

- **Board of Directors**

June 12, 2001 Board Meeting

8-15

Subject

Approve scope and guidelines and an initial \$2 million authorization for predevelopment planning and program development for the Southern California Water Education Center

Description

In April 2000, the Special Committee on Museum Feasibility and Development (Museum Committee) was formed in order to explore the feasibility and support among Metropolitan constituencies for a museum type center focusing on providing public education about the development of Southern California's water resources.

Evaluation of the museum concept resulted in a series of task forces that have looked into issues that must be addressed in such a proposal. The task forces have included architecture, member agency coordination, exhibits, themes, historical research and landscaping. During the course of the past year, the committee also conducted research at fourteen museums throughout Southern California.

Preliminary assessments have explored construction of a prospective facility ranging from 20,000 to 65,000 square feet of combined exhibit and archive space, ranging in costs from \$16 million to \$50 million depending on the size and amenities.

There have been general discussions of Metropolitan's center overlooking Diamond Valley Lake. This alternative would significantly impact costs and the ability to further develop our educational facilities and, therefore, is not recommended. A number of alternative sites are still being evaluated to ensure costs and environmental concerns are minimized as much as possible. Staff can conduct predevelopment activities pending identification of a site, should the Board approve this request.

The Museum Committee has also focused on funding and operation of the water education center and programs leading to a recommendation to create a nonprofit foundation. The foundation's function could include fundraising, marketing, and coordinating community events. A separate Board letter seeking approval to form a foundation will be presented in the future.

Programs and exhibit concepts for the center have been based upon existing Metropolitan education and inspection trip capabilities. Partly as an outgrowth of the museum discussion, the Board authorized the expansion and naming of the Allan Preston Museum at Gene Village, which currently exhibits artifacts from the construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct.

The Museum Committee has unanimously approved the scope and guidelines outlined below and recommends that these guidelines be approved by the Board as the next step in the development of the Southern California Water Education Center. These proposed guidelines reflect the original vision leading to the conceptual discussions we have had over the past several months. The Museum Committee's recommendation to the Board is that the cost of the Center will not exceed \$16 million. The Museum Committee respectfully requests that the Board approve a \$2 million authorization for predevelopment activities.

The predevelopment activities would include programming design, project planning, preparation of environmental documentation, entitlements, applications, infrastructure and facility design.

Scope and Guidelines

- The Southern California Water Education Center shall not exceed approximately 26,000, (+/- 10%), square feet on a ten-acre parcel. The costs of the overall project shall not exceed approximately \$16 million, subject to a proper evaluation based on firm engineering and construction estimates to be approved by the Board.
- Metropolitan shall fund an initial amount of \$2 million for development costs. These funds shall be derived from savings in the development of the Diamond Valley Lake Project. The current estimated amount of appropriated, but not spent funds, is approximately \$83 million. It is anticipated that a portion of additional funding for the Center may be generated through third party participation that may be derived from revenues generated from the Diamond Valley Lake Recreational components and/or the leveraging of assets in the Diamond Valley Lake area. Metropolitan funding of future actions associated with the development of the Center may be in the form of matching grants, etc.
- Exhibits and programs for the Center would be extensions of Metropolitan's current visitors' center, education programs, and the Colorado River Aqueduct Inspection Trips, which includes the Allan Preston Museum. Funding in the amount of \$300,000 has already been proposed in the upcoming fiscal year budget under External Affairs for this specific purpose, and is separate and additional to the \$2 million herein requested and designated for the museum development.
- Once completed the Center would initially operate as a Metropolitan facility staffed by the Metropolitan employees with an expertise in education, public relations, water development, conservation, and the environment; as well as archive development and maintenance.
- Metropolitan may enter into discussions and consider agreements with other water agencies outside of the Metropolitan service area, educational institutions and organizations interested in the preservation and archiving of artifacts related to the development of water supplies, conservation technology and their facilities in Southern California.

Upon Board approval of these guidelines, staff will proceed with the development of this program and will report their activities to the Special Committee on the Museum and Water Education Center.

Policy

No applicable policy.

CEQA

The CEQA Determination for Option #1 is: Determine that the approval of the Project Scope and Guidelines and initial funding for predevelopment activities is not defined as a project under CEQA because the proposed action involves continuing administrative policies, such as general policy and procedure making (Section 15378(b)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines), and because these actions also deal with government fiscal activities which do not involve any commitment to any specific project which may result in a potentially significant physical impact on the environment (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines).

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and approve the project scope and guidelines, and initial authorization of \$2 million, to support predevelopment planning activities for Metropolitan's Center and programs.

Fiscal Impact: The current estimated amount of appropriated, but not spent funds, is approximately \$83 million from the Diamond Valley Lake Construction Project. The initial \$2 million requested will be transferred from the Diamond Valley Lake Construction Project to the Education Center Project. The Museum Committee recommends that the total cost of the Center shall not exceed approximately \$16 million.

Option #2

Do not adopt the Museum Committee recommendation for the project scope and guidelines and initial authorization.

Fiscal Impact: None

Committee Recommendation

Option #1



Phillip J. Pace
Chairman of the Board

5/24/2001

Date

BLA #1049