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METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

9-7

May 26, 1998

To: Board of Directors

From: *for* General Manager

Submitted by: Chief Engineer

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

RECOMMENDATION(S)

For Information Only

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Metropolitan's direct participation in the development of the Western Center has thus far consisted of assisting in analysis of alternative sites on reservoir property and making available plans of proposed ESRP recreation facilities. One potential site for the Western Center, within the east recreation area, appears to have consensus of the Working Group. In addition, Metropolitan would allow artifacts collected from the ESRP site to be curated at the Western Center for study and interpretation. Although a specific time frame for development of the Western Center has not been established, it is understood that an active marketing effort is being undertaken by the Working Group to solicit potential funding sources for the Western Center's implementation.

However, Metropolitan has not participated in activities undertaken by the Working Group to garner funding or more broad based public or legislative support for the Western Center. While Metropolitan would consider participating in funding the facility at a level consistent with the cost to curate artifacts recovered at ESRP, Metropolitan has made no commitment to provide funding for the center, or to site the center on reservoir lands.

DETAILED REPORT

In May 1995, members of the Hemet-San Jacinto Action Group (Action Group) approached Metropolitan to discuss the concept of a museum that would include; educational, interpretive, research, and archaeological and paleontologic collections recovered from the reservoir area, as well as provide display, research, and interpretive opportunities for similar collections from the western United States. Metropolitan staff has discussed making available lands within the reservoir area as a site for the Western Center and to allow artifacts collected from the project area to be curated at the site for study and interpretation. It is Metropolitan's view that 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 local, state, and federal levels. Metropolitan has made no commitment to funding of the Western Center, other than that routinely provided for curation of artifacts recovered at the ESRP.

Senator Kelley introduced a Senate Resolution in August 1995 for a Senate Working Group to evaluate the feasibility of such a center. The Senate 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 Senate Working Group was formed in May 1996 and its first meeting was held in June 1996.

A framework for the proposed Western Center has been developed by UCR and the Action Group. The "vision" and "goals" for the Western Center as presented in this framework are 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 the Western Center concept into the overall planning for the ESRP visitor center, hospitality, and recreational facilities.
- To help characterize Metropolitan's responsiveness to community, educational, social, and economic concerns of the region.
- To develop an archaeological and paleontological 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 Eastside Reservoir Project 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.

Since the formation of the Senate Working Group, UCR has been actively engaged in planning for the Western Center. With initial funding by the legislature of \$275,000, UCR has established a Western Center development office and has begun designing architectural themes, site plans, and collection management strategies. Senator Kelley has directed UCR to prepare a three-phased study that would formulate the detailed concepts of the facility, and describe detailed building and funding planning. First-phase and second-phase reports have been completed and submitted to the Senate Working Group. Throughout this process, Metropolitan has consistently agreed to consider and evaluate any reasonable proposals for the design, development, construction, and management of the Western Center, and to fully cooperate in an effort to determine how such a facility could be developed to best serve the interests of Metropolitan, the public, and other potential Western Center partners.

As planning for the Western Center proceeds, Metropolitan will continue to honor all mitigation commitments in the FEIR for the Eastside Reservoir Project. These mitigation commitments include the recovery of significant archaeological and paleontological resources from construction impact areas, the documentation of those discoveries, curation and storage, in perpetuity, of the archaeological and paleontological collections in a facility meeting all state and federal guidelines for such a facility, and access to the collections for research and interpretation. Metropolitan has further committed to local Native American groups that the archaeological collection will be curated in the project area.

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 paleontological resources are also essential to the success of the proposed Western Center.

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