

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Nancy Brown, Environmental Protection Agency, Project Officer  
Alan Henning, Environmental Protection Agency, Project Monitor

**FROM:** Denise Kalakay, Lane Council of Governments, Project Manager

**SUBJECT:** **Lane Council of Governments Estuary Project, Cooperative Agreement Progress Report** – Billing period: October through December 2009

**DATE:** February 18, 2010

This memorandum describes services rendered, deliverables and outputs completed, and budget status for the EPA/LCOG cooperative agreement for the multi-city/county water resource assessment project. This progress report is for the October through December 2009 quarter. This narrative coincides with the billing statement for the quarter and describes the services and products provided for the budgeted tasks.

**Project Accomplishments (October – December 2009)** - Following is a brief summary of accomplishments towards each of the contract's major tasks for this time frame:

**Task 1. Project Coordination and Introduction.** This task ensures that the project process moves smoothly, high quality products are generated, and the values of each partner are fully integrated. This task is about 60 percent complete with the remainder of the task being on-going Steering Team coordination and project management. Activities completed include:

- Formed internal LCOG project team including planning, geographic information system (GIS), and Creative Services staff. Hold team coordination meetings at least twice a month or more frequently as needed.
- Formed Steering Team of representatives from each participating city, county, and State agency representatives.
- Held kick-off meeting providing Steering Team group with an overview and benefits of the project, refining the scope, discussing roles, and determining city specific needs regarding near term tasks such as public official briefings and public meetings.

- Reviewed Oregon Administrative Rules relevant to project including Local Wetland Inventory and Significance Determination Rules and Statewide Planning Goal 5 Administrative Rules.

**Task 2. Landowner, Public Official, Community Notification and Involvement.** This task creates an initial support for the project throughout the region. It includes initiation of outreach activities to raise knowledge and provide input regarding project goals, activities and approach among local governing officials, developers, and property owners with riparian areas or potential wetlands on their property. This task is about 50 percent complete (for this reporting quarter) with the remainder being completed in the January through March quarter. Activities performed during this reporting quarter include:

- Prepared briefing materials for and attended public official work sessions in each of the cities to gain input and buy off from elected official bodies including Planning Commissions and City Councils.
- Designed and posted an LCOG webpage describing the project's goals, objectives, and approach.
- Developed three fact sheets about wetland and riparian area inventories and assessments for project team, public, and public officials.
- Drafted letters and access permission forms to be mailed to property owners with potential wetlands and/or riparian areas on their property.
- Drafted flyer for public forums and gathered preliminary meeting dates for each city.
- Prepared press release for distribution to media networks such as local and regional newspapers, radio stations, local newsletters.
- Met with Lane County staff and Commissioners to discuss water resource issues in Lane County and how those issues relate to the region as a whole.
- Created summary matrix of water quality issues/programs in the Willamette Basin for public officials. The matrix demonstrates that many of these issues and programs overlap and numerous benefits can be gained by taking a multi-faceted approach to water quality impacts.

**Task 3. Data Collection and Consultant Selection.** This task relates to the assurance of a high quality inventory and assessment through the compilation of all background materials and the selection of a wetland consultant. About 75 percent of this task has been completed during this reporting period with the remainder being

completed during the January – March reporting cycle. Activities performed include the following:

- Prepared Quality Assurance Project Plan including:
  - Researching other Quality Assurance Plans
  - Researching project methodologies, procedures, and standards
  - Detailing Quality Assurance Plan participants and their roles
  - Preparing draft plan and submitting to EPA for review and comment
  - Base mapping of each city for posting to the web page for the RFP responders
  
- Collected and assembled GIS data for the three county area (downloading, unzipping, stitching together, deriving, analyzing, etc); such as aerial photography, NRCS soils, National Wetland Inventory quad data, land use and taxlot data, rivers and streams.
  
- Collected LiDAR data where available in Linn, Lane, and Benton Counties.
  
- Digitized wetland delineations and determinations from Department of State Lands (DSL) files.
  
- Produced map of Project Area displaying cities and counties involved within the Willamette River Basin.
  
- Solicited input from cities for areas outside the urban growth boundaries (UGBs) to include in the study areas for each city and digitized additional areas.
  
- Prepared draft base maps for each city showing taxlots, study area, wetland or riparian indicators such as hydric soils, NWI wetlands, soils with hydric inclusions, shallow depth to groundwater, waterways, etc.
  
- Developed and refined methodology for identifying and generating lists and maps of potentially affected taxlots reflecting taxlots intersecting with features associated with wetlands and/or riparian areas.
  
- Prepared, posted, and responded to inquiries about the Request for Proposals (RFP) for wetland contractor/s to conduct the wetland and riparian inventory and assessment including:
  - Researching and assessing similar RFPs
  - Drafting RFP and conducting legal and editing review
  - Posting RFP with interested parties list, and Department of State Lands wetland scientist distribution list
  - Responded to, tracked, inquiries from potential respondents to the RFP
  
- Selected wetland contractors for the northern and southern groups of cities including:

- Forming review committee with LCOG, State, and local city representatives
- Developing review criteria and reviewing seven proposals scoring based on review criteria
- Conducting interviews with the three top contractor choices based on criteria scoring
- Negotiated and prepared contracts with each contractor

**Task 4. Conduct Local Wetland and Riparian Area Inventory and Functional Assessments.** This task provides local jurisdictions and state agencies with an accurate depiction of where significant wetland and riparian resources are in order to protect those areas from development. This task has not been started and the majority of this task will be conducted by the wetland contractor with LCOG support in the January through June reporting periods.

**Task 5. Water Resource Land Use Action Kit Development.** The policy portion of the project provides a menu of mechanisms for cities to choose from so that water resources are protected and their environmental values maintained. This task is in the early stages with only preliminary work being completed. Activities include:

- Researched and reviewed preliminary policy options for local jurisdictions (cities and counties) under Statewide Planning Goal 5 (Natural Resources) and Goal 6 (Water Quality).
- Conferred with the Oregon Environmental Council to integrate low impact development technical assistance with the cities and counties involved in the project.
- Participated on Benton County's wetland and riparian area Advisory Committee and Technical Team designing inventory strategies and policy options appropriate at a county scale.
- Worked with the Eugene Water and Electric Board, the U of O Planning Workshop, and others to establish a framework for reviewing and analyzing county land use code that has potential negative water quality impacts.

**Task 6. Public Official and Community Involvement.** This task is designed to provide a series of vehicles to generate informed decision making and give public officials and staff an accurate depiction of how their constituents feel on issues related to water quality. The task will help ensure that ordinances and programs are developed which meet public need and have public support, thus nurturing in policy makers the political will needed to take necessary implementation steps. This task is about 5 percent complete and includes the following activities:

- Helped plan and attended two meetings of the County Commissioner led Benton, Lane, Linn Water Resource Study Group meetings to continue discussions on

addressing water quantity and quality issues on a regional basis. Provided a project overview presentation to the Study Group.

- Helped the tri-county Study Group develop a logo and tagline that will strengthen awareness and interest in water resource issues throughout the region.
- Attended and participated in Lane County water resource technical group meetings to share common objectives across projects and to integrate projects towards common goals.

**Project Issues/Points of Interest:**

- The City of Brownsville has decided to not participate in the project. The primary reason given was not wanting to contribute the \$5,000 cash match. Although when told we would figure out a way to work around that, they still declined. The lead person for Brownsville on this project has been undergoing intense personal tragedy, and I suspect that is one of the key reasons for the decision.
- The City of Lowell City Administrator is indicating uncertainty about continued participation. During the joint City Council and Planning Commission Work Session held in December, both groups expressed need and support of the project. The City Administrator claims that recent public upheaval on other issues may impact project support. Our intent is to generate a commitment (or not) following the public meeting February 17<sup>th</sup> and prior to commencing field work in early March.
- It was interesting (and a bit nerve-racking) that prior to several city council meetings, the lead staff person was worried that the elected officials would have a change of heart and not want to participate even though they all had submitted letters of support.
- The original concept and a cost saving measure was to hold joint city meetings that combined at least 2-3 cities within a geographic similar area. Based on input from the Steering Team it was clear that there would be greater benefit from having separate meetings in each city. Although this creates an additional up-front cost, we hope to see cost savings and higher quality end products with an increase in public participation in these meetings which should result in higher property access permission and overall project support.
- To date, there has been limited direct Watershed Council involvement with the overall Steering Team. There has been on-going communication (primarily e-mail and phone) between the councils and LCOG and between the councils and individual cities. This is not necessarily a problem as this stage of the project does not “require” watershed council involvement and routine Team meetings is probably not the best use of their time. We will be scheduling a meeting in the near future specifically with the Councils to determine what their preferred role will be.