

# Agenda Report

**DATE:** MAY 5, 2003  
**TO:** CITY COUNCIL  
**FROM:** CYNTHIA KURTZ, CITY MANAGER  
**SUBJECT:** APPROVAL OF LOWER AND CENTRAL ARROYO SECO MASTER PLANS

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Acknowledge its action on April 14, 2003 (I) certifying the MEIR for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and adopting 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, (II) and directing staff to file a Notice of Determination with the County Clerk and Governor's Office of Planning and Research for the Lower Arroyo Master Plan and the Central Arroyo Master Plan; and
2. Adopt the Lower Arroyo Master Plan and the Central Arroyo Master Plan, as presented in attachments A and B (redlined versions of the Draft Arroyo Seco Master Plan).

**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 with changes identified in the Lower Arroyo Master Plan Matrix. (Attachment C)
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 limit the use of temporary lights on Area H consistent with the October 2000 recommendation of the Multi Sports Field Task Force.

*In response to the recommendation of the Recreation and Parks Commission, staff recognizes the Arroyo Seco Master Plan does not go into detail regarding the layout of proposed improvements identified in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the Central Arroyo. There are several funded CIP projects for Brookside Park including ADA improvements, walkway replacements, picnic facility upgrades, playground replacements and parking lot improvements. When these projects are implemented, comprehensive schematic designs will be developed that will integrate all the proposed work and insure overall compliance with the Central Arroyo Master Plan and the Design Guidelines. Therefore, it will not be necessary to add the additional step of developing a separate park plan for Brookside Park.*

*In response to the concerns with portable lights on Area H, staff supports guidelines that limit the use of portable lights in Area H. The primary need is to accommodate youth sports practices during late afternoon and early evenings of the non-Daylight Savings Time months, for the Fall and Winter sports seasons. Accordingly, staff recommends use of portable lights at Area H for youth sports activities, within the following parameters: not to exceed three weekday evenings per week nor six months per year, with lights out no later than 9pm per evening.*

#### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION:**

The Planning Commission provided input on the draft Master Environmental Impact Report at its regularly scheduled meeting of August 28, 2002 at which time they recommended that the City re-examine and re-draft the Arroyo Seco Master Plans. The primary issues of the Commission were:

- 1) Parking in the Lower Arroyo
- 2) Better integration with the Arroyo Seco Watershed Feasibility Study
- 3) Consistency between the Central Arroyo Master Plan and the Rose Bowl Use Plan.

*The recommended Final Lower Arroyo Master Plan removes the parking lot. The plan also includes support for the Arroyo Seco Watershed Feasibility Study with plans to work aggressively with Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to consider alternatives to the concrete channel. While not addressing all issues, it is believed that their primary issues have been addressed.*

#### **COMMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMISSION:**

The Transportation Advisory Commission provided individual comments on the draft MEIR at its regularly scheduled meeting of June 21, 2002, that included specific comments on the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco Master Plans. No action or recommendations were made at this meeting, listed below is a summary of the Commission's comments related to Lower and Central Arroyo Master Plans:

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?

*The recommended final plan eliminates any additional parking areas in the Lower Arroyo as well as any new recreational uses, such as the bike path. The main access road to the Lower Arroyo has several sections that do not allow the safe passage of two vehicles where several "near miss" accidents have occurred. The current increased popularity of the area and the anticipated future usage has prompted the recommendation to widen only the "pinches" in a manner that would allow safe passage and with a design solution that is reminiscent of the Arroyo character. The intent of the Plan is to enhance the natural environment and cultural resources that define the unique character of the Arroyo.*

*Another goal of the plan is to upgrade existing infrastructure and facilities so they will be in compliance with current safety, accessibility and water quality standards, as well as improve or replace deteriorating facilities, so the public can continue to enjoy this precious open natural space.*

#### **COMMENTS OF UTILITY ADVISORY COMMISSION:**

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. With regard to the Draft Lower and Central Arroyo Seco Master Plans, the UAC commented that they supported the removal of the flood channel and that the bike path should be removed from the plan.

*The final recommended master plan supports the restoration of the Arroyo Seco streamcourse, where feasible, and is currently working with Los Angeles County Flood Control and the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct a feasibility study to consider the removal of the concrete channel and the impacts of such. The bike path in the Lower Arroyo Seco Master Plan has been removed in the recommended Final Lower Arroyo Master Plan.*

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The current planning effort for the Arroyo Seco Master Plans began approximately 15 years ago when a graduate design team from California State Polytechnic University at Pomona prepared a Master Plan for the Lower Arroyo that was presented to the City Council in 1988 for information only. In spring 1994, the City Council requested that the Recreation and Parks Commission bring a recommended Lower Arroyo Master Plan to the City Council for formal adoption.

### Lower Arroyo Master Plan

On February 10, 1997, the City Council granted conceptual approval for the Lower Arroyo Master Plan (LAMP):

Subsequent to the Council directive to proceed with the environmental reviews for LAMP, People for the Arroyo filed a complaint against the City of Pasadena, relative to the bicycle path in LAMP. The resulting stipulated judgment provided restrictions for the introduction of new recreational uses to this area of the Arroyo Seco, and delayed the furtherance of the environmental review until 2001. At that time, staff held two public meetings to update the 1997 LAMP document.

The update to the 1997 conceptual plan for the Lower Arroyo Seco (also known as the 2002 draft LAMP) made this component consistent with the other Arroyo Seco master plans, incorporated the 1997 directives from the City Council and clearly identified the approved and funded CIP projects for the Lower Arroyo Seco.

The recommended Final Lower Arroyo Seco Master Plan now includes changes in response to public comments, as well as issues raised during the MEIR comment period. A matrix that highlights the changes to the recommended projects are included as Attachment C. Attachment A provides the "redlined" version of the final plan as well. In general, projects relating to signage have been eliminated, and will follow the design guidelines as approved by City Council on April 14, 2003. Excessive picnic areas, and dedicated rest areas along with permanent parking at the Archer Clubhouse have all been eliminated under the recommended plan. All references to bicycles have been removed. Projects that restore the natural habitat have been clarified or added to ensure conservation and preservation of the Lower Arroyo Seco. Finally, the new pedestrian bridge and the improvements to the south entrance have been eliminated in response to public comment along with the extension of the Low Flow Stream project in the Memorial Grove.

### Central Arroyo Master Plan

In November 1999, the Recreation and Parks Commission established the Central Arroyo Master Plan Advisory Committee to oversee the master plan process for the Central Arroyo Seco area. The plan was presented, and received conceptual approval from the City Council on January 22, 2001. The Central Arroyo Master Plan (CAMP) provides a framework for the utilization of the City's regional recreation area.

The major projects included in the Draft Central Arroyo Seco Master Plan can be found in the attached matrix (Attachment D), which provides clarification for specific projects in response to public comments. Attachment B is a "redlined" version of CAMP and illustrates the edits made to the 2002 draft CAMP based on the recommended Final CAMP. In general, the recommended plan mimics the

conceptual CAMP with the addition/modification of one project: the children's play equipment areas in Brookside Park.

Upon approval of the conceptual plan for the Central Arroyo Seco Master Plan, staff began preparing the various elements of the draft Master Environmental Impact Report for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan. These elements included thorough project descriptions, additional details for existing conditions, utility information, historical data and other elements needed for the environmental analysis. In addition to the elements that were added to the concept plan, staff removed the recommendation that provided for using the disabled parking lot for regular parking during non-event times. This was removed because staff re-examined the existing parking situation and determined there was adequate parking in the Central Arroyo during non-event conditions that using the disabled lot was not necessary.

On April 14, 2003, the City Council directed staff to return to the City Council with the Draft Lower and Central Arroyo Seco Master Plans in a "redlined" format indicating any edits to the document resulting from the recommended plans. Staff has prepared charts that detail the differences/changes between the Draft Master Plan documents and the concept plans. These charts are included as Attachment E to describe the changes from the plans previously approved by City Council as "concept" documents, to the Draft Arroyo Seco Master Plan documents evaluated by the Draft Master Environmental Impact Report.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

The following grants are currently funded for the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco areas.

**Lower Arroyo Seco**

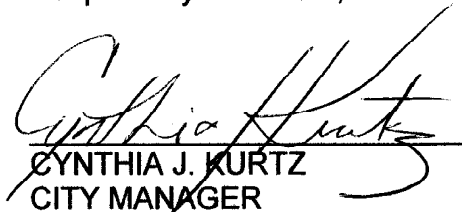
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|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) 1992 Proposition A  | Lower Arroyo Signage, Train Definition and Restroom Demolition. (\$85,000)                                        |
| 2) 1992 Proposition A  | Lower Arroyo Trail and Rubble Wall Restoration (\$250,000)                                                        |
| 3) 1992 Proposition A  | Lower Arroyo New South Entrance (Removed and funding will be reassigned to another Prop A project) (\$100,000)    |
| 4) 1992 Proposition A  | Lower Arroyo New Pedestrian Bridge (Removed and funding will be reassigned to another Prop A project) (\$120,000) |
| 4) 1992 Proposition A  | Lower Arroyo Revegetation (\$200,000)                                                                             |
| 5) 1992 Proposition A  | Replace La Casita Decorative Wall (\$90,000)                                                                      |
| 6) 2002 Proposition 40 | Casting Pond Repairs (\$50,000)                                                                                   |

**Central Arroyo Seco**

- |                        |                                                                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) 2000 Proposition 12 | Arroyo Seco Trails (Brookside Park and Salvia Canyon) (\$275,000)          |
| 2) 2000 Proposition 12 | Restoration of Northern and Southern Arroyo Seco Channel Areas (\$999,670) |


Staff's recommended Final Lower Arroyo Seco Master Plan has removed two funded projects, the New Southern Entrance and the Pedestrian Bridge. If adopted as recommended staff will review all approved projects and prepare cost estimates and priorities. Staff will work with Los Angeles County to redirect the Prop A funds for these two projects, to appropriate projects based on priorities and cost estimates. The remaining Projects will be linked together to facilitate logical completion in phases where environmental review and clearance has been completed, and funding is available. Staff will pursue funding opportunities for the remaining projects as they become available.

Respectfully submitted,



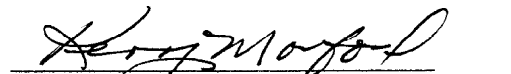
CYNTHIA J. KURTZ  
CITY MANAGER

Prepared by:



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Approved by:



KERRY MORFORD, Interim Director  
Department of Public Works

Attachments:

- A. "Redlined" Version of LAMP
- B. "Redlined" Version of CAMP
- C. Final Recommended Project Matrix for LAMP
- D. Final Recommended Project Matrix for CAMP
- E. Comparison Chart Between Conceptual Plan and Draft Plan for LAMP and CAMP