

- **Board of Directors**  
**Engineering and Operations Committee**

July 9, 2002 Board Meeting

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**8-10**

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**Subject**

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Adopt California Environmental Quality Act documents and approve a specific plan for the Diamond Valley Lake Park

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**Description**

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In June 2001, the Board approved a recommendation by its Special Committee on the Museum and Water Education Center to proceed with the development of the Southern California Water Education Center (SCWEC) and authorized the expenditure of \$2 million in predevelopment costs. Previously, in March 2001 and further in January 2002, Metropolitan completed leases with the Western Center for Archaeology and Paleontology (Western Center) and Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District (Valley-Wide), for parcels which are to be sited in proximity to the SCWEC in the East Recreation Area. In addition, the Board has authorized development of a youth camp facility in the East Recreation area. All entities are preparing to proceed with the development of their facilities. Moreover, the City of Hemet (City), within whose jurisdiction the Metropolitan components are located, has indicated a readiness to complete the planning and entitlement of these components.

To accomplish construction of the Metropolitan components in a timely manner, with the cooperation of the City, Metropolitan is creating a Specific Plan (a copy of which will be mailed under separate cover and will be made available for review in the Executive Secretary's office) for the SCWEC, Western Center community park and aquatic facility, youth camp, recreation lake and future development area to be submitted to the City for its consideration. In addition to facilitating planning and entitlement, the Specific Plan provides development and design criteria uniquely related to the project and proposed uses, ensures that the various project components are compatible with each other and appropriately integrated, identifies the necessary infrastructure and public services to meet project demands, and provides the City with administrative procedures to process and approve future building projects without a lengthy planning process.

As the lead agency on California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation, Metropolitan's approval and adoption of the CEQA documentation will allow the Specific Plan to be presented to the City Planning Commission at its July hearing. See the California Environmental Quality Act section below for more detail on Metropolitan's role in the environmental assessment process.

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**Policy**

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Pursuant to CEQA, Sections 21000 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code, and State CEQA Guidelines, Title 14, Sections 15000 et seq. of the California Code of Regulations, Metropolitan, as a CEQA Lead Agency, is required to adopt environmental documentation prior to project approval, final design, and construction.

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**California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**

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CEQA determination for Option #1:

To comply with CEQA, Metropolitan, as the Lead Agency, prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Diamond Valley Lake Park Specific Plan (a copy of which will be mailed under separate cover and will be made available for review in the Executive Secretary's office). The MND was distributed for a 30-day public review period starting on June 4, 2002. This document includes the Initial Study and Environmental Checklist form. Comment letters received during the public review period, along with responses to the

comments, will also be made available for review in the Executive Secretary's office. As stated in the State CEQA Guidelines (Section 15074), the Board of Directors is required to review and consider the MND and comments received during the public review period prior to the adoption of the MND. Adoption of the MND rests on the finding by the Board that based on the whole record before it, there is no substantial evidence that, with the mitigation measures required by the MND, the project will have a significant impact on the environment. In addition, the MND reflects the Lead Agency's independent judgment and analysis. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) required under CEQA Section 21081.6 must also be adopted by the Board prior to project approval (a copy of which will be mailed under separate cover and will be made available for review in the Executive Secretary's office). The administrative record and environmental documentation associated with the plan will be retained by Metropolitan at 700 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, California 90012.

The CEQA determination for the Diamond Valley Lake Park Specific Plan is: Review and consider the information in the MND and comments received during the public review period; adopt the MND for the project; and adopt the MMRP.

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

### **Board Options/Fiscal Impacts**

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#### **Option #1**

Adopt the CEQA determination and approve the Diamond Valley Lake Park Specific Plan.

**Fiscal Impact:** None

#### **Option #2**

Do not approve the Specific Plan for the Diamond Valley Lake Park.

**Fiscal Impact:** Undetermined delay costs.

### **Staff Recommendation**

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Option #1

	6/10/2002
Roy L. Wolfe	Date
Manager, Corporate Resources	

	6/14/2002
Ronald R. Gastelum	Date
Chief Executive Officer	