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Title: Approve an Assistance Agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation and accept receipt of \$300,000 grant for the Fresno School Districts Water Conservation Project to provide for local school districts to install irrigation system improvements to conserve water. (Citywide)
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9/15/2016	1	City Council	approved	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

September 15, 2016

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Department of Public Utilities

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SUBJECT

Approve an Assistance Agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation and accept receipt of \$300,000 grant for the Fresno School Districts Water Conservation Project to provide for local school districts to install irrigation system improvements to conserve water (citywide).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends the City Council approve an Assistance Agreement with the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) to accept receipt of \$300,000 for the

Fresno School Districts Water Conservation Project, which will provide for local school districts to install irrigation system improvements to conserve water, and authorize the Director of Public Utilities or designee to execute all related documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2016, Council authorized the Department of Public Utilities' (DPU) application for the WaterSMART Water and Energy Efficiency Grant offered through the USBR. DPU pursued, and has been awarded, a grant to provide funding for landscape irrigation system improvement projects at Fresno area schools. The Fresno, Clovis and Central Unified School Districts all receive potable water from the City and each expressed an interest in utilizing available funding to install improvements. The City will make the funding available for the school districts to install irrigation system improvements that will provide more efficient delivery of water for large irrigated turf and landscaping. The City will make the grant funding available to the highest benefit projects from the school districts, and the school districts will construct the improvements. On June 23, 2016, the City received notification that the Project was selected for award of \$300,000. Approval and ratification of the Assistance Agreement is now recommended to receive the grant funding.

BACKGROUND

The City of Fresno provides potable water to Fresno, Clovis and Central Unified School Districts within the City of Fresno. Irrigation of the large turf areas on the school sites is the most significant portion of the water demand at each school site. In an effort to reduce demand and conserve water, the school districts have been working to install large turf irrigation system improvements. These improvements include smart controllers that adjust and reduce sprinkler run times based on atmospheric conditions, as well as installing high efficiency sprinkler heads that provide more efficient water application and reduce runoff. Each school district still has several school sites that need these improvements installed.

The USBR WaterSMART (Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow) Program establishes a framework to provide Federal leadership and assistance on the efficient use of water, integrating water and energy policies to support the sustainable use of all natural resources, and coordinating the water conservation activities of various federal bureaus and offices. Through the WaterSMART Program, the USBR is working to achieve a sustainable water management strategy to meet the nation's water needs. The WaterSMART grant is structured with two group types for awards. Group 1 recipients are eligible to receive grant awards up to \$300,000 per agreement for a project that can be completed within two years of award. Group 2 recipients will be funded up to \$1,000,000 per agreement for a project that can be completed in three years and will be funded on an annual basis. The school districts were not eligible to pursue this funding on their own as the program requires a nexus to a USBR water supply. Council authorized the City, pursuing the grant funding, as lead agency because the specific grant program requires a USBR nexus which the City has with its Central Valley Project water supply contract. An application for the Fresno School Districts Water Conservation Project was submitted in January 2016. On June 23, 2016, the City received notification that the Project was selected for award in the amount of \$300,000. The fifty percent (50%) cost share required as a condition of eligibility will be provided by the school districts. .

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the Assistance Agreement template and approved it as to form. The detailed Project scope (specific of the irrigation upgrades and conservation incentives)

and budget details (but not the total budget amount, which is \$300,000 award) are being finalized with the USBR. The USBR's Fiscal Year 2016 funding obligation deadline of September 19, 2016, requires the City to sign the Agreement no later than September 16, 2016.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

The project is exempt from CEQA under §15301(Existing Facilities) because the project is the replacement of existing sprinklers and irrigation controllers with more efficient and water conserving devices.

The grant requires National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance because the funding source is a federal agency. A federal agency is required to be the lead agency for NEPA compliance. The United States Bureau of Reclamation will be the lead, and will prepare the final NEPA documents once the school sites have been finalized.

LOCAL PREFERENCE

Local Preference was not considered because this action does not include a bid or an award of a City construction contract.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approving this resolution will not impact the General Fund. Project construction will be the responsibility of the school districts. Project construction is expected to start in the summer of 2017.

Attachment: Template Assistance Agreement