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## **Proposed Economic Indicators Report Overview**

### **Board Meeting, July 23, 2014**

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#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Board direct staff to continue to work with DPC and be prepared to seek funding to develop the Economic Indicators study.

#### **ECONOMIC INDICATORS PROJECT**

##### Introduction

The Delta Conservancy is interested in producing a report describing Economic Indicators of the Delta and Suisun Marsh, in order to track a group of indicators that reflect the overall well-being of the Delta region in terms of economic, social, and environmental health. The report can be a way of describing current conditions, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of Conservancy, or various other local, State, and Federal programs to improve the economy of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Suisun Marsh region.

Prior staff work (2011) involved initial background research on definition, purpose, and usefulness of indicators, as well as examples of specific indicators. A draft listing of indicators relevant to the Delta Conservancy and potential sources of information was compiled. In anticipation of the water bonds, and recent available expertise, staff was asked to continue the work and identify next steps.

Staff prepared a White Paper detailing Background, Purpose, Relationship to Strategic Plan, Data Approach, Process and Challenges, and Recommendations. This paper was shared with DPC and a meeting was held with their Executive Director to solicit input. Based on their input, the White Paper was updated and findings are summarized herein.

##### Data Process and Challenges

In order to determine whether the Conservancy's programs and efforts, as well as those of other State, federal, and local agencies, are affecting positive change to the Delta economy, it is important to establish baseline measurements to compare to changes over time. There are many agencies and non-profit organizations working in the Delta on habitat improvements, water quality, agricultural enhancements, increases to recreation and tourism, supporting Legacy Communities, and other endeavors. Many, if not all, of these projects can have a potential impact on the Delta economy – either positive or negative. As programs are enacted and public funds are spent, the overall macro-effectiveness of such programs can be measured and compared against baseline data to determine net impacts to the Delta economy. This baseline data can take the form of Indicators. Economic indicators can then be compiled, analyzed, and assembled into a report.

Based on the prior research, reviews of the Strategic Plan and other relevant documents, the process to follow to create an Economic Indicators report, at its most simple, is:

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- (1) Determine which indicators best represent the Delta Economy;
- (2) Gather data;
- (3) Analyze; and
- (4) Report.

Yet, each of these steps requires resources which are currently prohibitive and have several additional challenges. The largest issue is that most data exists only at the County, Zip Code, or Census Block level, which does not readily correspond to Delta/Suisun Marsh legal boundaries. GIS functionality is going to be necessary to have an accurate portrayal of the Delta and Suisun Marsh.

By incorporating data in previous efforts with the Conservancy's planning documents, a suite of Indicators that represent broad project categories emerges.

- Economy and Demographics
- Visitor supporting Infrastructure, Recreation, and Tourism
- Water Quality/Public Health
- Land/Ecosystem
- Agriculture
- Working Landscapes
- Climate Change

Other applicable reports produced by other agencies that helped to inform this White Paper included:

- Economic Sustainability Plan for the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (DPC)
- System Indicators (Sierra Nevada Conservancy)
- The State of the Great Central Valley of California: Assessing the Region Via Indicators (Great Valley Center)
- Status and Trends of the Delta and Suisun Marsh (DWR)
- State of the San Francisco Bay (San Francisco Estuary Partnership)

The work ahead is to determine the specific statistics and attributes for each Indicator category, what data is available, and what are the limitations. Overall objectives are:

- Create a valuable resource of regional data that describes the overall economic and social well-being of the Delta.
- Data should present a clear snapshot that can be tracked over time, and be easy to use, convenient, and readily updatable.
- Data should be organized in such a way so as to clearly measure progress and compare progress across goals.
- Data should be used for evaluation and potential adjustment or elimination of ineffective programs and policies.

### Recommendations

An Economic Indicators report and analysis is a complex undertaking, but can be a very valuable tool for the community, the general public, and policy makers to understand the efficacy of Delta projects and programs,

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especially implementation of the Delta Plan. As the Delta Plan is implemented, environmental restoration will affect the Delta economy and economic development may affect the environment. By looking at both attributes from the same lens, it will allow us to better track changes with both and analyze potential interactions. Staff recommends that the Conservancy apply for grant funding to complete this project. Once funded, it is anticipated that it will take 18-24 months to complete this project, including a community and board input process.

### BACKGROUND

Staff provided a brief report on the Economic Indicators project at the May 28, 2014 Board Meeting. At that meeting, the Board requested staff include a more detailed report at the July board meeting. Staff presented a draft report to the Program and Policy Subcommittee at their June 18 meeting.

### BUDGET

#### Draft Suggested Budget

a. Program Manager	¼ time staff person for 1 year <i>or</i> Consultant at 500 hours x \$150 = \$75,000
b. GIS Analyst	500 hours x \$100 = \$50,000
c. Data Intern	100 hours x \$15 = \$1,500
d. Economic Analysis	100 hours x \$150 = \$15,000
e. Writer/Editor	100 hours x \$100 = \$10,000
f. Graphic Design	40 hours x \$150 = \$6,000
g. Printing/Expenses	\$10,000
h. <i>Total Draft Sample Budget</i>	<i>\$92,500 - \$167,500???</i>

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*Full White Paper available upon request.*