



CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

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CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION COUNCIL

Items 6a-6b

Staff Recommendation
July 25, 2018

Proposition 1 Funding Recommendations: Water Quality and Marine Debris

Holly Wyer, Program Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,992,644 to various grantees as follows:

- 6a. \$1,000,000 to the Trust for Public Land for the Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project; and
- 6b. \$992,644 to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program for Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary

This staff recommendation, together with the accompanying Proposition 1 staff recommendation for Habitat Restoration projects (items 6c through 6h for a total of \$6,423,765) in combination represent a total Ocean Protection Council (OPC) Proposition 1 investment of \$8,416,409. Additional projects may be brought to the Council for consideration and approval at its next meeting in October.

LOCATION: The recommended projects are located throughout California as follows; see Exhibits for more detailed project-specific locations and site maps:

- Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project is in the City of Los Angeles in Los Angeles County; and
- Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary is in the City of Morro Bay in San Luis Obispo County.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE(S): Coastal and ocean impacts from land-based sources

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 6a: Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration – Supporting Documentation

- 6a1 [Site Map](#)
- 6a2 [Site Photos and Graphics](#)
- 6a3 [Letters of Support](#)
- 6a4 [Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act](#)

Exhibit 6b: Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary – Supporting Documentation

- 6b1 [Site Map](#)
- 6b2 [Site Photos and Graphics](#)
- 6b3 [Letters of Support](#)
- 6b4 [Department of Parks and Recreation Notice of Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act](#)

FINDINGS AND RESOLUTION

Staff recommends that the Ocean Protection Council (OPC) adopt the following findings:

“Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibit(s), OPC hereby finds that:

- 1) The proposed projects are consistent with the purposes of Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, the Ocean Protection Act;
- 2) The proposed projects are consistent with OPC's Proposition 1 grant guidelines (adopted November 2017); and
- 3) OPC has reviewed the Notice of Exemption for the Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project, filed by the Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation on February 12, 2018, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 6a4. OPC finds that section 15301 exempting minor alterations to existing facilities, is appropriate. OPC authorizes staff to file a notice of exemption on OPC's behalf citing the same section as rationale.
- 4) OPC has reviewed the Notice of Exemption for Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary, filed by the Department of Parks and Recreation on February 20, 2018, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act, and attached to the accompanying staff recommendation as Exhibit 6b4. OPC finds that sections 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304, exempting existing facilities, replacement or reconstruction of facilities, new construction or conversion of small structures, and minor alterations to land, respectively, are appropriate. OPC authorizes staff to file a notice of exemption on OPC's behalf citing the same sections as rationale.”

Staff further recommends that OPC adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 35500 *et seq.* of the Public Resources Code:

“OPC hereby approves the disbursement of up to \$1,992,644 to two different grantees as follows:

1. \$1,000,000 to the Trust for Public Land for the Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project; and
2. \$992,644 to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program for Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary.

This authorization is subject to the condition that prior to disbursement of funds, the Trust for Public Land, and the Morro Bay National Estuary Program shall submit for the review and approval of the Executive Director of OPC detailed work plans, schedules, staff requirements, budgets, and the names of

any contractors intended to be used to complete the projects, as well as discrete deliverables that can be produced in intervals to ensure the projects are on target for successful completion. All projects will be developed under a shared understanding of process, management and delivery.”

PROJECT SUMMARY 6a: Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project

Project Description

Stormwater pollution is the largest source of nonpoint source pollution to Santa Monica Bay. The Greater Los Angeles Area, with its vast expanses of paved landscapes, is a major contributor of stormwater pollution to Santa Monica Bay. The proposed project is part of a collaborative regional program to renovate existing alleys into multi-benefit assets to address this stormwater issue. With over 300 miles of alleys, South Los Angeles offers abundant opportunities to achieve meaningful infiltration of runoff near its source.

This project reimagines two alleys in South Los Angeles by installing stormwater capture and infiltration Best Management Practices including infiltration trenches, infiltration planters, permeable pavers, dry-wells, and trash capture systems. It also includes the planting of trees, vines, shrubs and grasses. This will mitigate flooding, reduce strain on the existing stormwater system, and reduce demand for imported water through groundwater recharge. It will help protect aquatic ecosystems by reducing stormwater pollution to Ballona Creek and Ballona Wetlands, which is the only natural coastal salt marsh in Los Angeles County. The Quincy Jones neighborhood has been designated a high priority for alley greening, as it is ideally situated to both improve surface water quality and groundwater recharge. The project will also increase green space and safe routes for alternative transportation within a severely disadvantaged neighborhood. The goals of the project include decreasing the volume of contaminated stormwater flowing into Ballona Creek and Santa Monica Bay, reducing the amount of litter moving from these alleys into the storm drain system, and cultivating community stewardship of green alleys and greater knowledge of the stormwater-ocean connection.

Site Description

The two alleys proposed for renovation as part of this project are located west of Griffith Avenue, between East Jefferson Boulevard and East 33rd Street in South Los Angeles. These alleys connect the Numero Uno supermarket to Quincy Jones Elementary School, and are frequently used by the public who walk or bike from the school to the market. The two alleys are part of the larger 55-acre Quincy Jones Green Alley Network, which is in South Los Angeles, primarily in the Ballona Creek watershed and partially in the Los Angeles River watershed.

There are two special features of the project location that are significant regarding the project's groundwater recharge benefit. First, the network lies over a portion of the underlying Central Groundwater Basin that allows for direct infiltration of surface water to the groundwater aquifer. These groundwater recharge opportunities are limited in the Ballona Creek watershed. Second, the depth to groundwater in this location is deep enough that the project can use the full suite of best management practices to achieve infiltration; restrictions on best management practices for infiltration are required to protect groundwater quality when depth to groundwater is less than 10 feet. This ensures that pollutants will be fully treated by soil microbes and infiltration prior to reaching the groundwater.

Project History

This project is part of a larger collaborative effort to advance green alleys in South Los Angeles. Beginning in 2012, with funding from the Strategic Growth Council, the Trust for Public Land worked

with the City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works, Department of Planning Urban Design Studio, the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency, and University of Southern California's Center for Sustainable Cities to develop the South Los Angeles Green Alley Master Plan (AMP). The AMP was approved by the City Council in February 2017 and provides a systematic and robust analysis of the potential environmental, social, and economic benefits of green alley renovations in an 18-square-mile area of South Los Angeles. It included an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, and extensive community outreach to determine the concerns and needs of the residents. It then prioritized the alley networks offering the greatest overall benefits. The Quincy Jones neighborhood is highly urbanized, park poor, and severely economically disadvantaged; at Quincy Jones Elementary, which is within the alley network boundary, 90.6% of students are eligible for the Free or Reduced Meals program. The Quincy Jones network had the second-highest combined score for the AMP project area based on runoff volume, pollution levels, park poverty, and community connections models used in the network selection process.

Other planning processes are using green infrastructure to meet their water quality goals. The Ballona Creek Watershed Enhanced Watershed Management Program's Implementation Strategy anticipates that 17% of the total "control measure capacity" required of all best management practices to meet water quality objectives will be provided through green streets, of which green alleys are a component; this represents the second largest category of control measures to meet water quality objectives in Ballona Creek.¹

Project Timeline

This is a two-year project that would end in fall of 2020. The project will be maintained by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation (LA Sanitation) for a minimum of 25 years. The equipment installed as part of the project would be included in LA Sanitation's regular maintenance schedule and plans.

Project Financing

Staff recommends that OPC authorize encumbrance of up to \$1,000,000 to the Trust for Public Land to implement the Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project. The proposed project may not require expenditure of the full \$1,000,000.

Ocean Protection Council	\$1,000,000
City of Los Angeles	\$1,500,000
Trust for Public Land	\$216,208
TOTAL	\$2,716,208

¹ Ballona Creek Watershed Enhanced Watershed Management Program's Implementation Strategy available here: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/rwqcb4/water_issues/programs/stormwater/municipal/watershed_management/ballona_creek/BallonaCreek_RevisedEWMP_corrected2016Feb1.pdf. The best management practices can be found on page ES-6 and ES-7.

PROJECT SUMMARY 6b: Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary Project

Project Description

Water quality in Morro Bay, home to state marine protected areas (MPAs) and a national estuary, has been degraded by increasing urbanization and is listed as impaired for multiple pollutants. During storm events, water quality frequently falls below standards, resulting in exposure warnings, algal blooms, and sea otter mortality. Bayside Marina at Morro Bay, located on California State Parks land, is a strategic opportunity to correct a long-standing water quality problem and capture land-based pollutants before they reach the marine environment. Water quality in the Morro Bay estuary is a reflection of pollutants generated locally, including nutrients, fertilizers, and chemicals from an upland golf course, sediments and petroleum hydrocarbons from the urbanized watershed, and fish waste and toxic metals from the marina. This project would support the planning and installation of stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure – consisting of a series of surface drains and pipes, a water lift station, and biofiltration system – at this waterfront location, improving water quality in Morro Bay for the benefit of the local economy, fisheries, and wildlife.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program will collaborate with the California Department of State Parks, California Coastkeepers, Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, and California Marine Sanctuary Foundation, to plan for and implement stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure which will divert stormwater and allow for percolation and removal of pollutants through biofiltration to ensure that pollutants do not reach the Morro Bay estuary. Overall, this project will remediate a long-standing water quality program and provide multiple benefits to improve the ecological health of the Morro Bay estuary.

Site Description

Morro Bay estuary is in San Luis Obispo County. The project site at Morro Bay State Park Bayside Marina is ecologically important at the local, state, and national scale. The site is located within the boundaries of the Morro Bay National Estuary and the Morro Bay State Marine Recreational Management Area, and within meters of the Morro Bay State Marine Reserve (see Exhibit 6a1). Morro Bay is one of 28 estuaries nationwide designated and funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency due to its ecological significance, providing important habitat for birds, fish, and other animals.

The project site is also economically important for Morro Bay residents and visitors. Home to a working fishing fleet, it is a popular destination for outdoor recreation. Commercial fisheries operate offshore and two commercial aquaculture operations grow Pacific oysters immediately in front the proposed project site in the intertidal mudflats. Home to the popular Bayside Café, in operation for almost 30 years, the site is located adjacent to the Morro Bay Golf Course and Morro Bay State Park Campground. Because these facilities promote public access and use, the waterfront area, marina, and launching point is a popular spot for coastal activities. The site also provides parking for the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, the only natural history interpretive museum in the California State Parks system. Since 1962, this site receives over 50,000 people annually. The site is also within minutes of the Heron Rookery, Morro Bay State Park, Montaña de Oro State Park, the El Moro Elfin Forest, and Audubon's Sweet Springs Nature Preserve.

Project History

To protect the ecological, economic, and historic values at the site, the water quality problem in the estuary must be addressed through the installation of stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure, consisting of a series of surface drains and pipes, a water lift station, and biofiltration system. Currently, the large parking area floods with stormwater runoff during rainfall events. This water pools into sunken areas and flows, untreated, directly into the estuary with no opportunity for sediment to settle or remove hazardous particles. This runoff contributes to broader water quality issues in Morro Bay and may negatively impact Morro Bay's eelgrass.

Morro Bay estuary has experienced a significant decline in its eelgrass population. Morro Bay is home to the third largest eelgrass-dominated ecosystem in southern California; however, the estuary's eelgrass population has declined from an area with hundreds of acres of eelgrass to an area with fewer than 15 acres, with a 94% decline observed between 2010 and 2013 (see Exhibit 6b1). While a single cause has not been determined, it is likely that a combination of stormwater pollution consisting of toxic pathogens, sediment and nutrients have contributed to the decline. Over the past 10 years, the project site consistently has failed to meet water quality standards and total maximum daily loads. Morro Bay National Estuary Program and San Luis Coastkeepers have regularly conducted monitoring in the bay and creeks of Morro Bay watershed. Additionally, failing to meet water quality standards poses a significant issue for two oyster farms located in the bay.

Degrading water quality in Morro Bay estuary is impacting local businesses, aquaculture leases, public access and ecosystem health. Planning for and installing stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure will improve water quality in the estuary and the project will serve as a model for other waterfront public access parks, California state parks, and marinas.

Project Timeline

This is a two-year project beginning in December 2018 and ending in December 2020.

Project Financing

Staff recommends that OPC authorize encumbrance of up to \$992,644.10 to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program to plan for and install stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure – consisting of a series of surface drains and pipes, a water lift station, and biofiltration system – to improve water quality in Morro Bay. The proposed project may not require expenditure of the full \$992,644.10.

Ocean Protection Council	\$992,644.10
California Department of State Parks and Recreation, Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District, San Luis Coastkeepers and Resources Legacy Fund	\$360,580.00
TOTAL	\$1,353,224.10

**FUNDING SOURCE FOR ALL PROJECTS AND CONSISTENCY WITH PROPOSITION 1 GRANT GUIDELINES
(Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014; Water Code §79700 et. seq.)**

The anticipated source of funds for these projects is OPC's appropriation pursuant to the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1, Water Code §79700 et. seq.). Funds appropriated to OPC derive from Chapter 6 (commencing with §79730) and may be used "for multibenefit water quality, water supply, and watershed protection and restoration efforts for the watersheds of the state" (Water Code §79731). Section 79732 identifies specific purposes for Chapter 6, which include protecting and restoring coastal watersheds, including, but not limited to, bays, marine estuaries, and nearshore ecosystems. The proposed projects are an appropriate use of Proposition 1 funds because they each have multi-benefits and will improve resiliency and adaptation to climate change, provide healthier marine or estuarine ecosystems, and restore watershed and coastal habitat.

Summary of Recommended Prop 1 Round 2 Water Quality and Marine Debris Projects (by Project Name)	Recommended OPC Funding from Prop 1
Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project	\$1,000,000.00
Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary	\$992,644.10
SUBTOTAL	\$1,992,644.10
Recommended in other staff recommendation for Items 6a and 6b	\$6,423,765
Projects recommended this meeting – TOTAL	\$8,416,409

The proposed projects were selected through a competitive grant process under the OPC's Proposition 1 Grant Guidelines, which were adopted in November 2017. The OPC Proposition 1 Grant Program assembled a Round 2 Review Committee that consisted of OPC staff and twelve external reviewers from state and federal government agencies. External reviewers represented various agencies including CDFW, the climate program of the Resources Agency, the State Water Quality Control Board, State Lands Commission, CalRecycle, NOAA, USC Sea Grant, and the Coastal Commission.

The Review Committee scored all complete and eligible applications submitted in this OPC Proposition 1 according to the Scoring Criteria found on page 11 of the Grant Guidelines. After all proposals were scored and ranked, the Review Committee met and determined which projects should receive site visits from OPC Staff and members of the Review Committee. Following long-standing Resources Agency practice, site visits were offered to more projects than the OPC has available funding for. Final funding recommendation decisions were made by the OPC Executive Director.

CONSISTENCY WITH CALIFORNIA OCEAN PROTECTION ACT

The proposed projects are consistent with the Ocean Protection Act, Division 26.5 of the Public Resources Code, because they are consistent with trust-fund allowable projects, defined in Public Resources Code Section 35650(b)(2) as projects which:

- Eliminate or reduce threats to coastal and ocean ecosystems, habitats, and species; and
- Improve coastal water quality.

The Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project will reduce threats to coastal and ocean ecosystems and improve coastal water quality by infiltrating polluted water, rather than allowing it to flow to Ballona Creek. The Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary Project will also eliminate or reduce threats to coastal and ocean ecosystems and species, and will improve coastal water quality.

CONSISTENCY WITH OPC'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Both staff-recommended water quality and marine debris projects implement one focal area from the OPC's Strategic Plan.

Focal Area D. Coastal and ocean impacts from land is addressed by both projects. Specifically, these projects will support an integrated approach to water management that minimizes harm to the health of downstream ocean and coastal ecosystems. Additionally, the Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project will also support collaborative efforts and effective partnerships that measurably reduce existing and new marine debris.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

The proposed projects have different statuses under CEQA as follows:

Quincy Jones Green Alley Stormwater Infiltration Project

This project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation filed a notice of exemption for the project on February 12, 2018, citing section 15301(c) of the CEQA Guidelines which exempts minor alteration to existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities.

OPC staff concurs that a categorical exemption is appropriate because the proposed project is making alterations and improvements to two existing alleys, which falls within the categorical exemption described in 15301(c).

Correcting Water Quality Problems at Morro Bay MPAs and National Estuary Project

This project is categorically exempt from CEQA. The California Department of Parks and Recreation filed a notice of exemption for the project on February 20, 2018, citing section 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304 of the CEQA Guidelines. These sections exempt existing facilities, replacement or reconstruction of facilities, new construction or conversion of small structures, and minor alterations to land, respectively.

OPC staff concurs that a categorical exemption is appropriate because the proposed project is making alterations and improvements to install stormwater pollution prevention infrastructure at an existing parking lot, which falls within the categorical exemptions described in sections 15301, 15302, 15303, and 15304.

For all projects, OPC will delegate to staff the ability to file a notice of exemption for CEQA compliance upon OPC approval, consistent with the findings in the staff recommendation.