

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS - LAND USE  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024**

**MINUTE ORDER NO. 2**

**SUBJECT: AMEND GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE SAN DIEGO REGIONAL POLICY & INNOVATION CENTER TO ALLOCATE \$2 MILLION IN AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS TO CLIMATE-RESILIENT GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS AND NO CEQA RELATED EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

**OVERVIEW**

On June 8, 2021 (03), the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Auditor and Controller to establish a trust fund for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) program funds and appropriated \$13 Million in ARPA funds for stormwater, sewer, and drinking water infrastructure. On October 5, 2021 (13), the Board allocated \$13 Million in ARPA funds, which included \$8.5 Million for various water projects within the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) and a \$4.5 Million grant for the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center (SDRPIC) to support three projects focused on innovative water technologies, water affordability, and climate-resilient green infrastructure.

The \$4.5 Million in ARPA funds for SDRPIC included \$2.25 Million for climate-resilient green infrastructure demonstration projects combined with broadband. These projects will identify where there is a need for improvements in both stormwater infrastructure and broadband connectivity, along with the potential for improving disaster resilience. SDRPIC conducted outreach with multiple stakeholders and developed a project site selection methodology based on flood risk, ground surface permeability, median household income, the federal Justice40 Initiative, and County of San Diego (County) identified Environmental Justice Communities. This methodology was used to identify high priority census tracts, from which potential sites were identified for implementation of green infrastructure demonstration projects that will capture and treat stormwater. A 9.5-acre site owned by the San Diego Youth Foundation and operated by San Diego Youth Services (SDYS) in Spring Valley was selected based on the site's location within a high priority census tract, available land for multiple green stormwater infrastructure projects and other potential benefits, and the willingness of the property owner to implement projects, and include educational elements for the larger community. This site serves as a trusted community hub and provides various childcare and mental health services for youth, as well as space for a variety of community events in a historically underserved area of the county.

Separately, the \$8.5 Million in ARPA funds that were allocated to LUEG included \$2 Million for community-focused stormwater improvement partnerships with the Department of Public Works (DPW) for stormwater, water, and wastewater improvements on private property. DPW staff worked with a consultant team to explore potential opportunities for this funding within County- identified Environmental Justice communities. A multi-faceted prioritization approach was used to assess environmental benefits, design considerations, coordination with other projects, and community benefits at the parcel level. Similar to SDRPIC's analysis, DPW's prioritization approach also ranked the Spring Valley SDYS site as a top candidate. After multiple meetings and discussions with the property owner, SDRPIC, and DPW's consultant team, several conceptual projects have been identified throughout the site that will improve stormwater quality, enhance existing and planned uses for the site, provide educational and potential workforce development opportunities, and showcase sustainable best practices to the community.

Following a comprehensive review of the separate analyses, staff recommend that DPW's ARPA funding for the community-focused stormwater improvement partnerships project be combined with the SDRPIC climate-resilient green infrastructure demonstration project to streamline permitting and construction activities and maximize the positive impact that this funding will have on the community of Spring Valley and beyond. Spring Valley is identified as an Environmental Justice Community in the County's General Plan and has historically been underserved. Additionally, this is a low-income area and was recently impacted by extreme weather and flooding. Implementation of the conceptual projects that have been identified will improve stormwater quality, enhance existing and planned uses for the site, provide educational and potential workforce development opportunities, and showcase sustainable best practices to the community.

Today's action would amend the current grant agreement with SDRPIC to add the \$2 Million in ARPA funds that were previously allocated to DPW for community-focused stormwater improvement partnerships to implement stormwater projects at the SDYS site.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find that the proposed actions are not subject to review under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3) because the action is not a project as defined in Section 15378 of CEQA Guidelines.
2. Authorize the Chief Administrative Officer, or designee, to amend the grant agreement with the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center (SDRPIC) in an amount up to \$2 Million using funds from the Department of Public Works General Fund, Services & Supplies to fund SDRPIC's planning and implementation of climate-resilient green infrastructure demonstration projects, and to prepare and authorize any other required documents in furtherance of this program.

### **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The County of San Diego strives to preserve, enhance, and promote quality of life and environmental resources through the implementation of programs and projects that improve regional community health and environmental quality. The infrastructure enhancements realized through the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center's (SDRPIC's) climate-resilient green stormwater infrastructure projects will benefit the well-being of the surrounding communities while improving water quality and providing additional benefits to a community that has historically been underserved and was recently impacted by extreme weather and flooding. Additionally, these projects will provide educational and potential workforce development opportunities. SDRPIC will demonstrate an equity and multi-benefit approach to stormwater challenges by addressing climate change resilience and community equity through robust community outreach and stakeholder engagement throughout the planning and implementation phases of these projects.

### **SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today's action to approve an amendment to the grant agreement with the San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center supports the County's sustainability goals to protect the environment and the health and well-being of residents and has health, well-being, and environmental sustainability benefits. Investments in stormwater infrastructure support the health of the community and the environment by improving the water quality of runoff that reaches the region's rivers, beaches, and bays during rainfall.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Funds for this request are included in the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Operational Plan for Department of Public Works, General Fund. If approved, this request will result in current year cost and revenue of \$2 Million, for a total of \$6.5 Million in the amended grant agreement with San Diego Regional Policy & Innovation Center. The funding source is American Rescue Plan Act. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

Today’s actions benefit local businesses and the community at large by improving surface water quality and mitigating sources of water quality contamination. This contributes to quality of life for the community and a healthy environment.

**ACTION:**

ON MOTION of Supervisor Montgomery Steppe, seconded by Supervisor Desmond, the Board of Supervisors took action as recommended, on Consent.

AYES: Vargas, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe, Desmond

ABSENT: Anderson

State of California)  
County of San Diego)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



**Signed**  
by Andrew Potter