



# RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES

## Board Memorandum

**BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**DATE:** MARCH 22, 2021

**SUBJECT:** MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE SANTA ANA WATERSHED PROJECT AUTHORITY AND THE RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WATER ENERGY COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK'S TURF REMOVAL PROGRAM; GRANT MATCH FUND AMOUNT OF \$100,000

**ISSUES:**

Consider the approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and Riverside Public Utilities to participate in the Water Energy Community Action Network's turf removal program with a grant match fund amount of \$100,000.

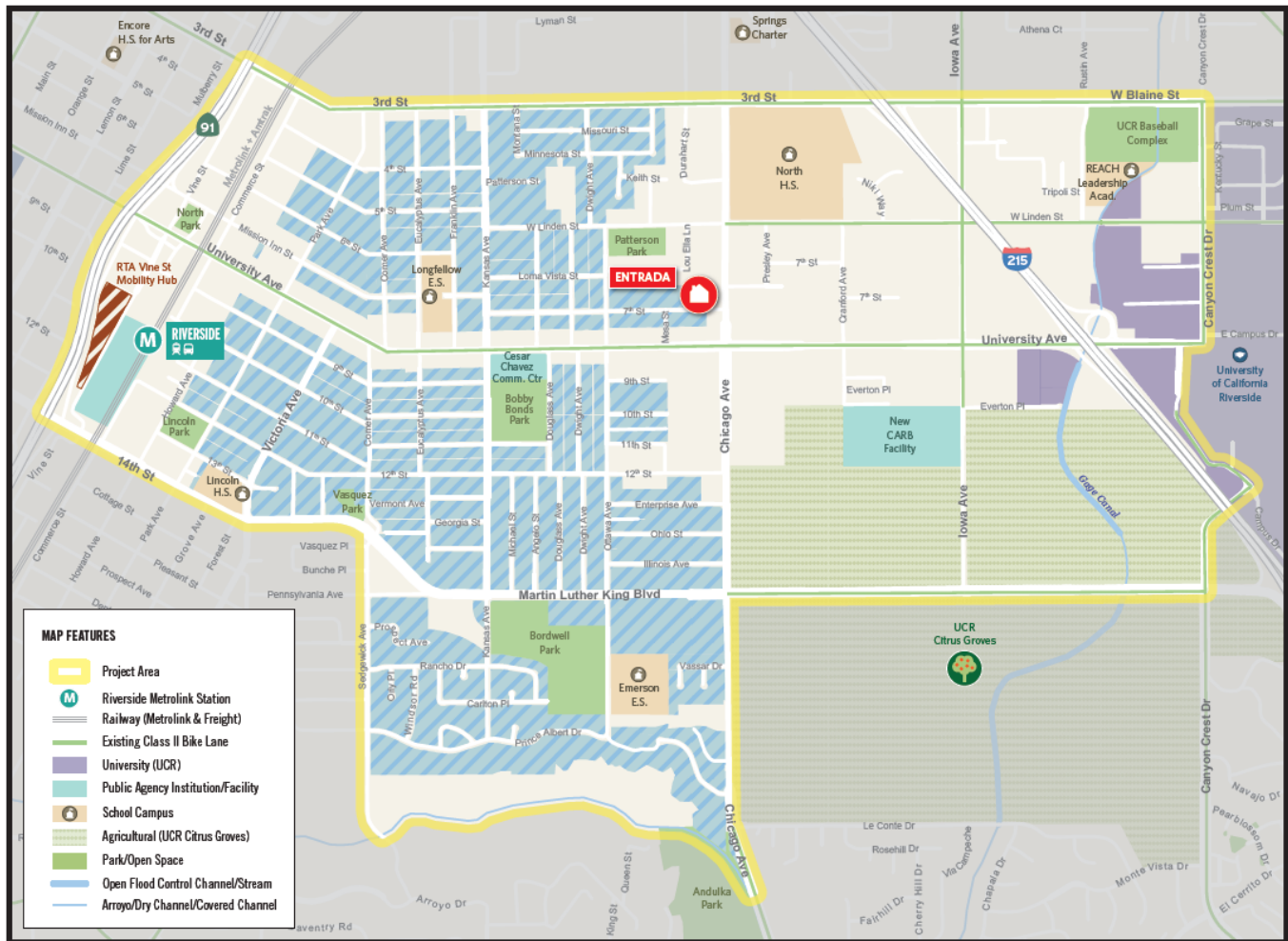
**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Public Utilities recommend that the City Council:

1. Approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Riverside Public Utilities and the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority to implement and administer the Water Energy Community Action Network's turf removal program; and
2. Authorize a grant match in the amount of \$100,000 from the Public Utilities Water Conservation and Reclamation Fund (521) Unprogrammed Funds Account.

**BACKGROUND:**

On July 10, 2020, the City of Riverside was awarded \$9.1 million from the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC) for a Transformative Climate Communities (TCC) Implementation grant funded by California's Cap-and-Trade Program. The TCC grant empowers communities and assists the people of California to adapt to climate change, mitigate carbon emissions, and support low-income communities as they seek water and energy savings throughout California. The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) was one of the partner agency applicants on the City's TCC grant. SAWPA's portion of the project funds, \$592,417, will fund the Water Energy Community Action Network's turf removal program. Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) was identified as providing matching funds in the amount of \$100,000 for the effort.



## **DISCUSSION:**

SAWPA is a joint power authority that focuses on a broad range of water resource issues including water supply reliability, water quality improvement, recycled water, wastewater treatment, groundwater management, brine disposal, and integrated regional planning. SAWPA will be utilizing the grant award from SGC to fund its Water Energy Community Action Network (WECAN) turf removal program to provide, no cost, front-yard turf removal with drought tolerant landscape replacement across its Water Energy Community Action Network (WECAN) for homes in disadvantaged communities within the RPU service territory, within the TCC grant program area.

On January 23, 2020, RPU submitted a letter of support to SGC on behalf of SAWPA and the City's proposal for the SGC grant program. In the letter of support, RPU staff committed to seek support of the turf removal portion of WECAN by matching funds from SAWPA through a cost share outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RPU and SAWPA. The MOU states that RPU will contribute \$1.00 per square foot of turf removed, for a maximum contribution of \$100,000.

Typically, RPU water customers who elect to participate in a turf removal rebate would receive \$3.00 per square foot of turf removed when they apply through SoCal WaterSmart, the rebate program that is managed and funded by Metropolitan Water District (MWD). MWD contributes \$2.00 per square foot and RPU contributes an additional \$1.00 per square foot of turf removed for projects completed in RPU's service territory. Since customers participating in the SAWPA

program will not be eligible to apply for reimbursement from SoCal Watersmart, RPU staff is recommending that the \$1.00 per square foot match that would have been provided through the existing turf replacement program, be provided to customers participating in the SAWPA program.

The MOU also states that in order to receive funding from RPU, SAWPA's WECAN contractor will perform tasks such as:

1. Conduct a pre-installation site visit by assessing the amount of turf and the condition of the irrigation;
2. Remove the existing turf through use of methods such as application of herbicide and rototilling;
3. Install drought-tolerant landscaping, convert sprinkler heads to drip emitters, and apply mulch;
4. Conduct two follow up site visits to assess the growth of new vegetation, replant various new plants if necessary and repair any issues with the new irrigation equipment; and
5. Complete various project management tasks such as outreach to clients.

The goal of RPU's participation in this program is not only to support water conservation efforts, but to also produce immediate and long-term assistance for communities that are most vulnerable to climate change impacts in a cost-effective manner that supports the City's efforts to adapt to climate change, mitigate carbon emissions, and support low-income communities.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

The total fiscal impact is \$100,000. Sufficient funds are available in the Public Utilities Water Conservation and Reclamation Fund (521) Unprogrammed Funds Account No. 6220200-453001 which will be transferred into the SAWPA - Turf Removal Program Account No. 6220200-457038.

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Approved by: Todd M. Corbin, Utilities General Manager  
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, City Manager  
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Certifies availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer

#### **Attachments:**

1. Memorandum of Understanding
2. Presentation
3. Map