

Agenda Report

DATE: APRIL 14, 2003

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CYNTHIA KURTZ, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: CERTIFICATION OF THE MASTER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (MEIR) AND APPROVAL OF THE ARROYO SECO MASTER PLANS

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Certify the MEIR for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan, adopt the appropriate CEQA findings (including a Statement of Overriding Considerations for potentially significant short-term air quality impacts) and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program, direct staff to file a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk and Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and direct staff to pay the appropriate California Department of Fish and Game fees; and
2. Adopt the Central Arroyo Master Plan, the Rose Bowl Use Plan, the amended Lower Arroyo Master Plan, the amended Hahamongna Master Plan, and the amended Design Guidelines as proposed in Attachment G and Attachment I.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION AND THE HAHAMONGNA WATERSHED PARK ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

At the April 8, 2003 joint meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee, the joint body voted to recommend to City Council:

1. Certify the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) and state its desire to review any future Rose Bowl project which has the potential to impact parkland. The vote was 8-1.
2. A separate motion was made to express the intent of the Commission and Committee to be silent on the Environmental Clearance of the Rose Bowl Use Plan due to the lack of their involvement in the preparation of the Rose Bowl Use Plan. The vote was 8-1.

3. Approval of the base framework for the Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan that was originally represented to the Council along with the proposed amendments in Attachment I, The vote was 6-2 with one abstention.
4. Approval of the Design Guidelines (which differs from the Arts Commission recommendation in that it states that public Art should be focused in the Central Arroyo). The joint body voted 8-0 with one abstention.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE RECREATION AND PARKS COMMISSION:

Following the April 8, 2003 joint meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee the Recreation and Parks Commission voted to recommend to City Council:

1. Approval of the Lower Arroyo Master Plan along with the proposed amendments in Attachment I. The vote was 3-2 with one abstention.
2. Approval of the Central Arroyo Master Plan. Included in the motion was the recommendation to develop a separate park plan for Brookside Park, and to reinforce City Council's previous action to limit the use of temporary lights on Area H. The vote was 3-2 with one abstention.
3. Recommend the rejection of the Rose Bowl Use Plan because the document is considered insufficient for review and recommendation. The vote was 6-0.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION REGARDING THE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

On February 10, 2003 the Design Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Design Guidelines as modified in the underline-strikeout version in Attachment F.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE ARTS COMMISSION REGARDING THE DESIGN GUIDELINES:

On February 5, 2002 the Arts Commission recommended modifying Chapter 10 of the Design Guidelines from the underline-strikeout version prepared by a subcommittee of the Design Commission (Attachment F) includes a the recommendations to Chapter 10 which the Arts Commission has proposed.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT MEIR AND THE LOWER, CENTRAL AND HAHAMONGNA WATERSHED MASTER PLANS:

During the preparation of the concept master plans the Planning Commission reviewed and recommended conceptual approval of the Lower Arroyo Master in November 1995. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended conceptual approval of the Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan in November 1999. The Planning Commission reviewed the Central Arroyo Master Plan at a joint meeting with the Recreation and Parks Commission in December 2000 and chose to withhold its recommendation until the

completion of the draft MEIR. The Commission indicated its general support of the Central Arroyo Master Plan and provided a letter to the City Council indicating their concerns and comments regarding Council's consideration of the conceptual Central Arroyo Master Plan.

The Planning Commission provided input on the draft Master MEIR at its regularly scheduled meeting of August 28, 2002 and made the following recommendations:

1. The City re-examine and re-draft the Master Plan; and
2. The MEIR not be certified, based on the determination that the MEIR does not adequately address the potential impacts because:
 - a. It does not adequately address the potential impacts from additional major events at the Rose Bowl;
 - b. It does not adequately address the potential impacts to water quality and hydrology (including the Watershed Feasibility Study and potential removal of the flood control channel);
 - c. It fails to provide an effective alternative for consideration of the restoring/conserving of the existing character of the Arroyo Seco; and
 - d. The proposed threshold for Design Review does not provide an effective mitigation to the potential impacts to aesthetics.

While the Planning Commission acknowledged current city procedures dictate that the Recreation and Parks Commission act as the advisory body to the City Council for Park Master Plans and their associated environmental documentation, they expressed their desire to City Council to refer the Master Plans and MEIR back to the Planning Commission for their consideration. At the Planning Commission's March 26, 2003 meeting, the Commission directed the Commission Chair to prepare a letter to the City Council asking the Council to refer the matter back to the Planning Commission such that the Commission could review the adequacy of the final MEIR. The Commission received an informational update regarding the status of the Master Plans and MEIR at its April 9, 2003 meeting and reconfirmed the request for a letter to the City Council reiterating their request that this matter be referred back to the Planning Commission such that the Commission could review the adequacy of the final MEIR and provide the City Council its recommendation. The letter is Attachment B.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE DESIGN COMMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT MEIR:

The Design Commission provided input on the draft Master Environmental Impact Report at its regularly scheduled meeting of September 8, 2002 and made the following recommendations:

1. Acknowledge the purpose and intent of the Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines (Chapter 1);
 2. Confirm the Draft MEIR's finding of potentially significant unavoidable effects on aesthetics due to the proposed parking garage in Hahamongna Watershed Park and that all other potential aesthetic effects can be mitigated;
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3. Confirm the draft MEIR's finding that potentially significant effects on cultural resources can be mitigated;
4. Recommend certification of the MEIR for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan with the understanding that design review shall be required for projects in the Arroyo Seco in accordance with Chapters 2.75, 2.80 and 17.92 of the Pasadena Municipal Code.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT MEIR:

The Historic Preservation Commission provided input on the draft Master Environmental Impact Report at its regularly scheduled meeting of July 15, 2002 and made the following recommendations:

Recommend the City Council certify the draft Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan with the understanding that staff will add mitigation measures for:

1. Design review of any new projects in the Arroyo Seco shall be in accordance with Chapters 2.75, 2.80 and 17.92 of the Pasadena Municipal Code and,
2. Completion of a Cultural Landscape Report to address all the historic resources in the area within a year (if feasible) of adoption of the MEIR;

COMMENTS OF THE TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT MEIR:

The Transportation Advisory Commission provided individual comments on the draft MEIR at its regularly scheduled meeting of June 21, 2002. No action or recommendations were made at this meeting, listed below is a summary of the Commission's comments:

1. The Plan includes too many infrastructure projects. For example, in the Lower Arroyo, parking lots, wider streets, and a bike path are proposed. The Plan should be more "wilderness" oriented.
2. The Plan and EIR include references to bringing facilities up to industry standards. What are these standards?
3. On page 3.12-4 of the EIR, reference is made to Mountain Street accessing the Central Arroyo. What is Mountain Street's lane configuration? How was it considered for traffic accessing the Central Arroyo and the Rose Bowl?

COMMENTS OF THE UTILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION REGARDING THE DRAFT MEIR:

The Utility Advisory Committee provided individual comments on the draft MEIR at its regularly scheduled meeting of August 21, 2002. No action or recommendations were made at this meeting, listed below is a summary of the Commission's comments:

1. The flood channel and the bike path should be removed.
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2. The City should investigate the feasibility of installing plastic liners under the playing fields to limit pesticides leaching into the soil.
3. Reclaimed water should be used for athletic fields and the lakes.
4. Alternatives from the Phillip Williams Study should be explored.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The City of Pasadena prepared three Park Master Plans, the Rose Bowl Use Plan and a comprehensive set of Design Guidelines for the Arroyo Seco. These related documents were combined into a single project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the purposes of preparing a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). As a result of public comment received during the review period of the draft MEIR and accompanying plans, revisions were made to the Design Guidelines, the Lower Arroyo Master Plan and the Hahamongna Master Plan. During this review period many public meetings were held including publicly noticed meetings of the Recreation and Parks Commission, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Transportation Advisory Commission, Utility Advisory Commission and Design Commission. The City received comments from over 600 entities which included local, state and federal agencies, advocacy groups and numerous individuals.

The recommended changes reduce potential environmental impacts and respond to concerns expressed by a broad segment of the community. The recommended changes refine and eliminate features of the Master Plans which were first presented to the City Council during the conceptual development of the individual plans. In addition, the plan for the Hahamongna Watershed Park, emphasizes the importance of the area's water resources; both the quality of water and the conservation of water to minimize dependence on imported water.

Significant deletions to the plans include the elimination of the east side parking structure in the Hahamongna area, clarifications to the status of the lease agreement regarding the Metropolitan Water District property, the removal of bike paths in the Lower Arroyo Master Plan and the removal of the new south entrance adjacent to the San Pasqual stables in South Pasadena.

The current effort on exploring the feasibility of a National Football League franchise to locate at the Rose Bowl is not part of the Master Plans. Attachment A provides additional information regarding the status of this effort.

BACKGROUND:

The current planning effort for the Arroyo Seco Master Plans began approximately 15 years ago when California State Polytechnic University at Pomona prepared a Master Plan for the Lower Arroyo which was presented to the City Council in 1988 for information only. In July 1991, the City and Browning Ferris Industries of California, Inc. (BFI) entered into an agreement to implement a "low flow" stream diversion project. In spring 1994, largely in response to this increasing activity and interest in the Lower Arroyo, the City Council

requested that the Recreation and Parks Commission bring a recommended Lower Arroyo Master Plan to the City Council for formal adoption. On February 10, 1997, the Pasadena City Council approved in concept the Draft Master Plan for the Lower Arroyo. Following the renovation of the Devil's Gate Dam in 1996, the City Council established the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee (HWPAC) who was given the charge of overseeing the preparation of a comprehensive Master Plan for this area north of Devil's Gate Dam.

With the park planning initiatives established for the Lower and Upper Arroyo areas, the Recreation and Parks Commission established the Central Arroyo Master Plan Advisory Committee in November of 1999 to oversee the master plan process for this remaining geographical component of the Arroyo Seco area. Upon the conceptual approval and completion of the geographical Master Plans, the Rose Bowl Use Plan and the Design Guidelines for the entire reach of the Arroyo Seco, staff began the process of preparing a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) to analyze the impacts of the plan in a comprehensive manner. The preparation of the MEIR began with public scoping meetings in fall 2000 and concluded with the circulation of a draft MEIR in May 2002. In response to the significant impacts identified in the draft MEIR and public comment received, an alternative recommendation was prepared which minimized the significant environmental impacts and addressed many of the concerns raised by the public during the draft circulation period.

Master Environmental Impact Report

The City of Pasadena has prepared a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) encompassing all five Master Plans. An Initial Study and Notice of Preparation (NOP) of EIR were prepared and circulated for public review from September 13, 2000 to October 12, 2000. The review period for the draft MEIR began on May 16, 2002 and ended on September 16, 2002. The period was extended three times to accommodate the public's interest in reviewing the plan and providing comment. More than 600 comment letters were received on the draft MEIR. Additionally, comments were received at public meetings before the Recreation and Parks Commission, the Transportation Advisory Commission, the Cultural Heritage Commission (now known as the Historic Preservation Commission), the Design Commission, the Utility Advisory Commission, and the Planning Commission. The most notable issues raised during the comment period which the recommended alternative has taken into consideration are the following:

- Support for the restoration of the Arroyo Seco stream course, where feasible;
 - Additional information and context on the "History of the Arroyo Seco";
 - Establishes the potential use of the Rose Bowl by the NFL and any modifications to the Rose Bowl related to such use is not within the scope of the MEIR;
 - Support for the Arroyo Seco Watershed Feasibility Study, where appropriate and ensure all technical studies are clearly documented and appropriately described;
 - Concerns about the unmitigated impacts of the Parking Structure in the Hahamongna Watershed Park;
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- Clarification that the Metropolitan Water District ("MWD") property is part of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan planning area; and
- The introduction of additional "non-natural" features in the Lower Arroyo.

The MEIR consists of three volumes: (1) Volume I (Draft MEIR); (2) Volume II (Technical Appendices); and, (3) Volume III (Final MEIR). Volume III (the Final MEIR) is attached to the Council's packets (see Attachment E) and includes any changes made to Volume I. The Final MEIR concludes that adoption of the Staff Recommended Alternative will result in potentially significant impacts on the physical environment that can not be mitigated. These impacts are short-term (i.e., construction) air quality and are typical of any project of this magnitude. The original draft Master Plan described in the Draft MEIR would have resulted in an additional significant unavoidable impact in regards to aesthetics, due to the parking structure that was proposed. The Recommended Alternative, which deletes this east side parking structure, results in a project with less-than-significant impacts on aesthetics. Therefore, a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Recommended Alternative will be required for potentially significant short-term air quality impacts related to the construction activities involved in implementing the Master Plan.

Overview

The Arroyo Seco Master Plans are composed of five components: 1) Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan, 2) Central Arroyo Master Plan, 3) Lower Arroyo Master Plan, 4) Rose Bowl Use Plan, and 5) Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines.

Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan

The Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan was conceptually approved on February 7, 2000 (see Attachment E). Council action/directives were to 1) direct the City Manager to prepare a financing and phasing plan for the development, operations and maintenance of Hahamongna Watershed Parking including the Concept Plan in Exhibit 1 of the January 24, 2000 agenda report and a Concept Plan which also includes the 9-hole frisbee course to be utilized for additional soccer fields; and 2) direct that consideration of the impacts of the above options for HWP be included in the Draft Arroyo Seco MEIR. A broad overview of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan is provided in brief (See Attachment G).

Central Arroyo Master Plan

The City Council granted conceptual approval for the Central Arroyo Master Plan on January 22, 2001. The Central Arroyo Master Plan provides a framework for the utilization of the City's regional recreation area. (see Attachment E).

Lower Arroyo Master Plan

On February 10, 1997, the City Council granted conceptual approval for the Lower Arroyo Master Plan (see Attachment E) including the following changes: 1) Reaffirm that the Lower Arroyo be restored and preserved as a natural park area; 2) Upon review and

analysis of land use, and after completion of Devil's Gate Dam renovation, continue to explore additional funding opportunities that could allow flood control channel removal in the future, which could be addressed under a joint effort and coordination with agencies such as Los Angeles County, Army Corps of Engineers, etc; Direct staff to continue to develop the area known as the "wet land" area based upon available resources; 3) Reaffirm the current guidelines of the Arroyo Seco Ordinance which indicates in part, "New structures shall be limited to those required for utility operations, park maintenance and protection of plant and animal communities; 4) Retain current parking capacity based upon regulations under the Accessibility Disability Act guidelines and potential expansion of parking areas will be considered based upon utilization, including land used in conjunction with low stream restoration and non-impacting existing plant and wildlife; 5) Develop a "public land trust" funding alternative for the purpose of acquiring sections of the Lower Arroyo for preservation; 6) Retain current City Ordinance for dogs on leash; and 7) Develop a path on the west side of the flood control channel for bicycles which would require amending the current City Ordinance. The City Council further authorized staff to proceed with the environmental reviews required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Rose Bowl Use Plan

On August 14, 2000, the City Council granted conceptual approval to the Rose Bowl Use Plan. The Plan permits up to 25 major events, or displacement events, to be held annually. The definition of a major event will be an event that has a minimum of 20,000 attendees. Two of the most important issues that the Rose Bowl Operating Company addressed as part of the Use Plan are fiscal responsibilities and the Arroyo Seco Ordinance, which includes the number of major events permitted at the Rose Bowl. The Council further directed that Area H remain available for recreational use at all possible times.

The potential use of the Rose Bowl by the National Football League and any modifications to the Rose Bowl related to such use are not within the scope of this MEIR. The MEIR does not review traffic impacts for midweek non-holiday displacement events at the Rose Bowl. Approval of the Rose Bowl Use Plan would permit the Rose Bowl Operating Company to contract for up to 25 major events per year on weekends and major holidays. At such time that a potential use of the Rose Bowl by the NFL becomes a definable project, the City will undertake a full environmental review consisting of a complete EIR to study the impacts related to a potential NFL project.

Design Guidelines:

The purpose of the Arroyo Seco Guidelines is to provide: 1) Design criteria for preservation, restoration, and conservation for the Arroyo Seco leading to a unified park design that reflects the natural environment, the heritage of the site, and its relationship to the traditions of the City of Pasadena; and 2) A unifying set of design criteria for improvements set forth in the Arroyo Seco Master Plan consistent with the preservation and restoration of the natural environment. (See Attachment F)

FISCAL IMPACT:


Upon the Certification of the MEIR, staff will review all approved projects and prepare cost estimates. Projects will be linked together to facilitate logical completion in phases where environmental review and clearance has been completed, and funding is available. Attachment J provides a listing of the grant funded projects and their required dates of completion. Staff will pursue funding opportunities for the remaining projects as they become available.

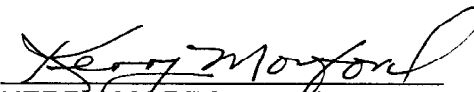
Respectfully submitted,


CYNTHIA J. KURTZ
CITY MANAGER


Approved by:

Concurrence by:


RICHARD J. BRUCKNER, DIRECTOR
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT


KERRY MORFORD, ACTING
DIRECTOR PUBLIC WORKS

Prepared by:


BRIAN LEAGUE
MEIR Project Manager


ROSA LAVEAGA
Project Manager

Attachments:

- A. Memorandum from City Attorney regarding Rose Bowl Planning Efforts
 - B. Letter from Planning Commission Chair to the City Council
 - C. Chronological Summary of Milestones in Planning Process
 - D. Summary of Saturday March 28, 2003 Plan Workshop
 - E. Volume III: Final MEIR
 - F. Agenda Reports and Council Minutes from the Conceptual Approval Individual Component Plans
 - G. Design Guidelines
 - H. ASMP In Brief
 - I. Matrix of Staff Recommended Alternative on ASMP
 - J. Colored Plans sets of Recommend Master Plan Alternative
 - K. List of Current Grants for the Arroyo Seco
 - L. CEQA findings
 - M. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program
 - N. Notice of Determination
 - O. Errata Sheet
 - P. Technical Report Athletic Fields at Hahmongna Watershed Park
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