



Santa Clara Valley Water District

File No.: 17-0696

Agenda Date: 12/12/2017

Item No.: *7.1.

BOARD AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT:

Update on the Office of Civic Engagement and Formation of Board Advisory Youth Commission.

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Receive information and updates on Office of Civic Engagement;
- B. Approve the formation of a Santa Clara Valley Water District Youth Commission; and
- C. Adopt the Resolution PROVIDING FOR AND DEFINING THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND REPEALING RESOLUTION 15-28.

SUMMARY:

The Office of Civic Engagement (OCE) was officially formalized on August 28, 2017. The purpose of the new unit is to advance and build positive and proactive relationships with the community through engagement, education, and partnerships. The programs and projects in the unit are designed to provide the community with access to resources and opportunities that will help build understanding, trust, and support for the District's goals and mission.

The OCE is organized into two (2) program areas:

Community Benefits Program

1. Safe, Clean Water Grants & Partnerships Program
2. Creek Stewardship
3. Public Arts & Signage

Water Education & Volunteer Program

1. District Volunteer Project
2. Water Education Outreach
3. Recycled Water Outreach

OCE will also provide programmatic oversight and coordination for the **Youth Commission**.

Community Benefits Program

The development of the Community Benefits Program demonstrates the District's commitment to providing opportunities that will make positive and sustainable social impacts in the communities that we serve. The programs and projects under Community Benefits Program will provide access to resources, engage, and collaborate with community members through grants and partnerships, creek stewardship volunteerism, and public arts projects.

A. Safe Clean Water Grants & Partnerships. Reorganizing the Safe, Clean Water Grants & Partnerships Program (SCW Grants Program) under the Office of External Affairs allows the District to increase our engagement with the community as well as broaden the reach and impact of our grant and partnership dollars. With the SCW Grants Program closely connected to the other units under External Affairs, staff is able to coordinate broader outreach efforts with Communications and Government Relations and stay closely connected with the needs and concerns of the community through Community Engagement and the Education programs.

Below is the current status for each SCW priority:

SCW Program Priority	# Funded Projects	Total Funding Awarded	FY2018 Status
A2 - Hydration Stations	50	\$250,000	5 additional schools to fund
B3 - Pollution Prevention	12	\$1.8 M	Funding released Nov 1; due Jan 12, 2018
B7 - Volunteer Cleanup & Education	7	\$350,000	Funding released Aug 4 - Oct 27; funding decisions Mar 2018
D3 - Trails & Open Space	3	\$570,000	Funding released Aug 4 - Oct 27; funding decisions Mar 2018
D3 - Restoration	22	\$4 M	Anticipated release Jan 2018
D3 - Mini-grants	0	\$ 0	Funding released Jul 31; apps accepted ongoing until all funding is awarded

Moving forward, staff will prioritize three areas for the SCW Grants Program: *Engagement, Outreach, and Efficiency*. Staff intends to get more engaged with grantees and their projects by conducting more site visits, providing timely technical assistance, and staying engaged with project status. Grantees' projects are intended to be an extension of the District's positive impacts to the community, therefore, establishing strong relationships with grantees allows staff to not only stay connected but also have a stronger presence as the project moves along to completion. Staff is also committed to expanding our outreach efforts. In order for projects to be more diverse and have a broader community impact, the outreach efforts to ensure a more diverse pool of applicants is critical. For FY2018's grant cycle, Staff has conducted outreach in communities that have not submitted project proposals in the past and hopes to build more relationships in the community to encourage more active participation in our grants & partnerships program. Staff is also seeking to utilize partnership funding to expand the District's impact in underserved communities.

For the grant cycles in FY2018, the District piloted an online grants application system to streamline the application process. All applications were submitted online and are also currently being reviewed and evaluated through the online system. Staff is seeking to expand the grants system to also include the management of the grant-funded projects once awarded. Grantees will be able to submit invoices, project status reports, and other supporting documents all through the online system with built in forms and templates to make the process easier and more efficient for the grantees and staff. Staff is working with Procurement to solicit bids for a vendor that will be able to implement the expansive grants management system to provide greater efficiency for the program. Staff anticipates implementing the full grants management system in FY2019.

B. Creek Stewardship. The District continues to receive active and increasing participation from the community for our various cleanup efforts. Through all our cleanup projects, volunteers contribute thousands of in-kind service hours and remove hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash throughout Santa Clara County (County). There are currently 139 Adopt-A-Creek (AAC) partners that actively coordinate bi-annual cleanups at their adopted sites. The District also coordinates the One-Day Use Permits project and have already provided 36 one-day permits this calendar year for cleanups. Additionally, the District continues to host annually the National River Cleanup Day (NRCD) and Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD). This year, 1,251 volunteers for NRCD cleaned 48 sites (65 miles of creek) and collected 36,494lbs of trash. For CCD, 1,892 volunteers cleaned 50 sites (68 miles) and picked up 50,838lbs of trash. On September 30th, the District worked with the Board to host the Coyote Creek Cleanup, where 136 volunteers gathered at two sites and collected a total of 5.25 tons of trash.

Creek Stewardship Cleanup Efforts Achievements 2017 (to date) <i>National</i>	
<i>River Cleanup Day (May) Coastal Cleanup Day (Sept) Coyote Creek Cleanup (Sept)</i>	
# of Volunteers	3,279
# of Volunteer Hours	13,116
# of Creek Miles Cleaned	133.37
# lbs of trash removed	101,092
Total of Hours In-Kind Value	\$367,248

Staff is working to continually improve how we coordinate our cleanup efforts, collect data, and support the volunteerism for the projects. For the AAC project, staff is developing an interactive GIS map that will allow the public to locate all the creeks on District property. The map would identify adoptable creek sections as well as the ones that are currently adopted. The map would allow the public to submit the adoption form directly online to streamline the process and allow for residents to research areas of interest and easily register as AAC partners. Staff established an online reporting form to capture the number of volunteers, pounds of trash collected, miles of creek cleaned, and pictures of the trash that was collected via Access Valley Water. This will allow the District to start collecting more data for AAC and the One-Day Use Permit projects.

C. Public Arts & Signage. Staff is in the process of developing the Public Arts & Signage program

that will utilize art to convey messages about water conservation, environmental protection and stewardship, pollution prevention, and other District values. Creating art projects throughout the County will allow the District to have a presence and be a part of the culture and fabric of the various communities we serve. Additionally, the public art projects will further educate, bring awareness, and build community support around stream stewardship, environmental protection, water conservation, among other District efforts and initiatives. Staff has developed an outline of the program which will initially consist of the following two components:

1. **Adopt-A-Bench Project** - Revitalize interpretive signs & benches by allowing the public to “adopt” a bench and propose an artistic design for the bench.
2. **Art Grants** - Award grants to the community to collaborate on public arts projects (i.e. murals, art installation)

In FY2018, staff will continue to research and gather information to build out the components of the program. Staff is working to reach out to all the cities in the County to understand the procedures for commissioning public arts within each respective jurisdiction. Staff is also working to identify the locations of all the District’s interpretive signs and benches to develop an interactive GIS map, similar to the Adopt-A-Creek project. The map will allow the public to view information about the benches & signage and, if interested, submit a form to “adopt” the bench and propose an art design. Staff anticipates piloting the program with 7 adoptable benches in FY2018, with one bench in each Board Member’s district. Staff intends to request resources through the FY2019 budget process to carry out the program.

Water Education & Volunteer Program

The Office of Civic Engagement is the process of expanding the Water Education and Volunteer Program in a way that will help further the District’s goals in water education and diversity engagement. Currently, the Program includes the following project areas: Recycled Water Outreach, Water Education Outreach, and a new District Volunteer pilot project.

A. District Volunteer Project. The goal of this new project is to develop an integrated and robust volunteer experience that engages a diverse group of volunteers to expand opportunities beyond just creek cleanups to other functions and areas within the District that could benefit from volunteer support. The first two project areas that will be expanded by volunteer support include the Water Education and Recycled Water Outreach projects to add bilingual teachers and tour docents to not only support those projects areas with trained volunteer resources, but to also further the OCE Unit’s goal of diversity engagement. Having bilingual volunteers will allow the District to engage diverse communities that might not be accomplished otherwise.

Staff is currently working on developing a project plan to launch a new District Volunteer project in early 2018. Staff is gathering information from similar volunteer programs throughout the County to better understand structure, training programs, HR compliance and regulatory issues, background clearance and projected costs among other items, to build out our own program.

The volunteer project will include the following components and elements that are still under

development for an early spring 2018 launch:

- a. Volunteer Staff Advisory Group - Form staff advisory group of influential volunteer leaders to help build and recruit other interested volunteers and provide input on volunteer opportunities.
- b. Bilingual Volunteers - Recruit and train a cadre of 5 -10 bilingual volunteers initially to serve as either education teacher aids, and/or tour docents for facility tours at the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center and/or other facilities, open house events, or special projects.
- c. Adopt-A-Creek Volunteers - Continue to grow and expand Adopt-a-Creek volunteers for creek cleanups and other potential volunteer opportunities.
- d. Ambassador program - Develop District ambassadors in which volunteers get specific training on local water issues and messaging. Ambassadors will then and serve as neighborhood leads in distributing messages when needed.

B. Water Education Outreach Project Area. The goal of the Water Education Outreach project area is to provide educational programming and outreach to students and youth about important water issues but also District projects and initiatives, as well as to showcase the type of careers possible with the District. Project staff have been busy presenting at libraries and in classrooms, leading field trips at the District's five outdoor classrooms and fielding many other requests for educational programming.

Silicon Valley Boys and Girls Clubs - Staff visited all the first and second graders at the local clubs over the Spring and repeated the visits again over the Summer to the third and fourth graders. Staff presented activities focused on watersheds, water pollution, the water cycle, and salmon survival.

Public Library outreach - Staff reached out to both Santa Clara County Libraries as well as City of San Jose Libraries to begin programming during pre-school story times, as well as Summer "lunch and learn" family programming. Through this outreach, staff has been communicating flood safety and awareness, promoting conservation rebates, education outreach, and overall district awareness in the community to build and foster positive relations. In total, staff conducted 28 visits, amounting to over 1,250 contacts with attendees between July - December 2017.

Summer camps - Working with the City of San Jose, staff visited 5 summer camps and presented outdoor obstacle courses for participants to rotate through in smaller age groups. Camp attendees participated in lessons about salmon survival and the water cycle. 250 youths were introduced to our programming through these efforts.

Schools outreach - September kicked off a new 2017 school year in which Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) are expected to now be implemented and begin to be integrated into curriculum. Staff launched two new lessons focused on global water awareness as well as plastic pollution for 5th grade and up. Staff is working in partnership with a collaboration network called Change Scale, to work with school districts to implement environmental education opportunities by grade level that include external providers, including the District, to provide programming on an on-going basis. The goal set for our school outreach is to connect with 15,000 students annually; by the end of December, staff expects to have reached close to 6,000 students through our lessons and outreach.

First Lego League Hydrodynamics Competition - Beginning in July 2017, staff started receiving calls

from many First Lego League teams throughout the County informing staff that their theme and Annual Challenge this year was on hydrodynamics. Staff fielded and responded to over 100 separate team requests, and worked closely with other District project teams, including the Recycled Water Outreach team to provide tours at the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center. Overall, staff provided over 15 tours/presentations, and saw over 500 students and coaches before the competition began.

Looking ahead, staff will look to expand the project area by providing bilingual volunteer teachers and docents to support project goals, and provide engagement opportunities to community members interested in enrichment and volunteering opportunities. Staff will also be targeting outreach to Middle Schools, South County & underserved communities, and ensuring that curriculum is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, and furthering school partnerships. Staff will also be furthering the District Flood Awareness campaign & outreach by incorporating a flood awareness coloring contest and furthering school partnerships

C. Recycled Water Outreach Project. Since the reorganization, staff has focused further on expanding potable reuse education and outreach, specifically under stakeholder engagement and multi-cultural outreach efforts where several key milestones were met.

Multi-cultural outreach - Efforts have included extensive outreach to the Asian community this summer to promote the recycled and purified water program and tours, as well as a hosting a hugely successful Asian Community Tour Day event that was part of staff's strategy to increase the District's visibility in the Asian community. The Asian Community Tour Day was held on July 15, 2017 at the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center. The event was well-attended with 250 community members attending, well above the projected number of 100 people. Directors Nai Hsueh and Richard P. Santos met guests with welcome remarks, and tours were offered in multiple languages of English, Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Youth Tours - Staff collaborated and worked closely with the water education outreach staff to accommodate requests to lead tours at the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center for the First Lego League Competition this year. Two large special event tours were held on September 23 and October 21, 2017. In total over 230 students were reached.

Stakeholder engagement -During this new fiscal year, staff coordinated three speaking engagements for our Board members. In July, Chair Varela made a presentation to the Saratoga Rotary on District and recycled purified water efforts. In August, Chair Varela and Director Kremen addressed the San Jose and Palo Alto Kiwanis, respectively, about the importance and future of recycled water in Santa Clara County. Future engagements are being coordinated for Directors to go out to the San Jose Rotary Club, and Almaden Kiwanis. Other stakeholder engagement efforts have included employee education and outreach through both planned brown bag events and employee tours.

Currently, staff is wrapping up a potable reuse opinion survey and working on securing a Social Marketing/ Media contractor within the next few months to develop a Potable Reuse social media plan that addresses Direct Potable Reuse. Looking ahead, staff will also plan for ways to incorporate

volunteer support in the form of bilingual tour docents and provide training to volunteers to assist in this effort to engage with diverse and multi-ethnic communities.

Santa Clara Valley Water District Youth Commission

The Youth Commission will serve as a youth-led advisory committee to the Santa Clara Valley Water District Board of Directors. The goal is to foster greater involvement of youth in local government to inspire and develop future public policy leaders and professionals with an awareness of issues and activities relating to water supply, conservation, flood protection, and stream stewardship.

While the existence of a youth commission within the District is not new, staff is proposing to reestablish the program as a Board Advisory Committee, similar to other public organizations, and to redirect its purpose from just exposing young people to careers at the District, to one in which we leverage their intellectual curiosity, and keen understanding of youth culture, to not only conduct outreach into their communities, but to provide them with an opportunity to develop leadership and management skills while also fully engaging them in public policy issues as they relate to issues relevant to the District.

The Youth Commission will be comprised of students who attend high school and reside in the County. The District will accept applications from qualified youth and each Board Director will select and appoint three youth each for a total of 21 Youth Commission members.

The role of the Youth Commission will be to make recommendations to the Board of Directors on water related issues that affect young people in the County. They will be advocates for their peers and advise the Board on critical issues that young people face in the County and how decisions made by the Board can impact those issues. The Youth Commission help keep the Board closely connected with current issues that affect youth, which will allow the Board to be better informed when making decisions. Additionally, participating youth will not only be able to be change agents in their community, but they will also develop valuable leadership, management, advocacy, and critical thinking skills in the process.

To implement the Youth Commission, staff is seeking the Board's approval to establish the program as an advisory committee to the Board, which will mirror the model that all local municipalities utilize.

In the few short months since the Office of Civic Engagement formed, staff has made great progress in establishing the role and purpose of the new unit. Staff is currently developing an overall unit workplan to ensure that the work continues to align with the purpose and goals of the unit.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

The positions that formed the Office of Civic Engagement were reallocated from other units. Resources for the development of the Public Arts & Signage program or the District Volunteer Project will come from existing funds in FY2018. Additional resources will be requested through the FY2019 budget process. Youth Commissioners will receive no compensation for their participation on the Advisory Committee, however, there will be nominal costs for food and supplies.

CEQA:

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

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: PowerPoint

Attachment 2: Resolution

UNCLASSIFIED MANAGER:

Rick Callender, 408-630-2017