



DATE: November 21, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Cindy Chong, Superintendent Parks & Facilities
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SUBJECT: Resolution Approving the Lease of One (1) New Kubota L47TLB-LB in the Amount of \$79,503.49 from Garton Tractor, Inc., of Santa Rosa, CA, Authorizing the City Manager to Execute all Documents Necessary to Complete the Lease, and Finding This Action Categorically Exempt Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached Resolution approving the lease of one (1) new Kubota L47TLB-LB in the amount of \$79,503.49 from Garton Tractor, Inc., of Santa Rosa, CA, authorizing the City Manager to execute all documents necessary to complete the purchase, and finding this action categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND

The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance and stewardship of the City's forty-seven parks, twenty-seven playgrounds, dozens of pedestrian trails, park pathways, urban center landscapes, aquatic facilities, and open spaces. Parks Maintenance crewmembers maintain approximately 450 acres of parkland, 175 which are natural turf and over 200 acres of open space. At the core of park maintenance is the experienced and dedicated parks staff, whose collective responsibilities include debris removal, playground inspections and repairs, restroom cleaning, irrigation repairs, mowing, pruning, fertilization, graffiti eradication, tree maintenance, pool maintenance and monitoring, mulching, weed eating, minor plumbing and construction work, water conservation monitoring, as well as repairing or replacing park amenities that include benches, signs, equipment, drinking fountains, etc.

The Parks Maintenance Division relies on specialized equipment to efficiently and effectively manage a growing area of acreage. In addition to parks maintenance staff, the City often uses

contracted services for enhanced maintenance activities including specialized tree care, increased mulching, major utility repairs, etc. Contracted maintenance services are an essential tool to help close the gap between staffing resources and areas of responsibility and has been critical in responding to the increase of calls for services in recent years. While supplementing routine maintenance with contracted services remains a critical tool for improving overall delivery, relying solely on contractors for specialized equipment risks delays in response times, added administration costs, and unanticipated costs.

As stewards of public lands, the Parks and Recreation Department aims to serve as industry leaders in both capital investments as well as maintenance best practices that help the city reach its net zero carbon emissions goal by 2030. While staff are encouraged by the recent advances in technology used in manufacturing larger specialized equipment to support parks maintenance, the production of the electric equivalents to critical compact utility tractors that provide a variety of tasks assigned to a park's maintenance division do not yet exist. Until technology reaches a production phase, staff have sought options which enable the City to be both responsive to calls for service as well as ensure long term capital investments are aligned with our climate action goals. The specialized equipment being recommended for procurement is available for lease with the highest degree of emission standards to date, however given the demand and supply chain challenges, the lead time in securing the equipment is estimated to be between six and twelve months during which the department will rely on contracted machine operators for critical services.

DISCUSSION

The Parks and Recreation Department recommend action be taken to replace the Kubota L4200, compact utility tractor that was originally purchased in 1998. The compact tractor, which has the option for several attachments, had been used heavily by the Parks Maintenance team for digging out irrigation lines for repair and maintenance, removal of unsafe pieces of playground equipment, transporting and removing mulching, placing and removing sand, a three-point hitch which enables additional attachments to perform turf regeneration, fertilization, drop spreading, and high weed mowing. Parks Maintenance crews had relied heavily on the compact tractor to be in excellent working condition, however after 24 years of service, the equipment has become unreliable and costly to repair. Unreliable equipment and a reliance on more labor-intensive methods of maintenance increases the risk of injury to staff. The Kubota L4200 tractor is out of operation and the costs to repair the equipment exceed its value. As a result of the utility tractors age, condition, and non-compliance with current diesel emissions standards, (please see Climate Action sub-section below) staff is recommending action to replace the equipment.

Compact utility tractors provide parks maintenance staff a variety of tools to address unique challenges within parks. Industry research indicates smaller, newer manufacturers of this equipment are in the reserve phase with few manufactures providing dates of production. Representatives for larger manufacturers including John Deere, have indicated that equivalent large scale, reliable landscape equipment may likely first become available in 2026, however representatives indicate it could an additional three to five years before the equipment would become widely available.

The addition of a compact utility tractor would provide critical tools for parks maintenance staff to respond to the growing challenges in performing a natural turf regeneration schedule, respond to increasing levels of irrigation line breaks, new tree plantings, mulching services, and high weed mitigation. Capital investments in replacing multi-functional maintenance equipment will improve the quality and efficiencies of carrying out day to day operations and thereby narrow the gap between maintenance responsibilities and resources available.

Parks and Recreation staff have contacted and evaluated several compact utility tractor manufactures including John Deer, Kubota, Toro, Mean Green, Husqvarna, Ariens, Cub Cadet, and electric manufactures including Monarch and Solestrac. There was not a manufacturer found with an electrified version of a compact utility tractor capable of performing the variety of task in a timeline for production prior to 2026. In addition to safety, durability, and functionality, staff placed the highest priority on procuring equipment which demonstrated the highest emissions standards ratings available with an option to lease that provides greater flexibility for future investments in zero emission alternatives when options become available. Renewable diesel fuel will be used instead of conventional diesel which will greatly reduce the amount of GHG emissions associated with the use of this equipment.

Given the priority placed on investing in a multi-functional, safe, reliable, compact, low emission replacement, staff are recommending the lease of one Kubota L47TLB-LB utility tractor. The Kubota L47TLB-LB provides parks maintenance staff with a safer, more efficient piece of equipment while satisfying Tier-4 emissions compliance. The Tier 4 standards require that emissions of particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) be further reduced by about 90%. The Kubota L47TLB-LB is unique in that it is a one third size tractor/backhoe/loader which is Cal OSHA certified for non-agricultural work. The Kubota L47TLB-LB represents one of the only tractors of its size in the marketplace which provides functional capability that increase efficiencies for the park maintenance division while reducing the reliance on third party contractors for unique tasks.

The Kubota L47TLB-LB was competitively bid through the Sourcewell purchasing program. Per Municipal Code 4.04.100 Cooperative Purchasing Programs, the bidding process may be waived when it is advantageous for the City, with appropriate City Manager and City Council approval, to use contracts that were awarded by other agencies.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This agenda item was noticed in compliance with the California Brown Act.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

The City Council has identified “Our Environmental Legacy” as one of its key strategic initiatives for 2021-2023.

Objective #1 seeks to “Preserve and Protect Petaluma’s Environment with Smart and Efficient use of Resources;” This request specifically supports the following workplan items:

- Workplan item #63: “Reimagine maintenance practices for managing City parks and open spaces.”
- Workplan Item #135: “Maximize use of current parks and recreation infrastructure, and other City-owned facilities and properties for the hosting of recreational, sports, cultural and entertainment events that attract visitors to Petaluma.”
- Workplan Item #203: “Impose a moratorium on City purchases of fossil fuel powered vehicles, power equipment, and appliances, with limited exceptions for emergency vehicles and equipment where no low climate pollution causing alternatives are reasonably available.”

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The Kubota L47TLB-LB will replace the 24-year-old Kubota L4200 tractor which is no longer diesel emissions compliant and provide a specialized compact utility tractor that meets the stringent Tier 4 emissions requirements. The Tier 4 standards require that emissions of particulate matter (PM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) be further reduced by about 90%. Additionally, renewable diesel fuel would be used instead of conventional diesel which would greatly reduce the amount of GHG emissions associated with the use of this equipment.

Research into electric tractors was conducted by online research, manufacturing call outs, reading peer reviewed articles, speaking to other municipalities, and speaking to college/universities maintenance department personnel. There are currently no readily available electric tractors that meet the City’s growing needs. The electric market for large scale landscaping equipment largely remains in development with a few industry leaders indicating production as early as 2026. There are models available which offer fully electric backhoes in the large construction equipment category, however nothing similar has yet been released in the smaller size. The tractor needed for parks maintenance is unique in its 1/3rd size and certification for non-agriculture work per Cal OSHA. The smaller size makes it feasible to relocate throughout the City’s 47 parks, trails, pathways, and open spaces by trailer, whereas the larger electric backhoes would require on-street driving. Regardless of procurement, staff are actively seeking opportunities to upgrade electrical infrastructure at the Corp Yard to provide space and proper infrastructure to safely charge new electric equipment when available.

Staff will continue to closely monitor the market and look to replace this equipment powered by an internal combustion engine when there is equipment available with electric motors that meets the City’s needs.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The item is categorically exempt under California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) Guidelines, Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption) as it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that purchasing a more efficient replacement tractor will have a significant effect on the environment.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Funding identified to replace the Kubota L4200, was provided for within the Vehicle and Equipment Replacement budget in FY 2019/2020 however, the uncertainty around the potential for production of electrified alternatives as well as advances in cleaner technology ultimately resulted in action to delay procurement. The total lease price of the Kubota L47TLB-LB compact utility tractor is available in the amount of \$79,503.49. A budget adjustment will carry forward the previously allocated funding from FY 2020-2021 for the appropriation in the FY 22/23 budget.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution
2. Kubota L47TLB-LB Specification Sheet