

Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL

October 16, 2000

FROM: CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: EMERGENCY BRUSH CLEARANCE FOR FIRE MITIGATION IN THE
CENTRAL AND LOWER ARROYO SECO

RECOMMENDATION

Pursuant to Pasadena Municipal Code Section 4.08.150, it is recommended that City Council receive and file this report.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on August 14, 2000, City Council approved an appropriation of \$200,000 for emergency brush clearance in the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco from the Arroyo Seco Improvement Fund. The City's Fire Marshall determined that the overgrowth of brush in the Lower and Central Arroyo constituted a risk to the health and safety of Pasadena residents. Priority areas were established by staff and Fire Marshall review in conjunction with City Council, and a brush hazard abatement plan was created.

In response to both City Council's action and the Fire Marshall's determination, staff met with various local, City approved vendors to determine which was most capable and able to mobilize quickly to begin brush hazard abatement. Pursuant to P.M.C. Section 4.08.150, which authorizes the City Manager to secure any needed services without competitive bidding in the event of an emergency, the firm of Systems Management Incorporated (SMI) was engaged to immediately begin clearing brush in the Arroyo Seco. SMI is a local Pasadena firm that employs a number of Pasadena residents and has a strong performance record with the City.

The Fire Marshall determined that the local fire season will likely extend into December, due in large part to the long, hot, dry summer in Southern California. Seasonal Santa Ana winds could further increase the hazard. Given these factors, the Fire Marshall made an additional site visit to the Arroyo in September and recommended a more aggressive approach to brush hazard abatement with first priority going to the west facing slopes. The following areas were established as high priority (see attached memorandum with maps):

- West facing slopes from California Boulevard north to the Colorado Street Bridge

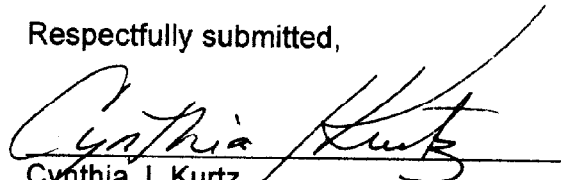
- West facing slopes along Rosemont from Seco Street north to above Washington Boulevard
- Clearance from residential structures on Rosemont from Washington Boulevard to Arroyo Boulevard
- Salvia Canyon on the west side of the Central Arroyo
- West facing slopes within Brookside Park

Crews totaling 35 to 40 personnel per day are currently at work at designated sites both in the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco. As of September 28th, brush clearance had been completed in approximately 10 acres in the Lower Arroyo Seco and 18 acres in the Central Arroyo Seco. The contractor is working to complete the high priority areas as established by the Fire Marshall. Those areas contain some of the most rugged terrain in the Arroyo. It is anticipated that the highest risk areas will be completed by December 2000.

FISCAL IMPACT

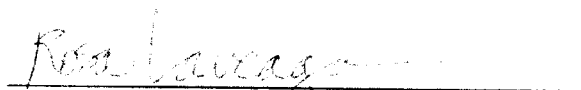
As of September 28th, \$70,000 of the \$200,000 appropriation had been expended. This work will continue through the end of December, and fire mitigation expenditures for the remainder of the year will be paid for from the existing budget. Following Council's action on August 14, 2000, there are sufficient funds in the Brookside/Lower Arroyo Seco Operating Budget, 8114-101-765300, to cover this expense.

Respectfully submitted,



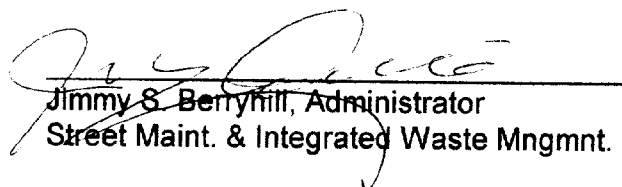
Cynthia J. Kurtz
City Manager

Prepared by:




Rosa Laveaga, Public Works Supervisor
Parks and Natural Resources Division

Reviewed by:



Jimmy S. Berryhill, Administrator
Street Maint. & Integrated Waste Mngmnt.

Approved by:



C. Bernard Gilpin, Director
Public Works and Transportation Dept.