



# City Council Memorandum

*City of Arts & Innovation*

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**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL                      DATE: APRIL 13, 2021**

**FROM: PUBLIC UTILITIES DEPARTMENT                              WARDS: ALL**

**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:**

Approval of a 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.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding between the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and Riverside Public Utilities 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.

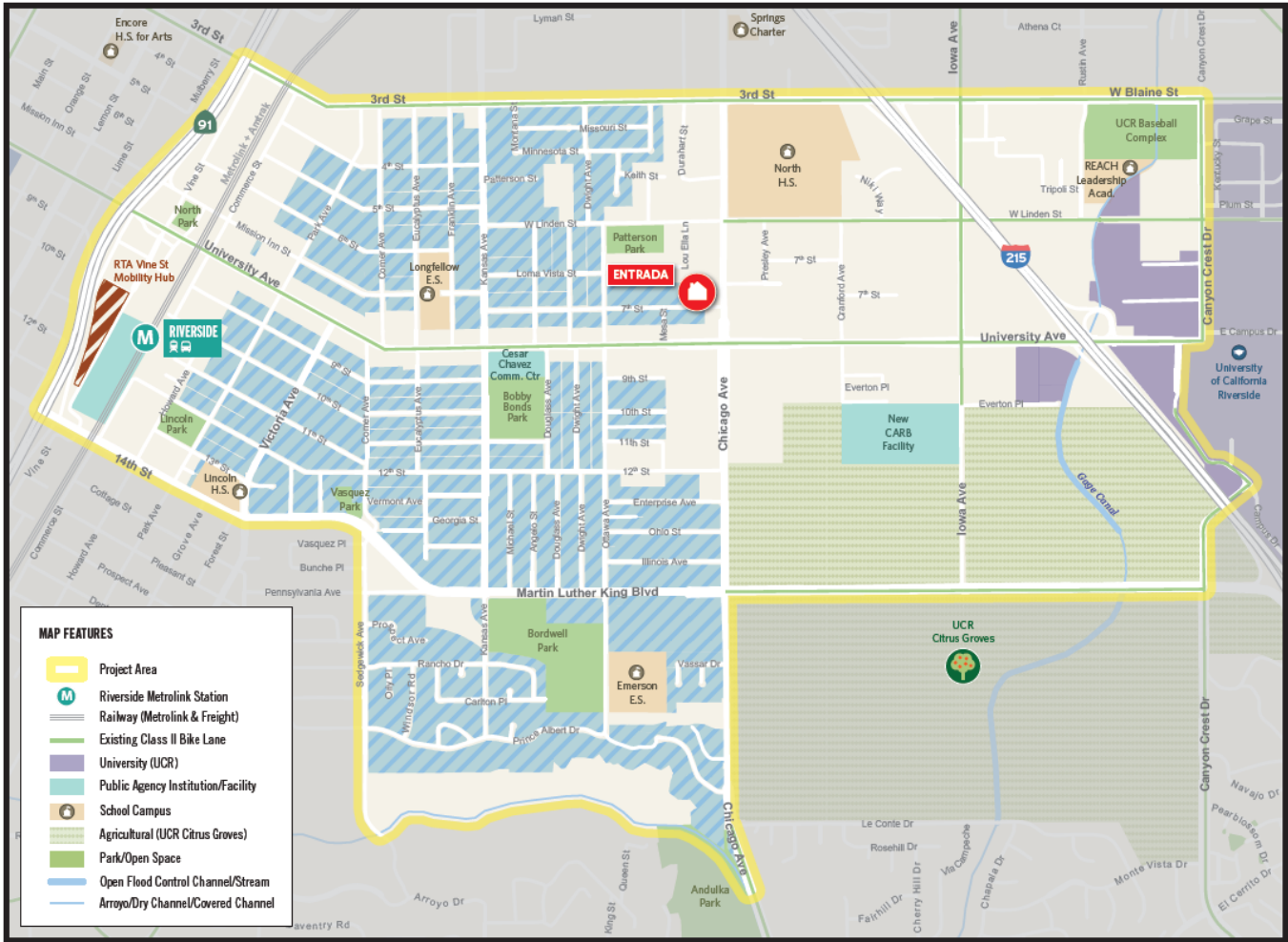
**BOARD RECOMMENDATION:**

On March 22, 2021, the Board of Public Utilities voted unanimously to 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 to 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:**

The Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (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 for homes in disadvantaged communities within the Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) service territory within the TCC grant program area.

On January 23, 2020, RPU submitted a letter of support to SGC on the 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 SoCalWaterSmart, the rebate program managed and funded by the 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 the customers participating in the SAWPA program will not be eligible to apply for reimbursement from SoCalWaterSmart, RPU staff is recommending that the \$1 per square foot match that would have been provided by through the existing turf replacement program be provided to our 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 of this action 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.

Prepared by: Todd M. Corbin, Utilities General Manager  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer/City Treasurer  
Approved by: Al Zelinka, FAICP, City Manager  
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Memorandum of Understanding
2. Presentation
3. Map