

Memorandum

To : The Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group

Date: January 24, 2019

From : Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 10:** Consideration of resolution recommending that the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize non-governmental organizations to provide community engagement and outreach services.

Staff Recommendation: That the Working Group adopt the attached resolution recommending that the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize non-governmental organizations to provide community engagement and outreach services.

Legislative Authority: Section 33220 of the Public Resources Code.

Background: Legislation establishing the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group, Assembly Bill 466 (AB 466), Chapter 347 of the Statutes of 2017, requires a “...master planning process that includes community engagement and a prioritization of disadvantaged communities...”. An effective method for reaching local communities is by working with the non-governmental organizations that serve them. This is particularly effective when the mission of the non-governmental organization complements the purpose and goals of the project under development.

To achieve the legislation’s requirement to include community engagement and outreach to disadvantaged communities, MRCA staff, in consultation with the Working Group and project consultants, issued a Request for Proposals for Community Engagement and Outreach (RFP) services. The RFP solicited proposals from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) to undergo traditional and non-traditional community engagement and outreach to local residents, stakeholders, neighborhoods, and community groups with a prioritization of disadvantaged communities for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan. The RFP was distributed directly to more than twenty NGOs that have done work on the Los Angeles River, as well as via the City of Los Angeles’ river announcements.

In total six proposals were received. All proposals were thoroughly reviewed and carefully evaluated for the following criteria:

- Demonstrated experience of the NGO in relation to the services required and quality of performance on similar past projects;

- Demonstrated experience, competence, and availability of key personnel in relation to the services required;
- Recommendations of prior partners and stakeholders; and
- Creative strategies and approaches for engaging non-traditional stakeholders.

Upon review, it was determined that all proposers could effectively contribute to the Revitalization Plan's Community Engagement and Outreach process. It is proposed that the outreach be divided into defined geographic areas based on each organization's capacity and expertise. The outreach process is estimated to run 8-10 months. This approach will reach a broad audience and allow for diverse participation throughout the planning process, inclusive of various age groups, demographics, geography, and more. The proposed distribution of work is as follows:

Pacoima Beautiful in partnership with Friends of the Los Angeles River

Pacoima Beautiful is a grassroots environmental justice organization that provides education, impacts local policy, and supports local arts and culture in order to promote a healthy and sustainable San Fernando Valley. Friends of the Los Angeles River (FOLAR) inspires and creates future River stewards through advocacy, education, collaboration and imagination. It is proposed that these two organizations conduct community engagement and outreach for Tujunga Wash, Pacoima Wash, and the main stem of the river from headwaters to Verdugo Wash, reaching communities of the San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles and City of San Fernando.

The River Project

The River Project (TRP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to holistic watershed planning for natural resource protection, conservation, and enhancement in Los Angeles County. TRP's mission is to advance responsible planning and management of our lands, working for living rivers nourished by healthy watersheds for the social, economic, and environmental benefit of our communities. TRP is proposed to conduct outreach throughout the Verdugo Wash and its confluence with the main stem, including Glendale, La Crescenta, Burbank and Los Angeles.

River LA

River LA is a nonprofit with a mission to integrate design and infrastructure to bring people, water and nature together across all 51 miles of the Los Angeles River. The organization is currently performing community outreach for the County's Los Angeles River Master Plan update. River LA is proposed to conduct outreach in the Arroyo

Seco, and the southernmost portion of the river's main stem, from the Arroyo Seco downstream to Vernon.

Mulholland Institute, c/o The Valley Economic Alliance

The Mulholland Institute and the Valley Economic Alliance are non-governmental organizations focused on establishing geographic equity and creating a sense of place for San Fernando Valley residents for over 25 years. It is proposed that they conduct outreach for Aliso Canyon Wash and the headwaters area of the river's main stem, including the communities of Winnetka, Reseda, Northridge, Sherman Oaks and Van Nuys.

William C. Velasquez Institute

The William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) is a non-profit, non-partisan public policy analysis organization chartered in 1985, focusing on improving the level of political and economic participation in Latino and other underrepresented communities. WCVI is proposed to conduct outreach in the mid-lower portion of the river's main stem, including the neighborhoods of Boyle Heights, Chinatown, Downtown, Atwater Village, Silver Lake, Cypress Park, Elysian Valley and Lincoln Heights.

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples

Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples (SPI) is a Los Angeles-based community organization dedicated to building the capacity of Tribes and Indigenous people on cultural, social, and environmental justice issues. SPI is proposed to conduct outreach to the regions of the Tongva and the Tataviam tribes, the urban Indian population base and to the Indigenous peoples affiliate population.

Consideration: Approval of the six contracts with non-governmental organizations is subject to MRCA Governing Board approval. A budget of approximately \$200,000.00 for engagement and outreach was anticipated in the May 2018 grant augmentation request.