

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES**  
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

DATE: August 24, 2020

TO: Proposition O Citizens Oversight Advisory Committee (COAC)  
Proposition O Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC)

FROM:   
Wing K. Tam, Proposition O Planning Manager  
Watershed Protection Program,  
LA Sanitation and Environment

SUBJECT: **REQUEST FOR PROPOSITION O FUNDING FOR THE TAYLOR YARD G2 WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Approve the budget of \$16,400,000 for the Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project (Project).
2. Approve the transfer of \$16,400,000 from the following Proposition O accounts to a new account entitled the Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project to fund the Project:
  - a. \$12,400,000 from the Taylor Yard River Park – Parcel G2 Project; and,
  - b. \$4,000,000 from Program Contingency, which will be reimbursed upon receipt of Proposition 1 Grant funds that was awarded to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA).
3. Authorize receipt of up to \$4,000,000 in funds from the Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Act of 2014 (State Proposition 1) funding, awarded to MRCA through Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) to fund the Project and deposit these funds to the Proposition O Program.
4. Authorize the Bureau of Engineering (BOE) and LA Sanitation and Environment (LASAN), to fully develop and implement the Project.
5. Authorize the City Administrative Officer, in coordination with the Proposition O Planning Manager of LASAN and the Proposition O Implementation Manager of BOE, to make technical corrections, as necessary, to the transaction included in this memorandum.
6. Request approval from the City Council and the Mayor to accept grant funding for the Project, by LASAN, from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), in an amount not to exceed \$10,000,000. Authorize Proposition O Program to fully front-fund the awarded grant amount not to exceed \$10,000,000.
7. Request that the City Council and the Mayor to authorize the Director of LASAN, or a designee, to apply for and accept grant funding; to conduct all negotiations; and to execute and

submit all grant-related documents, including, but not limited to, applications, agreements, or amendments, which may be necessary to secure funding under the State of California's Proposition 1 Storm Water Grant Program.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Taylor Yard G2 parcel has often been referred to as the crown jewel of the Los Angeles River (LA River) revitalization effort and the last piece in the puzzle that will connect over 100 acres of open space along the LA River. The 42 acre parcel, a former Union Pacific railroad maintenance yard, is located in Council District 1 bordering the Los Angeles River adjacent to the Glassell Park and Cypress Park neighborhoods of Northeast Los Angeles. The City's Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (Master Plan) adopted by City Council in 2007 identified the G2 parcel as Taylor Yard River Park, Project No. 165. The opportunity was also described in the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Report (Ecosystem Plan), also known as the "Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization" or ARBOR Study, in 2015 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for which the City is serving as local sponsor.

Additionally, California State planning documents, including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy's (SMMC) 2001 Common Ground Plan, the State Coastal Conservancy's 2002 Taylor Yard Multiple Objective Feasibility Study, and California State Parks' 2005 Rio de Los Angeles State Park General Plan all identified Taylor Yard as a priority site. The G2 parcel is critical to fulfillment of the Ecosystem Plan goals to restore ecosystem values in and along an 11-mile soft-bottomed corridor of the River from the edge of Griffith Park into Downtown Los Angeles known as the Glendale Narrows.

Following the Master Plan adoption in 2007, LASAN identified stormwater quality improvement opportunity at the G2 site and created an initial Concept Report for Prop O funding. \$25 million in Prop O funding for Taylor Yard River Park G2 Parcel Land Acquisition was authorized by COAC and AOC and approved by City Council and Mayor in July 2007. In September 2009, the City Council approved the transfer of \$12.6 million from the Taylor Yard River Park-Parcel G2 land acquisition to land acquisition for the Albion Dairy Park project site. The City acquired the G2 parcel in early 2017, without using the remaining \$12.4 million of Prop O funds.

On January 25, 2018, the COAC and the AOC approved close out of the Taylor Yard River Park – Parcel G2 Land Acquisition project and recommended that the funding be considered for a future water quality improvement project. On April 10, 2018, the City Council approved withholding the release of the remaining \$12.4 million in funds from the Taylor Yard River Park – Parcel G2 Land Acquisition project, pending future project concept proposals (C.F. 13-1526).

In 2019, the City conveyed to the MRCA two multipurpose easement grants for approximately 12.5 acres on Taylor Yard G2 for the preservation of open space, construction of public access improvements, additional environmental cleanup, and habitat restoration, and other activities on the Easement Area as described in the grants. The City and the MRCA also entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to outline the mutual cooperation between the Parties relating to the cooperative planning, environmental remediation, and coordinated development and improvement of the Property and the Easement Area (C.F. 13-1641-S3).

The City acquired the G2 parcel with the intent of advancing the multiple objectives of the Plans and studies in this stretch of the LA River, which include contaminated soil remediation, stormwater quality improvement, river access, recreation, and habitat restoration. In June 2020, the 100 Acre Partnership was constituted, made up of State Parks, the City, and the MRCA, to support efforts to complete the planning, remediation and development of all 100 acres of open and recreational space along the LA River at Taylor Yard.

The partners and stakeholders are currently engaged in efforts to remediate and activate the Project site in a series of projects over an approximately 10-year period. The projects generally consist of an early activation effort, this Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project, and the Taylor Yard G2 River Park Project to complete full development of the site. Multiple projects to be implemented at and adjacent to the G2 parcel are in the planning and concept design phases such as the Paseo del Rio project (to provide River access), which is in pre-design, and the Taylor Yard Bikeway/Pedestrian Bridge over the LA River (connecting the G2 site to the Elysian Valley neighborhood and LA River bikepath), which is in construction. The City and partners worked closely with the community for nearly two years to gather input and ideas for the development of design concepts for the multiple phases and projects at the Taylor Yard G2 River Park.

Water quality in the LA River adjacent to the G2 parcel is impaired in wet weather, meaning it does not meet Federal and State water quality standards. The City's Municipal Storm Sewer Permit (MS4) regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), lists pollutants with Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements for the LA River and receiving waters. Approved TMDLs include trash, ammonia, copper, nutrients, and bacteria. Stormwater runoff from the watershed is impacted with these pollutants due to the impervious land uses in the watershed and historic contamination within the site. The City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) is the department responsible for stormwater management and TMDL-MS4 compliance. Prop O funding would allow the Project to realize vital water quality improvements as well as provide additional ancillary environmental benefits.

## **SCOPE AND BENEFITS**

Project improvements will include excavation and remediation of contaminated soils, installation of a diversion and pre-treatment system to capture flows from storm drains, and creation of a natural treatment system that provides stormwater detention and cleaning as well as habitat and open space. The Project will aid the City in reducing pollutants entering the LA River, helping to meet the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements of our Municipal Storm Sewer Permit (MS4) regulated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) for the LA River and receiving waters. The Project will be designed to integrate with and provide benefits to current and future Taylor Yard G2 River Park projects.

The Project will divert flows of storm drain runoff from 4,297 acres of tributary area that includes the City neighborhoods of Glassell Park, Cypress Park, Mt. Washington and Eagle Rock as well as portions of Glendale and State Highways CA-2 and 134. The runoff flows in underground concrete box channels under Taylor Yard before discharging at outfalls at the LA River. Stormwater runoff is expected to be impacted with trash, some nitrates, metals, bacteria, and

suspended solids due to the commercial, industrial, educational, transportation, and recreational uses in the area and within the site. In addition to the diversion and pre-treatment, the Project will consist of best management practices (BMPs) that are designed to treat onsite runoff along with varying portions of dry and wet weather flows from upstream and adjacent offsite areas. The natural treatment BMP proposed is a bioretention facility with an underdrain and liner (Bioretention BMP). Bioretention facilities are landscaped shallow depressions that capture and filter stormwater runoff according to the City’s Low Impact Development (LID) Manual. These facilities have a layer of plants and soil where pollutants can be filtered, absorbed, and biodegraded as stormwater percolates through the soil media. Once stormwater saturates the media materials and fills the Bioretention BMP, an underdrain system conveys the treated stormwater to an outlet, discharging clean water to the LA River. Due to the existing soil contamination found on-site from previous industrial uses, an impermeable liner would be used to prevent infiltration into underlying soils.

The Bioretention BMP will provide water quality improvements and additional benefits such as habitat, open green space and biodiversity. This alternative was selected to treat pollutants associated with land uses in the area and within the site, in addition to addressing the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) impairments and current and future TMDLs associated with Los Angeles River Reach 3/ARBOR Reach 6 and the Upper Los Angeles River Enhanced Watershed Management Program.

## BUDGET

<b>Budget Category</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Pre-Design	\$250,000
Planning/Design/Engineering/Environmental Documentation and permitting (includes outreach, permits, final plans & specifications)	\$1,300,000
Bid and Award	\$180,000
Construction/Implementation (includes mobilization, excavation and capping, construction management and contingency)	\$14,670,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 16,400,000</b>

The total estimated cost of the project is \$16,400,000. Of this amount, LASAN is seeking funding from the Proposition O Program for an amount of \$16,400,000 to be able to implement the Project. According to the May 2020 Prop O Monthly Report, there is currently \$12.4 million in Prop O funds budgeted for land acquisition of the Taylor Yard River Park - Parcel G2. As these funds are no longer needed for land acquisition, LASAN is requesting the transfer of \$12,400,000 Prop O funds to fund the Project at the Taylor Yard G2 site. An additional amount of \$4,000,000 in Proposition O funding is requested as an interim funding pending the reimbursement of MRCA funds as discussed below.

Up to \$4,000,000 of Project costs are reimbursable from the State Proposition 1 grant held by MRCA through SMMC. The 2019 MOU between the City and the MRCA allows cost sharing for G2 parcel projects, for planning, design and construction-related Project costs providing benefits such as environmental, landscaping, habitat and public access. Other funding sources at State and

local levels will be pursued. Upon accumulation of \$4,000,000 in Project spending, MRCA will be requested to fund the Project. Upon receiving these funds, Proposition O Program will be reimbursed.

In addition to the funding described above, on July 2, 2020, LASAN applied to the SWRCB for \$10,000,000 in funding under the State’s Proposition 1 Storm Water Grant Program. If any of this funding becomes available, it will be used to offset Proposition O contributions. However, because of the lag in obtaining State reimbursement, the Proposition O Program will still need to fully front-fund the project in the amount \$12.4M. This memo also requests to pursuit City Council and Mayor’s approval to allow LASAN to apply and accept the grant as well as negotiate and execute the grant agreement with SWRCB.

Below is the schedule and funding summary for the Taylor Yard Project.

**SCHEDULE**

Work Item	2020				2021				2022				2023				2024																		
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N
Public Outreach																																			
Pre-Design																																			
Environmental Documentation																																			
Design																																			
Bid and Award																																			
Construction																																			
Post Construction																																			

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

Funding Source	Amount (\$)
Proposition O	16,400,000 (12,400,000 after MRCA reimbursement)
MRCA - SMMC Prop 1	Up to 4,000,000
Other (Prop 1, Prop 68, Measure W, City)	To be determined

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please contact me at (213) 359-5932.

Attachment: MRCA BOS G2 Prop O Letter of Support  
 WKT:KK:gh

- cc: David Hirano, CAO
- Salyna Cun, CAO
- Shahram Kharaghani, LASAN
- Kosta Kaporis, LASAN
- Gordon Haines, LASAN
- Ken Redd, BOE
- Christopher Johnson, BOE
- Bryan Powell, BOE



**MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**  
Los Angeles River Center & Gardens  
570 West Avenue Twenty-Six, Suite 100  
Los Angeles, California 90065  
Phone (323) 221-9944 Fax (323) 221-9934

July 8, 2020

Wing Tam, P.E.  
Proposition O Planning Manager  
LA Sanitation and Environment  
1149 S. Broadway, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90015

<<Transmitted via electronic mail: [wing.tam@lacity.org](mailto:wing.tam@lacity.org)>>

**RE: Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project-Proposition O Application**

Dear Mr. Tam:

On behalf of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), I am writing in strong support of the Proposition O Committee's (Proposition O) for the **Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project** (Project).

The MRCA has actively supported the City's efforts to acquire the Taylor Yard-G2 parcel and look forward to participating on the team that will guide development of the site, including the above referenced Project. The MRCA and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), our joint powers authority, have worked for nearly two decades to acquire and preserve the Taylor Yard-G2 site for use as a public open space park along the Los Angeles River. In early 2019, the MRCA was successful in securing a significant investment by the State's Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to purchase a 12.5-acre multi-purpose easement by the MRCA for the purposes of adding a project partner to the site to help with funding, development of open space improvements, and eventual operations. To this end, the MRCA and City have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing roles and responsibilities as partners at Taylor Yard. Additionally, the SMMC has provided Proposition 1 Water Bond funding to both the City and MRCA for the planning and implementation that will complement the proposed Proposition O Project.

The Proposition O Project will support the improvement work of the City and key partners in developing the Taylor Yard River Park, which is Project No. 165 of the City Council-adopted Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP) and a pivotal component of the Recommended Plan of the US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Feasibility Study (also known as the ARBOR or "Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization" Study) for which the City is serving as local sponsor. The Taylor Yard G2 site is a brownfield and therefore complicated by legacy contamination, but it offers a significant opportunity upon remediation to provide direct access to the Los Angeles River in historically-underserved communities.

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The G2 parcel is identified as the centerpiece of one of five primary “opportunity areas” in the 2007 LARRMP and its restoration will also help achieve the LARRMP goal to “Restore a Functional Riparian Ecosystem.” The Federal ARBOR Study also prioritizes the site as the nearest-term opportunity to remove the river’s concrete channel and expand the historic floodplain to accommodate riparian habitat that will include wetlands and freshwater marsh.

In addition to City and Federal prioritization of the Taylor Yard area, it is a long-standing priority of the State via the SMMC’s 2001 *Common Ground Plan*, the State Coastal Conservancy’s 2002 *Taylor Yard Multiple Objective Feasibility Study*, and California State Parks’ 2005 *Rio de Los Angeles State Park General Plan*. Significantly, the Taylor Yard River Park will leverage a very large investment already made by the State of California when it acquired the adjacent parcels (Bowtie upstream and Rio de Los Angeles State Park inland) and its development will finally make it possible to connect those to the Los Angeles River. Additionally, improvements funding from Proposition O would leverage those significant investments by the WCB and SMMC for the purpose of public access and open space improvements. The MRCA has committed to the City that it will contribute up to \$4,000,000 from an awarded 2017 Prop 1 acquisition and improvements grant for improvements developed within the Project on the MRCA easement. The MRCA anticipates using this existing funding to reimburse the City for eligible costs.

The Improvements of the G2 parcel will include a water-quality improvement component, which will utilize discharge from existing storm drains near the Project Site. The capture and treatment of the existing storm drain runoff, before it discharges into the Los Angeles River, supports the MRCA’s goals of improving water quality within the Los Angeles River watershed.

For these reasons, we support the City’s application to the Proposition O Clean Water Bond funds to complete the **Taylor Yard G2 Water Quality Improvements Project**.

We look forward to working with the City as this process continues. Please contact me at [brian.baldauf@mrca.ca.gov](mailto:brian.baldauf@mrca.ca.gov) or at (323) 221-9944, extension 190 with any questions you have concerning this recommendation.

Sincerely,



Brian Baldauf  
Chief of Watershed Planning