

**DATE:** March 19, 2026  
**TO:** WCA Governing Board  
**FROM:** Staff  
**THROUGH:** Mark Stanley, Executive Officer  
**SUBJECT:** Item 11: Consideration of a resolution to approve a grant to the SELA Arts Foundation for Preaquisition Due Diligence for alternative site analysis and potential purchase

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) Governing Board approve a grant in an amount not to exceed \$578,600 to the SELA Arts Foundation for Preaquisition Due Diligence for alternative site analysis and potential land acquisition.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The SELA Arts Foundation requests funding to support a 12-month period for legal, consulting, and project management services to advance the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center (SELA Cultural Center). This effort will focus on advancing site acquisition, conducting due diligence, and evaluating a potential alternative site that may reduce overall project costs and accelerate project delivery (Exhibit A). Support during this period will allow the Foundation to protect prior investments, complete informed decision-making, and position the project for its next phase of development.

Over several years, the leadership team guiding the SELA Arts Foundation has worked in close coordination with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Watershed Conservation Authority, Los Angeles County, and other regional partners to advance planning and site identification for the SELA Cultural Center. The Foundation continues to collaborate with these partners on the broader project, including coordination related to the previously identified site. In parallel, and in consultation with legal counsel, the Foundation is evaluating a potential alternative site that may offer a more cost-effective and time-efficient pathway to implementation. This evaluation requires targeted legal review, transactional support, and strategic coordination to ensure that any decision is grounded in verified feasibility, cost implications, and long-term project viability.

During this period, the Foundation will conduct legal and transactional due diligence related to a potential alternative site; evaluate acquisition feasibility, entitlement considerations, and implementation timelines; assess whether the site could support a broader range of long-term implementation strategies, including opportunities that may help offset operating costs and enhance overall project viability; negotiate and document site-control instruments, as appropriate; coordinate technical review and stakeholder engagement necessary to inform site selection; and prepare the SELA Cultural Center for transition into its next phase of development based on a clearly defined and defensible site strategy.

### **BACKGROUND**

The SELA Arts Foundation is a philanthropic initiative of the California Community Foundation (CCF), which provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and compliance support consistent with public-agency funding requirements. Through this partnership, the Foundation is

focused on building the groundwork for sustainable growth, equitable access, and long-term cultural impact across Southeast Los Angeles.

Development of the Project stems from drawing attention to disproportionately affected specific populations, largely consisting of low-income and diverse communities, such as those found within southeast Los Angeles. Communities within this region of LA include nine of the most densely populated cities in the U.S. and are communities that lack open space, have lower rates of educational attainment, employment, and home ownership; and have higher rates of poverty, food insecurity, public assistance, and incarceration. Considering these socioeconomic disparities, the Project aspires to reveal the communities' talents and empower these talents as a cultural asset and economic resource within the region.

In response to recognizing the inequitable conditions of SELA cities and the need for infrastructural change, California State Assembly Speaker Emeritus Assembly Member Anthony Rendon created a seed fund for a cultural center in unincorporated LA County, next to the LA River, and surrounded by the City of South Gate, which is a city whose population has a 10-year shorter lifespan than those of more affluent cities. Regarding using a cultural center as a means of promoting economic growth, California's creative economy supports 2.6 million jobs, \$227.8 billion in labor income, and \$604.9 billion in annual economic output. While one in three jobs within LA County is part of the creative economy, these jobs are disproportionately represented by wealthier communities. Thus, it is believed that a significant reinvestment in arts education and programming within the SELA region would support access to the creative economy by its historically marginalized communities.

#### **FISCAL INFORMATION**

All funds will be administered through the California Community Foundation (CCF), the fiscal sponsor of the SELA Arts Foundation. CCF will oversee fiscal management, compliance, and reporting in accordance with public-agency standards.

In September the WCA Board approved Resolution 2025-36 to disburse funds the SELA Cultural Center. The action would retain some of those funds to conduct the due diligence for an alternative site. Should the process lead to consideration of a change in location for the center, it may warrant retaining additional dollars for property acquisition.

WCA was awarded through grant agreement RMC23017 a total of \$93,953,399.89 in the State of California grant agreement funded through the Budget Acts of 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022 as part of the RMC's Non-bond Priorities Grant Program and for the purposes of advancing the policies and priorities set forth in PRC 22.8 §§ 32601-32602, 32604, 32611-32615.



January 20, 2026

Dear Mark Stanley:

On behalf of the SELA Arts Foundation, I am pleased to submit the enclosed proposal requesting funding from the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) to support a 12-month period of legal, consulting, and project management services to advance the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center (SELA Cultural Center).

This proposal reflects a critical implementation-readiness phase for the project, focused on advancing site acquisition, conducting due diligence, and evaluating a potential alternative site that may reduce overall project costs and delivery timelines. Support during this period will allow the Foundation to protect prior investments, complete informed decision-making, and position the project for its next phase of development.

We appreciate WCA's continued partnership and consideration and look forward to the opportunity to discuss this request further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diana Morales".

Diana Morales  
Executive Director  
SELA Arts Foundation

## **Executive Summary**

The SELA Arts Foundation respectfully requests funding support from the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) in an amount not to exceed \$578,600 for a 12-month engagement to advance the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center through critical legal, transactional, and project management milestones.

This funding will support integrated consulting and legal services to secure site control, evaluate a cost-reducing alternative site, and complete the due diligence and coordination necessary to move the project toward construction.

WCA's investment at this stage will strengthen project feasibility, reduce long-term risk, and ensure that the SELA Cultural Center advances with fiscal discipline, legal clarity, and strong institutional readiness.

## **Organizational Background**

The SELA Arts Foundation is a nonprofit organization operating under the fiscal sponsorship of the California Community Foundation (CCF). Rooted in a region known for its resilience, diversity, and artistic expression, the Foundation uplifts the people and places that make Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) thrive by investing in local artists, youth, and community-driven cultural infrastructure.

The Foundation's flagship initiative is the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center (SELA Cultural Center)—a planned, permanent cultural institution envisioned as a world-class destination for visual and performing arts, education, and community gathering. Designed in collaboration with local residents and led by local vision, the SELA Cultural Center will serve as a creative anchor for the region, providing arts education, performance venues, gallery space, and opportunities for workforce development.

The SELA Arts Foundation is a philanthropic initiative of the California Community Foundation (CCF), which provides fiduciary oversight, financial management, and compliance support consistent with public-agency funding requirements. Through this partnership, the Foundation is focused on building the groundwork for sustainable growth, equitable access, and long-term cultural impact across Southeast Los Angeles.

## **Project Context**

Over multiple years, the leadership team now guiding the SELA Arts Foundation has worked in close coordination with the San Gabriel and Lower LA Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, Watershed Conservation Authority, Los Angeles County,

and regional partners to advance planning and site identification for the SELA Cultural Center. The Foundation continues to engage with project partners on the broader project, including coordination related to the previously identified site.

In parallel, and in consultation with legal counsel, the Foundation is evaluating a potential alternative site that may offer a more cost-effective and time-efficient pathway to implementation. This evaluation requires targeted legal review, transactional support, and strategic coordination to ensure that any decision is grounded in verified feasibility, cost implications, and long-term project viability.

This proposed engagement will enable the Foundation to conduct a comprehensive comparison of the current and alternative site, formalize acquisition-related agreements, and maintain project momentum while protecting prior investments of public and philanthropic resources.

## **Purpose and Funding Request**

The SELA Arts Foundation seeks funding support for a 12-month period to deliver integrated legal and consulting services focused on evaluating and advancing a potential alternative site for the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center (SELA Cultural Center).

This scope of work does not include ongoing legal or transactional work related to the previously identified project site. Instead, the proposed engagement is intentionally structured to allow the Foundation to assess a new site opportunity that may offer a more feasible, cost-effective, and time-efficient pathway to implementation.

Specifically, funding will support efforts to:

- Conduct legal and transactional due diligence related to a potential alternative site;
- Evaluate acquisition feasibility, entitlement considerations, and implementation timelines associated with the alternative site;
- Assess whether the alternative site may support a broader range of long-term implementation strategies, including opportunities that could help offset operating costs and enhance overall project viability;
- Negotiate and document site-control instruments, as appropriate, for the alternative site;
- Coordinate technical review and stakeholder engagement necessary to inform site selection; and

- Prepare the SELA Cultural Center for transition into its next phase of development based on a clearly defined and defensible site strategy.

Funding during this period will enable the Foundation to move forward with clarity and discipline—ensuring that future investments are aligned with a site strategy that reduces risk, controls costs, and accelerates delivery of the SELA Cultural Center.

## **Scope of Work**

### **A. Legal and Transactional Services**

- Site control negotiations and acquisition support
- Due diligence and entitlement review
- Drafting and review of transactional documents
- Coordination with public agency counsel and property owners

### **B. Project Management and Strategic Consulting**

- Integrated project coordination and schedule oversight
- Stakeholder engagement and partner briefings
- Documentation of decisions, risks, and milestones
- Reporting to WCA and fiscal sponsor

### **C. Stakeholder Engagement and Technical Support**

- Site comparison documentation
- Technical summaries and briefing materials
- Facilitation of coordination meetings as needed

## **Deliverables and Timeline**

### **Months 1–2**

Project kickoff, refined work plan, site evaluation framework

### **Months 3–6**

Due diligence, negotiations, and preliminary comparative analysis

### **Months 6–9**

Draft findings, stakeholder coordination, and recommendation development

**Months 9–12**

Final acquisition strategy, implementation readiness summary, and transition plan

**Budget Summary (12 Months)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Legal & Transactional Services	\$195,000
Project Management	\$96,000
Strategic Consulting	\$210,000
Stakeholder Engagement & Technical Support	\$25,000
Fiscal Sponsorship & Administration Fees (10%)	\$52,600
<b>Total (Not to Exceed)</b>	<b>\$578,600</b>

*Final allocation across budget categories may be adjusted with WCA approval to respond to project needs.*

**Administration and Fiscal Sponsorship**

All funds will be administered through the California Community Foundation (CCF), the fiscal sponsor of the SELA Arts Foundation. CCF will oversee fiscal management, compliance, and reporting in accordance with public-agency standards.

**Outcomes and Public Value**

WCA's investment will enable the SELA Arts Foundation to:

- Advance the project with legal and financial certainty;
- Identify the most feasible and cost-effective site option;
- Reduce long-term risk and protect prior public investments; and
- Accelerate progress toward a permanent cultural institution serving Southeast Los Angeles.

## **Conclusion**

The SELA Cultural Center represents a transformative opportunity to expand equitable access to arts and culture in Southeast Los Angeles. Support for this 12-month engagement will ensure that the project advances with discipline, clarity, and readiness for implementation.

The SELA Arts Foundation appreciates WCA's continued partnership and consideration of this proposal and looks forward to advancing this work together.

March 19, 2026 – Item 11

**RESOLUTION 2026-12**

**CONSIDERATION OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE A  
GRANT TO THE SELA ARTS FOUNDATION FOR  
PREAQUISITION DUE DILIGENCE FOR ALTERNATIVE SITE  
ANALYSIS AND POTENTIAL PURCHASE**

**WHEREAS**, The Watershed Conservation Authority has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District); and

**WHEREAS**, The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has further been established to focus on projects which will provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement projects in both the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers watershed; and

**WHEREAS**, The SELA Arts Foundation has worked in close coordination with the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, the Watershed Conservation Authority, Los Angeles County, and other regional partners to advance planning and site identification for the SELA Cultural Center; and

**WHEREAS**, The Foundation will conduct legal and transactional due diligence related to a potential alternative site; evaluate acquisition feasibility, entitlement considerations, and implementation timelines; assess whether the site could support a broader range of long-term implementation strategies; and

**WHEREAS**, The SELA Arts Foundation requests funding to support a 12-month period for legal, consulting, and project management services; and

**WHEREAS**, In September the WCA Board approved Resolution 2025-36 to disburse funds the SELA Cultural Center. The action would retain some of those funds to conduct the due diligence for an alternative site; and

**WHEREAS**, The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act; NOW

*Therefore be it resolved that* the WCA hereby:

1. **FINDS** that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the WCA.
2. **FINDS** that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated March 19, 2026.
4. **APPROVES** a grant in an amount not to exceed \$578,600 to the SELA Arts Foundation for Preacquisition Due Diligence for alternative site analysis and potential land acquisition.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: \_\_\_\_\_ Second: \_\_\_\_\_

Ayes: \_\_\_\_\_ Nays: \_\_\_\_\_ Abstentions: \_\_\_\_\_

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the  
**WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
On March 19, 2026

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vincent Chang  
Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
John Natalizio  
Deputy Attorney General