

EXECUTIVE OFFICER SUMMARY REPORT
May 21, 2004

- ITEM: 8
- SUBJECT: **SDRC MISSION, OBJECTIVES, PROGRAMS, AND PRIORITY RANKING METHODOLOGY.** The Board will consider creating a committee to develop an Agency mission statement, objectives, programs, and priority ranking methodology / criteria for evaluating proposed projects. Tentative Resolution 04-05 would create a committee(s) to address all of the issues contained in Agenda Items 7 and 8. (*Deborah Jayne*)
- PURPOSE: Consider adoption of tentative Resolution 04-05. Does the Governing Board wish to create a committee(s) to work with the Executive Officer to:
- (1) Develop an Agency mission statement, objectives, programs, and priority ranking methodology / criteria for evaluating proposed projects; and
 - (2) Make recommendations to the full Governing Board regarding these issues?
- DISCUSSION: **Enabling Statute**
The San Diego River Conservancy Act (Act or enabling statute) describes the need and overall purpose for the San Diego River Conservancy (SDRC). In the purpose statement [section 32633], the Act identifies 12 specific objectives or authorities for the Conservancy. It also indicates that the Legislature intends for the Conservancy to consider the recommendations contained in the “Conceptual Plan”¹. The Conceptual Plan provides a “structural framework for ideas for establishing a San Diego River Parkway Master Plan” [section 32631 (c)]. The Conceptual Plan identifies additional objectives, not specifically identified in the enabling statute².
- The enabling statute directs the Conservancy to (1) establish policies and priorities within the San Diego River Area; (2) conduct necessary planning activities; and (3) establish priorities to be given to projects consistent with the purposes of the Act [section 32653 (b)(c)]. The enabling statute authorizes the SDRC to develop “an integrated

program of resource stewardship” to manage the entire San Diego River Area [section 32653 (a)]. In summary, the enabling statute clearly intends for the Conservancy to undertake “big picture” planning activities such as establishing an Agency mission, objectives, programs, and priority setting methodology. These early activities are fundamental to the success of the Conservancy and will serve to guide its course into the near-term future. They will also serve as the first steps in the Conservancy’s long-range strategic planning effort.

Program Approach vs. Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan

I recommend that the Governing Board consider the use of a “Programmatic Approach” (as proposed below) in lieu of development and approval of a single overall Land Use Master Plan for the entire San Diego River Area³. Under a Program Approach, the Board would simply extract its Agency objectives directly from the enabling statute (and Conceptual Plan) and define a Program around each single objective (e.g., Land Acquisition Program, Recreational Opportunities Program, Water Quality Improvement Program, Historical and Cultural Recognition Program). Each Program would be implemented through a series of projects (e.g., acquire specific 100 acre parcel, construct public access facility, conduct urban runoff education, construct Interpretive Center). All Programs would be self-reinforcing and knitted together by the common vision and mission of the Conservancy.

Concurrently the Governing Board (or its committee) would develop priority ranking methodology / criteria. Appropriate ranking criteria would incorporate a wide range of key factors. Two of the most important factors would be (1) equitable representation and distribution of resources across all local jurisdictions; and (2) level of community support. Using the established criteria, each Program / Agency objective would first be evaluated and assigned a priority. Are all Programs /Agency objectives equally important (since each was derived from the enabling statute) or are some (e.g., land acquisition) higher priority than others? Each project (within each Program) would subsequently be evaluated and assigned a priority⁴. Projects within each Program would be undertaken in accordance with the established priority and as opportunity arises and funding allows.

Overall success of the Conservancy would be measured in terms of completed projects (e.g., 500 acres acquired; 10 miles of trail and one staging area constructed; bacterial concentrations reduced in lower reaches, Interpretive Center highlights historical and cultural resources).

I recommend the use of a Program Approach rather than a single comprehensive Master Plan for the following reasons:

(1) Less Problematic

The development and approval of a single overall Master Plan for the entire San Diego River may be problematic because:

- a) SDRC has no land use authority;
- b) Problems may arise if SDRC's Master Plan conflicts in any way with a local jurisdiction's General Plan; and
- c) The entire SDRC Master Plan may be jeopardized or significantly delayed if even a small part of the Plan is considered undesirable by an individual or group of stakeholders⁵.

(2) Transcends Jurisdictions

A Program Approach transcends jurisdictional boundaries and ensures that the Conservancy's actions are viewed as high priority by all jurisdictions and that projects are undertaken in all jurisdictions. These assurances would be "built-in" to the ranking criteria and are a very important feature of the Program Approach. The Program Approach emphasizes the "common" vision and goals of each jurisdiction's individual Master Plan.

(3) Less Resource-Intensive / Allows Action Sooner

Master Plan development and approval is often a long, resource-intensive process. Because a Program Approach is considerably more simple, streamlined, and less time consuming, it would allow the SDRC to take "result-oriented actions" sooner. A Program Approach would satisfy our need to accomplish basic big picture planning efficiently, while allowing us to direct most of our limited resources towards result-oriented actions, rather than planning efforts.

(4) Consistent with Mayor's Alliance

A Program Approach is consistent with the stated goals / directives of the Mayor's San Diego River Park Alliance⁶: (1) each local jurisdiction should conduct its own individual master planning effort for the San Diego River; (2) a technical advisory committee should ensure consistency and continuity between the individual Master Plans of the local jurisdictions; and (3) while Master Plans are under development by individual jurisdictions, "near-term projects" should be undertaken and completed.

(5) More Flexible / Less Threatening

A Program Approach provides greater flexibility to the SDRC and may be viewed as less threatening (than a comprehensive Master

Plan for the entire San Diego River Area) by local jurisdictions and private land owners.

(6) Consistent with other State-Chartered Conservancies

The Program Approach appears to be consistent with the planning model employed by the State Coastal Conservancy and the California Tahoe Conservancy.

Tentative Resolution 04-05

Tentative Resolution 04-05 extracts the essence from the enabling statute. Findings 1-5 address the need for the Conservancy, its mission, purpose, and the Legislature's directives to establish Agency programs, policies, and priorities and to conduct planning. Findings 16, 17, and the final resolution statement, create one or more committees to work with the Executive Officer to accomplish the above (as well as establishing Agency policies and procedures on land acquisition, awarding of grants, and other topics related to capital outlay expenditures as described in Agenda Item 7).

Issues for Governing Board to Address

I am seeking direction from the Governing Board on the following:

- a) Should a committee(s) be created?
- b) If so, how many committees are needed (should a single committee address all of the issues described in both Agenda Items 7 and 8)?
- c) What is the composition and structure of the committee(s)?
- d) What is the charter of the committee(s) including specific purpose and issues to be addressed (e.g., are all Programs /Agency objectives equally important?)
- e) When should the committee(s) return to the full Governing Board with recommendations?
- f) What modifications are needed to tentative Resolution 04-05?

LEGAL CONCERNS: Ensure that actions of the Governing Board and its committee(s) are consistent with enabling statute.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: 1. Tentative Resolution 04-05

2. Proposed Operational Approach for Getting Started dated March 21, 2004⁷

- RECOMMENDATION:
1. Receive public testimony.
 2. Specify committee composition, structure, charter, and schedule for returning to the full Governing Board with recommendations.
 3. Adopt Tentative Resolution 04-05.

¹ San Diego River Park Conceptual Plan, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona. June 2002.

² Examples include (1) develop river-long park; (2) increase public access; and (3) protect historical resources.

³ Although a potential “San Diego River Parkway Master Plan” is mentioned in the enabling statute (see quote above from section 32631 (c)), the statute does not specifically direct the Conservancy to develop such a plan. Rather in section 32653 (b) the statute directs the Conservancy to “conduct any necessary planning activities in accordance with the purposes of this division”.

⁴ Ranking criteria may be tailored for applicability to individual Programs or projects.

⁵ Other state-chartered Conservancies are currently dealing with delays in adopting a Comprehensive Master Plan for these reasons.

⁶ The San Diego River Park Alliance is a group of elected officials which was assembled by Mayor Dick Murphy in the summer of 2001. The Alliance includes representatives from all San Diego River jurisdictions.

⁷ This document provides additional information regarding the proposed “Program Approach”. (The document was developed in preparation for my Executive Officer interview.)