

CENTRAL BASIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT **JUNE 16, 2004 - Finance**
Hawkins, No Quorum
JUNE 28, 2004 - Board Meeting
Prepared by: Art Aguilar
Submitted by: Art Aguilar
Approved by: Art Aguilar/Richard Nagel

ACTION CALENDAR

DISTRICT PARTICIPATION ON STEERING COMMITTEE
FOR WHITTIER NARROWS DISCOVERY CENTER

SUMMARY:

Director George Cole and staff met with the Steering Committee and staff members for the Whittier Narrows Nature Center "Discovery Center" Educational Project on May 25, 2004 to discuss possible District involvement - including membership on the Project Steering Committee.

The Discovery Center Project includes the building of a "green" (environmentally friendly) building on the site of the current Los Angeles County Nature Center at Whittier Narrows, development of education exhibits both in the building and on the grounds, development of community meeting facilities, and exhibits featuring the water cycle, conservation, and recycling. Current Steering Committee members include the County, Upper San Gabriel Municipal Water District, the Rio Hondo River and Mountains Conservancy and a member representing the Project area stakeholders. As part of the Steering Committee's attempt to expand its membership, Project Manager Jeff Yann made a presentation at a Central Basin Board meeting and Director Cole and staff was instructed to pursue membership possibilities.

Per the Steering Committee staff, membership requires both a commitment of time and money. If Central Basin decides to become a Steering Committee member, the Board needs to make a substantial financial commitment to the Project's development and appoint a representative to the Committee (preferably a Director) who will attend monthly meetings and other necessary functions and a staff liaison to the Committee and Project staff. The financial commitment, which can be spread out over several years, should be in the \$500,000 to \$750,000 range and may involve committing staff time to various phases of the Project. Funds can be earmarked to development, design and construction. Since the intent is to develop a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that will own and operate the Center, the effort can be considered a capital Project.

During last month's meeting, Central Basin suggested a commitment of \$50,000 for the 2003-04 fiscal year (using the funds budgeted for Wetlands development), \$100,000 for fiscal years 2004-05 and 2005-06, and a capital improvement commitment of \$500,000 for Project development and construction. This would equal the commitment made by Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (USGVMWD). The heavy involvement by USGVMWD and Central Basin will ensure that the water story will be a featured part of the center's exhibits and purpose.

By participating in this Project, Central Basin will be establishing a center immediately adjacent to its service area (in fact, an area strongly identified with the District) that can be used for youth and adult education programs, provide a location for special events and promote conservation, environmental, and informational programs for the District.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

This project is not a budgeted item and must be approved by the Board.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE:

Not applicable.

COMMITTEE STATUS:

This item was reviewed by the Finance Committee on June 16, 2004. Due to a lack of quorum Director Hawkins suggested that the Board consider this Item at the June 28, 2004 Board meeting.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

That the Board:

1. Approves membership on the Whittier Narrows Discovery Center Steering Committee and instruct staff to develop a financing plan based on the commitment of \$50,000 for fiscal year 2003-04; \$100,000 for FY 2004-05; \$100,000 for FY 2005-06; and \$500,000 for additional capital improvement; and
2. Appoints a Board member as the District's representative on the Steering Committee.

LIST OF EXHIBITS:

None.