mechanism. The action does not commit to the construction of "California's Backyard". As a result, the proposed action does not constitute a project under CEQA Guidelines, title 14, section 15378(b)(4) of the California Code of Regulations. Appropriate environmental review will be conducted following grant award and prior to construction.

**Sustainability Considerations:** The Urban Ecology Center project proposed for North Natomas Regional Park is consistent with the goals, policies and targets of the *City Sustainability Master Plan* and the *Parks and Recreation Sustainability Plan 2008-2015*. The Zoo project is consistent with the *City Sustainability Master Plan*.

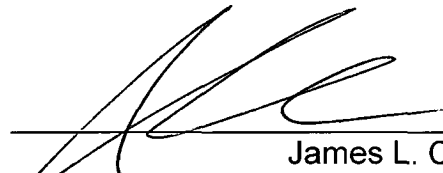
**Rationale for Recommendation:** The STF has enjoyed a mutually beneficial working relationship with the City of Sacramento. The development of an MOU to provide for land tenure/site control for the possible future development of an Urban Ecology Center at North Natomas Regional Park will benefit the City of Sacramento by enhancing and encouraging the study and preservation of the region's natural resources. California's Backyard provides an enjoyable experience that will educate the public on the importance of preserving our valuable natural resources. Approving the filing of an application for grant funding is consistent with finding outside resources to enhance the quality of life for residents.

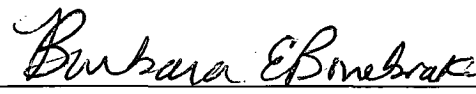
**Financial Considerations:**

Proposed Urban Ecology Center Project: As the City is not the grant applicant for this project, there are no direct financial considerations for the City associated with the development of the MOU. The STF would provide for the operations and maintenance of the proposed UEC, and the City park land would be made available to STF for a nominal annual cost; however, these and all other details regarding construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed UEC would be the subject of a separate agreement between the City and the STF that would be entered into, if at all, following the completion of CEQA review.

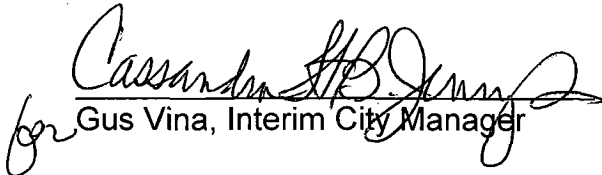
Proposed California's Backyard Project: Any grant funds awarded for the Zoo's California's Backyard Project will be deposited into a reimbursable capital improvement project, which will be established to administer the State funds post award. There are no requirements for matching funds. However, the Zoo intends to leverage this grant funding by securing additional private donations to complete the project. Should the City be awarded the grant, staff will return to Council requesting approval to establish a City CIP to administer the grant funding.

**Emerging Small Business Development (ESBD):** Not applicable at this time as no goods or services are being procured with this item.

Approved by:   
James L. Combs  
Director, Department of Parks and Recreation

Approved by:   
Barbara E. Bonebrake  
Director, Department of Convention, Culture & Leisure

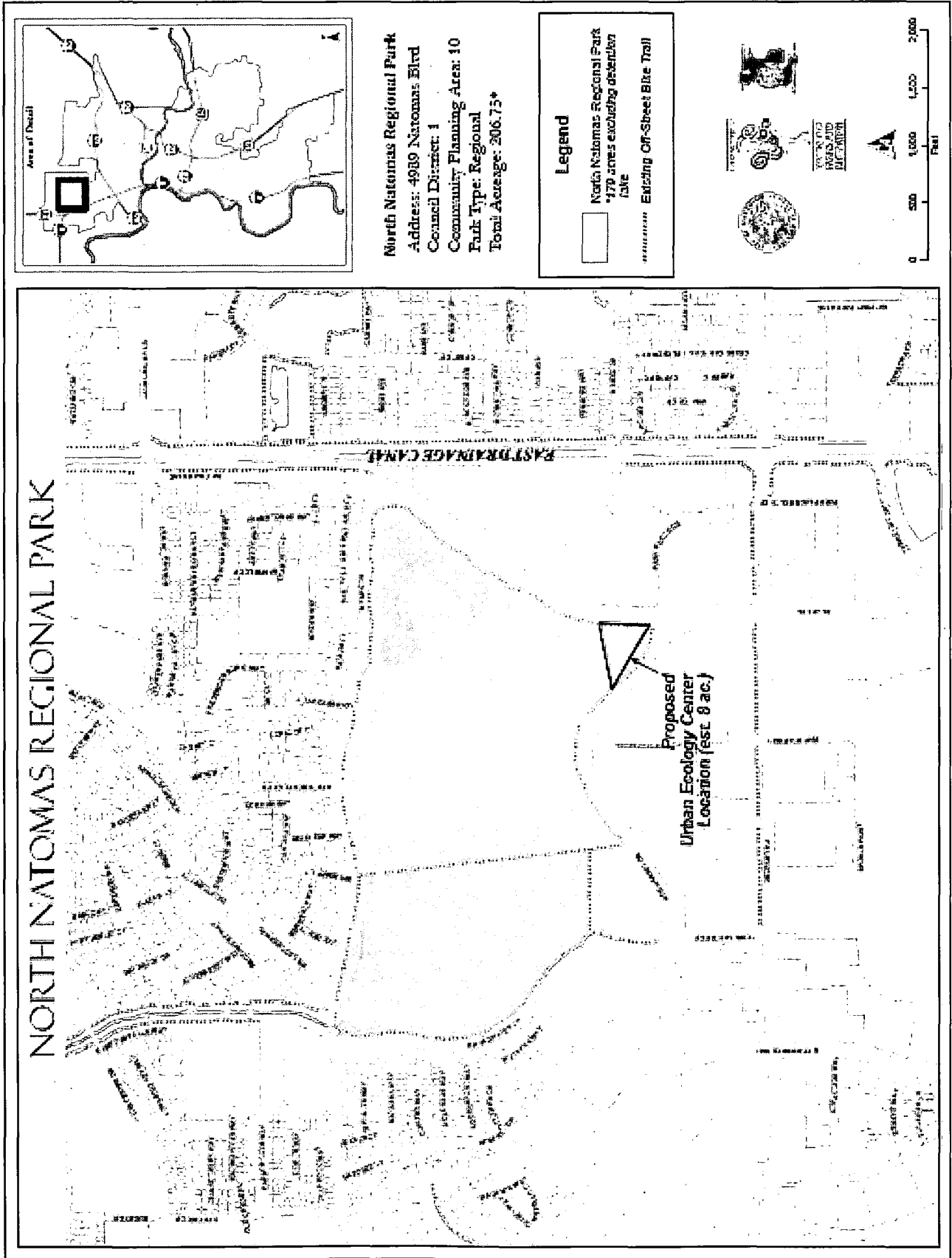
Recommendation Approved:

  
for Gus Vina, Interim City Manager

**Table of Contents:**

	Report	pg. 1
<b>Attachments</b>		
1	Urban Ecology Center Location Map	pg. 6
2	Sacramento Zoo Location Map	pg. 7
3	Background	pg. 8
4	Draft Memorandum of Understanding	pg. 10
5	City Resolution	pg. 11
6	Grantor Resolution	pg. 12

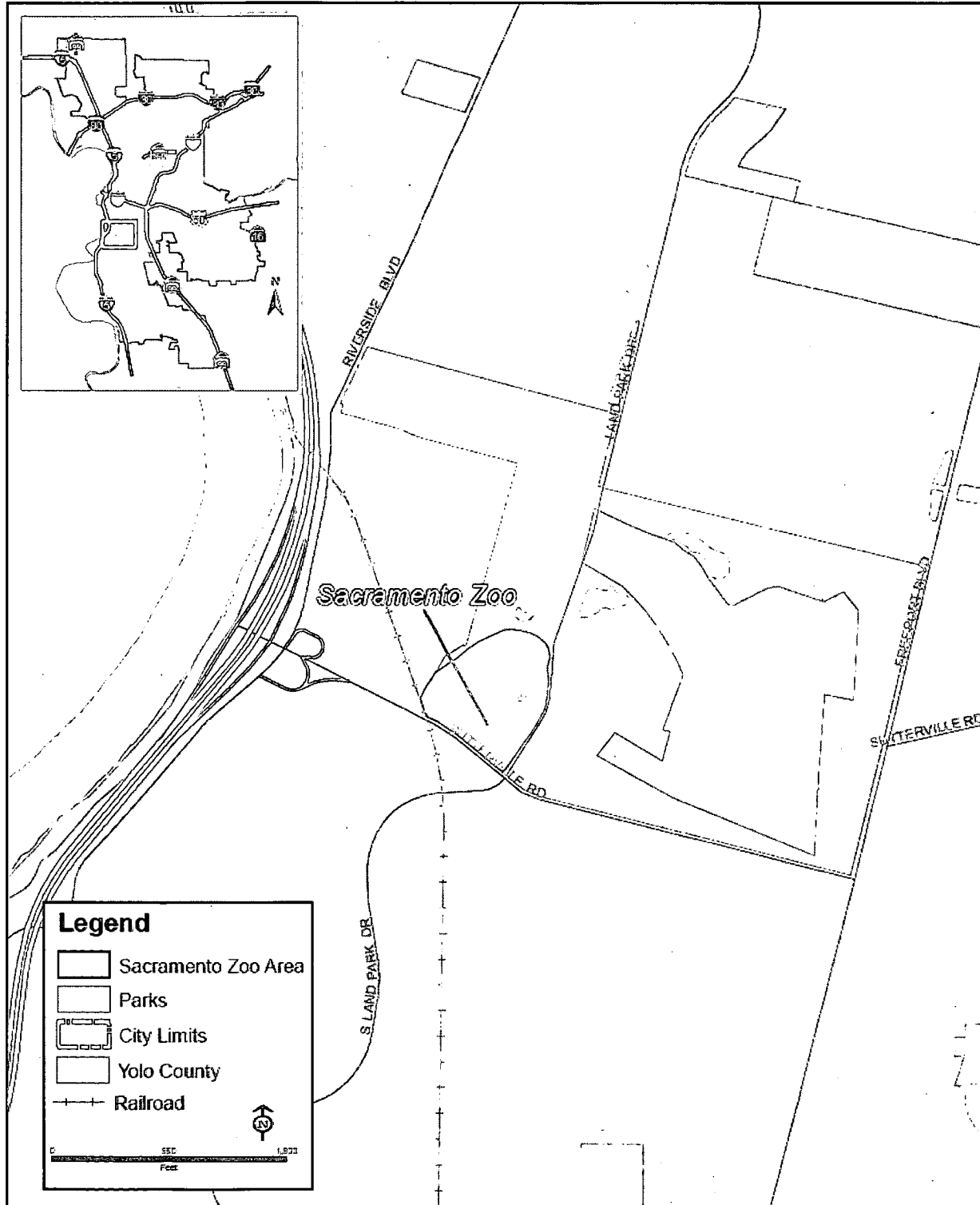
**ATTACHMENT 1 – URBAN ECOLOGY CENTER LOCATION MAP**



D:\GIS\Proposals\NorthNatomas\NorthNatomas.mxd May 11, 2010

### ATTACHMENT 2 – SACRAMENTO ZOO CALIFORNIA'S BACKYARD LOCATION MAP

Department of Convention, Culture and Leisure  
Proposition 84 Nature Education Facilities Program Proposed Grant Application Site



**ATTACHMENT 3 - BACKGROUND**

On November 7, 2006, California voters passed Proposition 84, the \$5.4 billion "Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006".

A program under Proposition 84 is the *Nature Education Facilities Program* (AB31, Leon). California State Parks is administering this competitive grant program. There are no per capita funding formulas. Grant funds totaling \$93,000,000 will be awarded to communities throughout the state. The program is focused on development projects that will increase public understanding and knowledge of California's resources. The grant application deadline is July 1, 2010, with a single maximum grant request of \$7,000,000. Grant awards should be announced in spring 2011. No local matching funds are required.

To be eligible, the project must be for development and include construction and renovation of nature education facilities, buildings, structures and exhibit galleries that present collections to inspire and educate the public and marine wildlife conservation research equipment and facilities. The proposed project(s) must provide nature education that includes focused learning about the natural environment that inspires environmental stewardship and meet one of the following objectives:

- Combine the study of natural science with preservation, demonstration and education programs that serve diverse populations
- Provide collections and programs related to the relationship of Native American cultures to the environment
- Conduct marine wildlife conservation research

**North Natomas Regional Park - Proposed Urban Ecology Center**

The Urban Ecology Center (UEC) is a proposed educational facility that will focus on shifting our regional consciousness around the urban environment to promote landscapes that are healthier for both people and wildlife, are river and environmentally friendly, conserve resources, and enhance the human experience. The UEC would demonstrate healthy urban landscapes that promote energy efficiency, water efficiency, native habitat, food security, waste utilization, and integrated pest management. The grant application for this project would be submitted for an amount up to \$7 million.

The UEC would be a LEED certified facility that is open to the public for self-guided tours, classes, and volunteer opportunities. Every aspect of the facility would be used as an opportunity for education and demonstration of environmental responsibility and stewardship including permeable surface parking lots, rainwater collection for irrigation, use of solar and other renewable sources, and organic waste for composting. As currently proposed, the UEC be organized around four main activities:

- Demonstration Plots – fruit trees, home food gardens, native landscaping, etc.
- Educational Classes – front yard remodels, pruning/planting, composting, etc.



- Low Cost Nursery – native trees/plants, garden starts, genetically diverse trees
- Wood/Waste Utility – mulch, milling, composting

The UEC will be filling a large gap in urban ecology education for our region. While a handful of small demonstration gardens exist in the region (the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center is among the most prominent), they primarily focus on water efficiency, and there is currently no facility that takes a comprehensive look at landscapes and offers an experiential learning opportunity. The most similar facility in concept is Roseville Utility Exploration Center that has almost no landscape component and is located more than 30 miles from Downtown Sacramento. Other facilities, such as the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, focus on open and natural environments.

### Sacramento Zoo – Proposed California's Backyard Project

The Sacramento Zoo is proposing to create a functional outdoor learning space and playground that is focused on the cultural and environmental heritage of the Sacramento region--its plants, animals and river systems, and is to be called California's Backyard. Situated in one of the State Capital's most visited venues, the Sacramento Zoo, California's Backyard will educate visitors about Northern California's unique animal and plant life that exists nowhere else on earth. The project will also stress a strong conservation message, showing visitors how they can help protect the environment through positive actions.

The educational journey begins at the current Wildlife Amphitheatre, which will be renovated and renamed "Nature's Stage." In its current state, the use of the amphitheatre is limited to the spring and summer months. Nature's Stage will be a year-round educational facility with features including a solar paneled roof, ceiling fans, marquis and an upgraded audio visual system. Near Nature's Stage will be constructed four new exhibits to house non-releasable native raptors.

In an adjacent plaza area, a large fountain structure will be constructed to represent the Sierra Nevada Mountains. A natural stream ("Living River") will flow from the fountain structure, a meandering stream of water and rocks that is a metaphor for the rivers that flow into the Sacramento Valley and the Delta. As the Living River draws the visitor through the California landscape, it concludes at a "cattail misters" structure adjacent to a new Nature Playground. This animal-themed playground is where young Zoo visitors can play on educational structures that represent the Valley's natural history. Along the Living River are carefully placed education pods where trained Zoo docents and Zoo naturalists offer visitors educational opportunities, often featuring live animals indigenous to the Sacramento region.

Using state-of-the-art sustainability principles and building methods, California's Backyard will be a dynamic, interactive and fun environment for children and their families to explore nature and learn about Northern California's unique natural history. Through immersive adventure play, children and their families will explore and discover plants and animals as well as the habitats that support them.

ATTACHMENT 4 – DRAFT MOU/LETTER OF INTENT

(Forthcoming from City Attorney's Office)

**RESOLUTION NO. 2010-**

Adopted by the Sacramento City Council

June 22, 2010

**State of California Proposition 84  
Nature Education Facilities Grants**

**BACKGROUND:**

- A. California State Parks is administering competitive grant programs funded through Proposition 84, the 2006 Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act. The grant application deadline is July 1, 2010, with a single maximum grant request limit of \$7 million.
- B. The *Nature Education Facilities Program* will award \$93 million in an unspecified number of competitive rounds to fund development projects that will increase the public understanding and knowledge of California's resources.
- C. Staff recommends a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") be developed by and between the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Tree Foundation ("STF") to facilitate STF's grant application for the development of a proposed Urban Ecology Center at North Natomas Regional Park.
- D. Staff further recommends that a grant proposal application be developed and submitted by the Sacramento Zoo for the California's Backyard Project

**BASED ON THE FACTS SET FORTH IN THE BACKGROUND, THE CITY COUNCIL  
RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

- Section 1. The City Manager or his designee is authorized to execute a memorandum of understanding with the Sacramento Tree Foundation regarding development of a proposed Urban Ecology Center at North Natomas Regional Park.
- Section 2. An application to the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation for a Proposition 84 Nature Education Facilities Program grant for amount not to exceed \$7 million for the development of the California's Backyard project at the Sacramento Zoo is approved and the City Manager or his designee is authorized to submit the application.
- Section 3. Agreements related to a Proposition 84 grant for the Zoo's California's Backyard project with the State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation are approved and the City Manager or his designee are authorized to execute all such agreements.

Resolution No: 2010-\_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION OF THE  
( City Council ) OF  
( the City of Sacramento )

Approving the Application for  
NATURE EDUCATION FACILITY PROGRAM FUNDS

*Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006*

WHEREAS, the State Department of Parks and Recreation has been delegated the responsibility by the Legislature of the State of California for the administration of the Nature Education Facilities Program, setting up necessary procedures governing the Application; and

WHEREAS, said procedures established by the State Department of Parks and Recreation require the applicant to certify by resolution the approval of application(s) before submission of said application(s) to the State; and

WHEREAS, the applicant will enter into a contract with the State of California to complete the PROJECT;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the (City Council of the City of Sacramento) hereby:

Approves the filing of an application for the (Sacramento Zoo California's Backyard Project), and

1. Certifies that said applicant has or will have available, prior to commencement of any work on the project included in this application, the sufficient funds to complete the project should this grant be awarded; and
1. Certifies that the applicant has or will have sufficient funds to operate and maintain the project; and
1. Certifies that the applicant has reviewed, understands, and agrees to the General Provisions contained in the contract shown in the Grant Administration Guide; and
1. Certifies that this project is consistent with the applicable city or county, or appropriate planning document, as the case may be; and
1. Delegates the authority to (the City Manager and/or his designee) to conduct all negotiations, sign and submit all documents, including, but not limited to applications, agreements, amendments, and payment requests, which may be necessary for the completion of the project; and
1. Agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, ordinances, rules, regulations and guidelines.

Approved and adopted the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June, 2010

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution Number 2010-\_\_\_\_\_ was duly adopted by the (City Council of the City of Sacramento) following a roll call vote:

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_

Noes: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_

(Clerk or Board Secretary)