



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council

Item No. _____

FROM: City Manager

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE'S REQUEST TO THE LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES (LAFCO) TO INITIATE PROCEEDINGS FOR THE FORMATION OF THE LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER RECREATION AND PARKS DISTRICT

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 5, 2019

RECOMMENDATION:

To confirm the City's support for formation of the Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Parks District (District).

- a. Adopt the resolution supporting the formation of the Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Parks District; and
- b. Direct the City Clerk to file the resolution with LAFCO; and
- c. Authorize the City Manager to approve the final District Boundary Map on behalf of the City.

ANALYSIS:

In September of 2016, California Senate Bill 1374, sponsored by then Senator Ricardo Lara, was signed into law authorizing the formation of the Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Parks District (District). This District would be responsible for coordination of park developments and activities along the Los Angeles River that exceed the boundaries of the individual cities.

By providing a District to assist with advancing recreational opportunities along the river, there will be greater access to funding and the burden of organizing activities, ensuring public safety and developing additional facilities will be shared or in some cases, lifted from individual cities.

The proposed boundaries of the district will be in line with recent LA River studies – Lower LA River Revitalization Plan, County Master Plan, River Ranger Public Safety & Program Plan, therefor the boundaries are anticipated to extend based on parcels one mile from the river following major roadways. A final Boundary Map for the District will be presented to

each member City for approval. The City Manager or his/her appointee will be authorized to approve that map.

As specified in the legislation, the board of the District will be appointed by the county and member cities. The County Board of Supervisor shall appoint two members, one of which will be a representative from a non-profit organization serving the Lower Los Angeles River. Each City whose boundaries include a portion of the Los Angeles River; Vernon, Maywood, Bell, Bell Gardens, Cudahy, South Gate, Lynwood, Compton, Paramount, Long Beach, shall appoint one member. Those member cities whose boundaries only include a portion of the Rio Hondo Channel (Tributary Cities) will decide on one representative to represent the four cities; Commerce, Downey, Montebello, Pico Rivera

In the event that the Tributary Cities would like one representative for each Tributary City on the Board of Directors, changes may be made in the following way. During the development of the Lower LA River Recreation and Park District guidelines and process, it may be stated that each of the Tributary Cities may each have a representative on the board of Directors. This can only occur once the application is completed by LAFCO. The current expected date of completion is January 2020. Then an amendment would need to be made to SB1374 by the State Legislature to state that the City of Commerce, Downey, Montebello, and Pico Rivera may have a representative on the board of Directors. This could not occur until the 2020 legislative cycle between January 2020 to October 2020. If the bill passes and is signed into law, then it would be implemented on January 2021.

BACKGROUND: A recently released study by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation identified the region around the Lower Los Angeles River as one of the most park-poor areas in LA County. According to the report, the City of Maywood has 0.3 park acres per 1000 residents, whereas the county-wide average is 3.3 acres per 1000 residents. The City of Bell has just 0.4 acres per 1000 residents. The City of Cudahy has just 19.8 acres of park space in a city of 24,164 people

The single biggest barrier to develop new parks is the lack of funding. The recently approved state water bond (Proposition 1) does provide funding opportunities for the revitalization of the Lower Los Angeles River watershed, including a \$30 million direct allocation to the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and a share of \$100 million for urban creek restoration. But those funds are strictly limited to acquisition and development of facilities, and cannot be used for operation or maintenance of park facilities.

A lack of local resources often means that parks cannot be developed, or if they are, they cannot be properly maintained. Increasing interest for more recreational opportunities along the Los Angeles River may also place an undue burden on those communities that do have park facilities adjacent to the river. As a regional issue, there needs to be a regional solution.

The Lower LA River flows through many disadvantaged communities, where residents are disproportionately impacted by poor air quality from local heavy industry and congested transportation corridors and suffer from a severe lack of access to recreational opportunities and outdoor park space.

While the Lower LA River serves an important purpose as a flood protection and control channel, it also presents a unique opportunity for open space, urban greening, and as a recreational resource for the region. With numerous recent developments, including the creation of a Lower Los Angeles River Working Group to develop a revitalization plan, the City's Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, and multiple conversations about a new vision for the river, there is a growing local interest in transformation of the river.

Parks have many beneficial impacts on communities such as encouraging physical activity, improving health and fitness, reducing urban heating effects and air pollution, reducing greenhouse gas emissions through trees and greenery, and providing important economic benefits. Working in collaboration with the Working Group and the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), a Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Park District will help to promote the development of open space and parks for the benefit of communities along the Lower LA River, will help in coordinating development and activities on a more regional level and will assist local agencies in meeting the growing demand for recreation along the river.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve recommendation
2. Reject recommendation
3. Provide Staff with further direction

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the City for the formation of the Lower Los Angeles River Recreation and Parks District (District). During formation, the District will not be requesting any transfer of land taxes from its member Cities.

Once formed, the District Board which will be made up of representatives from the member agencies, will develop a funding plan which may include:

- The ability to apply for state and county funds outside of setting up a JPA or nonprofit organization. The advantage of the JPA or nonprofit is tapping into private donations and soliciting for funds and additional flexibility for use of state and local funds.
- Potential public-private partnerships for funds to operate and maintain parks.
- The ability to leverage funding by fee assessment of the entities whose service area affected by the creation of the district can enter negotiations to contribute some of their land tax and special fees revenues to the district.

Overall funding needs and sources will be based upon the amount and types of services to be provided by the Board once the District is formed.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC GOALS:

Recommended by: Adolfo Marquez, Interim Director of Parks & Recreation

Respectfully submitted: Edgar P. Cisneros, City Manager

Approved as to form: Noel Tapia, City Attorney