



# MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Officer

DATE: February 6, 2019

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VII : Consideration of resolution authorizing contracts with Sierra Health Foundation c/o Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, William C. Velasquez Institute, River LA, The Valley Economic Alliance c/o Mulholland Institute, The River Project, and Pacoima Beautiful in partnership with Friends of the Los Angeles River for community engagement and outreach for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing professional services contracts with Sierra Health Foundation c/o Sacred Places Institute for Indigenous Peoples, William C. Velasquez Institute, River LA, The Valley Economic Alliance c/o Mulholland Institute, The River Project, and Pacoima Beautiful in partnership with Friends of the Los Angeles River for community engagement and outreach for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan.

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 non-profit 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.

Six proposals were received from local organizations, representing a range of constituencies, geography, and partnerships. In addition to carefully evaluating the competence and qualifications of each firm relative to the project, the following items were reviewed per the MRCA's Purchasing and Contracting Procedures, Section 3.3, Professional Services, as applicable:

- List of names and contact information for clients for which services were performed in the last five years.
- Samples of the services performed including the scope and cost.
- Disclosure of any actions taken against the professional.

The proposals described a variety of creative strategies and approaches for engaging non-traditional stakeholders, as well as varying interpretations of the project's needs. Outreach activities will target the involvement of disadvantaged communities, including but not limited to: low- and moderate-income residents, communities of color, people with disabilities, youth, seniors, and other hard-to-reach groups. Engagement will occur throughout the 8-10 month planning process, with workshops for data collection and general input scheduled to commence in February. During this process there will be approximately eight public meetings, which will be held in the evenings and/or weekends, at a variety of locations.

After consideration of each proposal, staff determined that all proposers could effectively contribute to the Revitalization Plan's Community Engagement and Outreach process. Dividing the work up into defined geographic areas, based on each organization's capacity and expertise, will ensure that the widest possible participation is achieved. Staff met with all organizations to refine the scope of services needed and the related fees. Short excerpts from the proposals are attached. 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 contract will be approximately \$117,000.00.

*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. The contract with The River Project will be approximately \$20,000.00.

*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. The contract with River LA will be approximately \$32,000.00.

*The Valley Economic Alliance c/o Mulholland Institute*

The Valley Economic Alliance and Mulholland Institute 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. The contract with the Valley Economic Alliance c/o Mulholland Institute will be approximately \$20,000.00.

*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. The contract with WCVI will be approximately \$18,000.00.

*Sierra Health Foundation c/o 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. Staff is still

working with SPI and Sierra Health Foundation to finalize the scope of services and fees. The contract amount is expected to be within a range of \$13,000 to \$43,000.

Consideration: The proposed action would authorize six contracts, totaling approximately \$235,000, for community engagement and outreach services related to the planning and development of a Revitalization Plan for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries.

Fiscal Impact: These contracts will be funded partially through an existing reimbursable grant from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The expenses were anticipated in the fiscal year 18/19 budget. There will be a negligible impact on the general fund to cover meeting supplies, such as refreshments, that are ineligible grant costs.