

California Natural Resources Agency
Attn: Jennifer Thomas
715 P Street, 20th Floor
Sacramento CA, 95814

July 25th, 2023

Dear California, Natural Resources Agency,

As a long-time partner on various Greening Grants over the past 10 years, it is with deep regret to inform you that the City of Visalia will not be utilizing Urban Greening grant funds awarded for the Mill Creek Beautification at Burke Street Project, grant agreement no. U29137-0.

Funds were awarded for the landscaping and beautification of the Mill Creek Trail between Burke and Tipton Streets. We understand that we were awarded this grant to create a green space within the Downtown area of our city; However, we were apprised of an opportunity to develop a new inclusive park in the same location through a park grant acquired by our Parks and Recreation Department. The City was awarded funding to design and build an all-inclusive playground, the first of its kind in Visalia. We made the upmost effort to incorporate the installation of trees and shrubs into the design of the inclusive park. However, due to limited space available, the number of trees and shrubs required per the grant could not be met.

In correspondence(s) held with CNRA staff, we were led to believe that there would be an opportunity to propose an alternative location for the grant funds. We were advised that through an amendment process, we could submit a concept plan and cost estimate for consideration of a new location so long as the grant requirements are met; the tone of the communication seemed optimistic of the amendment process. The City of Visalia proceeded to evaluate different locations both adjacent to the original site and beyond, the City submitted an amendment package to CNRA outlining the new location, concept layout and cost. This new location and design met the grant requirements, specifically the tree and shrub count as these were conveyed as critical parameters to meet the goals of the grant. Unfortunately, the proposed amendment upon CNRA's final review, was denied and the grant funds now need to be returned. It was clarified at the point of final review that this kind of amendment (location change) is not commonly approved and would require circumstances outside of the jurisdiction's control to receive approval.

We recognize that your organization has limited resources, and we want to make sure that the funds will be used where they are most needed. We would like to thank you for your support and the award of these funds for this project. At this time however, the City is continuing the development of the space into a beautiful and beneficial park space area for all members of our community.

Again, we thank you for your understanding and hope to work with you in the near future on other projects that continue to environmentally benefit our community.

Sincerely,

Leslie Caviglia
City Manager
City of Visalia

Attachments:

1. Exhibit of Original Greening Project
2. Exhibit of Inclusive Park
3. Original Funding Contract