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ADOPT-A-LOT PILOT PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

The Municipal Facilities Committee (MFC) requested periodic updates on the status of the Adopt-A-Lot (AAL) Pilot Program. Below is a description of the various activities that have taken place since the first AAL program started.

BACKGROUND

On June 27, 2018, City Council approved a MFC report (CF#18-0630) providing the Department of General Services authority to negotiate and execute a master license agreement with Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) to implement the AAL Pilot Program. Under this Council authority, KDI will administer temporary uses of up to ten (10) city-owned parcels, utilizing a sub-license for the programming provider, for a period of 18 months with zero rent payments. As of September 13, 2019, the master license has been executed between the City and KDI.

The AAL Pilot Program enables Los Angeles residents to access City-owned vacant lots and temporarily transform them into community spaces. The program is spearheaded by Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI), who works with other non-profit and community organizations to implement the program at each site location.

AAL Implementation #1

The Department of General Services (GSD) implemented the first AAL site located at 15201 Tupper Street, Los Angeles, CA 91343 (Tupper). In the summer of 2019, Free Lots Los Angeles (Free Lots), a non-profit partnering organization to KDI, reached out to local organizations in the North Hills neighborhood and Pacoima Beautiful (a local nonprofit) was selected to be the pilot program's first adopter. Free Lots and Pacoima Beautiful conducted outreach in the neighborhood surrounding the lot culminating in a voting workshop in October 2019, where residents selected amenities and co-designed the site plan of the lot. The North Hills community space and garden, the first lot transformation of the pilot program, celebrated its opening in February 2020. However, the space was then soon after closed to the public in March when COVID-19 Stay at Home orders went into effect.

In the month that it was open, the garden beds were planted with flowers, and school children and families from the Carlos Santana Arts Academy regularly enjoyed the space. A community



and the lot's caretaker is responsible for opening up and closing the space, picking up after the lot each day, and reporting any refuse pickup, graffiti, or maintenance needs.

AAL Implementation #2

In early 2020, a second lot of the pilot was established at 1631 E. 110th St., Los Angeles, CA 90059 (110th), KDI and Inclusive Action (a local nonprofit) collaborated with the Annenberg GRoW Foundation to find organizations in the area interested in adopting the lot. Brillante Watts, a locally based and women-led community group, was selected to be the lot's adopter. Free Lots then worked with Brillante Watts in early 2020 to reach out to residents to ask what amenities will be included in the lot's site plan. Brillante Watts and KDI then co-hosted a voting workshop in March of 2020; the surrounding neighbors were invited to vote on the final site plan option.

The 110th site design and buildout scheduling were paused due to the pandemic and then resumed once MFC approval was obtained in August 2020. Brillante Watts and KDI began building out this second lot of the pilot in early October and expects completion is by the end of November 2020.

Challenges to the Adopt-A-Lot

COVID-19 Pandemic: The major challenge to date is the impact the COVID-19 pandemic is having on social gatherings and the public health issues encountered while implementing AAL programming. The pandemic necessitated the need to close the North Hills space for 6 months due to the uncertainty and potential health risk of the site being used for non-distanced gathering. Guidance from City, County & State resources on how these spaces can be used as a resource, with signage indicating pandemic health codes, would be very helpful during the duration of the pandemic.

Refuse Pickup: The program has relied on CD7 for refuse pickup services, but inquiries are still pending to explore a more streamlined option of adding all of the pilot lots' addresses to the Dept. of Sanitation refuse pickup routes for regular pickup.


Weed Control: A bi-weekly or monthly weed maintenance schedule would be preferable, as weeds grow back abundantly within a few weeks of maintenance.

NEXT STEPS

KDI is working towards implementing additional lots under the AAL Pilot Program. Additionally, KDI is working in conjunction with the City, local Council Districts and community leaders to overcome the current challenges to the program.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Municipal Facilities Committee note and file this status report.



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