

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

DATE ISSUED: March 1, 2010 REPORT NO: N/A
ATTENTION: Natural Resources and Culture Committee,
Agenda of March 17, 2010
ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Public Utilities
SUBJECT: Agreement with HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. for
Preparing a Land Management Plan for Public Utilities Rural
Lands
COUNCIL DISTRICT(S): All
CONTACT/PHONE NUMBER: Marsi Steirer (619)533-4112, Jeffery Pasek (619)533-7599

REQUESTED ACTION:

Council authorization to execute an agreement with HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. for the preparation of a Land Management Plan for Public Utilities Department's rural lands. The contract amount is not to exceed \$250,000. Work is expected to begin in mid-2010 and be completed in approximately two years.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the requested action and expenditure of funds.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The San Diego Public Utilities Department (Public Utilities) owns and manages slightly more than 42,000 acres of land. Most of these land holdings surround the City's source water reservoirs and are located in rural portions of San Diego County. The lands are largely undeveloped, are mostly outside of the City boundaries, and are beyond the City's traditional sphere of influence for land use, stormwater, and other regulatory matters.

The Public Utilities' primary interest in managing its lands is the protection of water quality in its reservoirs: Barrett, El Capitan, Hodges, Miramar, Morena, Murray, Otay, San Vicente, and Sutherland. Beyond that, because Public Utilities lands have remained more-or-less untouched for decades - some for 120 years - they hold large tracks of native habitat and other natural and cultural resources that are highly valued and regionally significant. These lands are also valued for public recreation and open space. This suite of concerns, interests, and values places multiple, often conflicting, management responsibilities on the Public Utilities Department. Although there are generalized management plans for the regions surrounding the reservoirs (e.g. jurisdictional land use plans, watershed management plans, Forest Plan), Public Utilities lacks a comprehensive Land Management Plan (LMP) that addresses the totality of its lands and the complex management issues particular to each land holding.

In 2009 Public Utilities staff crafted the document *A Framework for Managing Public Utilities Department Lands* (attached). *Framework* embraces the principle that good land use practices around source waters is a cost effective way to ensure a reliable and safe public water supply. *Framework* lays out the rationale and nine core strategies for managing Public Utilities lands.

The work of the consultant hired under this agreement will be to create the Land Management Plan for Public Utilities lands. The scope of work for the LMP is based on the core strategies outlined in *Framework*. Protecting water quality, sustaining ecological health, and providing prudent financial management are the key objectives. The planning horizon of the LMP is 10 years, after which periodic updates are likely.

A selection committee of City staff plus staff from the County of San Diego and Sweetwater Authority evaluated consultant proposals. The committee interviewed five consulting firms in November 2009 and the HELIX Environmental team was selected.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY CONTRACTING:

This Agreement is subject to the City's Equal Opportunity Contracting (San Diego Ordinance No. 18173, Section 22.2701 through 22.2702) and Non-Discrimination in Contracting Ordinance (San Diego Municipal Code Sections 22.3501 through 22.3517).

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

The total cost for the consultant agreement to prepare the Land Management Plan will be \$250,000. Funds are available in Water Fund 700011 Cost Center 2013141211.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

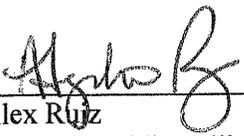
None.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

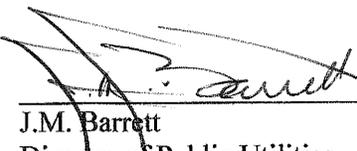
Development of the LMP will include stakeholder outreach meetings to gather input. A Technical Advisory Group [TAG] will be formed, consisting of land and water management experts, representatives from the local scientific and academic communities, regulatory agencies, and advocates for public access. The TAG will work with Public Utilities and the consultant to identify the range of issues, and will help to determine the goals and objectives of the Plan. The project will include a Public Participation Plan, which will guide the role of the public in the LMP development. Outreach and public education regarding Public Utilities lands and protection of water resources will be components of the completed LMP.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

The extensive list of stakeholders that will benefit from this project includes San Diego's water ratepayers; other water agencies [and their customers] that store water in our reservoirs; regulatory agencies [e.g. CA Department of Public Health, wildlife agencies, RWQCB]; and advocates for public access and trails [e.g. San Diego River Conservancy and River Park, San Dieguito River Park JPA].

 3/3/10

Alex Ruiz
Assistant Public Utilities Director

 3-3-10

J.M. Barrett
Director of Public Utilities

Attachment: A Framework for Managing Public Utilities Department Lands