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Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee Meeting and Special Meeting of the Board of Directors

Wednesday, November 05, 2025 4:30 P.M.

### Committee Members:

Anthony R. Fellow, Chair Edward Chavez, Vice-Chair

\*The Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee meeting is noticed as a joint committee meeting with the Board of Directors for the purpose of compliance with the Brown Act. Members of the Board who are not assigned to the Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee may attend and participate as members of the Board, whether or not a quorum of the Board is present. In order to preserve the function of the Committee as advisory to the Board, members of the Board who are not assigned to the Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee will not vote on matters before the Committee.

### Communications

- 1. Call to Order
- 2. Public Comment

### Discussion/Action

- 3. Washington DC Update
- 4. Federal Bill Summaries and Positions (Staff memorandum enclosed)
- 5. Soto Resources Contract (Staff memorandum enclosed)
- 6. ADHOC Committee Report Puente Hills Regional Park Sponsorship (Staff memorandum enclosed)
- 7. Water Education Grants (Staff memorandum to be distributed)

### **Oral Reports**

### **Other Matters**

9.

### **Adjournment**

Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 03, 2025 at 4:30 p.m.



American Disabilities Act Compliance (Government Code Section 54954.2(a))

To request special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the District office at (626) 443-2297.







### Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District

October 28, 2025

Ana Schwab, Lowry Crook, Michael Brain, Madeline Voitier, Chris Keosian, and Alex Dunn



The federal government officially shut down at 12:01 a.m. EDT on October 1, 2025, after Congress failed to enact Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Appropriations bills or an extension of FY25 Appropriations through a Continuing Resolution (CR).

As of the date of this report, the shutdown remains unresolved, with Congressional leaders in both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives unable to reach a funding agreement. Democrats are pushing to include an extension of enhanced Affordable Care Act premium tax credits and seeking assurances that the Trump Administration will obligate appropriated funds as intended by Congress. Republicans insist that any deal must first reopen the government through a "clean" CR. The Republican Conference argues that potential healthcare reforms could be addressed subsequently rather than paired with the funding measure, but Democrats remain skeptical.

The shutdown's impact varies across federal agencies. Some continue operations using "no-year" appropriations or mandatory funding authorized through standalone legislation, while others face significant disruptions.

### Padilla Suggests Openness to PFAS Passive Receiver Liability Exemption

Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) recently expressed conditional support for legislation limiting Superfund liability for passive receivers of PFAS. His position comes as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) affirmed that it would uphold the designation of PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act* (CERCLA). In announcing its decision to uphold this rule, EPA stated that Congress will have to pass new statutory language to fully address EPA's concerns with passive receiver liability.

Senator Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), the Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, previously advocated for such legislation and Padilla's





openness suggests a renewal of potential bipartisan momentum. However, no Senate bill addressing PFAS passive receiver liability has been introduced in the 119th Congress, and legal challenges to the CERCLA rule may continue to delay progress.

### Michael Boren Confirmed as USDA Undersecretary Amid Senate Rule Shift

On October 7, 2025, Michael Boren was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in a 51-47 party-line vote to serve as Undersecretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment. In his new role, Undersecretary Boren will oversee both the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. These agencies each have significant sway over policies impacting water use and quality.

His confirmation was part of a broader package of over 100 executive nominees advanced under newly revised Senate rules that allow *en bloc* consideration of lower-level agency appointments.

Boren's nomination had drawn criticism from Democratic lawmakers, who raised concerns about his past dealings with the Forest Service. Despite this opposition, his confirmation proceeded alongside other energy and environment nominees as Senate Republicans pushed to expedite appointments that faced prolonged delays prior to the rules change.

### Chairman Mike Lee Proposes Forest Service Reorganization Legislation

Senator Mike Lee (R-UT), Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, is advancing draft legislation titled the *Forest Service Reorganization Act of 2025*. The proposal seeks to transfer the U.S. Forest Service from the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to the Department of the Interior—reversing a 1905 administrative shift initiated under President Theodore Roosevelt.

Notable provisions of the draft legislation include:

- > Reclassifying the Forest Service Chief as a political appointee subject to U.S. Senate confirmation
- > Establishing a standalone Wildland Fire Agency within the Interior Department

Supporters argue that the Interior Department may offer a more efficient and conservation-focused approach to land management given Interior's other portfolios. Critics, however, caution that the transition could disrupt longstanding partnerships between the Forest Service and state/local governments and diminish the agency's agricultural and forestry research roles—including conservation efforts.







Previous attempts to reorganize the Forest Service have faced resistance. A 2009 Government Accountability Office (GAO) review found that while some efficiencies might be gained, keeping the Forest Service within USDA better supports its traditional strengths in working with rural stakeholders.

The proposal comes amid broader efforts by the Trump Administration to reorient the Forest Service's priorities toward timber production, shifting emphasis away from research, conservation, and forest management programs.

### Senate Agriculture Committee Advances Fix Our Forests Act

On October 21, 2025 the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee voted 18–5 to advance S. 1462, the *Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA)*. Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA) voted against the measure. Ranking Democrat Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) supported the bill but noted there is still room for improvements, particularly the need for a plan to fund new programs. The House passed its version, *H.R. 471*, in January with strong bipartisan support, followed by a March hearing before the Senate Subcommittee on Conservation, Forestry, Natural Resources, and Biotechnology.

The legislation seeks to accelerate forest management projects in high-risk "firesheds" identified by the U.S. Forest Service. It would expand categorical exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) from 3,000 to 10,000 acres in certain areas and place new limits on court injunctions that could delay forest restoration work. A new interagency board would also advise on the creation of additional "firesheds" across national forest lands.

Other provisions promote prescribed fire, wildfire prevention education, and community resilience programs such as fire-safe construction and defensible space planning. Notably, the measure does not include dedicated funding to support these initiatives. This is a point of contention among Democrats, who noted ongoing workforce shortages at the Forest Service following recent budget and staffing reductions.

The Senate bill will now be considered by the full Senate. Upon passage, the Senate and House bills will be reconciled in a Conference Committee.

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# Federal Budget/Appropriations

### Budget Standoff Intensifies Amid Shutdown; No Current Funding Deal Exists

As the ongoing federal government shutdown persists, tensions are escalating between Democratic lawmakers and White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russell Vought.

President Donald Trump has suggested that the government shutdown could be made more "painful" through targeted cuts to federal programs aligned with Democratic priorities. At the same time, the Administration sought to ease potential pain points of the shutdown for Americans who rely on essential federal programs by reprogramming discretionary funds from the U.S. Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Agriculture. These efforts were meant to ensure that U.S. military service members and families receiving Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits did not miss payments in mid-October.

However, the discretionary funds used to bolster the USDA's hunger prevention programs are beginning to run dry. As a result, many states may be forced to halt delivery of these nutrition benefits at the start of November. If funding lapses, families depending on food assistance programs could be left without support until the government reopens—a development that could significantly shift the political dynamics of the shutdown and pressure lawmakers to reach a funding agreement.

In the U.S. Senate, which remains in session and continues legislative business despite the shutdown, Republicans sought to pressure Democrats into advancing the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Defense Appropriations bill. Democrats rebuffed those efforts and voted down consideration of the \$852 billion Defense funding measure, arguing that they want a broader deal on spending to end the government shutdown.

Significant Appropriations bills like the FY26 Defense Appropriations measure could serve as the vehicle for the Senate's second "minibus," but Democrats are seeking assurances on the final package before committing their support. For example, some are pushing for the inclusion of the Labor-HHS-Education measure in the package—a move Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) plans to pursue once the Defense bill advances. Senate Appropriations Chair Susan Collins (R-ME) also aims to include the Transportation-HUD





and Commerce-Justice-Science bills in the minibus, though adding additional measures would require unanimous consent.

Advancing these measures would require Democratic cooperation, which remains uncertain amid the broader dispute over the Administration's adherence to Congressional funding authority.

Notably, any bipartisan Senate Appropriations legislation would need to be negotiated via Conference Committee with House Appropriators. Uncertainty remains over whether the Senate can formally conference its first minibus—containing Military Construction-VA, Agriculture-FDA, and Legislative Branch spending bills—with the House. Top appropriators have been informally negotiating for weeks, with Republicans saying the talks are nearly complete and Democrats arguing GOP leaders have yet to fully engage.

In contrast, the U.S. House of Representatives has not convened since September 19, 2025, when it passed a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund the government at FY25 levels through November 21, 2025. Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA-04) is weathering criticism for keeping the House out of session during the shutdown. He has defended the decision, asserting that the House fulfilled its responsibility and that it is now up to Senate Democrats to provide the votes needed to reopen the government.

Due to the prolonged nature of the shutdown, recent discussions have shifted toward concerns that the November 21 deadline—mere weeks away—set in the House-passed CR as it may not now provide sufficient time for appropriators to finalize a full-year FY26 funding agreement. As a result, the need for a longer-term CR could compel Speaker Johnson to reconvene the House before the shutdown concludes.

### Administration Begins "Reductions in Force" at Agencies; Federal Judge Issues TRO

During the shutdown, OMB Director Vought has questioned whether or not furloughed workers will receive back pay and initiated significant layoffs—actions some lawmakers argue violate both the *Government Employee Fair Treatment Act of 2019* and the *Antideficiency Act of 1982*. Labor unions representing federal employees have challenged the layoffs—formally known as Reductions in Force, or RIFs—in Federal Court. Additionally, some Senate Democrats have discussed requiring a reversal of the RIFs as part of any funding deal to reopen government.

The Administration began issuing layoff notices on October 10, 2025 to thousands of federal employees across multiple agencies. The notices cite the shutdown as the reason for the RIF.





Agencies first affected by the RIF notices include:

- ➤ **Department of Energy**: Offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy; Clean Energy Demonstration; State and Community Energy Programs; and Minority Economic Impact
- > Environmental Protection Agency: Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division
- > Department of the Treasury: Community Development Financial Institutions Fund
- > Department of Homeland Security: Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency
- > Department of Health and Human Services: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- > **Department of the Interior**: Office of the Secretary, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Parks Service

Additional RIFs, including those at other agencies, are possible. However, on October 15, 2025, U.S. District Judge Susan Illston of the Northern District of California issued a Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) halting the Administration's use of the shutdown as justification for the layoffs until further court proceedings. This TRO is the latest action highlighting the ongoing legal dispute between the Administration and the federal judiciary over workforce protections and program funding.

A hearing on the case is set for October 28, 2025, where Judge Illston will hear arguments on whether to issue a formal injunction against the Trump Administration's planned RIFs.

### Administration/Agency

### Scott Cameron Named Acting Head of Bureau of Reclamation

Scott Cameron has been appointed as Acting Commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), effective October 1, 2025. His appointment was formalized through a Secretarial Order issued by U.S. Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum.

Cameron previously served as Acting Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior. He steps into the USBR role following the U.S. Senate's confirmation of Andrea Travnicek to his previous position.





This leadership change follows the Trump Administration's withdrawal of Ted Cooke's nomination to serve as USBR Commissioner amid Congressional opposition. A new nominee has not yet been announced.

As Acting Commissioner, Cameron will continue to lead federal high-stakes negotiations on the future management of the Colorado River. He succeeds David Palumbo, a long-serving career official who had been serving in the role. The Colorado River Basin states face a critical deadline of November 11, 2025, set by the Department of the Interior, by which the states must submit a primary operations agreement.

### Interior Department Releases Operations Plan for Federal Government Shutdown

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced that nearly half of its 58,600 employees will be furloughed due to the ongoing federal government shutdown. Contingency plans released just before the funding deadline indicate that more than 29,000 staff members across the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and other Interior agencies have been temporarily placed on leave.

Employees supporting the Administration's energy priorities, budget development, and public safety functions are expected to continue working. These include staff involved in managing oil, gas, and mineral development, wildland firefighting, and law enforcement.

The Office of the Secretary will furlough over 80% of its workforce. Other agencies face significant reductions: about 66% of Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) employees, 64% of NPS staff, and 55% of USGS employees are on leave.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), which manages water infrastructure and hydroelectric power across the West, will furlough 241 of its 4,111 employees (5.9%). Most USBR operations are funded through sources other than annual appropriations—including "no year" appropriations and royalties from energy projects, land sales, and project repayments. As a result, critical functions such as water delivery and dam safety will continue, though planning and permitting activities may face delays.

Most National Parks remain open with limited services funded by park fee revenues. However, museums and visitor centers are closed, and visitors have been advised to enter at their own risk due to reduced maintenance and staffing.





At the BLM, roughly 56% of employees will continue working, particularly those tied to the declared "national energy emergency." These include personnel handling energy and mineral permitting. Similar exceptions apply at the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has also furloughed about 42,000 of its 88,000 employees. Most Forest Service personnel will remain on duty due to wildfire and public safety responsibilities, though new timber sales and conservation programs are largely paused. The Department has warned that the shutdown could negatively impact farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

The FWS announced its plans to keep about 2,700 staff active, including personnel required to safeguard facilities and maintain national fish hatcheries. Many Wildlife Refuges will remain open to the public where access does not require federal staffing, but visitor centers and buildings are closed.

With the shutdown continuing, long-term impacts to federal land management, energy development, and rural support programs remain unclear.

### EPA Widens Furloughs Amid Prolonged Government Shutdown

As the federal government shutdown continues, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has significantly expanded furloughs across the agency. Initially operating under its September 29, 2025, Shutdown Contingency Plan, the EPA used carryover funds to maintain limited operations. Approximately 11% of its workforce—1,734 out of over 15,000 employees—were designated to continue performing essential functions. These included emergency environmental responses, enforcement actions, and work at high-risk Superfund sites, supported by alternative funding sources such as Superfund taxes and fees under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act.

As those funds dwindled, the agency began issuing broader furlough notices. On October 9, 2025, the EPA initiated formal furloughs, suspending most new grants, civil enforcement inspections, non-essential Superfund work, and regulatory approvals. By October 20, 2025, the agency issued its largest wave of furloughs to date, affecting a wide range of offices and functions.

The latest furloughs have impacted the Offices of Air and Water—excluding their permitting functions—the Office of Land and Emergency Management, enforcement and administrative staff, IT personnel, regional counsel, and laboratory employees. Superfund-related work remains mostly exempt for now. The EPA has not publicly confirmed the total number of employees affected in this latest round of furloughs.





The shutdown comes amid broader organizational changes at the EPA. Staffing levels had already declined to 15,166 employees prior to the shutdown—down 1,571 from March 2025. A planned restructuring could eliminate over 3,700 positions, potentially reducing staffing to its lowest level since 1985.

### New U.S. Tariffs Announced by President Trump

On September 26, 2025, President Trump unveiled a new set of tariffs targeting several categories of imported goods, further escalating his Administration's assertive approach to international trade negotiations. These measures took effect on October 1, 2025 and include:

- ➤ Pharmaceuticals: A 100% tariff will be applied to branded and patented drug imports unless the manufacturer is actively constructing a facility in the United States. Generic drugs and companies with U.S.-based production are exempt. Industry analysts suggest the impact may be limited due to existing domestic operations and exemptions. On October 1, 2025, the Trump Administration paused these planned tariffs as it attempts to negotiate agreements with large pharmaceutical companies;
- ➤ Heavy-Duty Trucks: Imports will face a 25% tariff, effective November 1, 2025. The Administration argues this will shield American manufacturers from foreign competition. However, trade groups warn of increased costs, noting that many truck components are sourced from countries such as Mexico and Canada;
- Furniture and Cabinetry: Additional tariffs on certain wood-products were imposed on October 14, 2025, with escalation clauses included if trade agreements are not reached by January 1, 2026. An initial 25% tariff will be imposed on kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities may rise to 50%,, while upholstered furniture will be subject to an initial 25% tariff, that may increase to 30%. These actions respond to what the Administration describes as excessive foreign imports harming U.S. producers.

These tariffs are part of a broader strategy that has defined President Trump's second term, building on previous levies affecting steel, aluminum, timber, and automotive sectors, as well as increased duties imposed on dozens of foreign nations.

President Trump also stated that a portion of the revenue generated from these tariffs would be allocated to support American farmers—a sector significantly impacted by rising equipment costs and reduced access to foreign markets due to ongoing trade tensions. Specific details of the support plan were not provided, and implementation of any farm aid may be delayed by the ongoing federal government shutdown.





Additionally, President Trump announced on October 10, 2025, that the United States will implement a 100% tariff on all Chinese imports beginning November 1, 2025. This decision follows China's declaration of broad export controls, including restrictions on rare earth minerals essential to semiconductor manufacturing. President Trump described China's actions as "extraordinarily aggressive" and characterized the U.S. response as necessary to counter a global threat to trade stability.

On Sunday, October 27, 2025, in advance of an expected meeting between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced that the U.S. and China have agreed to a framework of a deal and that the U.S. would remove the threat of 100% tariffs.

### <u>President Trump Quickly Reversed Course on USMCA Review Renegotiation Plans, Ends</u> Talks with Canada Over Political Ad

At an October 7, 2025, White House meeting with Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, President Donald Trump expressed openness to renegotiating the United States—Mexico—Canada Agreement (USMCA) or pursuing separate bilateral trade deals with Canada and Mexico. He emphasized securing the best outcome for the United States, while also acknowledging Canadian interests.

The USMCA, signed in 2020, is scheduled for a mandatory review in 2026. Trump's remarks introduce uncertainty over whether the U.S. will seek to extend the trilateral pact or pivot toward bilateral negotiations.

Throughout 2025, Canadian and U.S. officials have worked to advance sector-specific agreements in steel, aluminum, and energy amid rising trade tensions. During the Oval Office meeting, Prime Minister Carney underscored Canada's substantial investment in the United States and suggested further increases contingent on both nations agreeing to favorable trade terms.

Under the USMCA's provisions, all three member countries must agree in 2026 to extend the agreement beyond its initial 16-year term. Without consensus, the pact would enter annual reviews, with potential termination in 2036.

However, on October 23, 2025, President Trump abruptly terminated all trade negotiations with Canada in reaction to an Ontario-produced ad using President Ronald Reagan's voice to criticize U.S. tariffs. Trump claimed the ad was "fake" and accused Canada of attempting







to influence U.S. court decisions regarding tariffs. Trump further asserted that tariffs are vital to U.S. national security and the economy.

This move will further complicate ongoing discussions over USMCA review, raising uncertainty about future negotiations and the potential for broader trade disputes among the three countries.

Judicial/Courts

### Legal and Regulatory Dispute Over California's Vehicle Emissions Standards Continues

California's authority to set its own vehicle emissions standards is at the center of an intensifying legal and regulatory dispute involving U.S. Congress, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and state officials.

On September 26, 2025, House Republican leaders filed an amicus brief in California's lawsuit against the Trump Administration supporting Congress' use of the Congressional Review Act (CRA) to nullify three Biden-era waivers permitting California's stricter pollution rules. Republicans contend that California's case undermines congressional rulemaking authority and violates separation-of-powers principles, while Democratic lawmakers argue that the CRA was misapplied because the waivers are not formal rules. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) and Senate parliamentarian both previously found that the waivers did not constitute rules subject to the CRA. This case highlights ongoing tensions over the balance of federal and state powers in environmental regulation.

Following the congressional repeal of the waivers, California state regulators decided to pursue an alternative approach to maintain vehicle emissions oversight. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) proposed reverting to its Obama-era emissions standards, which predate the state's more ambitious 2022 mandate for 100 percent zero-emission vehicles sales by 2035. Federal officials objected to this move, asserting that EPA maintains authority over such standards and is unlikely to approve the proposal. EPA submitted official comments on CARB's proposal and separately characterized it as a "scare tactic" meant to pressure the vehicle industry into making more electric vehicle commitments.

The policy confrontation reflects broader federal-state conflict over clean transportation authority and regulatory certainty. California contends that reverting to earlier standards







would clarify its continued ability to certify vehicles and maintain public health protections. Meanwhile, congressional and administrative opponents argue that recent federal decisions preclude the state from enforcing either current or prior rules without new EPA approval. The outcome of this case could determine how much flexibility states retain to pursue climate and clean transportation goals independent of federal oversight.

### Background

On June 12, 2025, President Trump signed a CRA measure blocking California's electric vehicle (EV) mandate, following a contentious partisan debate over its fast-track passage without a filibuster. President Trump framed the action as protecting the U.S. auto-industry and part of a broader Republican effort to counter progressive state policies in California.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta (D-CA) promptly filed suit against the federal government, arguing that Congress and the Trump Administration overstepped their authority in revoking the waiver. The lawsuit alleges that the Trump Administration's use of the CRA to revoke California's waivers violated federalism, separation of powers, and required legal procedures.

Attorney General Bonta was joined by 10 other states Attorneys General in filing the suit. The outcome of this litigation will have far-reaching impacts as 17 states and the District of Columbia follow California's Air Quality Standards. The 10 states who joined California's suite all have authority to follow California's Air Quality Standards.

# Federal Funding Opportunities

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - National Fish Passage Program FY25

The National Fish Passage Program provides technical and financial assistance to partners to remove instream barriers and restore aquatic connectivity, while also improving community safety and supporting local economies. Projects under this program benefit communities by reducing flood risk, improving recreational opportunities, enhancing transportation infrastructure, and restoring native fish populations and aquatic ecosystems.

Examples of eligible projects include:





- > Dam removals
- > Culvert replacements
- > Floodplain restoration
- > Installation of fishways

Eligible applicants for this grant program include state, county, city, and township governments, special district governments, and nonprofit organizations.

A total of \$10,000,000 is available in funding for this program. Award amounts range from \$1 to \$1,000,000, with approximately 100 awards expected. No cost share is required.

Applications are due December 31, 2025.

More information can be found here.



### **FEDERAL REPORT**



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### **MEMORANDUM**

Date: November 5, 2025

**To:** Government and Community Affairs Committee and Board of Directors

From: General Manager

Subject: Federal Bill Summaries and Positions

### **Recommendation**

Approve staff recommendations for federal bills H.R. 4733, H.R. 5414, H.R. 5513, H.R. 5566, and H.R 5661, which align with Upper Water's 2025–26 Legislative Policy Principles adopted by the Board in January 2025.

### Federal Bill Analysis

### H.R. 4733 – Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act

Introduced in the House on July 23, 2025, by Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL-17).

**Summary:** The bill would make permanent a national water assistance program by directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services and EPA Administrator to provide grants to states, territories, and tribes to help low-income households pay drinking water and wastewater bills. The program would align eligibility with existing federal assistance programs like LIHEAP, TANF, and SNAP, ensuring consistent income requirements. It would also provide technical support to small, rural, and Tribal water systems to improve service delivery.

**Action:** On July 23, 2025, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Support

### H.R. 5414 - DAMS Act

**Introduced** in the House on September 16, 2025, by Rep. Jefferson Van Drew (R-NJ-2). **Summary:** The bill would reauthorize the National Dam Safety Program, extending the authorization of appropriations for the rehabilitation of high hazard potential dams through 2031. The program, managed by FEMA, is a partnership between states, territories, federal agencies, and other stakeholders. It works to:

- Educate the public and dam owners about dam safety;
- Implement States to use a risk-based priority system for identifying such dams;
- Support decision-makers with access to data, tools, and resources; and
- Improve overall dam safety through collaboration and information sharing.

**Action:** On September 16, 2025, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and on September 17, 2025, referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Support

## H.R. 5513 – To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to make certain technology investments eligible for additional subsidization, and for other purposes.

**Introduced** in the House on September 19, 2025, by Rep. Vince Fong (R-CA-20).

**Summary:** The bill would amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify eligible uses under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund for advanced software and monitoring tools, ultimately empowering communities to modernize their water management systems. It authorizes the implementation or use of processes, materials, techniques, or technologies—including software for asset management, operational analysis, and advanced digital construction management systems—to support water- and energy-efficiency goals, mitigate stormwater runoff, and carry out projects that are cost-effective and sustainably planned, designed, and constructed.

**Action:** On September 19, 2025, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and on September 20, 2025, referred to the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Support

### H.R. 5566 – Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act

**Introduced** in the House on September 26, 2025, by Reps. Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24) and David Valadao (R-CA-22)

**Summary:** The bill would reauthorize three critical federal programs to help address the cost of water system resilience by offering competitive grants to help communities:

- Enhance water supply reliability;
- Increase resilience to natural disasters, extreme weather, and cybersecurity threats; and
- Invest in innovative technological solutions.

The Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program, originally established in the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, serves small and disadvantaged communities. Complementary programs, including the Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program and the Midsize and Large Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program, support wastewater systems and larger drinking water systems. All three programs are set to expire next year, and the bill would reauthorize funding through 2031 to ensure that the nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure remains resilient to a wide range of threats. **Action:** On September 26, 2025, the bill was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Support

### H.R. 5661 – Water Preservation and Affordability Act

**Introduced** in the House on September 30, 2025, by Reps. Emilia Strong Sykes (D-OH-13) **Summary:** The Water Preservation and Affordability Act would amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to promote the use of "resource preservation techniques," including water and energy efficiency, stormwater mitigation, and sustainable project planning. The bill would require the incorporation of these techniques in federally funded water projects and authorize increased funding for the Wastewater Efficiency Grant Pilot Program and the Clean Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Program through FY2031.

**Action:** On September 30, 2025, the bill was referred to the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Support



### **MEMORANDUM**

5. **ACTION** 

DATE:

November 5, 2025

TO:

Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee

FROM:

General Manager

SUBJECT:

Authorize the General Manager to execute a professional services contract with

Soto Resources for as-needed services for grant assistance in the amount not to

exceed \$75,000 through June of 2027.

### **Recommendation**

Authorize the General Manager to execute a professional services contract with Soto Resources for as-needed services for grant assistance in the amount not to exceed \$75,000 through June of 2027.

### **Background**

Upper Water has been very successful in securing grant funding to help support many of the agency's conservation and recycled water projects. Since 2007, over \$28 million in federal and state grant funds have been awarded to Upper Water.

Grant writing efforts have been a joint effort by staff and grant writing consultants. Continuing the effort to successfully pursue grant funding, staff recommends retaining Soto Resources to track and identify grant opportunities for Upper Water's priorities and assist with grant writing and reporting.

Since 2015, Upper Water has utilized Soto Resources for grant assistance and was successful in acquiring \$10 million in grants for various water efficiency and watershed restoration projects. Most recently, Soto Resources assisted staff in securing two U.S. Bureau of Reclamation grants for the Water Smart Home Kit program and the Plant Voucher program. Currently, Upper Water has a pending federal grant application to assist with drafting of a golden mussel control plan.

Staff is recommending that the Board authorize a new agreement for grant assistance with Soto Resources for the next two years. Soto Resources has submitted a fee schedule which is attached. Additionally, retaining Soto Resources will allow Upper Water to continually seek alternative funding opportunities that will assist in meeting Upper Water's strategic goals.

**ATTACHMENT** 





October 30, 2025

Patty Cortez
Assistant General Manager
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Subject: Proposal for General Grant Assistance Services for Upper San Gabriel Valley

Municipal Water District Projects

### Dear Patty:

It has been a pleasure working with you to provide grant assistance services for Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Upper Water, District). Upper Water is an important client of Soto Resources, and together we have secured \$2,811,500 in grant funding for important District projects. We are excited about this opportunity to continue our success with you and your team. Per your request, this proposal is to continue to provide general grant assistance services for Upper Water, including grant funding research & tracking, application preparation and submittal, and funding agreement management and reporting, and the positive results that you've come to expect from Soto Resources. We take great pride in the level of expertise we offer, based on over 20 years of experience.

Below is the scope of work and fee schedule for providing general grant assistance services for Upper Water.

### Scope of Work

Soto Resources' general grant assistance services may include, but are not limited to the following:

### Task 1. Meetings and Priority Project List

Participate in meetings to discuss priority projects and the funding needed. Soto Resources will develop and maintain a priority project list. The Soto Resources team will attend meetings with District staff, as appropriate, to review and discuss the status of and updates to the District's priority projects in need of funding. Based on our discussions, Soto Resources' efforts will focus on identifying funding for the following priority projects:



- 1. San Gabriel River Golden Mussel Control Project
- 2. Baldwin Park Learning Center Project
- 3. Conservation Incentives (rebates)
- 4. Drought tolerant landscaping for streets
- 5. Stormwater capture (already capture most water)
- 6. Water loss reduction (i.e., leak detection, smart meters)
- 7. Watershed Restoration Program
- 8. Water quality and water use efficiency (DAC focus)
- 9. Lead pipe replacement (DAC focus)
- 10. Water Smart Home Program (DAC focus)
- 11. Whittier Narrows Recycled Water Reliability Project
- 12. Angeles National Forest Post-Fire Infrastructure Improvements
- 13. Indirect Reuse Replenishment Project
- 14. Residential Plant Voucher Program

### Task 2. Funding Research

Soto Resources will research eligible funding opportunities (grants and loans) for the District's priority projects. Research efforts may also include the following:

- Contact funding agencies to discuss project eligibility and to achieve updated program information.
- Review grant funding guidelines, proposal solicitation packages (state grants), or funding opportunity announcements (federal grants) to determine project eligibility, maximum funding award amount, timeframe for completing the project, cost/level of effort to prepare the grant proposal, proposal due date, and competitiveness.
- Participate in funding agency meetings and attend workshops for selected opportunities.

The federal, state, and local funding opportunities that may be researched include, but are not limited to, the following:

### Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA)

Hazard Mitigation Grant Program

### United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- Reduction in Lead Exposure Via Drinking Water
- Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Loans Program

### United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR)

- WaterSMART: Water and Energy Efficiency Grant Program
- WaterSMART: Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects
- WaterSMART: Drought Response Program Drought Resiliency Projects
- WaterSMART: Drought Response Program Planning and Project Design



- WaterSMART: Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Projects
- WaterSMART: Environmental Water Resources Projects
- Water Conservation Field Services Program, Lower Colorado River Region
- Bay-Delta Restoration Program: CALFED Water Use Efficiency Grants

### California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

- Proposition 4 Projects related to Integrated Regional Water Management to improve climate resilience on a watershed basis
- Proposition 4 Groundwater Banking, Groundwater Recharge, or Instream Flow Projects that Support Conjunctive Use of Groundwater and Surface Water Supplies
- Proposition 4 Capital Investments in Brackish Desalination, Contaminant and Salt Removal, and Salinity Management Projects to Improve Water and Drought Resilience
- Proposition 4 Improve Water Data Management and Reactivate Existing Stream Gages and Deploy New Gages
- Proposition 4 Regional Conveyance Projects or Repairs to Existing Conveyances
- Proposition 4 Projects that Increase Water Conservation in Agricultural and Urban Areas
- Proposition 4 Flood Management Projects
- Proposition 4 Dam Safety and Climate Resilience Local Assistance Program
- Proposition 4 Riverine Stewardship Program
- Proposition 4 Urban Streams Restoration Program

### California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

- Watershed Restoration and Delta Water Quality and Ecosystem Restoration Grant Programs
- Environmental Enhancement Fund

### California Department of Parks and Recreation

- Recreational Trails Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund

### California Infrastructure and Economic Development Bank (IBank)

Proposition 4 Public financing of clean energy transmission projects

### California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)

 Proposition 4 Projects that improve conditions on wildlife refuges and wetland habitat areas



- Proposition 4 Nature and Climate Education and Research Facilities, Nonprofit Organizations and Public Institutions, Natural History Museums, California Zoos and Aquariums, and Geologic Heritage Sites
- Proposition 4 Improve Local Fire Prevention Capacity, Improve Forest Health and Resilience, and Reduce the Risk of Wildfire Spreading into Populated Areas from Wildlands
- Proposition 4 Forest health and watershed improvement projects in forests and other habitats
- Proposition 4 Urban Greening Program
- Proposition 4 Reduction of climate impacts on disadvantaged communities and vulnerable populations and the creation, protection, and expansion of outdoor recreation opportunities

### California Office of Emergency Service/Cal FIRE

- Proposition 4 Wildfire Mitigation Grant Program
- Proposition 4 Forest Health Program for long-term forest health projects.
- Proposition 4 Grants to conduct fuel reduction, structure hardening, create defensible space, reforestation, or targeted acquisitions to improve forest health and fire resilience
- Proposition 4 Urban Forests
- Proposition 4 Community Resilience Centers

### California Water Commission

Proposition 4 Water Storage Investment Program

### California Wildlife Conservation Board

- Proposition 4 Stream Flow Enhancement Program
- Proposition 4 Grant programs to protect and enhance fish and wildlife resources and habitat and achieve the state's biodiversity, public access, and conservation goals
- Proposition 4 Projects that improve habitat connectivity and establish wildlife crossings and corridors

### San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

- Wildfire Prevention Grant Program
- Proposition 4 San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy for watershed improvement, wildfire resilience, chaparral and forest restoration, and workforce development
- Proposition 4 Reduce risks of climate change impacts upon communities, fish and wildlife, and natural resources, and increase public access

### State Water Resources Control Board

• Drinking Water Grants & Loans (Clean, Safe and Reliable Drinking Water)



- Nonpoint Source Grant Program: U.S. EPA Clean Water Act Section 319
- Proposition 4 Grants and Loans that Improve Water Quality or Help to Provide Clean, Safe, and Reliable Drinking Water
- Proposition 4 Grants and Projects Related to Water Reuse and Recycling
- Proposition 4 Multiple-benefit Urban Stormwater Management
- Other Proposition 4 Funded Programs

### Task 3. Funding Matrix and Monthly Reporting for Priority Projects

Soto Resources will maintain a funding matrix (spreadsheet) summarizing the District's priority projects and identifying the potential funding opportunities for each. The funding matrix will provide important funding program information, including program name and agency, funding purpose, funding amounts, key dates/deadlines. The funding matrix will be provided via email as a monthly report on current funding opportunities for the District's Projects. As needed, a funding alert email may be submitted to District staff when funding information is timely and needs to be distributed prior to regularly scheduled meetings.

### Task 4. Grant Management and Reporting

Upon award of funding, grant management and reporting services will be provided to manage the grant/funding award. Grant management may include assisting the District with negotiation and execution of the Funding Agreement with the funding agency; understanding project implementation reporting and invoicing requirements; establishing grant close-out procedures; and setting up appropriate reporting documents for progress reports and invoicing. District staff will be responsible for the invoicing portion of the required grant/funding agreement reporting. The following projects have funding awards that require ongoing grant management and reporting for the term of the agreement:

- ➤ Water Smart Home Program Awarded \$150,000 from the USBR Water and Energy Efficiency Grant Program (federal)
- Residential Plant Voucher Program Awarded \$100,000 from the USBR Small-Scale Water Efficiency Projects Program (federal)

### Task 5. Additional services (As Needed)

Soto Resources will perform other required tasks for funding related efforts on an asneeded basis, as requested by the District. Soto Resources and subcontracted staff, as assigned, will work closely with Upper Water to communicate with funding agencies regarding District projects to identify funding opportunities and to determine whether or not to proceed with a grant or loan application (also known as Go/No-Go Process). Upper Water will be responsible for providing project information required to complete funding related tasks. When the District decides to pursue a funding opportunity, a separate proposal or task order for completing the grant or loan application will be provided by Soto Resources to the District, upon request. This is because the level of effort for application preparation depends significantly on both the application requirements and the amount of existing project information available.



### Fee Schedule

The table below shows the anticipated Soto Resources team member and bill rate required to perform the proposed services. The services will be performed on an hourly basis, for a total cost not to exceed \$75,000 through June 30, 2027. Invoices will be submitted on a monthly basis.

Name	Title/Position	Hourly Bill Rate
Joey Soto, M.S.	Principal/Project Manager/ Senior Grant Researcher/Writer	\$205
Jennifer Nevius, P.E.	Senior Engineer/Grant Researcher/Writer*	\$185
Jane Soule, P.E.	Engineer/Grant Researcher/Writer*	\$175

Notes: \*Subconsultant rate shown includes markup. Other direct costs such as copying, reproduction, delivery, postage, mileage (rates allowed by current IRS guidelines), are not included in the fee estimate and will be billed separately if incurred. Soto Resources reserves the right to adjust its hourly rates at the beginning of the calendar year for all ongoing contracts.

Please contact me with any questions. I look forward to working together to acquire more grant funding for Upper Water Projects!

Sincerely,

Ms. Joey Soto, M.S.

Principal

Soto Resources

30767 Gateway Place #505

Rancho Mission Viejo, CA 92694

Ph. 949-370-6079

Email joey@sotoresources.com



### **MEMORANDUM**

6. ACTION

DATE: November 5, 2025

TO: Government Affairs and Community Outreach Committee

**FROM:** General Manager

**SUBJECT:** ADHOC Report – Puente Hills Regional Park Sponsorship

### **Recommend Action**

Staff is seeking direction from the Board regarding the ADHOC Sponsorship Committee's review and recommendation of the Puente Hills Regional Park Sponsorship.

### **Background**

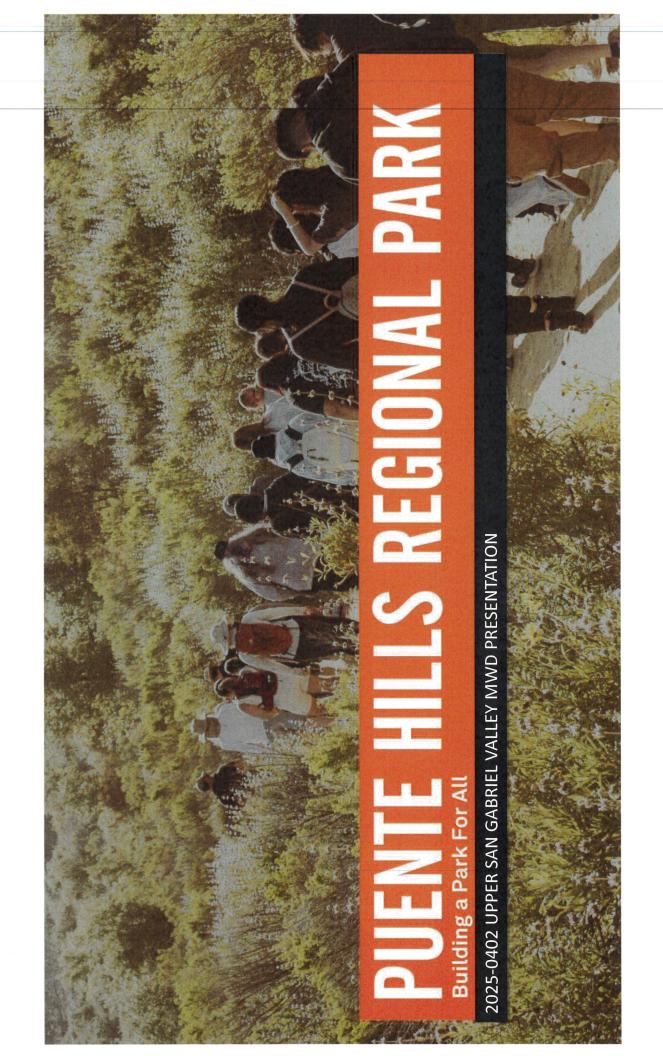
On May 28th, the Board of Directors formed an AdHoc committee consisting of Directors Katarina Garcia and Ed Chavez, to review two sponsorship requests. The goal of this committee was to review the Puente Hills Regional Park project and Valley County's Outdoor Education Center and Demonstration Garden. The committee met with staff on June 19th and again on September 4th to review both projects and assess the community value and need for the project, project alignment with Upper Water's strategic goals, and potential financial sponsorship opportunities.

The Puente Hills Regional Park project presented several sponsorship levels for the committee to consider, which can be found in the attachment. The sponsorship commitment would be for the Environmental Justice Center of the Puente Hills Regional Park, that recently broke ground in the Summer of 2025. Additional questions from the committee centered on potential for educational displays and water filling stations throughout the facility. The committee focused on one level – Named Learning Corner – which would provide for 500 SF of learning space at an outdoor area of the Environmental Justice Center. The corner will have a display opportunity for Upper Water to work with the designers to create a learning display. Some potential ideas would be an educational display on our local water supply, the water cycle and branding opportunities for Upper Water. The financial commitment for the Named Learning Corner is \$150,000. This funding would be allocated by the Board from existing reserves.

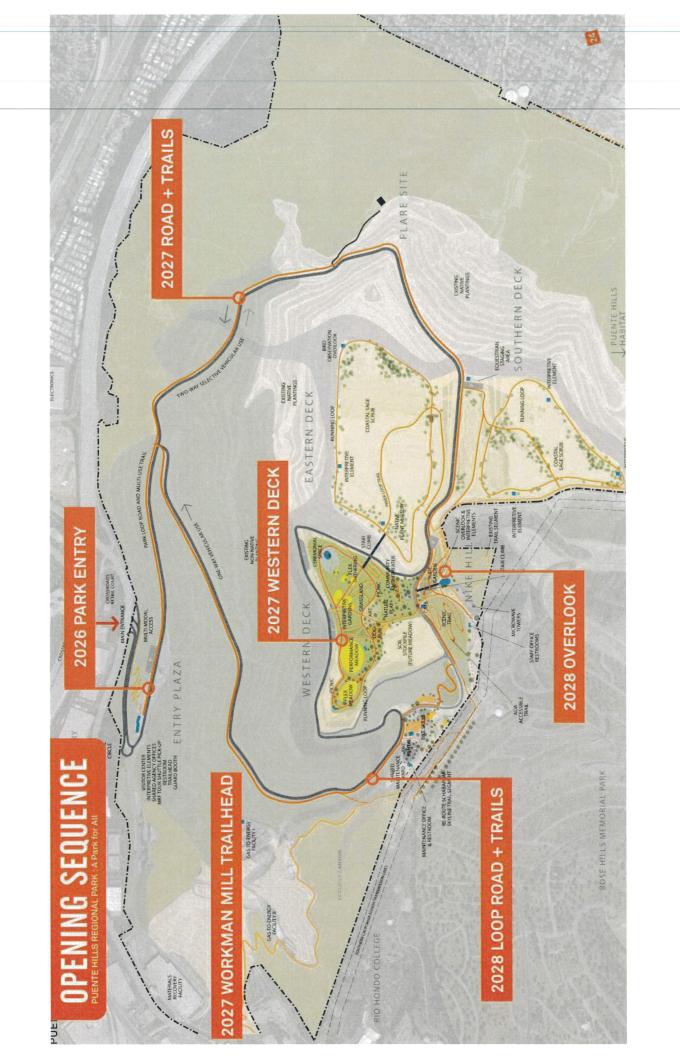
In regard to Valley County's Outdoor Education Center and Demonstration Garden, the committee recommended that staff continue to work with Valley County staff to find other grant funding sources to help with the project. The committee remains interested in the project and would like to bring this project back to the Board with a recommendation at a later date.

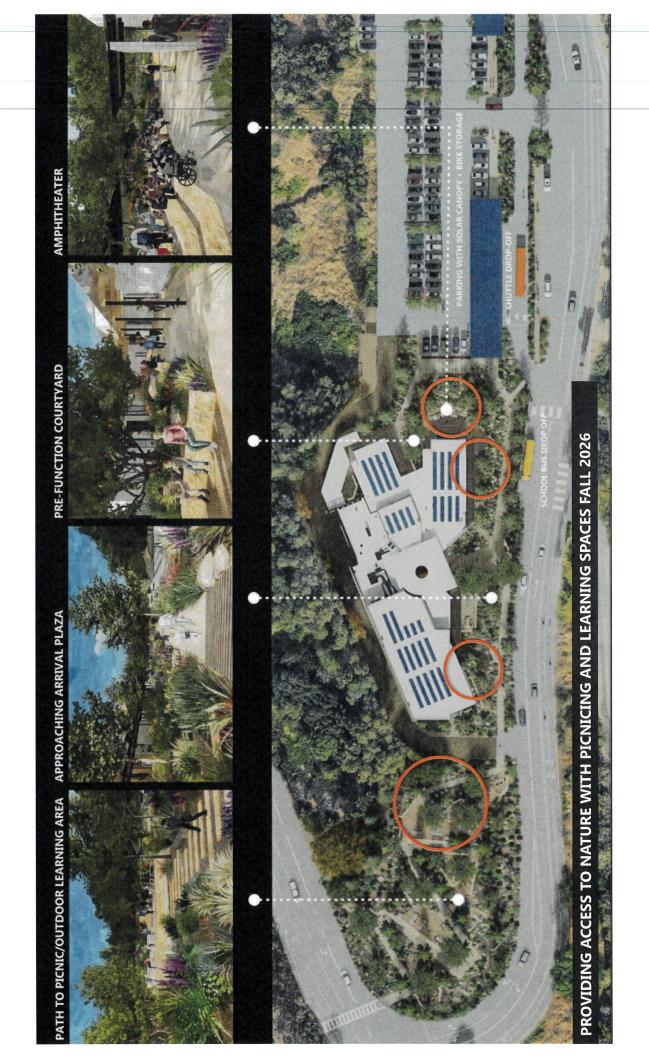
Staff is seeking direction from the Board on approving the AdHoc committee's recommendation to approve a sponsorship level of \$150,000 for the Named Learning Corner at the Puente Hills Regional Park, Environmental Justice Center.

**ATTACHMENT** 











**DESIGN EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION ENTIRE BUILDING IS A LEARNING TOOL FOR** OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ACTIVISTS BEST SUSTAINABLE, CARBON NEUTRAL

COOLING CENTER IN TIMES OF EXTREME HEAT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE HUB TO PROVIDE + TOOLS TO LEARN HOW TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE



( \* %)

= ON TARGET TO PROVIDE 105% ENERGY

**VENTILATION TO REDUCE ELECTRIC LOAD +** BEST PRACTICES PASSIVE STRATEGIES INCLUDING SHADING, NATURAL 100% ELECTRIC BUILDING



**DIVERSION OF CONSTRUCTION WASTE,** HIGH RECYCLED CONTENT MATERIALS, CIRCULAR ECONOMY SALVAGE **RETHINKING WASTE W/ 95%** 



18

**QUALITY DAYLIGHT + VIEWS & ACCESS** TO NATURE FOR OCCUPANT WELLNESS AND ENHANCED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

















IDENTIFYING SOURCES FOR RECLAIMED DOORS AND CABINETRY IN ADDITION TO DOWNCYCLED RECLAIMED MATERIALS IN ACOUSTICAL FINISHES



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INNOVATIVE SELF-SHADING, HIGH PERFORMANCE GLAZING

RESTORING LANDSCAPE TO SUPPORT NATIVE SPECIES INCLUDING POLINATORS, BIRDS AND OTHERS



MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION TO THE ENTIRE PARK, ROAD & OFF RIDE BIKES, HORSES, PEDESTRANS AND PUBLIC BUSES IN ADDITION TO PRIVAIT VEHICLES

ORIENTATION /PASSIVE EXTERIOR SHADING TO MINIMIZE HEAT GAIN APPROPRIATE SOLAR

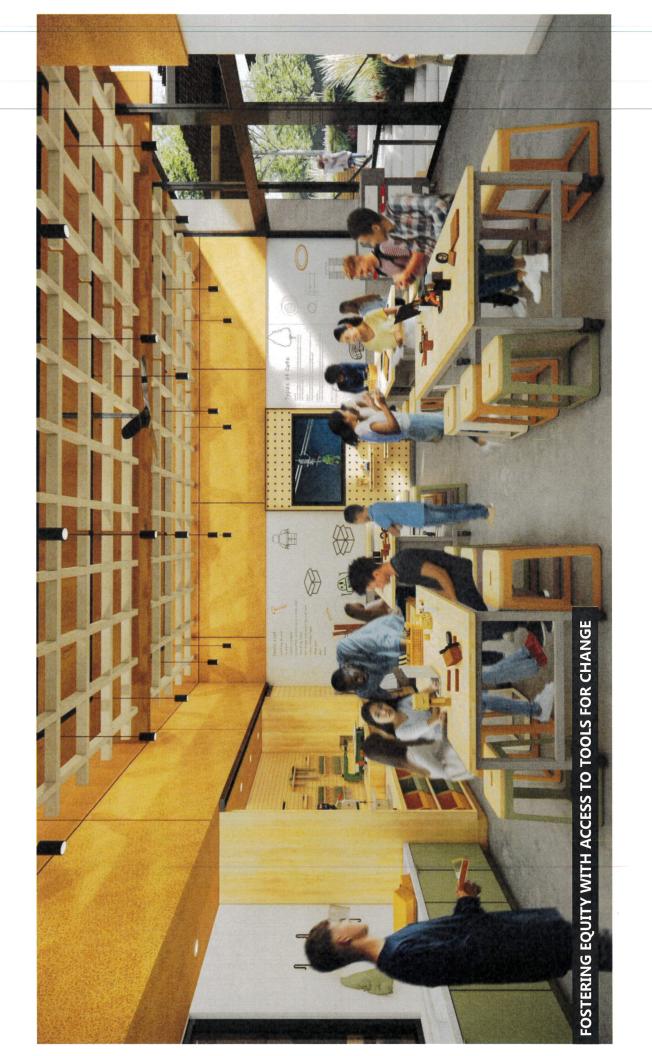
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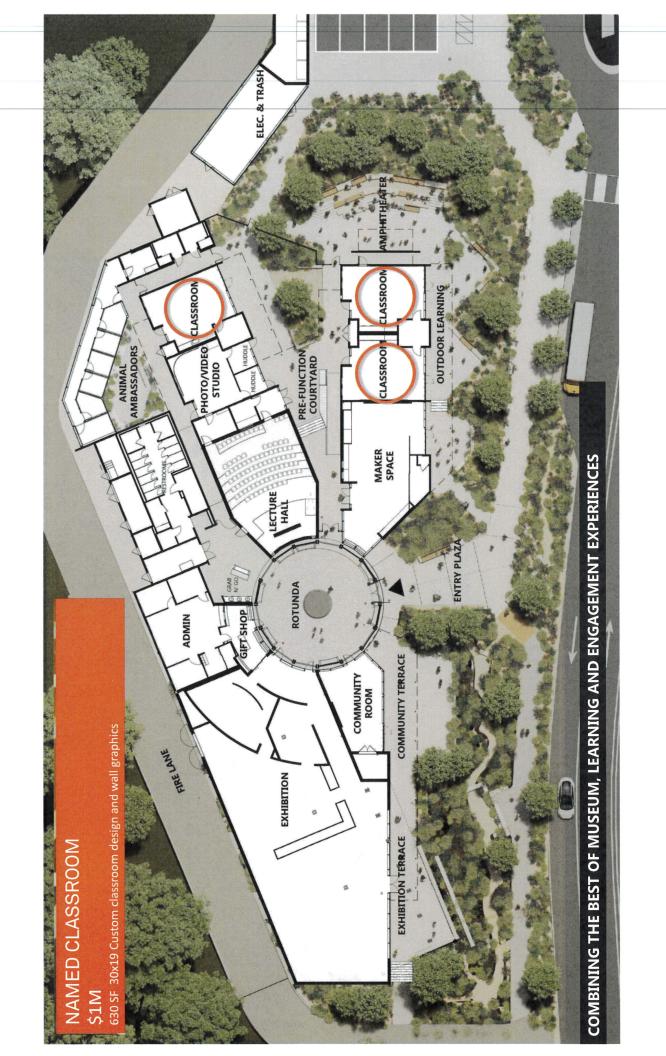


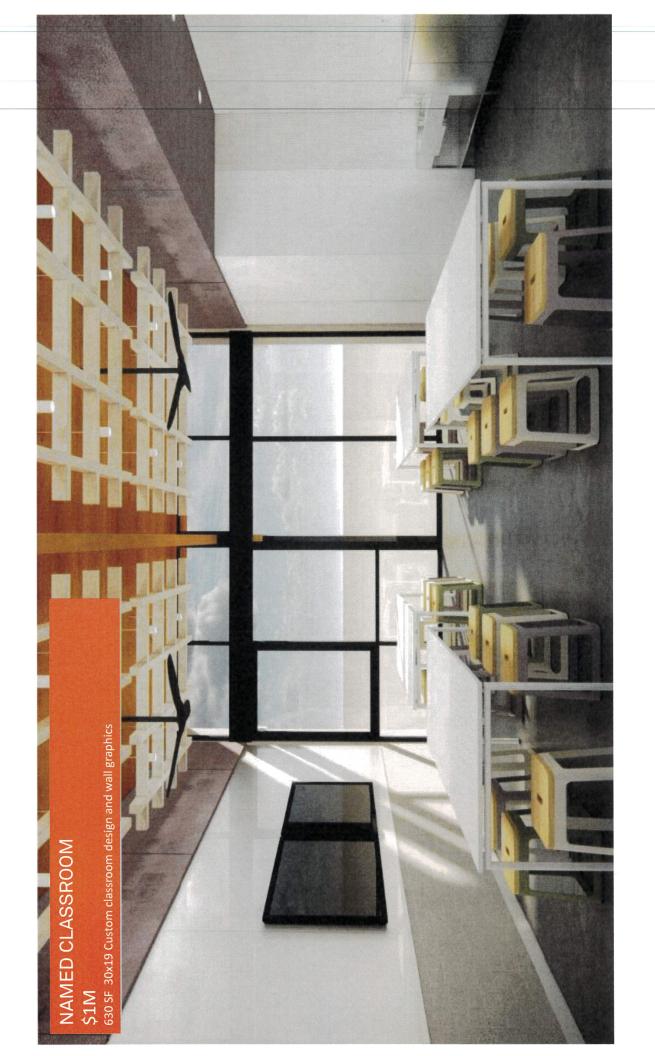


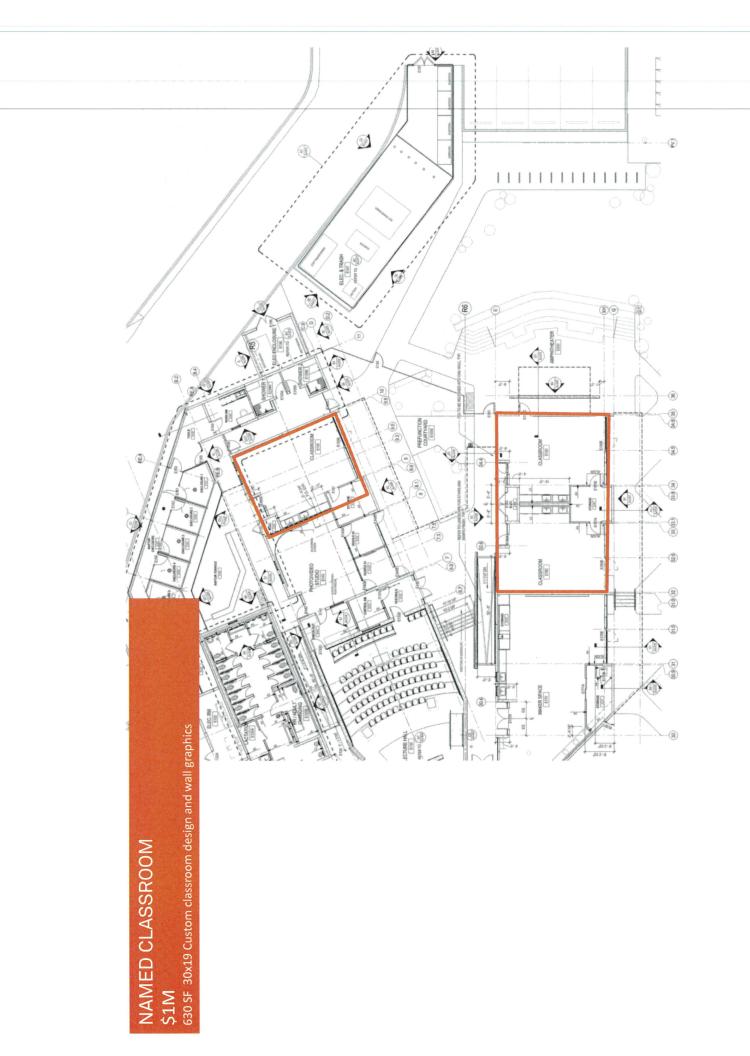
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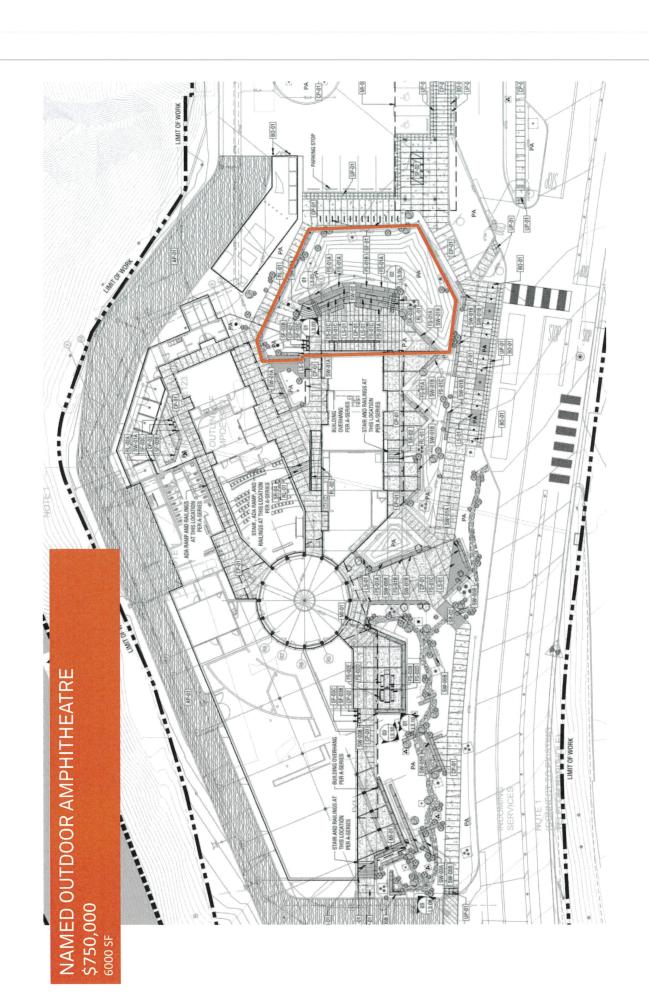
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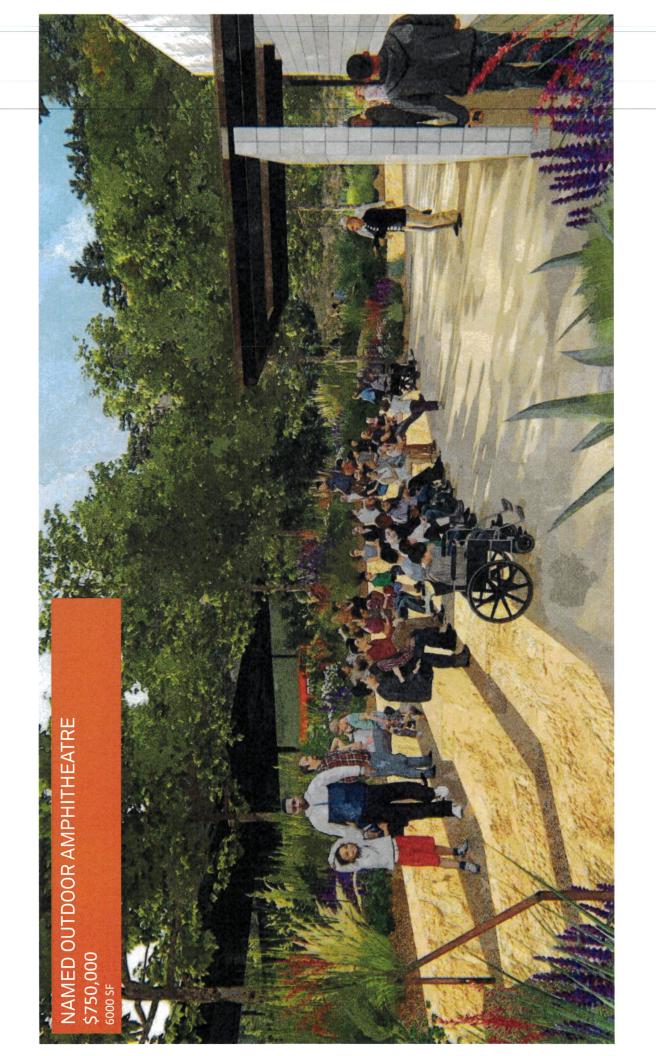


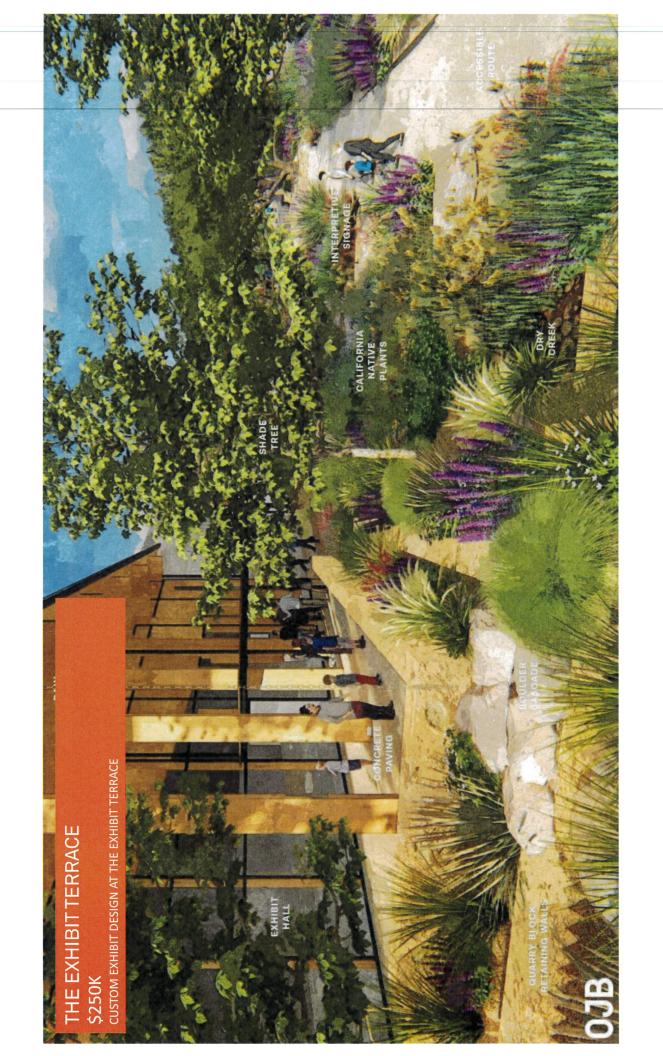


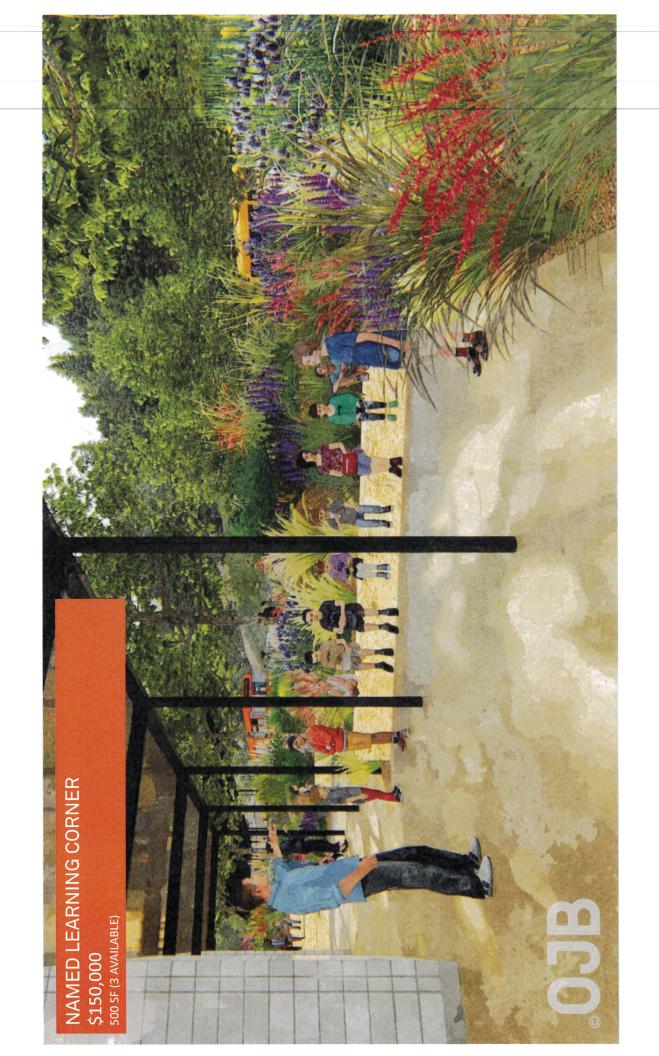


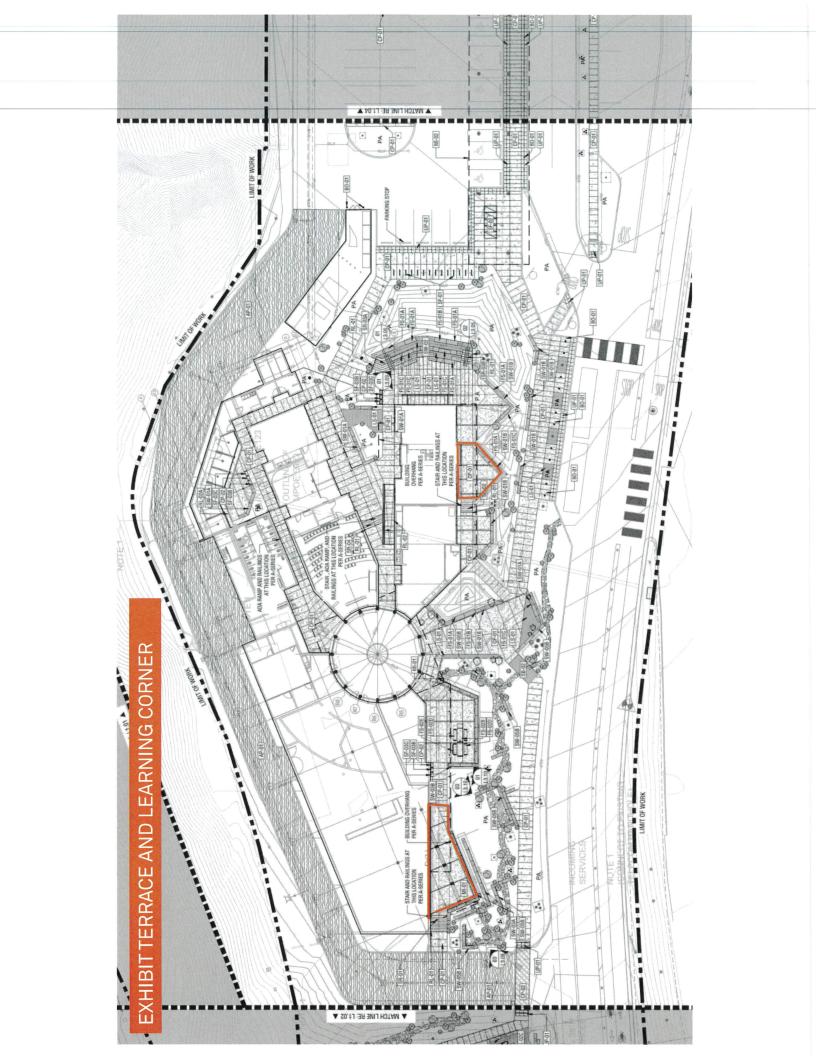


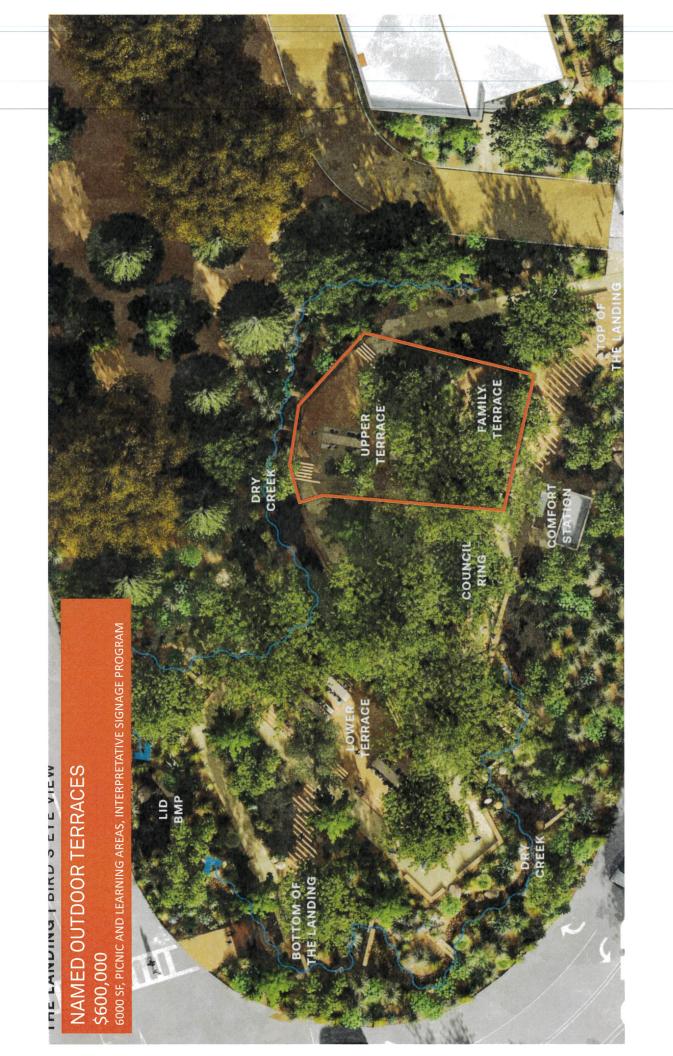


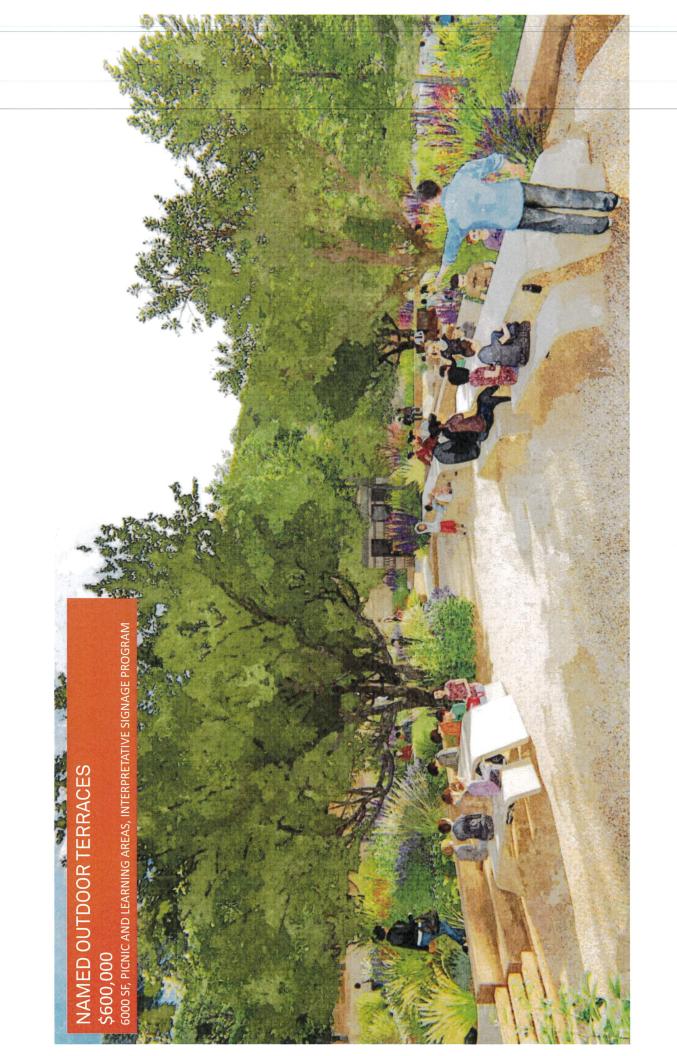


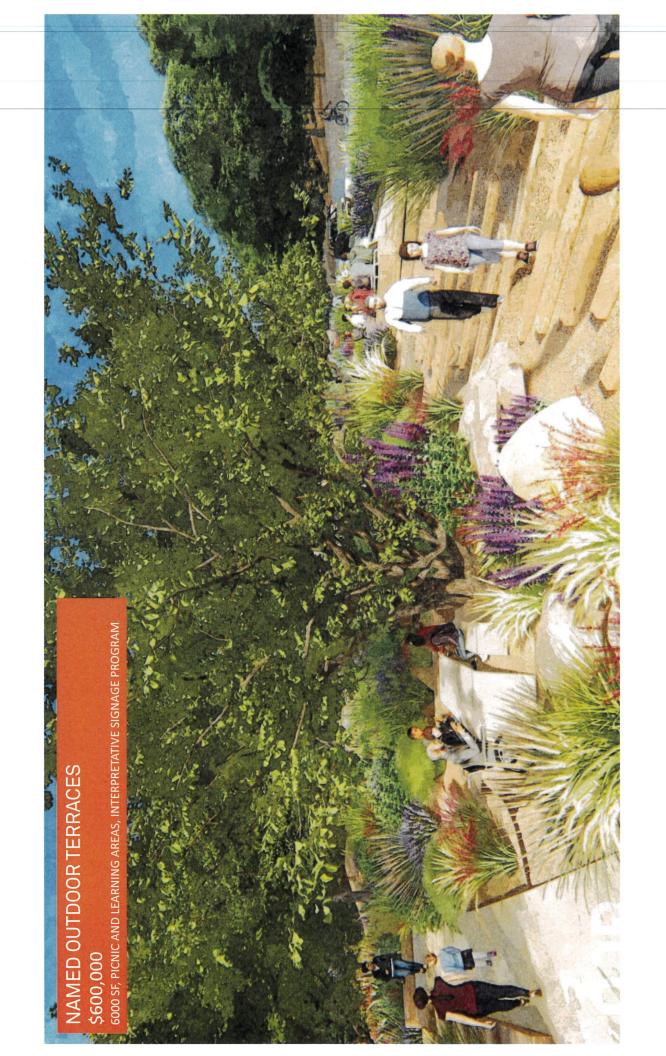












# 6000 SF, PICNIC AND LEARNING AREAS, INTERPRETATIVE SIGNAGE PROGRAM SITE FURNISHINGS | LANDING KEY PLAN NAMED OUTDOOR TERRACES Fixed Seat Top without Armrest Litter + Recycling Receptacles Fixed Seat Top without Back Community Bench with Back Fixed Seat Top with Armrest ADA Community Table 12" Community Table Stoped ADA Community table 6" Community Bench Bike Locker Bike Rack LEGEND G \$600,000

