



# COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

## LAND USE AGENDA ITEM

### BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Fourth District

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**DATE:** October 23, 2024

**07**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

### SUBJECT

**LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP DEPARTMENTS – ADOPT RESOLUTIONS AUTHORIZING THE EXTENSION OF SUBMISSION OF GRANT APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMATIC ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE COUNTY’S VISION AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND REALTED CEQA EXEMPTION (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

### OVERVIEW

The County of San Diego’s (County) Land Use & Environment Group (LUEG) is comprised of the departments of—Department of Public Works (DPW), Planning & Development Services (PDS), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), San Diego County Library (Libraries), Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM), Department of Environmental Health & Quality (DEHQ) — and overseen by the LUEG Executive Office (LUEG EO), which also houses the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ). Each of LUEG’s departments provide critical services that align with and support the County’s Vision and Strategic Initiatives.

LUEG departments utilize grant funding to enhance the implementation of programs and provision of services. In order to apply for and accept grants in excess of \$250,000 the County departments are required to request authorization from the Board of Supervisors (Board). Periodically, grant funds become available for a short period of time at the end of the federal and state fiscal years. Board approval to delegate authority to LUEG Department Directors to apply for and accept grants for their departments streamlines the application process and enables the Departments to apply for grant funding on short notice.

The Board has taken actions previously to support application and acceptance of grants by LUEG departments. On June 24, 2020 (12), the Board granted authority to seven LUEG departments at the time to apply for and accept grants to bring additional funding to the San Diego region for five years until June 30, 2025. This resolution had included the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and reference to the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), both of which are no longer part of LUEG. It also did not explicitly reference the LUEG EO or OSEJ, the latter of which did not exist at the time of adoption.

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This is a request to adopt a resolution authorizing the LUEG Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Chief Sustainability Officer, LUEG Department Directors and/or their designee(s) to submit, negotiate, accept and execute all documents necessary to secure grant funding from non-profits, local, state and federal agencies for an additional five years through Fiscal Year 2029-30.

**RECOMMENDATION(S)**

**CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER**

1. Find in accordance with Section 15061 (b)(3) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines that delegating authority to allow application for and acceptance of possible grant funding is exempt from CEQA review because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility the activity may have a significant effect on the environment.
2. Authorize the Land Use and Environment Group (LUEG) Deputy Chief Administrative Officer or designee, the Chief Sustainability Officer, and all LUEG department Directors, or their designees, to submit, negotiate, and execute all documents necessary to secure and apply for non-profit, local, state, and federal grant funds for their respective projects until June 30, 2030.
3. Adopt a resolution entitled: RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER, DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS AND/OR DESIGNEE(S), TO SUBMIT GRANT APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMATIC ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE COUNTY’S VISION AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
4. Waive Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts – Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, which requires full cost recovery for services provided under grants.

**EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

Grants funding supports improvements and services for San Diego County community members, including the preservation of agricultural lands and development of infrastructure. Modern infrastructure can aid environmental justice concerns, achieving environmental goals, as well as economic development by improving the conditions of the San Diego region. Policies such as the Justice 40 tool, which focuses on how 40% of federal investments can be channeled towards disadvantaged communities, which is similar to CalEnviroScreen but uses census data to allow agencies to identify disadvantaged communities: those that are in census tract areas at or above thresholds in one of 8 environmental justice categories. This also includes those found to be marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution. The County will utilize the Justice-40 tool, as applicable, when preparing applications for grants.

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**SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT**

The proposed action of authorizing applications and agreements for non-profit, federal, and state grant funding through Fiscal Year 2029-30 contributes to the County’s ability to reach the County of San Diego Sustainability Goals. By being able to quickly pursue grant opportunities, Sustainability Goals such as protecting health and wellbeing, and providing just and equitable access can be addressed through these added funding streams. Swift funding for Sustainability Goals is particularly critical to proactively promote resilience, especially in communities and socio-economic groups historically underserved, and also plays a key role during periods of emergency response. Today’s action supports the viability of sustainability programs and their responsiveness.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact associated with the approval of today’s resolutions authorizing applications and agreements for non-profit, federal and State grant funding through Fiscal Year 2029-30. Land Use and Environment Group Department Directors will return to the Board at a later date to appropriate any grant funds received, as they become available, any matching funds that may be required, and authorization of advertisement and award of contract as necessary. If a grant requires matching funds, matching funds will be provided by available funds managed by the department.

A waiver of Board Policy B-29 is requested because the proposed grant funding may not offset all administrative costs. If approved and a grant is awarded, the awarded Department will return to the Board for final approval and appropriation of any unrecovered cost per Board Policy B-29. The funding source for potential unrecovered cost will be provided by available funds managed by the department. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years.

**BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT**

N/A

**BACKGROUND**

The County of San Diego’s (County) Land Use & Environment Group (LUEG) is comprised of the departments of —the Department of Public Works (DPW), Planning & Development Services (PDS), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), San Diego County Library (Libraries), Agriculture, Weights and Measures (AWM), Department of Environmental Health & Quality (DEHQ) — and overseen by the LUEG Executive Office (LUEG EO), which also houses the Office of Sustainability and Environmental Justice (OSEJ). Each of LUEG’s departments holds an important role in the County with a diverse range of functions including supporting or facilitating sustainable communities, preserving and enhancing natural resources, building and maintaining

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critical infrastructure and ensuring compliance with local, State, and federal laws that protect the public’s health, safety, and quality of life.

Pursuant to Board Policy B-29, Fees, Grants, Revenue Contracts -Department Responsibility for Cost Recovery, Board approval must be sought at least 15 days before individual grant applications are due for requests at or exceeding \$250,000. Periodically, grant funds become available for a short period of time with as few as four weeks between the release of final grant guidelines and the deadline for submittal of the grant application, which may not provide adequate time for Board approval. Additionally, some grant opportunities are offered on an annual basis and require Board approval to delegate authority to the LUEG department Directors to apply for and accept grants for their respective departments. Approving these resolutions streamlines the application process and provides flexibility to apply for grant funding on short notice.

LUEG departments have applied for and accepted grants from local, state, and federal sources. Over the past ten years, funding has come from State agencies, including CA State Parks, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CA Natural Resources Agency, CA Environmental Protection Agency, CalRecycle, CalFire, CA Housing and Community Development, CA Coastal Conservancy, CA Department of Transportation, CA Department of Resources Recycling, CA Department of Food and Agriculture, California Office of Emergency Services, CA Climate Investments, Community Development Block Grants, CA State Library, CA Center for the Book; and additional funding has come from federal sources that include, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Communications Commission, Federal Trade Commission, United States Environmental Protection Agency and the United States Department of Energy.

A brief overview of each department’s and office’s functions that are supported by grants is described below:

- AWM: Protect human health and the food supply, support the local agricultural economy, ensure an equitable marketplace, and foster a sustainable environment.
- DEHQ: Protect the environment and public health with projects and programs related to hazardous materials, community health, vector control, radiological health, solid waste enforcement, land and water quality, and food and housing.
- DPR: Provide for capital improvements, park land acquisition, resource management, major maintenance, and parks and recreation programmatic projects that enhance the quality of life in San Diego County.
- DPW: Support and implement capital improvements, land acquisition, resource management, major maintenance, remediation, research, projects and programmatic activities related to watershed protection, recycling, flood control, environmental mitigation, landfill and burn site clean-up and mitigation, airports, roads, land development and local and active transportation.

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- Libraries: Mitigate the digital divide by supplying the community with free access to the internet and computers, to support literacy, reading and education programs or acquisition of additional materials (e.g., books, DVDs, music, e-books, and educational/research databases) for the library collection.
- PDS: Support and implement the County’s Climate Action Plan, agricultural preservation, conservation of habitat and biodiversity, water resource management, sustainable community development, building regulation, and affordable housing. With the County designated as a Prohousing Jurisdiction under the State’s Prohousing Designation Program, the County will be more competitive for critical state funding to accelerate the production of affordable housing.
- OSEJ: Lead the Regional Decarbonization Framework (RDF) that will guide the region toward zero carbon emission, and lead regional efforts to reduce environmental and health hazards, help address climate change, and advocate for equity and environmental justice in communities disproportionately impacted by environmental burdens
- EO: Lead LUEG department coordination, represent LUEG teams to the Board of Supervisors, and strategic leadership of future goals in alignment with the County’s objectives and public interest.

LUEG has expanded its search and pursuit of grant opportunities in the areas of greenhouse gas reduction, food system sustainability, environmental health training and data collection, local water quality assessments, and support of rural and active transportation networks. The goal over the next fiscal year will be to increase the number of successful applications with a focus on sustainability. Today’s proposed Board actions would help streamline the process for LUEG departments to seek and apply for grant funding.

The Board has taken actions previously to support application and acceptance of grants by LUEG departments. On June 24, 2020 (12), the Board granted authority to seven LUEG departments at the time to apply for and accept grants to bring additional funding to the San Diego region for five years until June 30, 2025. This resolution had included the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) and reference to the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE), both of which are no longer part of LUEG. It also did not explicitly reference the LUEG EO or OSEJ, the latter of which did not exist at the time of adoption.

Today’s request includes the adoption of a resolution that authorize LUEG department Directors, or designee(s), to submit, negotiate, and execute all documents that may be necessary to secure and spend grant funds for LUEG department projects and/or programmatic activities through June 30, 2030, including, but not limited to, applications, payment requests, agreements, and amendments to the agreements.

Upon notification of grant award, the awarded department will return to the Board for appropriation of grant funds, any matching funds that may be required, and authorization of

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advertisement and award of contract as necessary. A waiver of Board Policy B-29 is requested because grant funding may not be sufficient to offset all administrative costs. If approved and a grant is awarded, any unrecovered cost per Board Policy B-29 would be funded by available funds within the Department(s), as determined by the nature of the project(s) or program(s).

**ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT**

Section 15061 (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines provides that a project is exempt from CEQA review where “it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment...”. The proposed action seeks the delegation of authority for possible applications for and acceptance of grant funding for potential future projects. While entitlement funds are anticipated, there is no guarantee that discretionary funds will be awarded. Since the action involves the delegation of authority to seek and accept funding without a commitment to any particular project, the action is exempt from CEQA review because it can be seen with certainty that the activity will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Respectfully submitted,



DAHVIA LYNCH  
Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

**ATTACHMENT A:**

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AUTHORIZING LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT GROUP DEPUTY CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER, DEPARTMENT DIRECTORS AND/OR DESIGNEE(S), TO SUBMIT GRANT APPLICATIONS AND ACCEPT GRANT FUNDS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMATIC ACTIVITIES IN SUPPORT OF THE COUNTY’S VISION AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES