

# Agenda Report

DATE: May 20, 2002

TO: CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: CITY MANAGER  
SUBJECT: Resolution of Support for the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers  
Watershed and Open Space Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council adopt the attached resolution supporting the San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan, "Common Ground: from the Mountains to the Sea."

## **RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Recreation and Parks Commission unanimously endorsed supporting San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan at their special meeting held on March 27, 2002.

## **BACKGROUND**

In October 1999, Governor Davis signed into law AB1355 (Havice) and SB216 (Solis) establishing the Lower Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy. The City of Pasadena lies wholly within the area of the Conservancy and is represented on the governing board of the Conservancy through the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments.

The legislature charged the Conservancy with developing a parkway and open space plan to establish policies and priorities emphasizing "river related projects...without infringing on water quality, water supply and necessary flood control." The plan, titled Common Ground from the Mountains to the Sea: San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers Watershed and Open Space Plan", first describes the history and current condition of the watersheds and then lays out a vision, guiding principles, strategies, and opportunities for

future development. The plan recognizes the importance and validity of both natural and manmade systems in our region. The vision is summarized as “Restore balance between natural and human systems in the watersheds.”

The Guiding Principles are as follows:

- **Land: Grow a Greener Southern California.** This principle is detailed as the effort to create, expand, and improve public open space throughout the region; improve access to open space and recreation for all communities; improve habitat quality, quantity and connectivity; connect open space with a network of trails; promote stewardship of the landscape; and encourage sustainable growth to balance environmental social and economic benefits.
- **Water: Enhance Waters and Waterways.** This principle is detailed as promoting efforts to maintain and improve flood protection; establish riverfront greenways to cleanse water, hold floodwaters and extend open space; improve the quality of surface water and groundwater; improve flood safety through restoration of river and creek ecosystems; and, optimize water resources to reduce dependence on imported water.
- **Planning: Plan Together to Make It Happen.** This principle is detailed as promoting efforts to coordinate watershed planning across jurisdictions and boundaries; encourage multi-objective planning and projects; use science as a basis for planning; involve the public through education and outreach programs; and, utilize the Plan in an ongoing management process.

The Open Space Plan identifies six strategies for implementing open space and watershed enhancements: education; partnerships; funding; multiple-objective planning; management of public lands; and, monitoring and assessment. The plan further discusses opportunities within the watersheds upon which the conservancy can capitalize. These opportunities are in the areas of land acquisition, connectivity and open space, public access, native plants and wildlife, and water resources.

The Plan was circulated to cities and other interested organizations in draft form and the comments received were incorporated into the final plan. The plan provides an approach to future improvements in the region but does not adopt specific projects or impose specific obligations or development plans. The plan includes a legal opinion affirming that its adoption will not interfere with the authority of any city to regulate land use within its boundaries. Specifically, in case of any current or future conflict, there is no requirement that the City amend its General Plan to conform with the Open Space plan.

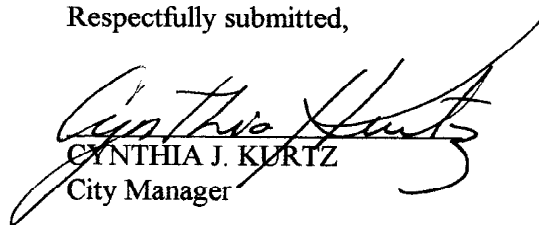
The Plan was approved by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy on October 17, 2001. The Plan will take effect when it has been adopted by a majority of the cities representing a majority of the population in the Conservancy area, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Central Basin Water Association and the San Gabriel Valley Watermaster.

Adopting the plan will benefit the city by providing a long-term vision for restoration of watersheds with strategies to achieve the vision and plans and opportunities to implement those strategies. In addition, the City of Pasadena will form partnerships and establish the framework for future projects that fall within the jurisdictions of both Conservancies.


**FISCAL IMPACT**

Adoption of the Plan does not impose any costs on the City. To the contrary, the Conservancy is expected to bring significant state dollars into the region for open space, environmental education, water quality, and habitat restoration projects. The next of these funding opportunities consists of \$15 million in Proposition 12 State Park Bonds which is expected to use the Open Space Plan as one of the tools for project evaluation. An example of likely future opportunities can be seen in AB 1602 state park bonds which will appear on the March, 2002 ballot and which, if passed, will earmark \$40 million for the Conservancy.

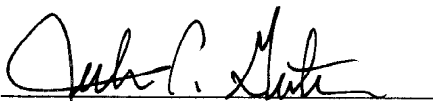
Respectfully submitted,

  
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ  
City Manager

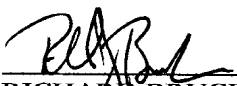
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