

**ACTION ITEM**

June 17, 2015

TO: Board of Directors**FROM:** **Public Affairs & Legislation Committee**
(Directors Barbre, Hinman, Tamaribuchi)Robert Hunter
General Manager

Staff Contact: Karl Seckel

SUBJECT: OCWD WILDLIFE EXHIBIT**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the PAL Committee discuss the Exhibit and alert OCWD of any concerns we might have.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Committee recommends (to be determined at Committee Meeting)

SUMMARY

OCWD recently alerted MWDOC staff of plans to create a wildlife exhibit in front of or behind the main entrance to the building (two alternatives). Staff reviewed the plans, alerted OCWD to potential concerns and attended the OCWD Administration and Finance meeting on June 11. The action taken by OCWD's Administration and Finance Committee was to recommend to the OCWD Board at its June 17 meeting to proceed with the development of plans and costs for the Exhibit. The OCWD Committee did not specify which alternative to pursue, but the Committee was leaning towards Alternative A.

Staff believes this is an issue that should be considered by MWDOC's Board. The Exhibit, as planned, points out the importance of the Santa Ana Watershed as an important source of natural resources, including for water management. The

Budgeted (Y/N):	Budgeted amount:	Core __	Choice __
Action item amount:		Line item:	
Fiscal Impact (explain if unbudgeted):			

anticipated use of the Exhibit is to add to the planned hallway exhibits when tours are conducted at OCWD. Currently, they host about 4,000 tour participants per year. Part of the Exhibit would involve re-landscaping the front areas adjacent to the walk ways to demonstrate California Friendly plantings and, as such, could carry an important Water Use Efficiency theme. To open up the area, the front “portal” might be removed to open up the landscaping opportunities and display the watershed theme. The changes have the potential to improve the aesthetics of the front entrance. It would be good to get input from the MWDOC Board early in the process. At minimum, staff believes the entrance design and theme should be discussed as well as a potential expansion of MWDOC office space in the area behind the receptionist and between the two buildings (outside of MWDOC’s conference room 101 and our Finance Department). If we want to alert OCWD to any concerns by the Board, we should do this sooner than later.

AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Meeting Date: June 11, 2015

To: Administration/Finance Issues Cte.
Board of Directors

From: Mike Markus

Staff Contact: G. Woodside/R. Zembal/
E. Torres

Budgeted: Yes

Budgeted Amount: \$20,000

Cost Estimate: \$19,000

Funding Source: N/A

Program/ Line Item No. N/A

General Counsel Approval: N/A

Engineers/Feasibility Report: N/A

CEQA Compliance: N/A

Subject: OCWD WILDLIFE EXHIBITS

SUMMARY

The Orange County Water District (the District; OCWD) has assembled an impressive collection of wildlife exhibits. These exhibits have been displayed in cabinets in the main hallway in the Fountain Valley office. Staff will review two alternatives for creating a new area to display the wildlife exhibits by developing an OCWD Watershed Center.

Attachment(s): OCWD Watershed Center presentation

RECOMMENDATION

Agendize for June 17 Board meeting: Direct consultant to proceed with preparing conceptual layout for Alternative "B" for the OCWD Watershed Center.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

The District has taken a proactive approach in Prado Basin to manage the District's property for wildlife values to achieve water management goals in concert with natural resource management. At its recharge facilities in Anaheim and Orange, the District has also been able to accomplish wildlife and habitat management as part of water projects and operations.

The forested wetland environment that OCWD fosters and manages in Prado Basin is the proper backdrop for this uniquely OCWD story: Excellence in water management and environmental stewardship go hand-in-hand at OCWD. However, the story can also be told quite effectively with the backdrop of a unique collection of wildlife specimens from the Santa Ana River Watershed. This collection has been assembled over the last fifteen years by the District's Natural Resources Department and is by far the largest collection of wildlife specimens in the Santa Ana River Watershed.

With the construction of the new hallway, the wildlife exhibits need to be relocated. Staff has explored various locations where the wildlife exhibits could be located. These include the Fountain Valley campus, the Anaheim Field Headquarters office, and Prado. Staff recommends that the wildlife specimens be maintained at the Fountain Valley campus. This is primarily due to the large number of visitors that come to the Fountain Valley campus compared to the other potential locations. Locating a new wildlife exhibit

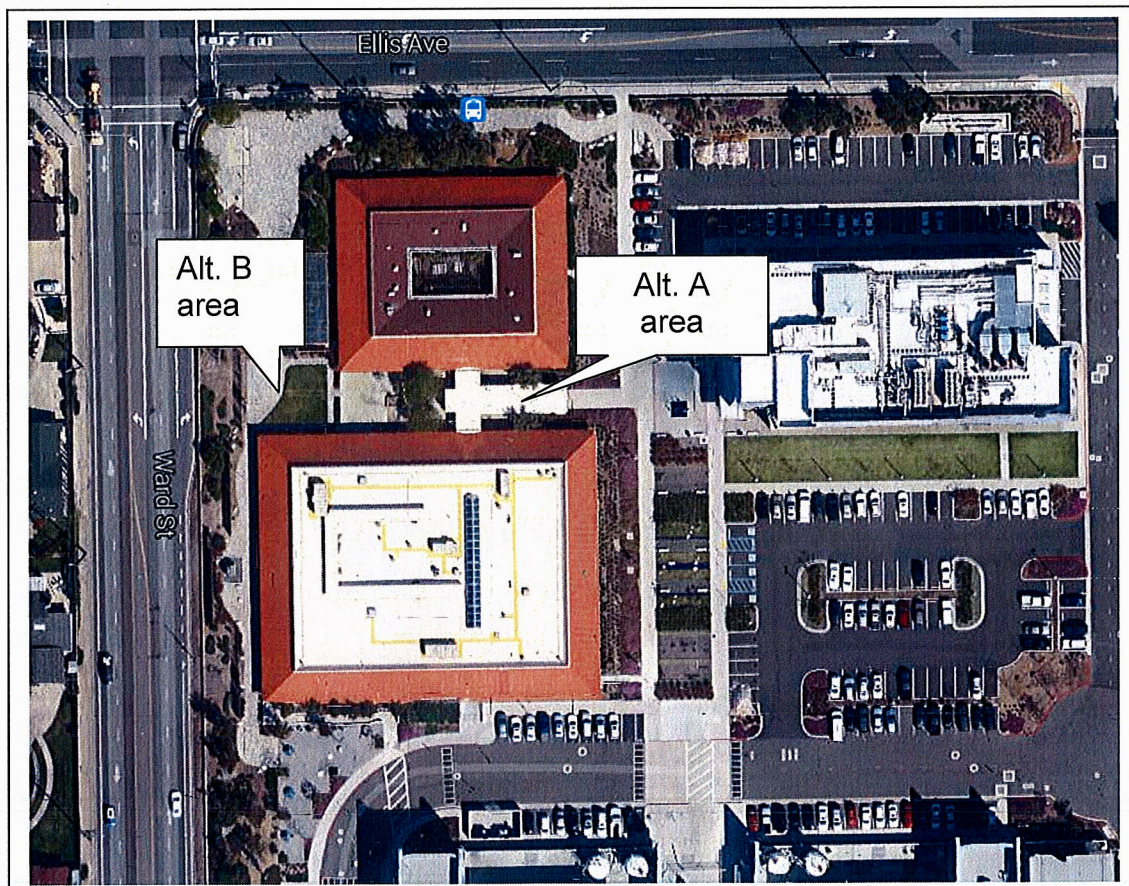
area in Fountain Valley will maximize their visibility and educational value. Approximately 1,000 square feet is needed for the displays.

The intent is to locate the collection with background scenes depicting the Prado Basin, Prado Wetlands, and other landmarks and wildlife habitats along the river. Visitors would view the collection in a self-guided tour that shows wildlife in displays that reflect native habitat. This provides an opportunity to highlight the exceptional wildlife collection and tell the complete story of OCWD's holistic approach to watershed management and environmental stewardship.

Staff considered two alternatives for locating a new wildlife exhibit at the Fountain Valley campus:

- Alternative A – The walkway from near the flagpole to the front door by the receptionist. This area is currently covered overhead but is open on the sides.
- Alternative B - The lawn between the OCWD and Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) buildings, between the receptionist area and Ward Street; in this option, a new structure would be constructed in the lawn area and the area currently covered in concrete could be left as is or converted to a native plant garden or other appropriate feature. This location could serve as an assembly area for tour guests and could offer a complimentary story adjacent to the new hallway.

These two areas are shown below:



For either alternative, a climate-controlled space is required to protect the integrity of the specimens and prevent their decay.

Under the General Manager's authority, a consultant, the Acorn Group, was hired to evaluate the two alternatives and prepare conceptual drawings of the potential new wildlife exhibit area. The cost of this evaluation by the consultant was less than \$20,000 and is a budgeted item.

The consultant's initial work has identified housing the wildlife exhibits in an area called the OCWD Watershed Center. The initial drawings from the consultant were reviewed with the Visitor's Center Ad Hoc Committee in April 2015.

At the Administration/Finance Issues Committee meeting, staff will review the preliminary drawings. The drawings illustrate the OCWD Watershed Center concept for Alternative A and Alternative B. The scope of work for the consultant is based on selecting one of the alternatives for further definition. Staff recommends that the Board direct the consultant to prepare drawings for Alternative B. Alternative A would add on the edges of the existing administration building to house the exhibits and poses difficulties with respect to its location and how visitors would enter and exit this location. Alternative B has more contiguous space and would require less modification to the existing administration building than Alternative A.

As part of the OCWD Watershed Center, the consultant has identified proposed improvements to the hardscape and landscape near the entry to the administration building. These improvements would be complementary to the new exhibit, would utilize native, drought tolerant landscaping, and would integrate the watershed story into the entrance to the building.

PRIOR RELEVANT BOARD ACTION(S): N/A



OCWD Wildlife Exhibits

Administration/Finance Committee

June 11, 2015

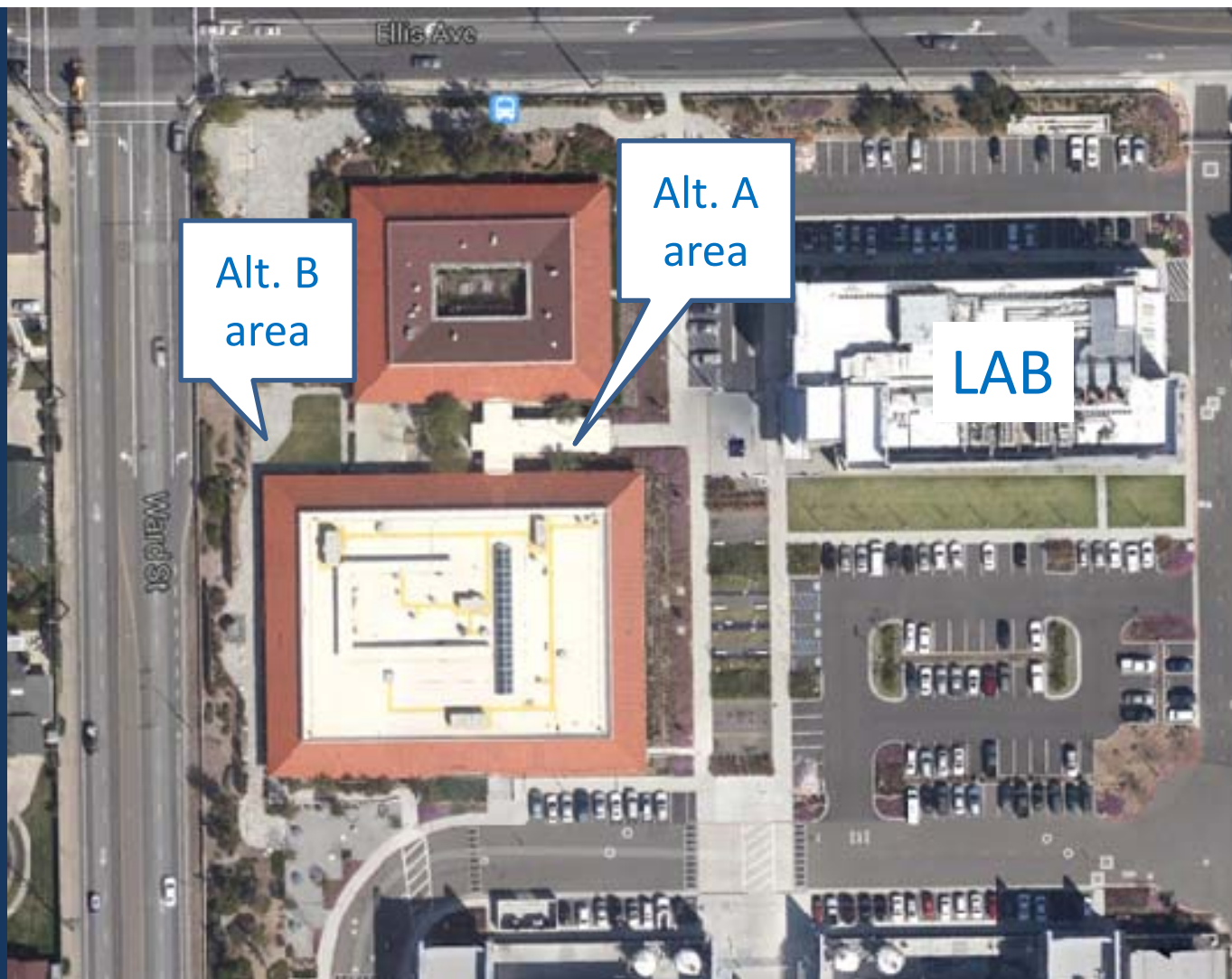


Wildlife Exhibits

- Over last 15 years, District has assembled an impressive wildlife collection
- Wildlife exhibits re-located to temporary storage to make way for new hallway
- Current year budget includes evaluating a new Watershed and Wildlife Exhibit
- Staff hired Acorn Group under General Manager's authority to develop preliminary concepts



Staff
directed
consultant to
evaluate two
areas



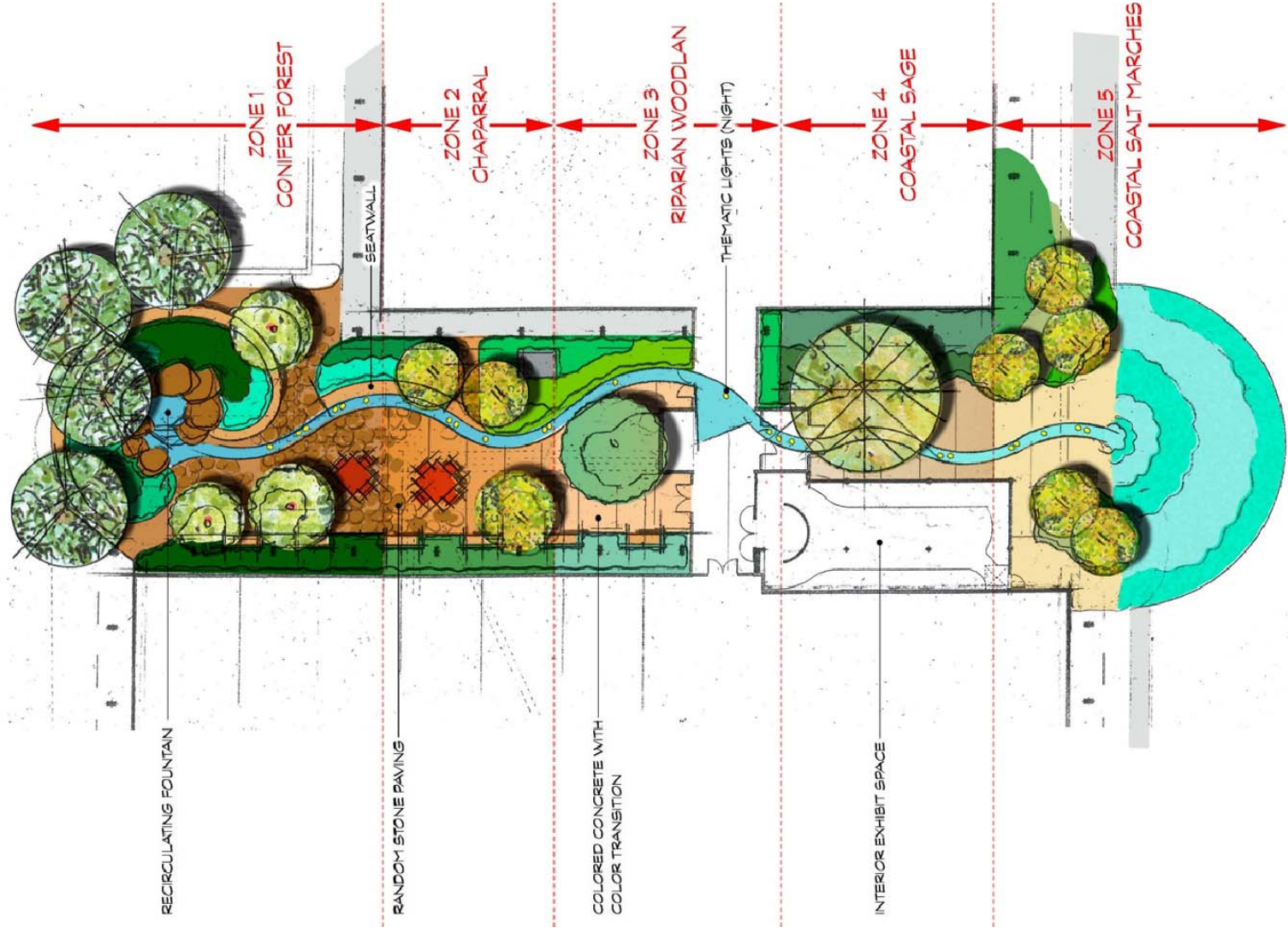


Example Interior Exhibit Space





Alternative A Exhibit Space/Entry Landscape schematic



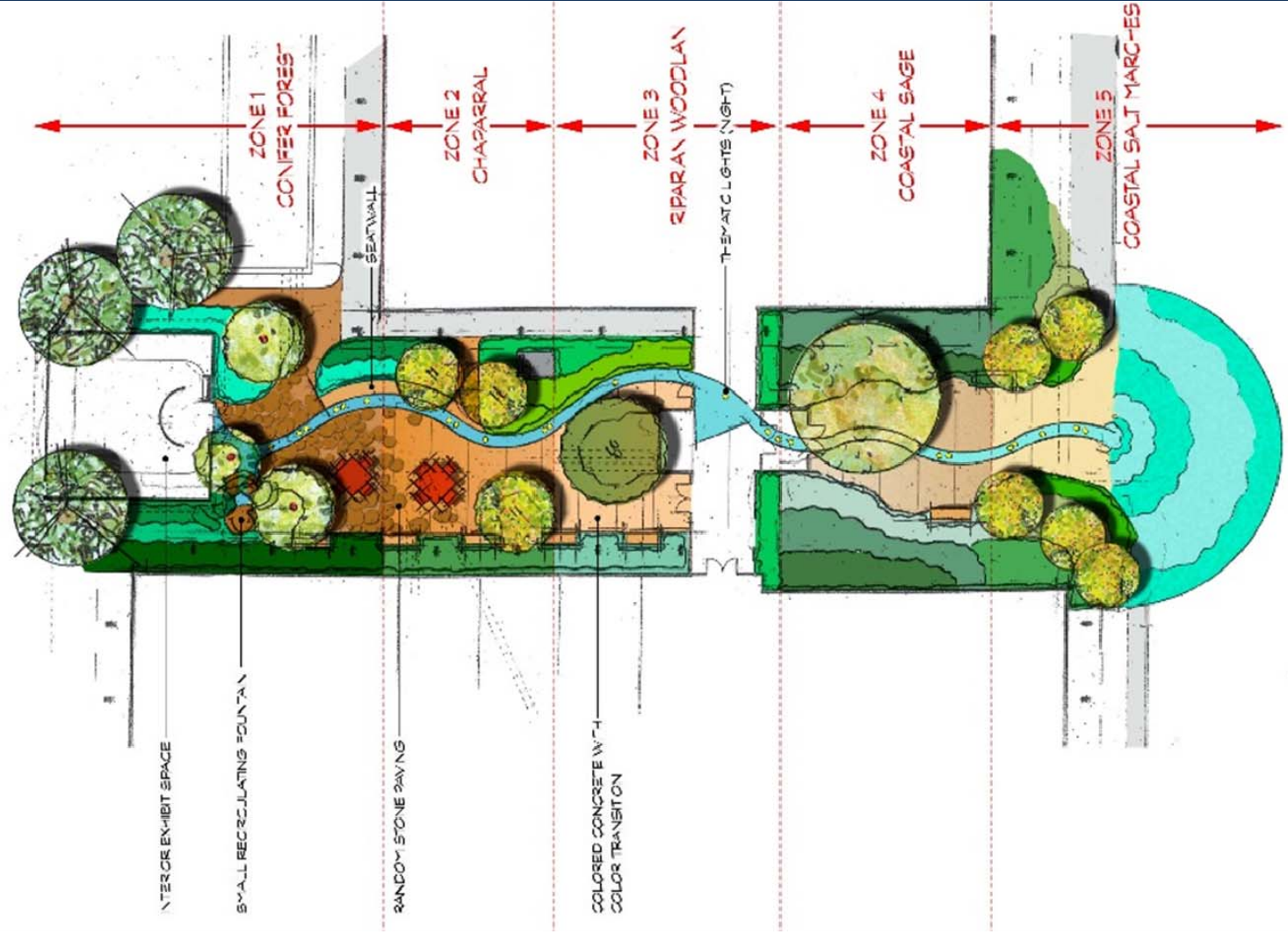


Alt. A Exhibit Space/Entry L.S.





Alternative B Exhibit Space/ Entry Landscape Schematic



Alternative B Exhibit Space/Patio Landscape Schematic





Advantages of Alternative B

- Better flow for guests entering building
- Provides better waiting area for guests
- Less changes to existing building
- Better use of available space



Recommended Action

- Agendize for June 17 Board meeting: Direct consultant to proceed with preparing conceptual layout for Alternative “B” for the OCWD Watershed Center.