



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 20-0398

Agenda Date: 4/28/2020

Item No.: *7.1.

SUPPLEMENTAL BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Update on Exploratory Efforts to Update and Enhance the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program for a Future Funding Measure.

REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL MEMORANDUM:

This report conveys additional information received after the initial report was released, consistent with Executive Limitations Policy EL-7-10-5.

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. *Receive information on potential new program development, specifically input received from the Capital Improvement Program Committee, potential capital projects, Blue Ribbon Forum;
- B. *Receive new and updated information on program development, including public education, engagement efforts, community input, new polling information; and
- C. *Provide input on the development of a draft Community-Preferred Plan.

SUMMARY:

The original board update on exploratory efforts to update and enhance the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program (Safe, Clean Water Program) for a future funding measure was slated to be presented on March 24, which included information covering February and March. However, due to the ongoing public health crisis, the agenda item was moved to April 28. The most recent developments have now also been included as part of this Supplemental item to cover additional information and data that has since been gathered and analyzed up through mid-April.

The supplemental information includes new public opinion survey data conducted in April, as well as information from Valley Water's stakeholder Blue-Ribbon Forum, which was held on April 9 virtually via the Zoom platform. In addition, public input gathering via the Community Input Survey has been ramped up over the last several weeks with over 3,100 inputs as of mid-April. The information gathered so far has been compiled and continues to be analyzed to help inform and refine the potential community-preferred plan further.

*April Public Opinion Survey

Between April 11-16, 2020, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) completed interviews with more than 800 Santa Clara County residents to gauge the viability of such a measure

in light of the recent public health crisis. Support remains consistent around the two-thirds threshold with seven in ten voters (69%) supporting extending the existing parcel tax (Attachment 1). The survey also found that reliable water supplies during public health emergencies is important to residents.

***Blue-Ribbon Forum Stakeholder Input Findings**

On April 9, the Office of Government Relations led a virtual Blue Ribbon Forum of 35 confirmed attendees representing a broad cross-section of business, environmental, diversity, labor, and municipal organizations, including elected officials and their staffers at the federal, state, and local levels.

Participants of the forum provided direct feedback and input on the potential program elements to help shape a draft Community-Preferred Plan as staff continues to evaluate the potential renewal of the Safe Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program. The forum consisted of a presentation on our current and potential program elements as outlined in a draft program brochure (Attachment 2), a questions and answers period, small group breakout sessions, and large group dialogue. Feedback was collected through small group discussions in virtual breakout rooms with Valley Water Subject-Matter Experts, as well as a survey that was sent following the forum.

Overall, participants were generally supportive of the overall concepts presented at a high-level, but also had the opportunity to provide specific input under each priority area for staff's consideration as further potential program refinements are made. An executive summary has been included (Attachment 3) with more detailed information; some of the themes distilled from the summary and comments include the following input which staff is taking into consideration as we work to design a community preferred plan for the Board's consideration:

1. Keep plan flexible to react to situations that arise, but still respond to long-term goals
2. Expand grant funding for hydration stations, water conservation grants, pollution prevention, and wildlife habitat/ open space, as well as provide increased access to smaller agencies and/or technology start-ups
3. Support incorporating climate change by integrating strategies across projects
4. Support trash/ homeless encampments cleans ups
5. High support for water supply infrastructure, particularly Anderson Dam
6. Support for multi-benefit projects
7. Support for long-term maintenance of projects
8. Continued support for environmental stewardship, habitat restoration
9. Continued support for flood protection
10. Collaborate with cities and local municipalities on public safety issues near creeks, homelessness, etc.

***Community Input Survey Findings**

As of April 17, Valley Water has been able to gather a total of 3,149 community input surveys between direct online efforts which include at least 1,113 inputs, and grassroots field operations which resulted in capturing another 2,036 inputs as of mid-April. The survey results include English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese, including a student version of the survey. Questions ask

respondents to rate the level of importance per priority, so that staff can determine what the correct prioritized balance of funding for projects and efforts in any future community preferred plan is.

Based on the data gathered to date, the top priorities for the broader community include protecting water supply and critical infrastructure from earthquakes, disasters and climate change, ensuring reliable drinking water supplies for the future, and building sustainable, locally controlled water supplies that are drought resilient, followed by flood protection, creek cleanups, and restoring fish, birds and wildlife habitat near creeks, streams and the Bay.

Below is a summary of how each priority ranks compared to one another between all methods of data collection up through mid-April (*percentages rounded up*)

1. Ensuring a safe, reliable drinking water supply for the future by improving and maintaining dams, pipelines, water storage, treatment systems, and aging infrastructure to avoid disruptions in service.

(Overall, 96%)

- 67% feel this is Extremely Important
- 20% feel this is Very Important
- 9% feel this is Important

2. Reducing and removing toxins, hazards and contaminants like mercury or pharmaceuticals from local creeks, streams and reservoirs.

(Overall, 85%).

- 69% feel this is Extremely Important
- 18% feel it is Very Important
- 8% feel this is Important

3. Protecting our water supply, water quality, dams and flood protection channels from earthquakes, natural disasters, and climate change.

(Overall, 99%).

- 60% feel this is Extremely Important
- 21% feel this is Very Important
- 18% feel this is Important

4. Restoring fish, bird and wildlife habitat in and around local creeks, streams and the Bay to ensure a healthy environment.

(Overall, 88%)

- 49% feel this is Extremely Important
- 21% feel this is Very Important
- 18% feel this is Important

5. Providing flood protection to protect local homes, businesses, schools, streets, and highways from flooding.

(Overall, 89%)

- 47% feel this is Extremely Important
- 23% feel this is Very Important
- 19% feel this is Important

6. Providing creek cleanups, vegetation management and tree removal near creeks to lessen the threat of flooding and wildfires.

(Overall, 89%)

- 46% feel this is Extremely Important
- 23% feel this is Very Important
- 20% feel this is Important

7. Building sustainable, locally controlled water supply projects that are drought resilient.

(Overall, 92%)

- 51% feel this is Extremely Important
- 24% feel this is Very Important
- 17% feel this is Important

8. Increasing public recreational access in and around local creeks, streams, and the Bay.

(Overall, 69%)

- 29% feel this is Extremely Important
- 16% feel this is Very Important
- 24% feel this is Important

9. Supporting public health and public safety for our community by increasing police patrols along waterways and ensuring protections for water quality* (newly added April 10; data will be compiled for analysis and shared in June.)

***Program Refinements and Next Steps**

As staff continues to evaluate the potential renewal of the Safe Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program, the information gathered to date through these various stakeholder and community input efforts are being considered and will be incorporated, if appropriate, by staff who will continue to make further program refinements on the potential program elements that will help shape a draft Community-Preferred Plan.

As part of this process, staff is planning to dive deeper on certain of these elements through two focus groups planned for the week of May 11-14, 2020. This will help ensure that the potential elements are further refined before preparing and presenting the semi-final draft of the Community-Preferred Plan during the next board update scheduled for mid-June.

The adjusted timeline (Attachment 4) will include preparing the semi-final draft of the Community-

Preferred Plan for the June 23 board meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no change to the originally reported financial impact associated with this item.

CEQA:

The recommended action does not constitute a project under CEQA because it does not have a potential for resulting in direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

ATTACHMENTS:

- *Attachment 1: April 2020 Polling Memo
- *Attachment 2: Blue Ribbon Forum Brochure
- *Attachment 3: Blue Ribbon Forum Executive Summary
- *Attachment 4: Adjusted Project Schedule
- *Attachment 5: Revised PowerPoint, Replacing Original Attachment 1

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

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