



- Board of Directors
Real Property and Asset Management Committee

5/11/2021 Board Meeting

7-11

Subject

Authorize agreements for District housing and property improvements at the Colorado River Aqueduct pumping plants villages with: (1) Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for environmental documentation; and (2) Fugro USA Land, Inc in an amount not to exceed \$350,000 for geotechnical services; the General Manager has determined that the proposed action is exempt or otherwise not subject to CEQA

Executive Summary

Metropolitan maintains employee housing, kitchens, and short-term lodging facilities at the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) pumping plant villages. These facilities have exceeded their design life, and are now showing signs of deterioration, and require replacement. This action authorizes two agreements for activities to advance the District Housing and Property Improvements Program.

Details

Background

The CRA is a 242-mile-long conveyance system that transports water from the Colorado River to Lake Mathews in Riverside County. The CRA includes five pumping plants that are in remote, isolated areas of the California desert. The aqueduct system was constructed in the late 1930s and was placed into service in 1941. Since the CRA's inception, Metropolitan has provided lodging or housing to employees involved in the construction, operation, and maintenance of the aqueduct system. Due to the remoteness of the pumping plants, the provision of housing ensures that staff can respond to emergency events in a timely manner.

Houses, kitchens, and short-term lodging were initially constructed at the CRA pumping plants in the early 1940s. Expansion of the CRA's capacity in the 1950s led to the construction of additional houses. Metropolitan has performed routine maintenance on each of these facilities since they were built, but following decades of continuous use and exposure to the harsh desert environment, the houses have deteriorated and need to be replaced.

Due to the remote location of the plants and an aging housing infrastructure, employee retention has been an ongoing challenge. In 2019, Metropolitan's Board authorized the District Housing and Property Improvement Program that includes the development of multiple enhancement features to create attractive and sustainable communities across Metropolitan's CRA pumping plants. The goal of the program is to enhance living conditions in the employee villages at these plants to attract and retain skilled employees.

The program consists of: (1) housing improvements; (2) village enhancements; and (3) kitchen and lodging facilities improvements. Metropolitan staff is currently in the process of completing the master planning study phase activities for these projects. Staff is also in the process of selecting a design consultant with experience in residential housing and community improvement projects. Prior to moving into the design phase, there are multiple preliminary activities that can be initiated and are necessary to complete design work. Initiating these activities ahead of the design phase will provide the necessary information for timely completion of the work and minimize delays to the overall program schedule.

In accordance with the April 2020 action on the biennial budget for Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22, the General Manager will authorize staff to proceed with preliminary activities to improve Metropolitan housing and property, pending board authorization of the agreements described below. Based on the current Capital Investment Plan (CIP) expenditure forecast, funds for the work to be performed pursuant to this action during the current biennium are available within the Appropriation for Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22 (Appropriation No. 15517). This project has been reviewed in accordance with Metropolitan's CIP prioritization criteria and was approved by Metropolitan's CIP evaluation team to be included in the District Housing and Property Improvement Program.

District Housing and Property Improvements Program – Geotechnical Investigations and Environmental Documentation

Preliminary activities that will be initiated ahead of the upcoming design phase will include geological/geotechnical site investigations, preparation of the environmental documentation, topographic surveys, and initiation of permits with Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. These activities will be conducted by both Metropolitan staff and consultants. Metropolitan staff will prepare the topographic surveys and initiation of permit submittals. Detailed topographic surveys are necessary to complete the site grading for individual housing lots and village enhancement features.

Geological/geotechnical investigations will be conducted to set design parameters for the foundation and structural design. These investigations will be performed by consultants as described below. Similarly, environmental documentation is necessary to identify project impacts, a determination of their significance on the basis of specific evaluation criteria including: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gases, and noise; as well as potential mitigation measures that will be implemented through the design, construction, and other efforts. Environmental documentation will be performed by a consultant as described below. Metropolitan staff will provide background documentation, project information, technical reviews of the geotechnical and environmental documentation, and coordinate multiple site visits across four CRA pumping plant villages. Additionally, staff will review and respond to comments anticipated during the public comment period for the environmental documentation process.

A total of \$2.85 million is required for this work. Allocated funds for professional services include \$350,000 for geological/geotechnical investigations and \$250,000 for environmental documentation. Allocated funds for Metropolitan staff activities include \$605,000 for technical oversight to support the geotechnical investigations and environmental documentation; \$100,000 for site visits; \$650,000 for surveying; \$395,000 for initial permitting, project management, project controls, and agreement administration. Allocated funds also include \$500,000 for remaining budget. **Attachment 1** provides the allocation of the required funds.

Staff is in the process of preparing the total estimated cost to complete the District Housing and Property Improvement Program and will return to the Board with an update. Staff will also return to the Board at a later date to award a consulting agreement for preliminary design services.

Specialized Environmental Services (Helix Environmental Planning, Inc.) – New Agreement

Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. is recommended to prepare environmental documentation for the housing and property improvements at four CRA pumping plant villages. Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. was selected via RFQ No. 1143 based on the firm's extensive experience with CEQA compliance, its specific experience with residential and community improvement projects, and its extensive experience with projects in environmentally sensitive locations.

The planned scope of work includes preparing environmental documentation and performing technical studies which address issues such as air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and noise.

This action authorizes a new agreement with Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. for a not-to-exceed total of \$250,000 to prepare environmental documentation for housing and property improvements at four CRA pumping plants. For this agreement, Metropolitan has established a Small Business Enterprise (SBE) participation level of 25 percent. Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. is an SBE firm and thus achieves 100 percent SBE participation. The planned subconsultants for this work are EcoKai, Inc., Kleinfelder, Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers, The Lightfoot Planning Group, and Paleo Solutions.

Specialized Geotechnical Services (Fugro USA Land, Inc.) – New Agreement

Fugro USA Land, Inc. is recommended to provide geotechnical services for the housing and property improvements at four CRA pumping plant villages. Fugro USA Land, Inc. was selected via Request for Qualification No. 1220 based on the firm's experience with geological/geotechnical exploration, testing, design, and analysis of projects located within the desert communities.

The planned activities and deliverables for Fugro USA Land, Inc. to provide geotechnical services for the housing and property improvements include: (1) subsurface exploration; (2) site characterization and evaluation; (3) laboratory testing; and (4) preparation of reports for final design and permit submission.

This action authorizes a new agreement with Fugro USA Land, Inc., for a not-to-exceed amount of \$350,000, to provide geotechnical services for the housing and property improvements at four CRA pumping plant villages. For this agreement, Metropolitan has established an SBE participation level of 25 percent. Fugro USA Land, Inc. has agreed to meet this level of participation. The planned subconsultants for this work are Tri-County Drilling, Inc., 2R Drilling, Inc., Newkirk's Backhoe Rental, Inc., Bruce Clark Backhoe, AP Engineering, Subsurface Surveys & Associates, Inc., and Belshire Environmental Services, Inc.

Alternatives Considered

Multiple alternatives were considered regarding the execution of the upcoming design phase. One alternative considered was to complete the master planning study phase and selection of the design consultant prior to moving forward with the environmental and geotechnical activities necessary to complete the design. Since many of these activities do not necessarily require completion of the master planning phase, staff felt moving forward with the preliminary activities at this time will expedite the upcoming design work.

Summary

This action authorizes two new agreements: (1) with Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. for a not-to-exceed total of \$250,000 for environmental documentation; and (2) with Fugro USA Land, Inc. for a not-to-exceed total of \$350,000 for geotechnical services. See **Attachment 1** for the Allocation of Funds and **Attachment 2** for the Location Map.

Project Milestones

December 2021 – Completion of geotechnical site investigations

February 2023 – Completion of environmental documentation

Policy

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 11104: Delegation of Responsibilities

Metropolitan Water District Administrative Code Section 8121: General Authority of the General Manager to Enter Contracts

By Minute Item 52179, dated November 10, 2020, the Board authorized preparation of conceptual master plan and to conduct property assessments for District housing.

By Minute Item 51963, dated April 14, 2020 the Board appropriated a total of \$500 million for projects identified in the Capital Investment Plan for Fiscal Years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

CEQA determination for Option #1:

The proposed action is not defined as a project under CEQA (Public Resources Code Section 21065, State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378) because the proposed action will not cause either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and involves other government fiscal activities (Section 15378(b)(4) of the State CEQA Guidelines). Moreover, even if the proposed action is defined as a project, it is categorically exempt under the provisions of CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. The overall activities involve carrying out future studies and environmental analyses for proposed projects that consist of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a serious or

major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. Accordingly, the proposed action qualifies as a Class 6 Exemption (Section 15306 of the State CEQA Guidelines).

CEQA determination for Option #2:

None required

Board Options

Option #1

- a. Authorize an agreement with Helix Environmental Planning, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$250,000 for CEQA documentation.
- b. Authorize an agreement with Fugro USA Land, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$350,000 for geotechnical services to support the Desert Housing and Property Improvements Program.

Fiscal Impact: \$2.85 million in capital funds. All costs will be incurred in the current biennium and have been previously authorized.

Business Analysis: This option will ensure the Desert Housing and Property Improvements Program moves forward in a timely fashion to preserve Metropolitan assets and maintain an appropriate standard of living for staff stationed at Metropolitan's desert facilities.

Option #2



Do not proceed with the project at this time.

Fiscal Impact: None

Business Analysis: This option would delay an opportunity to preserve Metropolitan assets at the desert facilities.

Staff Recommendation

Option #1

	4/26/2021
Lilly L. Shraibati Group Manager Real Property Group	Date
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	4/27/2021
Jeffrey Nightlinger General Manager	Date

Attachment 1 – Allocation of Budgeted Funds

Attachment 2 – Location Map

Ref# 12680748

Allocation of Funds for the District Housing and Property Improvement Program

	Current Board Action
	<u>(May 2021)</u>
Labor	
Studies & Investigations	\$ 950,000
Final Design	-
Owner Costs (Program mgmt., Proj. controls, envir. doc., survey)	794,000
Submittals Review & Record Drwgs.	-
Construction Inspection & Support	-
Metropolitan Force Construction	-
Materials & Supplies	-
Incidental Expenses	6,000
Professional/Technical Services	-
Helix Environmental Planning, Inc.	250,000
Fugro USA Land, Inc.	350,000
Right-of-Way	-
Equipment Use	-
Contracts	-
Remaining Budget	500,000
Total	\$ 2,850,000

The total amount expended to date for the District Housing and Property Improvement Program is approximately \$2 million. The total estimated cost to complete this program is currently in the process of being prepared by staff. Staff will return at a later date to provide the anticipated range of the entire program.

Location Map

