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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 20, 2018

TO: Advisory Committee
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

FROM: Jessica Davenport, Project Manager
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

SUBJECT: Proposal to Develop a Community Engagement Program for the San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (Authority) staff proposes to develop a community engagement program that results in long-term benefits for economically disadvantaged communities (EDCs). Staff invites the Advisory Committee (AC) to form an ad hoc subcommittee to work with staff to develop a project proposal for a two- to three-year grant or consulting contract that can be brought to the Governing Board for consideration for funding in early 2019.

Background

The Governing Board and the AC have both expressed a strong commitment to achieving the Measure AA goal of prioritizing projects that benefit economically disadvantaged communities. This goal has been discussed within the broader context of advancing environmental justice (EJ) in the Bay Area. The AC organized an EJ Panel for its June 29, 2018, meeting, and the panelists proposed a set of recommended actions.

The EJ Panel's responses were summarized by the AC and were further analyzed by Authority staff to identify specific recommendations on which the Authority could take action. This memo is intended to define the objectives the Authority would seek to achieve by taking actions recommended by the EJ Panel.

Overarching Goal for the Measure AA Grant Program Regarding Environmental Justice

Measure AA states, "The Authority shall give priority to projects that... Benefit economically disadvantaged communities," or EDCs.

The Grant Guidelines provide the following definition of EDCs,

"An economically disadvantaged community (EDC) is defined as a community with a median household income less than 80% of the area median income (AMI). Within this set of low- income communities, communities of particular concern include those that: are historically underrepresented in environmental policymaking and/or projects, bear a

disproportionate environmental and health burden, are most vulnerable to climate change impacts due to lack of resources required for community resilience, or are severely burdened by housing costs, increasing the risk of displacement.”

The Grant Guidelines also provide the following description of benefits to EDCs:

“A proposed project’s ability to provide benefits to these communities will be judged on the basis of the direct involvement and support of local community groups; a demonstrated track record working within communities; the use of proven strategies to increase relevance of messaging and outreach; and the ability to alleviate multiple stressors within communities, including, but not limited to, addressing the need for additional recreational amenities, resilience to climate change, reductions in pollution burden, greater civic engagement, and enhanced leadership development opportunities.”

Defining Community Benefits

Based on Measure AA, the Grant Program Guidelines and feedback from the EJ Panel, there appear to be two main types community benefits:

1. **Process Benefits:** Process benefits for communities may include:
 - a. Improved community understanding of the project and its potential ecological, social and environmental benefits, as well as any potential negative impacts;
 - b. Increased trust and engagement with community advocacy groups through shared establishment and implementation of equity goals;
 - c. Ownership, input, and buy-in over the type of project funded and its design;
 - d. Partnerships between community groups and project proponents;
 - e. Increased number of projects generated and led by community members in EDCs; and
 - f. Development of leadership skills among community members.

2. **Project Outcome Benefits:** As a result of project implementation, communities may gain one or more of the following benefits:
 - a. Increased access to nature-based recreation;
 - b. Local workforce development and employment opportunities;¹
 - c. Skills training for youth and young adults related to natural resource protection by local organizations and businesses;
 - d. Nature-based flood protection for critical infrastructure and existing shoreline communities; and
 - e. Reduced pollution burden through habitat restoration, site remediation and/or debris removal.

¹ In addition to prioritizing projects that benefit EDCs, Measure AA also calls for prioritizing projects that “Benefit the region’s economy, including local workforce development, employment opportunities for Bay Area residents, and nature-based flood protection for critical infrastructure and existing shoreline communities,” and “Work with local organizations and businesses to engage youth and young adults and assist them in gaining skills related to natural resource protection.”

Proposed Community Engagement Program and Additional Actions

Staff proposes to work with the AC to develop a long-term program that responds to community capacity, strengths and needs in EDCs and increases benefits to these communities through the Measure AA grant program. The first step would be establishing a community engagement program, as described in Objective 1. Additional actions described under Objectives 2 through 4 include potential near-term actions that could be undertaken concurrently with the development of a long-term program by staff or the consultant or grantee.

Obj. 1 Develop a community engagement program. Work with community-based organizations (CBOs) and/or non-profit organizations skilled in community engagement to develop an approach for a long-term Authority community engagement program. The actions below provide examples of potential program development elements:

Action 1A: Assess community priorities regarding the “Project Outcome Benefits” described above:

- Increased access to nature-based recreation;
- Local workforce development and employment opportunities;²
- Skills training for youth and young adults related to natural resource protection by local organizations and businesses;
- Nature-based flood protection for critical infrastructure and existing shoreline communities; and
- Reduced pollution burden through habitat restoration, site remediation and/or debris removal.

Action 1B: Identify proposed projects in or near EDCs that are currently on the Authority’s project list and evaluate their ability to provide community benefits and provide clear guidelines on what constitutes community benefits.

Action 1C: Determine whether existing proposed projects are adequate to meet community needs, if existing projects need to be enhanced to meet community needs, or if new projects need to be developed. Document both the results of the assessments for specific communities and best practices overall for community engagement.

Action 1D: Reach out to CBOs, non-profit organizations and local businesses that engage in workforce development, including training for both construction trades and professional environmental careers, to explore ways to encourage them to engage in bay restoration.

Action 1E: Bolster meaningful engagement and relationship-building among EDCs to support increased inclusion and participation in Measure AA-funded projects and related projects on an ongoing basis.

Action 1F: Consider related issues, such as housing cost burden, risk of displacement, and air pollution burden, and include as a deliverable a list of referrals to other grant programs, local government processes, and other opportunities for meeting community needs that fall outside the scope of what the Measure AA can fund.

² In addition to prioritizing projects that benefit EDCs, Measure AA also calls for prioritizing projects that “Benefit the region’s economy, including local workforce development, employment opportunities for Bay Area residents, and nature-based flood protection for critical infrastructure and existing shoreline communities,” and “Work with local organizations and businesses to engage youth and young adults and assist them in gaining skills related to natural resource protection.”

Action 1G: Provide guidance to the Authority on future special funding rounds and capacity building opportunities tailored to EDCs.

Action 1H: Explore ways to engage tribal groups and representatives as project partners and proponents. This effort is likely to have some overlap with providing benefits to EDCs, as defined by the Grant Program Guidelines, but will have unique aspects, as well.

Action 1I: Explore how to incorporate climate resilience into grant making that also benefits EDCs, e.g., by funding restoration and public access projects that create cool, shaded areas along the shoreline that provide relief on high heat days.

Action 1J: Plan a Restoration Forum for three to five years after granting funds to CBOs and small non-profits to provide benefits to EDCs. The Forum would facilitate sharing lessons learned among those who have worked on these projects, as well as those interested in applying for or partnering with others in applying for Measure AA funds.

Obj. 2 Support partnerships between project proponents and CBOs in EDCs.

Action 2A: Refine the Grant Program Guidelines and RFP to ensure that projects that have the potential to benefit an EDC will get more points in the grant review process for the following:

- The project proponent has an ongoing relationship with a CBO that has helped them engage the community in project development;
- The project builds in funding for CBOs and other community members to participate as partners during all phases of the project, but especially in the planning phase; and
- The project includes a partnership with a CBO, non-profit organization or business that engages in local workforce development, including training and employment opportunities for construction trades and/or professional environmental careers.

Action 2B: When appropriate, play a matchmaker role between CBOs and project proponents.

- Develop a list of CBOs and non-profits skilled in habitat restoration, flood protection, design and construction of public access and recreational amenities, community engagement, and/or workforce development that are interested in partnering with project proponents on grant applications.
- Create an online directory that participants can update annually.
- Make the directory sortable by county and encourage project proponents to consult it when developing their project.

Obj. 3. Support project proponents working in or near EDCs in conducting meaningful community engagement and building equity into the project design.

Action 3A: Provide a list of community engagement tips tailored for use in natural resource, flood protection, and public access projects. Consider a draft list of tips developed by the State Coastal Conservancy and review additional guidance before finalizing the list, e.g., the [RCI Equity Checklist](#) and the Guiding Principles from the [Climate Justice Working Group's Advancing Climate Justice in California: Guiding](#)

[Principles and Recommendations for Policy and Funding Decisions document](#) (see pages 5-6 for the ten guiding principles).

Obj. 4 Support CBOs in EDCs in building capacity to develop competitive projects, write compelling grant applications, and set up financial systems that meet government accounting standards.

Action 4A: Have a capacity-building grant round targeted at CBOs and small non-profit organizations.

Action 4B: Meet with CBOs and small non-profits in EDCs to provide tips on what has made past proposals successful or unsuccessful.

Action 4C: Hire a consultant to provide technical assistance to CBOs and small non-profits interested in participating in Measure AA-funded projects, including advising them on connecting with project proponents in their area and helping them write grant proposals.

Action 4D: Meet individually with CBOs and small non-profits that were unsuccessful in previous grant round and suggest ways to improve their applications.

Suggested Next Step

The AC is invited to form an ad hoc subcommittee to work with staff to develop a project proposal for a two- to three-year grant or consulting contract for establishing a community engagement program to benefit EDCs. The proposal would be brought to the Governing Board for consideration for funding in early 2019.