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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

9-8

December 8, 1997

To: Board of Directors (Executive Committee--Information)
(Engineering and Operations Committee--Information)

From: *for* General Manager

Submitted by: Chief Engineer

Subject: Proposed Western Center for Archaeology and Paleontology, Eastside Reservoir Project

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

For Information Only

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In February 1996, a Senate Select Committee was formed to undertake a multi-phased feasibility analysis for development of the Western Center for Archeology and Paleontology (Western Center) located at the Eastside Reservoir Project. The Western Center would provide museum, educational, research and curation opportunities for various collections of the southwestern United States. The proposed Western Center has received the support of Senator David Kelley who acts as Committee Chair to further develop planning concepts of the facility. The location proposed for development of the Western Center is at Metropolitan's Eastside Reservoir Project (ESRP).

Because development of the proposed Western Center would require participation by Metropolitan and would directly influence ESRP planning for a permanent visitor center, interpretive center, and curation facility, this letter is provided as information to the Board regarding Western Center's objectives and planning status.

Metropolitan's direct participation in the development of the Western Center consists of providing lands for its development. However, Metropolitan would utilize these facilities for curation and interpretive aspects of the reservoir and educational aspects of Metropolitan as a whole. Although a specific time frame for development of the Western Center has not been established, it is understood that an active marketing effort will be undertaken by the University of California Riverside (UCR) in the upcoming year to solicit potential funding sources for the Western Center's implementation.

DETAILED REPORT

In May 1995, members of the Hemet-San Jacinto Action Group (Action Group) approached Metropolitan to discuss the concept of a combined museum, educational, interpretive, research, and curation center located on lands of the Eastside Reservoir Project. The center would focus on the archaeological and paleontologic collections recovered from the reservoir area, as well as provide display, research and interpretive opportunities for similar collections from the southwestern United States. Metropolitan's commitment toward the Western Center would be limited to providing lands within the reservoir area and the cost required to curate those artifacts found at the reservoir site. Management of the Western Center's development would be shared by Metropolitan and UCR in relation to the respective use of the facility. A conceptual plan for the Western Center was submitted to Metropolitan for consideration in June 1995. Funding for the center would be pursued at both State and Federal levels.

As noted above, Senator Kelly introduced a Senate Resolution in August 1995 for a Senate Select Committee to evaluate the feasibility of such a center. The Senate Select Committee Working Group includes Senator Kelley (Chairman), Dr. Roy B. Mason (Superintendent/President, Mt. San Jacinto Community College), Dr. Raymond L. Orbach (Chancellor, UCR), Dr. R. Victor Tate (Hemet-San Jacinto Action Group), and John R. Wodraska (General Manager, Metropolitan Water District). The first meeting of the Senate Select Committee was held in June 1996.

A framework for the proposed Western Center has been developed by the UCR Department of Anthropology and the Hemet-San Jacinto Action Group. The "Vision" and "Goals" for the Western Center are presented in the framework as follows:

- To draw a consensus within the community of the value of a major cultural, educational, and research institution operating in the San Jacinto Valley.
- To provide a world-class, research university affiliated, scientific facility and learning center with a major potential to enhance regional tourism and economic growth.
- To provide close integration and articulation of Western Center's concept into the overall planning for the [ESRP] visitor center, hospitality, and recreational facilities.
- To help characterize the Metropolitan Water District's responsiveness to community, educational, social, and economic concerns of the region.
- To develop an archaeological and paleontologic museum similar in concept to the George C. Page Museum which is located adjacent to the La Brea Tar Pits in Los Angeles.
- To operate a center for basic and applied research for the development of new scientific methods and technologies in archaeology and paleontology similar in concept to the Conservation Analytical Laboratory of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.
- To promote public understanding of the scientific significance of the collections housed in the Western Center, especially highlighting the archaeology and paleontology of the Domenigoni and Diamond Valleys and western North America.

- To conserve materials representing the natural history and cultural heritage of the region so that they will be available to present and future publics.
- To exemplify the educational, cultural, social, and economic benefits that can be achieved through partnership between the public and private sector.

Metropolitan's opportunity to pursue educational, research and interpretive aspects of water resource development would be an attractive feature of this facility. The shared goals between Metropolitan and UCR, for the preservation, study, and interpretation of ESRP cultural and paleontologic resources are also essential to the success the proposed Western Center.

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