

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

CAO WA# 0220-05151-0458
Council File No. 18-0384
Council District - All

Date: June 2, 2023

To: Los Angeles City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, Chair 
Measure W - Safe, Clean Water Program - Administrative Oversight Committee

Subject: **TRANSMITTAL – RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO REQUEST FROM BUREAU OF SANITATION FOR AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR THE LOS ANGELES RIVER HABITAT RESTORATION AND STORMWATER CAPTURE PROJECT**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to approval by the Mayor,

1. APPROVE the recommendation by the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) for the Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) to issue a letter in support of The Nature Conservancy's submission of the Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project (Project) to the Safe, Clean Water Regional Infrastructure Program;
2. AUTHORIZE LASAN, with the concurrence of the Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and the Mayor's Office, to draft and issue a letter of support for the Project; and,
3. AUTHORIZE the CAO and CLA to make technical corrections consistent with the Mayor and Council action on this matter.

SUMMARY

At its regular meeting on May 25, 2023, the Administrative Oversight Committee of the Measure W – Safe, Clean Water Program (Measure W AOC) considered a report from the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) dated May 17, 2023, regarding a request for approval to issue a letter of support for the Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project (Project).

The Nature Conservancy requested a letter of support from the City of Los Angeles (City) for the Project which is located on the Bowtie Parcel. The Nature Conservancy is a conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Nature Conservancy's goals in Los Angeles are to treat stormwater using natural infrastructure, deliver additional benefits to urban residents, and enhance biodiversity across the urban landscape through strategies such as creating a proof-of-concept multi-benefit stormwater capture demonstration project.

Project Funding - This Project application is being submitted via the Round 5 Regional Infrastructure Program to the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area which is required to be submitted to the application module by July 31, 2023. This Project applied for funding in Round 4 and received a letter of support from the City dated July 27, 2022. However, Regional Infrastructure Program funding was not awarded due to budgeting constraints and the Project proponent is seeking to renew their letter of support from the City in order to pursue Round 5 funding. The Project has a total project cost of \$11.25 million and has already secured over \$6 million in matching funds from public and private sources. The expected request to the SCW Regional Program is about \$7 million over five years.

Project Scope - The Project aims to manage stormwater, enhance habitat, and simultaneously serve as an aesthetically-appealing educational feature that could be used as a model for other parks and open spaces. The Project proposes to daylight a storm drain from the existing pipeline and divert the water onto the Bowtie Parcel through a natural arroyo that meanders along the northern site boundary. The Bowtie Parcel is an approximately 18-acres property owned by State Parks and located on the east bank of the Los Angeles River in Northeast Los Angeles. The arroyo would be planted with southern California native vegetation, which would create habitat for riparian plant species and wildlife.

LASAN Working Group Determinations / Support – LASAN coordinated and received feedback from various stakeholders: including the project proponents, community organization, watershed coordinators, other City departments, and the City's Safe, Clean Water Program Working Group (Working Group), to make final recommendations for the AOC to consider. Below are the significant determinations from the Working Group:

- The Project would provide water quality and community enhancement benefits, consistent with City and Safe Clean Water Program goals.
- The Project poses minimal risks to the City.
- The Project proponent developed a preliminary Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan and is seeking funds through the Safe Clean Water Program for the first five years of operations. The plan proposes that the City may become a potential partner, but acknowledges that since the Project is on State Parks property, operation and maintenance will ultimately be the responsibility of the property owner.

In accordance with the Measure W Letter of Support Policy (C.F. 18-0384-S3), the Measure W AOC considered the request, approved the letter of support for the Project, and amended the recommendations to authorize LASAN to draft and issue the letter. The amended recommendations reflect the intent of the Measure AOC and are hereby transmit to Council for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the General Fund resulting from the recommendations included in this report, as the action is administrative only.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations of this report comply with the City's Financial Policies in that expenditures of the special funds are limited to and within the mandate of the funding source.

Attachment – May 17, 2023 LASAN Report for Round 5 (FY 24/25) Safe, Clean Water Community Proposed Project Proposal Evaluation for Letter of Support from the City of Los Angeles - Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project, proposed by The Nature Conservancy

MWS:PJH/JVW:jq:10230184

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: May 17, 2023

To: Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee
Matthew W Szabo, City Administrative Officer
Sharon M. Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
Ryan Jackson, Office of the Mayor

From: Michael Scaduto, PE, ENV SP, Principal Engineer
Safe, Clean Water Implementation Division
LA Sanitation & Environment

Subject: Round 5 (FY 24/25) Safe, Clean Water Community Proposed Project Proposal Evaluation for Letter of Support from the City of Los Angeles - Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project, proposed by The Nature Conservancy

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve recommendation by LA Sanitation and Environment (LASAN) for the Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) to issue a letter in support of The Nature Conservancy's submission of the Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project (Project) to the Safe, Clean Water Regional Infrastructure Program.
2. Authorize the City Administrative Officer, with the concurrence of the Chief Legislative Analyst and the Mayor's Office and the assistance of LASAN, to draft and issue a letter of support for the Project.

BACKGROUND

The Safe, Clean Water Regional Infrastructure Program's application process requires community proposed project applicants, such as The Nature Conservancy, to include a Letter of Support from the municipality in which the project is proposed. Additionally, the letter of support must include concurrence with the plan, roles, and responsibilities for operations and maintenance of the project.

The Nature Conservancy (Project proponent) is requesting a letter of support from the City of Los Angeles (City) for the Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project (Project) located on the Bowtie Parcel. The Nature Conservancy is a conservation organization working around the world to protect ecologically important lands and waters for nature and people. The Nature Conservancy's goals in Los Angeles are to treat stormwater using natural infrastructure, deliver additional benefits to urban residents, and enhance biodiversity across the urban landscape through strategies such as creating a proof-of-concept multi-benefit stormwater capture demonstration project.

This Project application is being submitted via the Round 5 Regional Infrastructure Program to the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area which is required to be submitted to the application module by July 31, 2023. This Project had previously applied for funding in Round 4 and received a letter of support from the City dated July 27, 2022. Regional Infrastructure Program funding was not awarded due to budgeting constraints and the Project proponent is seeking to renew their letter of support from the City in order to pursue Round 5 funding.

The Project has a total project cost of \$11.25 million and has already secured over \$6 million in matching funds from public and private sources. The expected request to the SCW Regional Program is about \$7 million over five years. The Project proposes to daylight a storm drain from the existing pipeline and divert the water onto the Bowtie Parcel through a natural arroyo that meanders along the northern site boundary. The Bowtie Parcel is an approximately 18-acre property owned by State Parks and located on the east bank of the Los Angeles River in Northeast Los Angeles. The arroyo would be planted with southern California native vegetation, which would create habitat for riparian plant species and wildlife. The Project aims to manage stormwater, enhance habitat, and simultaneously serve as an aesthetically-appealing educational feature that could be used as a model for other parks and open spaces.

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

LASAN leads City efforts to review requests for support letters for the Safe Clean Water Regional Program. As part of the review process, LASAN coordinated and received feedback from various stakeholders: including the project proponents, community organization, watershed coordinators, other City departments, and the City's Safe, Clean Water Program Working Group (Working Group), to make final recommendations for the AOC to consider. In the review of this specific request, it was determined that:

- The Project would provide water quality and community enhancement benefits, consistent with City and Safe Clean Water Program goals.
- The Project poses minimal risks to the City.
- The Project proponent developed a preliminary Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plan and is seeking funds through the Safe Clean Water Program for the first 5 years of operations. The plan proposes that the City may become a potential partner, but acknowledges that since the Project is on State Parks property, operation and maintenance will ultimately be the responsibility of the property owner.

Therefore, LASAN recommends that the AOC issues a letter in support of The Nature Conservancy's submission of the Project to the Upper LA River Safe, Clean Water Regional Round 5 (FY 24/25) Infrastructure Program. LASAN will continue to coordinate with and provide input to the Project proponent to ensure that the Project scope continues to support the goals of the City and SCWP both before application and after potential funding is received.

Attachment 1: Project Summary

cc: Patty Huber, CAO
Jacqueline Wagner, CAO
Jessica Quach, CAO
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Art Castro, DWP
Shirley Lau, BSS
Al Bazzi, BSS

ATTACHMENT 1: Project Summary

Brief Description

The Nature Conservancy, in partnership with CA State Parks (Project proponent), is developing a multi-benefit stormwater management and habitat enhancement project along the LA River: the Bowtie Demonstration Project. The Project proposes to daylight a storm drain from the existing pipeline and divert the water onto the Bowtie Parcel and through a natural arroyo that meanders along the northern site boundary that will improve water quality, enhance habitat and biodiversity, increase public access, and build climate resilience for Northeast LA. While The Nature Conservancy is not officially part of the 100-Acre Partnership, they are working closely with the City, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and State Parks to ensure seamless collaboration and project vision.

Surrounding Site Conditions

- Area is considered severely disadvantaged
- Not in an oil and gas area
- Potentially high groundwater
- In a liquefaction area
- In area without direct connection to groundwater basin

Preliminary Hydrology

- 2,800 acre drainage area
- 85th Percentile 24-hr Runoff Volume: 100 ac-ft

Water Quality Benefits

The Project will benefit water quality in the Los Angeles River, Reach 3 and Segment C, which are subject to the following water quality milestones:

- By 2024 for Copper/Lead in Reach 3
- By 2028 for Cooper, lead, zinc and cadmium for Segment C
- By 2037 for E Coli in Segment C

In addition, the Project does not overlap drainage areas with existing planned or constructed City stormwater capture projects.

Cost Breakdown

Total Project Cost: \$11,250,000

Annual Costs (Operation, Maintenance, Monitoring): \$200,000

Funding Requested of SCWP: \$7,000,000 (construction and five years of O&M)

Leveraged Funding: \$6,000,000

Operation and Maintenance Plan

The Project proponent developed a preliminary O&M Plan and is seeking funds through the Safe Clean Water Program for the first 5 years of operation and maintenance. The property is owned by State Parks so ultimately they are the responsible party. The Nature Conservancy has committed to performing O&M for the first 5 years after implementation. Project proponents are exploring a potential partnership with LASAN to maintain the stormwater features (i.e. the diversion, pumps and filtration system), assuming that LASAN's specifications can be met during design.

Drainage Area Delineation



Figure 1: Project Proponent's Drainage Area Delineation