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DATE: April 4th, 2017

TO: Governing Board
San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority

FROM: Matt Gerhart and Kelly Malinowski
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SUBJECT: **Key Considerations and Proposed Outline for Draft Request for Proposals**

San Francisco Bay Restoration Authority (SFBRA) staff anticipates bringing a draft Request for Proposals (RFP) to the SFBRA Board for its consideration at its June 9th board meeting, and a final RFP to the SFBRA Board for adoption at its September 8th meeting, in anticipation of the SFBRA's first grant round and in concert with the Grant Guidelines. Along with the draft RFP, SFBRA staff plans to bring the SFBRA Board a draft grant application, and draft scoring criteria, for consideration at the June 9th board meeting.

In preparation for the draft RFP in June, staff organized a proposed outline for the RFP (included here as Attachment 1), and a list of key considerations with regard to the RFP, based on feedback and proposed edits from the public and the Advisory Committee on the Grant Program Guidelines, and Restoration Authority staff experience with grant rounds. These key considerations are outlined below, followed by Attachment 1, the proposed RFP outline.

I. Key Considerations:

a. Focus for Grant Round: (Geographic, Programmatic, Phase, etc.)

- i. Staff recommends that the first SFBRA grant round, and related RFP, focus on the entire shoreline of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, and will focus on implementing discrete phases of projects, including final design, permitting, and construction.

b. Funding Range:

- i. Staff recommends providing a range of what is expected of typical proposals, but not specifying a minimum or maximum grant amount. Staff recommends and anticipates requests to run from the low \$100,000s to the low millions.

c. Reasonable Timeframe for Projects to be Completed:

- i. Staff recommends that the board discuss and come to a decision on this item. If a prospective grantee proposed a multi-year project longer than roughly 5 years, for example, staff would recommend that we break this multi-year project into phases, and then each major phase would go to the SFBRA Board for authorization.

d. Initial Application Screening for Eligibility and Readiness:

- i. Staff recommends initial application screening by SFBRA Staff based on project eligibility and readiness. The purpose of initial screening would be to first rule out any projects that are not eligible under the four programs outlined in Measure AA, do not meet the objectives of the enabling legislation, or are not within the geographic purview of SFBRA and Measure AA. The initial screening would also eliminate projects that will not have CEQA completed in time to go to the SFBRA Board within the next 12 months.

e. Application Evaluation

- i. Unlike the initial screening, which would eliminate projects that are not eligible or not ready, the next phase of review would involve evaluating the remaining projects to determine which are the highest priority for funding.
- ii. SFBRA staff, members of the Advisory Committee, and outside technical experts would conduct scoring. At least three people will review each application, more if the project is especially large or complicated. Screening would not be the same as prioritization, and prioritization would be determined by scoring.
- iii. Staff recommends that evaluation criteria be a combination of both quantitative and qualitative criteria.
 1. The Conservancy has previously found success in combining quantitative scoring with qualitative comments, which assist in highlighting particular strengths and weaknesses of proposals and help clarify differences of opinion between reviewers.
 2. Quantitative scores can provide direct relative judgements of how well projects meet particular prioritization criteria in the Guidelines. Qualitative feedback from reviewers supplements the numerical scores, adding needed information about the quality, clarity, feasibility, and benefits of projects that reviewers may find important to communicate. This can help particularly with projects of greatly varying types, scales, and geographies where direct numerical comparison can be difficult and/or misleading.

f. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidance:

- i. Staff recommends including information that prospective grantees cannot apply for both planning and implementation of a project in the same application and funding cycle, and that these two phases will have to be considered separately, due to CEQA. Planning activities are typically exempt from CEQA, while implementation phases typically require a lengthier analysis under CEQA (e.g. an Environmental Impact Report). Staff believes the SFBRA will most effectively fund projects in a role as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, relying on documents provided by proponents or other lead agencies. The SFBRA board could authorize funding the planning and environmental analysis for a given project, and then later authorize funding for final design and implementation of the project, at the time that CEQA findings can be based on completed CEQA documents.