

• **Board of Directors**
Education and Outreach Committee

August 16, 2005 Board Meeting

8-1

Subject

Authorize up to \$950,000 over two years for the revised 2005/06 City Makeover Program including an independent audit component to verify water savings

Description

In November 2002, the Board of Directors approved an outdoor conservation outreach campaign aimed at encouraging more efficient irrigation and use of native and California Friendly plants. As part of this overall effort, Metropolitan established the City Makeover Program to engage local government in the movement to reduce outdoor water use, while inspiring and educating the public on the beauty and usefulness of native and drought-tolerant plants, efficient irrigation techniques and sustainable design. It is important to move forward with this phase of the program in this fiscal year in order to establish key partnerships with cities, communities, and businesses that would help to ensure water savings over the long-term future.

This competitive grant program is administered by Metropolitan and receives funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Funding is provided biannually to cities, public agencies, nonprofit and community-based organizations for new native and drought-tolerant themed landscapes in prominent public locations. To receive funding, each new landscape must meet high standards for native plant palette, efficient water use, community involvement, and educational programs. Promotion of the program is ongoing and includes press releases and events surrounding the launch of the program, announcement of winners, check presentations and ribbon cuttings. In addition, each City Makeover winner is highlighted as a “model” program adaptable to multiple cities and agencies.

A total of 77 City Makeover grant applications were received and reviewed by a panel of external judges with expertise in water conservation, landscape design, horticulture and project management who evaluate the proposals using a merit-based point system. Based upon the number of applications, total fund requests and available funds, applications with the highest rank were granted funds from one of four broad categories:

- **Institutional Improvements:** Grants of up to \$150,000 available for institution-wide programs to landscape with native and California Friendly plants and improve water use efficiency at three or more related sites. Proposed projects must demonstrate water savings over existing landscape.
- **Signature Projects:** Grants of up to \$75,000 for high-visibility, public landscapes featuring native and California Friendly plant palette and state-of-the-art irrigation, and including exceptionally strong community involvement and education component.
- **Small Parks and Gardens:** Grants of up to \$20,000 for pocket parks and small-scale projects featuring landscape design and irrigation solutions easily transferable to residential settings. Must include educational component.
- **Next Step Educational Grants:** Funds available only to past City Makeover grant recipients for incorporation of Protector del Agua training courses.

This public education campaign will ultimately help Metropolitan meet its long-term conservation goal under the Integrated Resources Plan by changing people’s perception of California native plants, and inspiring them to replace high water use landscapes with those less wasteful. Based on projects previously funded, we can anticipate up to 85 percent savings in water usage for California Friendly gardens compared to traditional

landscapes. For example, the city of Santa Monica's 2003 City Makeover project demonstrates the differences between the two types of landscapes with side-by-side demonstration gardens. The project's Native Garden uses about 22 gallons of water each day, compared to the 163 gallons used by a traditional garden landscape. The review process and recommended recipients for the 2005/06 City Makeover Program are described in **Attachment 1**.

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 4210: Water Conservation. "It shall be the policy of the District to undertake and support water conservation programs. To that end, the District may develop and implement such programs and enter into agreements with member public agencies and other organizations to make more efficient use of water resources through water conservation programs so long as such agreements serve a beneficial purpose of the District."

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed funding action is not defined as a project under CEQA because it involves 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). For each specific project associated with the City Makeover Program, the grant recipients will be responsible for complying with CEQA, regulatory permitting, and all other applicable federal and state environmental laws and regulations.

The CEQA determination is: Determine that the proposed action is not subject to the provisions of CEQA pursuant to Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines.

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options/Fiscal Impacts

Option #1

Adopt the CEQA determination and authorize the revised program.

Fiscal Impact: \$950,000 in budgeted funds over a two-year cycle

Option #2

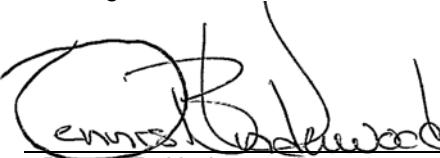
Do not adopt the CEQA determination or authorize the revised program.

Fiscal Impact: None

Staff Recommendation

Option #1


Timothy C. Worley
for Robert S. Joe
Manager, External Affairs
7/19/2005 Date


Dennis B. Underwood
CEO/General Manager
7/19/2005 Date

2005/06 City Makeover Program

Program Background

The City Makeover Program was established in 2003 by The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California as a competitive grant program to provide funding for new water-wise landscapes in prominent public locations within Metropolitan's service area. These landscapes feature native and California Friendly landscaping, state-of-the-art irrigation and controllers, sustainable landscaping techniques, community involvement, and a maintenance plan.

Eligibility

Cities, public agencies and nonprofit or community-based organizations were eligible to apply as the lead applicants. Projects that previously have received City Makeover funds were not eligible for future project funding; however they can apply for Next Step Educational Grants to enhance educational programs offered at the site. Partnerships between governmental agencies and nonprofit/community organizations were strongly encouraged. Each project must be located in a highly visible area with frequent public access, and the property should be in the public domain or within a public easement.

Categories

- Grants were available within four broad categories:
 - **Institutional Improvements:** Grants of up to \$150,000 available for institution-wide programs to landscape with native and California Friendly plants and improve water use efficiency at three or more related sites. Proposed projects must demonstrate water savings over existing landscape.
 - **Signature Projects:** Grants of up to \$75,000 for high-visibility, public landscapes featuring native and California Friendly plant palette and state-of-the-art irrigation, and including exceptionally strong community involvement and education component.
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Judging

- Review panels were comprised of landscape architects, municipal staff, water conservation professionals, area historians, and horticultural specialists. These panels were responsible for rating the proposals and reviewing final designs.
- Proposals were evaluated using a merit-based point system evaluated against 11 criteria. Based upon the number of applications, total fund requests and available funds, applications with the highest rank were granted funds.

City Makeover Program Criteria

The evaluation criteria below were used to score and rank each proposal against other submissions. Weight was given to achieving geographic dispersion throughout Metropolitan's service area.

	<i>Criteria</i>	Possible Points 200
1.	Location: Project location is highly visible with frequent public access, i.e. pocket park, community center, library, historic building, downtown area, etc. Site supports a heritage landscape, from both a horticultural and aesthetic perspective.	5
2.	Design: Design is based on the plant associations in the area's native plant community.	25
3.	Irrigation: Design incorporates best management practices for water conservation and irrigation, using reclaimed water if available.	30
4.	Water Savings: How much water will be saved, including calculations.	15
5.	Plant Palette: Plant palette is locally appropriate and features the use of native plants as well as drought tolerant types.	20
6.	Community Involvement: Community support for the project is demonstrated in the proposal.	20
7.	Co-Funding: Proposal includes detailed project budget, including maintenance and education programs for three years.	20
8.	Maintenance Program: A comprehensive maintenance program that reflects a working understanding of native landscapes and a plan for ongoing review/assessment are outlined in the proposal.	25
9.	Signage: Project plan and design includes informational signage. Description of signage and content summary are included in the proposal.	10
10.	Conservation Education: Project includes on-site education through design, signage, information brochures, and educational programs. It also includes a brief media plan. A detailed description of the education component is included in the proposal, along with goals for a number of local media articles, events, etc.	15
11.	Urban Runoff: Project design includes urban runoff mitigation features such as permeable paving, downspouts diverted to landscaping, and cisterns to collect runoff.	5

Recommended recipients by category**Institutional Improvements
(up to \$150,000)***None recommended***Signature Projects
(up to \$75,000)**

1. **Claremont:** Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden - California Natives Container Garden
2. **Fullerton:** Arboretum Visitor's Center Landscape Design Project
3. **Long Beach:** Aquarium of the Pacific, Watershed Garden Public Education
4. **Los Angeles:** Barnsdall Park Great Lawn Landscape Restoration Project
5. **National City:** Paradise Creek Educational Park
6. **Orange:** The Best of California - Santiago Canyon College
7. **Oxnard:** Public Library Garden
8. **Poway:** Native Gardens at the Kumeyaay-Ipai Interpretive Center
9. **Riverside:** The Land Use Learning Center: Urban Area Demonstration Garden
10. **Temecula:** Rose Haven Heritage Garden Project
11. **Woodland Hills:** Pierce College Botanical Garden

**Small Parks and Gardens
(up to \$20,000)**

1. **Altadena/Pasadena:** Oak Woodland Pocket Park
2. **Bellflower:** Library Gardens Demonstration Garden
3. **Covina:** Native Plants Demonstration Garden
4. **Huntington Beach:** Native plant demonstration gardens at Shipley Nature Center
5. **San Clemente:** Marine Monument at Park Semper Fi
6. **San Diego:** Urban Forestry Resource Center
7. **South Gate:** Hollydale Elementary School Demonstration Garden
8. **Torrance:** Showcase of Native Gardens for Residential Use at Madrona Marsh

**Next Step Educational Grants
(up to \$25,000)**

1. **San Clemente:** Casa Romantica Cultural Center & Gardens
2. **Santa Monica:** Garden/garden

Total number of entries: 77