

DATE: March 21, 2019

TO: WCA Governing Board

FROM: Jeremy Munns, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 17: Consideration of a resolution to authorize release of a Request for Proposal for the San Gabriel River Center Project at the Duck Farm.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board authorize release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for design-build services of the San Gabriel River Center and Landscape & Water Conservation Gardens Project

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: WCA will release an RFP for design-build services for water conservation demonstration gardens at the site of the old farmhouse at the Duck Farm River Park. The RFP will also include renovation of the farmhouse itself and other public amenities. A more comprehensive project description and concept plan is included as Exhibit A. A design-build model has numerous advantages, including the efficiency and flexibility of value engineering to meet the target value and a shorter overall time span for project implementation. As the Project is currently partially funded, the RFP will request 'modular and scalable' design-build services that can be configured depending on available project funding. WCA staff will negotiate a final agreement with the design-build project team that will provide the best value before bringing a recommendation to the WCA Board for consideration to approve a contract award. WCA anticipates release of the RFP in Spring 2019. The project's design build procurement methodology is further detailed in Exhibit B.

BACKGROUND: In April 2018, WCA accepted a grant agreement of \$891,200 from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) to develop 2 acres of water conservation demonstration gardens at the site of the 1929 Spanish colonial revival iconic farmhouse at the Duck Farm River Park. The site is located between the disadvantaged and equestrian communities of Avocado Heights and Bassett sandwiched between the 605 freeway and the San Gabriel River and located just north of the river's convergence with San Jose Creek. The site's design and planting will encourage residents to retrofit high resource consumptive landscapes into functional sites that capture and conserve water using simple and aesthetically pleasing strategies. As a critical extension of this project, WCA is seeking to transform the farmhouse itself into a water-wise educational resource and visitor center for the public, tentatively named the 'San Gabriel River Center'. This space will include opportunities for local art, local water resource information, interactive features, and multilingual interpretive signage.

The adjacent Duck Farm River Park is currently under construction. For this project, WCA determined that a design-build methodology was appropriate and necessary to allow for significant value engineering in order to meet available funding targets. Likewise, for the San Gabriel River Center Project, the anticipated cost and the complex nature of the renovation both necessitate a significant amount of value engineering. Furthermore, a design-build methodology allows for a more cohesive

construction sequence between the demonstration gardens and farmhouse renovation. A scope of work summary for the RFP is included as Exhibit C.

FISCAL INFORMATION: Currently, the WCA has \$891,200 of available funding from the RMC for the Water Conservation Gardens. The project is expected to require additional funding up to \$2,100,000 for the renovation of the farmhouse and other public amenities, for a total project cost between \$2,500,000 and \$3,500,000. WCA is seeking additional funding through state and local sources, including Prop 68 and Measure A.

San Gabriel River Center

at the Duck Farm River Park

Project Summary

The San Gabriel River Center project will transform a 1929 Spanish colonial revival iconic farmhouse into a water-wise educational resource and visitor center for the public. The indoor space will include opportunities for local art, local water resource information, interactive features, and multilingual interpretive signage. Center interpretive exhibits will explore the watershed history of the San Gabriel River from the historical days of the native Tongva and agrarian Rancho culture to the highly urbanized environment of Los Angeles today, highlighting river ecology and the role the river still plays today in providing potable drinking water to adjacent communities.

The site exterior will include 2 acres of demonstration site for water-wise residential landscaping. The site's design and planting will encourage residents to retrofit high resource consumptive landscapes into functional sites that capture

and conserve water using simple and aesthetically pleasing strategies. It will provide a clear example for residential landscapes to transition towards more resilient models showcasing water capture strategies such as rain gardens, bioswales, and cisterns, as well as presenting patterns of drought resistance built upon a foundation of native trees and shrubs.

Connection to Duck Farm River Park

The Center is adjacent to, and part of, the larger vision for the Duck Farm River Park. The Park, currently in construction, will provide 30+ acres of new green space along the San Gabriel River and within the Emerald Necklace Park Network, servicing both a park-poor community and a critical regional wildlife habitat and corridor along the Pacific Flyway.



Regional Trail Connectivity

The Center’s location within a “jewel” of the Emerald Necklace Park network, a 17-mile river greenway trail loop, makes it an ideal environment to educate and provide information to visitors exploring this regional recreational and ecological resource. The Center is also a connection within the San Gabriel River Corridor Master Plan associated with the existing 28-mile San Gabriel River Trail. In all, this trail system connects disadvantaged communities with the recreational and regionally significant San Gabriel Mountains National Monument all the way down to the ecologically significant Los Cerritos Wetlands which leads towards the coasts of Long Beach and Seal Beach.

Funding

Funding for the Center’s demonstration gardens is secured through a grant from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The WCA is seeking funding for the renovation of the farmhouse and other public amenities (including art and interpretation features) through additional grant opportunities, including from Prop 68, Measure A, and other programs, as shown in the table below.

San Gabriel River Center Funding Summary		
Funding Source	Agency	Status
Prop 1	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	\$900k Secured
Prop 68	California Natural Resources Agency	Applied
Prop 68	California State Parks and Recreation	Will Apply
Measure A	Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Space District	Will Apply
Supplemental Environmental Program (USEPA)	Los Angeles County 1st District	Will Inquire
Funding Need:		\$3 Million
Funding Gap:		\$2.1 Million

Operations and Maintenance

The WCA and Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation are in talks to determine the future operations and maintenance of the Duck Farm River Park, which will include the San Gabriel River Center and overall park programming.



Community members vote on potential San Gabriel River Center programming at an event in March 2019.

Community Outreach

The WCA is currently soliciting community input on potential programming activities at the San Gabriel River Center. Opportunities that have been identified include, but are not limited to:

- Fitness Classes
- Community Art Gallery
- Nutrition & Health Classes
- Vegetable Gardening
- Native Plant Gardening
- Walking Clubs
- Youth Job Training
- Volunteer Programs
- Guided Nature Walks
- Nature Craft Activities
- Music Performances
- Bird Watching

EXHIBIT B: Design-Build Procurement Methodology

WCA Staff recommends a Design-Build procurement methodology¹ be utilized at the outset of the procurement process for the San Gabriel River Center & Water Conservation Gardens Project for the following reasons:

1. **More fluid and iterative process that is directly informed by building retrofit construction expertise within the project's design-build team.** This is particularly critical given the current state of the Duck Farm Farmhouse and associated 2-acre landscape area—the condition of which has been documented in the “Duck Farm House Feasibility Study”, that was prepared by Architectural Resources Group, Inc. in 2011. Prior to this study, the Mitigated Negative Declaration prepared by EDAW/AECOM in 2007 had found one building on the site (the former farmhouse) to be a historic resource for the purpose of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) due to its eligibility for the California Register of Historical Resources. However, the most recent update analysis of the property completed as Primary Record #19-004079 (Update) GPA Consulting on behalf of the California Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) in January 2019 concludes that the former farmhouse “...is not presumed to be a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA per California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15064.5(a)(4)”. Though the project no longer involves a strictly “historic restoration” process, it will still require considerable and historically “respectful” renovation of an existing structure and grounds in considerable disrepair to bring the structure(s) and related infrastructure up to current applicable building codes, and to address infrastructure requirements due to the fact that the former residence will now be a public resource center.
2. **More efficient and time sensitive process.** From a construction feasibility point of view, it is better for the restoration/renovation of the farmhouse to precede the development/construction of the landscape and water conservation elements. Doing the farmhouse work will likely have significant impact on any completed work done on the gardens. It is typical construction protocol that above ground structures, in particular significant buildings, be constructed prior to the exterior improvements. A design-build methodology will allow for this construction sequence to more cohesively implemented. Additionally, the adjacent Duck Farm River Park (currently under construction) includes water infrastructure that will be extended to the grounds of the farmhouse. It is therefore necessary for the construction of the San Gabriel River Center project to begin within a reasonable timeline following the completion of the Duck Farm River Park. A design-build methodology will precipitate the project's construction start date.
3. **Process allows for value engineering which is better suited to meet investment targets.** The WCA has secured a \$891,200 grant from the RMC for the Water Conservation Gardens component. The WCA also recently partnered with Atlas Green Works to submit a \$995,551 Prop. 68 Concept Proposal for San Gabriel River Center restoration/renovation components. If successful, this would result in approximately \$1,900,000 of available design and construction funding. Full buildout of intended amenities and site features suggests a \$3,500,000 investment

¹ The California State Public Contract Code (PCC) provides authorization for various local agencies to utilize the “...design-build method of project delivery, using a best value procurement methodology...”. (PCC Code 22160).

for the San Gabriel River Center & Gardens Project. This value is informed by a number of factors including the need to design and install sound attenuation control elements within the gardens and the farm house itself to make the site suitably comfortable for the public. This will require a significant amount of value engineering will need to be accomplished during the design phase of the project. As a result, the design-build procurement methodology is the best path to generate the value-engineered savings and achieve the desired end product.

EXHIBIT C: RFP Scope of Work Summary

The following is an outline of the preliminary expected scope of work for the full RFP. The full scope of work will be developed upon approval of the WCA Board to move forward with the Design-Build Procurement Methodology Approach.

Architectural Elements:

The “Duck Farm Feasibility Study” prepared by Architectural Resources Group in October 2011 is the starting point for the design and engineering scope of work for the architectural improvement project components. Though the project no longer involves a strictly “historic restoration” process, it will still require considerable and historically “respectful” renovation of an existing structure and grounds in considerable disrepair to bring the structure(s) and related infrastructure up to current applicable building codes, and to address infrastructure requirements due to the fact that the former residence will now be a public resource center. The second floor renovation will include administrative offices, a second floor bathroom and rooms for potential residential use by WCA or other Duck Farm/San Gabriel Resource Center staff.

Given this design consideration, the Design-Build Contractor will design and produce construction documents that include the following elements:

1. **Building Systems** – Includes all new HVAC, plumbing, and electrical work required to bring systems up to current building codes
2. **Building Envelope/Exterior Restoration/Renovation** – Includes restoration of Spanish tile roof, historic exterior finishes, repair/replacement of rotted wood, broken windows, deteriorated doors and windows, and restoration of all exterior finishes
3. **Interior Restoration/Renovation of 1st Floor Public Spaces** – Includes replacement/restoration of all interior walls and finishes following building systems installations; also includes new appliances, cabinetry, etc. needed for library, resource center and kitchen
4. **Interior Restoration/Renovation of 2nd Floor Private Spaces** – Includes a “tenant improvement” approach that can address the anticipated use of this space; the design does not have to maintain the existing room/space allocations, but instead should anticipate the administrative and private residence program requirements of the WCA or other agency tasked with operating and maintaining the San Gabriel River Center and Gardens
5. **Structural Work** – Includes foundation, framing, plywood sheathing, floor joists, ceiling joists, etc. needed to bring structure to current building codes
6. **Interior Interpretive Elements/Stations & Related Furnishings** – Includes all public resource interpretive stations and related public space furnishings
7. **An Exterior Pre-Fabricated Public Restroom** – Includes scale and facility components intended to accommodate the expected number of visitors to the Center

Landscape & Water Conservation Gardens Elements:

In April 2018, the WCA signed a grant agreement with the RMC to develop two (2) acres of demonstration gardens at the site of the old farmhouse at the Duck Farm River Park. In addition, a portion of the required site infrastructure work required for the San Gabriel River Center & Gardens Project will now be funded by the Duck Farm Park Phase 1A-Step 2 Project, currently under construction.

1. **ADA Entrance:** An aesthetically pleasing ADA accessible entrance to the proposed resource library. Ramp should reflect the architectural style of existing structure and/or blend into the surrounding landscape as is appropriate.
2. **Circulation Paths:** ADA accessible permeable pathways that provide access and circulation through the gardens, and that connect to the existing trail system within the adjacent Duck Farm Park and to the resource library inside the Duck Farm House
3. **Garden Walls:** 18" garden walls in identified areas.
4. **Flexible Space:** Flexible temporary gathering spaces along pathways through the facility. Spaces should provide ample shade and future development potential.
5. **Sound Walls/Barriers or Sound Attenuation Strategies:** As the site is adjacent to the 605 Freeway, sound levels present a major impact on the experience of river center and garden users. Special attention should be made to utilize the renovated farm house building(s), distance from the 605 Freeway, and to create other strategically placed "natural" sound walls or barriers on the west side of the various gardens, or to design and similarly locate other sound attenuation elements. Integrating such features with shade elements would be another valid sound attenuation strategy.
6. **Septic System:** Existing septic system will need to be replaced with newly designed and constructed system that can support two (2) interior bathrooms, a kitchen and an exterior pre-fab restroom building
7. **Water Harvesting Gardens:** Variety of rain gardens, bioswales, greywater basins and other residential green infrastructure strategies that establish zero runoff from the site from rain events measuring up to 0.75 inches.
8. **Greywater Demonstration Gardens:** Contractor will integrate low-tech greywater fed climate adapted edibles and greywater infrastructure. This may provide an additional use within rainwater basins.
9. **Interpretive Signage Plan:** Signage should be designed and made ready for fabrication. Signage topics should be approachable and culturally relevant to a diverse population. All content should be presented in a multi-lingual format for English, Spanish, and Chinese speakers. Topics may include but are not limited to drought tolerant indigenous and native plants and their care, types of plants that will attract native birds and butterflies and a discussion of their migration profiles, simple keys to identification of these birds and butterflies, the design and mechanics of rain gardens and greywater systems, and overall recommendations for maintaining these types of gardens.

March 21, 2019 – Item 17

RESOLUTION 2019-18

**RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO AUTHORIZE
RELEASE OF A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER CENTER
PROJECT AT THE DUCK FARM.**

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, this action will authorize the release of a Request for Proposal for the San Gabriel River Center Project at the Duck Farm; 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 21, 2019.
4. **AUTHORIZES** the release of a Request for Proposal for the San Gabriel River Center Project at the Duck Farm.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Resolution 2019-18

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On March 21, 2019

Herlinda Chico,
Governing Board Vice Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall, Jr.
Deputy Attorney General