

# Agenda Report

February 5, 2018

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** City Manager and Rose Bowl General Manager

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON THE ARROYO ADVISORY GROUP AND ACTION TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE ARROYO SECO ("One Arroyo" Project)

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein is not a "project" as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) and therefore is not subject to environmental review; and
2. Appropriate \$100,000 from the undesignated General Fund balance to the RBOC "One Arroyo Project" to support the efforts to enhance and improve the Arroyo Seco.

## **BACKGROUND:**

On January 30, 2017, the Mayor, with an endorsement from Council, announced that 2017 was an opportune time to focus attention on the Arroyo Seco in light of several factors. In response, the Rose Bowl General Manager and City Manager formed an advisory group to assist the City in developing a cohesive vision for the Arroyo Seco, as well as examine ways to address significant deferred maintenance and fund improvements, despite limited public funds.

Subsequent to the formation of the Arroyo Advisory Group (AAG) in early 2017, the AAG returned to the City Council in July 2017 and presented an update on its initial and first phase of work to develop a working vision statement for the Arroyo Seco, along with an outline for an outreach plan to engage the community in discussions about the

Arroyo. As part of the July report, the AAG recommended the creation of an end-to-end trail system as a pilot project to advance the One Arroyo vision. At that time, Council approved a trail concept study as part of the next phase in the process to further explore the possibility of creating an end-to-end trail system throughout the Arroyo that would restore broken connections and enhance the trail user experience, as well as an implementation strategy inclusive of estimated capital and operating costs coupled with strategies for funding and management.

As part of the process, the RBOC engaged the services of HR&A Advisors (HR&A) and Rios Clementi Hale Studios (RCHS) to develop a concept plan for an improved end-to-end trail system. Since August, RCHS developed preliminary trail design concepts and cost estimates and HR&A prepared guidance about public and private financing opportunities for the trail system, including the importance of addressing significant deferred maintenance. Through their joint effort and in consultation with the AAG and City staff, three key trail objectives were identified in support of the One Arroyo vision:

*Connect- Minimum improvements to create a unified One Arroyo Trail*

*Enhance- Improvements that further enhance the user experience along the trails*

*Inspire- Additional inspirational designs that foster a deeper connection to the Arroyo and Arroyo watershed*

The "Connect" objective provides concept-level recommendations for reuniting trail segments; incorporates wayfinding recommendations at trail junctions and entries; considers the potential for pedestrian bridges; provides for materials palette recommendations to clearly define the trail; and suggests interpretive signage at the most significant historical, natural and cultural sites.

The "Enhance" objective posits that a basic unified trail can be further improved with elements that enhance the Arroyo, such as new native trees and vegetation and operational improvements to the trail. This concept would not only provide added comfort to trail users, but also provide a dynamic sensorial experience along the trail through diverse and robust textures and colors.

Finally, in the "Inspire" objective a comprehensive One Arroyo trail emerges. The trail is not only more traversable but more easily understood as a natural and cultural treasure to be explored and to recreate in both actively and passively. The design elements proposed in the "Inspire" objective seek to elevate the Arroyo trail into a one-of-a-kind

place to experience firsthand the story of the water cycle and the delicate connection between the urban environment and the Arroyo Seco.

The AAG received a comprehensive report from the consultants which outlines trail concept alternatives and explores design solutions to fulfill the Connect, Enhance, and Inspire objectives in more detail, while simultaneously addressing deferred maintenance. The report also provides conceptual level cost estimates for the proposed design elements. The estimated overall cost for hard costs within the entire concept package is \$37 million.

The AAG recognized that it could take a generation or more to bring the One Arroyo vision to fruition. As such, the AAG is recommending that the program be implemented in phases, beginning with a demonstration project to catalyze fundraising and serve as a proof of concept. The following criteria were used to frame ideas for two potential demonstration projects:

- Does it achieve all levels of implementation (connect, enhance, and inspire)?
- Is it highly visible and an easily accessible location?
- Is it relatively low cost (\$5 million or less)?
- Is it readily implementable and maintainable?

Based on feedback received during a three-hour workshop with the AAG, the consultant team has prepared two demonstration project concepts that focus on special habitat restoration areas at key connection points within the Arroyo. These projects are located at transition points that separate the major sections of the Arroyo. Referred to as the "Woodlands Loop" and "Streamside Walk," the former is located to the North and just under the Devil's Gate Dam, and the latter is located to the South and adjacent to the soft bottom and low-flow stream areas in the Lower Arroyo. As both demonstration projects are conceptual at this time, additional analysis and public input will be needed to inform specific elements of the projects, as will appropriate environmental review and ultimately incorporation into the Capital Improvement Program Budget. The recommendation will support an effort to both fund and refine the demonstration projects. After adequate funding has been identified and the demonstration projects are appropriately refined, staff will return to Council for further action toward implementation of the demonstration projects.

#### **Financial Planning Update & Findings:**

Concurrent with the trail concept study and cost estimation, the AAG worked closely

with the consultant team to develop a preliminary funding strategy for the demonstration projects and later phase trail projects as well as an estimate for sustainable operations and maintenance. Due to the limited public funding available to support the projects, the funding strategy recommended will require a collaboration with private and non-profit civic leaders. Initially, it is anticipated that the demonstration projects would be largely financed by the philanthropic community, which may include a partial City match.

In order to pursue funding for the demonstration projects, the AAG is recommending that the immediate next step be a fundraising assessment. The assessment would be initiated by a subset of the AAG's Financial Planning Committee, and perhaps others with expertise in this area, to explore fundraising potential and develop planning strategies for a future fundraising campaign. Should the fundraising assessment demonstrate the potential for private revenues and untapped public dollars, the Financial Planning Committee will also explore the potential of establishing a limited purpose tax-exempt, non-profit entity focused on the funding, creation and maintenance of a trail, with appropriate oversight. As part of this phase, it is anticipated that there would be a collaborative effort with the City to explore, advance and manage public and private grant opportunities.

#### **Community Outreach Update & Findings:**

Concurrent with the trail concept study, the AAG embarked on a citywide listening tour and managed a survey to build awareness of the needs and opportunities of the Arroyo, test the strengths of the proposed vision statement, and learn about the community's priorities for the Arroyo. Through the second phase of the effort, the AAG organized and supported a community-wide meeting at the Pasadena Center, 15 outreach presentations to community groups and Council Districts, four Arroyo Walks with the Mayor, and conducted countless small group presentations and meetings with non-profits and community organizations interested in the future of the Arroyo Seco.

From September through November 2017, the AAG, with the support of consultants, initiated a bilingual survey that was broadly disseminated throughout Pasadena to over 100 stakeholder organizations, offered in-person at 10 community events, and available online to maximize public participation. To bolster awareness for the effort and encourage participation in the survey, the AAG planned and hosted the first "One Arroyo Day" in late November bringing together 20 Arroyo-based organizations as well as City departments and the public for a celebration of Pasadena's great park.

The survey was a robust effort that confirmed the community's interest in improved amenities, especially trails, and in their appropriate maintenance. The top priorities of the 2,652 survey respondents included: maintenance, environment/ecology, trails,

amenities, and activities. The top new amenities confirmed by the survey included: restrooms, trails/paths, habitat restoration, bike trails, and places to relax. Overall, 57% of respondents expressed interest in wanting to see improvements, 70% were interested in more open space amenities, and 60% were interested in more open space programs. The survey also confirmed that the majority of respondents felt that the AAG's One Arroyo vision was appropriate and reflective of the community's desire to honor it as a natural place with opportunities for the community to come together in recreation and reflection. Following the survey, the AAG modified its vision statement to incorporate public feedback.

**Projects & Priorities Update:**

As previously discussed, the AAG identified the end-to-end trail as the pilot project for the One Arroyo effort. During the second phase of its work, the AAG explored ways to further enhance the Arroyo and identified three other possible projects for future consideration: (1) development of an effective program for tree preservation, habitat and native plant restoration; (2) rehabilitation of the forest service buildings in Hahamongna; and (3) establishment of a volunteer corps for the Arroyo Seco.

**Future Role of the AAG:**

It is currently anticipated that a subset of the AAG will immediately pivot to focus on the fundraising effort while the full AAG will meet periodically and conclude its work with a final written report to City Council by the end of Fiscal Year 2018. The final report will encompass other considerations by the AAG to preserve, enhance and improve the Arroyo Seco, including strengthening the level of coordination among the various Arroyo stakeholder activities.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:**

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(4) excludes from the definition of a "project" government fiscal actions which do not involve any commitment to any specific project. The action presented herein is a request for a budget allocation to support an effort to evaluate funding for and further refine the demonstration projects, and is not a request to take an action that will have a potential environmental effect. When the demonstration projects are fully developed and adequate funding has been identified, staff will return to Council with appropriate environmental review of the projects at that time.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

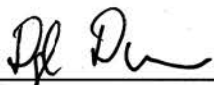
The budget for the next phase of this effort is \$125,000. Funding for the proposed action would require an appropriation of \$100,000 from the undesignated General Fund Balance to support the continued One Arroyo effort through December 31, 2018. Through the RBOC, a separate project account was designated on July 17, 2017 for the "One Arroyo" project and maintains a balance of \$25,000 that can be used towards the next phase of the project. The RBOC General Manager and City Manager's Office will work in consultation with the leadership of the AAG to undertake the selection process for a consultant and oversee the study.

Components of the budget are as follows:

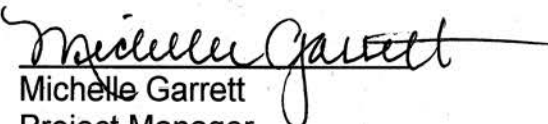
Fundraising Assessment & Development-Related Activities	\$ 50,000
Development of Fundraising Materials & Renderings	\$ 30,000
Trail Development/Public Funding Strategist	\$ 30,000
<u>Administrative Costs/Contingency</u>	<u>\$ 15,000</u>
Total	\$125,000

Respectfully submitted,

  
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City Manager

  
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Darryl Dunn  
General Manager, Rose Bowl Operating  
Company

Prepared by:

  
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Michelle Garrett  
Project Manager

Attachment A: One Arroyo Trail Final Report  
Attachment B: One Arroyo Survey Summary  
Attachment C: Proposed Guiding Principles for the Stewardship of the Arroyo Seco