



# City of Culver City

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## Staff Report

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**File #:** 16-781, **Version:** 1

**Item #:** A-3.

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**CC- (1) Discussion Regarding the Retention of Services of a Federal Advocacy Firm Regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's Southern California Metroplex Project; and (2) Direction to the City Manager as Deemed Appropriate.**

**Meeting Date:** March 27, 2017

**Contact Person/Dept:** Shelly Wolfberg/City Manager's Office

**Phone Number:** (310) 253-6000

**Fiscal Impact:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**General Fund:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Hearing:** ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☒

**Commission Action Required:** Yes ☐ No ☒

**Public Notification:** (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (03/22/17);

**Department Approval:** John M. Nachbar (03/21/17)

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the City Council (1) discuss retaining the services of a federal advocacy firm regarding the Federal Aviation Administration's Southern California Metroplex Project; and (2) direct the City Manager as deemed appropriate.

### **BACKGROUND**

At its October 24, 2016 Council meeting, the City Council directed the City Attorney to file a lawsuit against the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) related to aircraft overflights. Last year, the FAA issued an Environmental Assessment of its So Cal Metroplex, changing flight path procedures.

Over the past several years, hundreds of Culver City residents attended City Council meetings, and over a thousand complaints were submitted to the FAA and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), regarding serious concerns about current noise and pollution impacts of the aircraft overflights. Additionally, 300 residents have signed a petition submitted to the City Council, requesting that the Council take legal action against the FAA to protect them against further impacts from the So Cal Metroplex project.

The lawsuit will challenge the FAA's Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact and Record of Decision (FONSI/ROD) for the Southern California Metroplex (SoCal Metroplex) Project. The Project, a key component of the FAA's Next Generation Air Transportation System (NextGen), redesigns the airspace in the Southern California region, affecting arrival and departure procedures for 21 airports, including LAX. As the responsible agency for implementation of the new procedures, the FAA proposes to replace dozens of existing conventional air traffic procedures with new satellite-based procedures. The result will be a change in procedures for flight paths, with resulting increases in noise, air pollution and other impacts on numerous communities throughout Southern California, including Culver City.

During the March 6, 2017 City Council discussion of the City Attorney's Office Work Plan, Mayor Clarke raised the potential opportunity for the City to retain the services of a federal advocacy firm as part of the City's approach to address issues pertaining to NextGen.

## **DISCUSSION**

Staff is seeking City Council direction regarding whether or not the City Council would like to pursue the hiring of a federal advocacy firm devoted to advancing the City's position on Nextgen issues. The Mayor provided staff with a firm's proposal, with the following scope of work, which may be useful for the City Council's consideration regarding the engagement of a federal advocacy firm devoted to Nextgen:

### **Potential Scope of Work**

1. Create a targeted strategy for each issue in the context of the FAA, White House and Congressional Committees of Jurisdiction, Quiet Skies Caucus staff and Culver City's Congressional Delegation and the N.O.I.S.E. Organization.
2. Provide proposed action timetables designed to maintain consistent communication of your goals with the Congressional Delegation, Committees of Jurisdiction and appropriate agencies.
3. Facilitate direct in-person meetings with Congressional Staff.
4. Advocacy before the NextGen Advisory Committee.
5. Coalition building with other impacted communities and stakeholders for support of federal legislation and national initiatives.
6. Identify real and potential areas of concern for achieving the Culver City's objectives and promptly alert leadership for needed actions.
7. Identify all federal resources; including grants, multi-agency partnerships and emerging policy trends that would help to enhance and promote the City's priorities. This could include opportunities to partner with other impacted communities on shared goals, opportunities for Culver City's officials to be considered for federal appointments to FAA advisory committees or research bodies.
8. Assist in preparing letters, memos, press releases and other materials to communicate priorities to members of Congress and the Administration.
9. Propose and implement visits to Washington, DC for Culver City officials to participate in meetings with Members of Congress, Congressional Committee staff and FAA officials.
10. Agenda Setting: plan, organize and facilitate local agenda-setting workshops to bring impacted

communities together and focus the goals and agenda of all area stakeholders.

11. Public Communications: prepare and assist with dissemination of all public communications, letters, press releases official Congressional testimony, formal executive agency submissions, briefing books, issues analyses, background briefing/white-papers, memoranda, and media materials.
12. Bill Drafting: prepare/draft legislation and accompanying bill summaries.
13. Policy Briefings: research, plan, arrange, and participate in formal policy briefings for Members of Congress and Federal Agency officials.
14. Federal Regulatory Process: research, prepare, and submit comments in regulatory areas of interest during public comment periods.
15. Provide additional support/tailored strategic planning as needed.

If the City Council wishes to consider the engagement of an advocacy firm, staff requests the City Council determine the desired scope of work for the advocacy firm and the duration of time for the services.

### **FISCAL ANALYSIS**

There is no fiscal impact for the City Council to discuss this item. However, the engagement of a federal advocacy firm would have a fiscal impact.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None.

### **MOTION**

That the City Council:

1. Discuss whether it wishes to retain the services of a federal lobbyist to advance the City's positions on the So Cal Metroplex project;  
and/or
2. Provide direction to the City Manager as deemed appropriate.