



Legislation Text

File #: 07-0916, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to authorize City Manager to accept \$235,000 funds from the Port of Long Beach for a portion of the costs of conducting an environmental assessment of the Colorado Lagoon Restoration Project and execute all documents necessary to accept funds; and increase appropriations in the Capital Projects Fund (CP) in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine (PR) in the amount of \$235,000; and execute all documents necessary to enter into an agreement with LSA Associates, Inc., for environmental assessment at the Colorado Lagoon as required by California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), in an amount not to exceed \$500,289, including any required amendments to the contract to extend the term, add services, increase the amount of the contract, and adjust the fee schedule of hourly rates for inflation for any term extensions. (District 3)

The Colorado Lagoon (Lagoon) is a 28.3-acre tidal lagoon located in the middle of a suburban neighborhood (Exhibit A). It serves three main functions: 1) hosting sensitive estuarine habitat; 2) providing public recreation (including swimming); and 3) retaining and conveying storm flows. The Lagoon is used by hundreds of visitors from communities within and surrounding the City of Long Beach (City).

The Lagoon is impacted by several factors that cause it to have contaminated water and sediment. First, the Lagoon is surrounded on three sides by residential neighborhoods, a golf course on the fourth side, and lies within a highly urbanized watershed. Second, natural flushing of the Lagoon occurs through the exchange of water via a culvert that stretches 1,000 feet between the Lagoon and Marine Stadium. However, due to marine growth within the culvert and man-made sills at either end of the culvert, this tidal flushing is restricted. Third, there are four major and seven local storm drains that carry urban runoff from commercial, mobile, and residential sources from the adjacent watershed into the Lagoon. The result is that the State Water Quality Control Resources Board identifies the Lagoon as an impaired water body.

While swimming remains a popular activity at the Lagoon, beach closures due to unacceptable bacterial levels have become increasingly frequent and closed the Lagoon for much of the summer of 2006. The pollutant levels and the limited tidal flushing in the Lagoon aggravate these adverse recreational conditions.

The City sought, and was granted, funds from the Coastal Conservancy (from Proposition 13 funds) to prepare a feasibility study for remediation and restoration of the Lagoon. Moffatt & Nichol Engineers subsequently prepared the Restoration Feasibility Study (Study) for the Lagoon, which was completed in 2005. The purpose of the Study was to evaluate and recommend feasible opportunities to restore the marine ecosystem, support safe recreation while improving water and sediment quality, and manage the storm water in the Colorado Lagoon. The Study represents a broad set of alternatives developed to address all project objectives, a shortened list for implementation and their ranking. The alternatives were developed as individual components to select, prioritize, and implement either incrementally or in total as funding become viable.

Since the completion of the Study, the City has received funding in the amount of \$5,200,000 to date from other sources, and is exploring other grant opportunities to further the project. Secured funding has been awarded from:

> State Water Resources Control Board - Prop. 40 Clean Beaches Initiative (CBI) \$3.8 million (awarded) . U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Estuary Habitat Restoration Program - \$900,000 (awarded).

> State Coastal Conservancy - Resource Enhancement Program - \$500,000 (awarded).

> Rivers & Mountains Conservancy - Urban Rivers and Tributaries, Urban Core Program - \$150,000 (awarded)

Although the Study provides a roadmap for continuing the wetland restoration efforts at the Lagoon, a complete environmental assessment, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is necessary. LSA Associates, an environmental consultant, has been selected to assist in the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and to conduct associative community outreach. LSA Associates is on the City's approved environmental consultant on-call list, developed by the Department of Planning and Building, and has performed successfully on other City projects, such as the Long Beach Sports Park Master Plan and EIR. Staff has negotiated a specific scope of services with LSA Associates in the amount of \$500,289. It is expected that the EIR process will span approximately 10 months.

In addition to the City's established partnerships with Federal and State agencies, the Port of Long Beach has taken a leading role in supporting restoration efforts at the Lagoon, and has committed to providing staff assistance and potential funding for eligible project components. On June 25, 2007, the Board of Harbor Commissioners Development Subcommittee recommended to approve funding up to \$235,000, which will be used to fund a significant portion of the environmental assessment. The full Board of Harbor Commissioners approved this request on July 23, 2007. Without their commitment, the City would not be in a position to move forward with this next step of the project.

This report was reviewed by Deputy City Attorney, Richard F. Anthony, on June 25, 2007, and Budget and Performance Management Bureau Manager David Wodynski on June 26, 2007.

It is requested that the City Council approve the contract with LSA Associates, in order to commence the CEQA process. Due to funding restrictions placed on the City by its granting agencies, the CEQA compliance needs to be completed by fall 2008, in order for the project to remain on schedule.

There is no impact to the General Fund associated with this request. An appropriation increase in the amount of \$235,000 is requested in the Capital Projects Fund (CP) in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine (PR) to accept \$235,000 from the Port of Long Beach. The remaining contract cost of \$265,289 will come from existing grants.

Approve recommendation.

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APPROVED:

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