



Agenda Report

August 26, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Department of Public Works

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT A GRANT APPLICATION AND ADOPT A RESOLUTION FOR THE 2019 URBAN STREAMS RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the action proposed herein, authorization to apply for grants for enhancement or restoration of natural areas in the Arroyo Seco, is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to the following statutory exemption from State CEQA Guidelines: 15262 - Feasibility and Planning Studies; and
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing an application for the Proposition 84 and Proposition 68 Urban Streams Restoration Grant Program in the amount of \$998,550 for the *Planning and Design for the Stream Restoration of the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco*.

BACKGROUND:

The Urban Streams Restoration Program (USRP) is one of two sub-programs under the Riverine Stewardship Program (RSP). The USRP is currently funded by Propositions 84 and 68 and was established in Water Code Section 7048, which declared that urban creek protection, restoration and enhancement are best undertaken by local agencies and organizations with assistance from the State. The USRP provides local assistance grants to fund projects and provide technical assistance to restore streams impacted by urban development to a more natural state.

The USRP goals include:

- (1) Protecting, enhancing and restoring the natural, ecological value of streams.
- (2) Preventing future property damage caused by flooding and bank erosion.

(3) Promoting community involvement, education, and riverine stewardship.

A major objective of the USRP is to bring people together around projects that foster community relationships while ensuring the community's interests are incorporated into the project's planning, design, and outcomes. Local community-supported projects can support local economies, renew a community's understanding of the value of streams, and make them a centerpiece for the community while expanding their contact with nature. The RSP objectives defined in the Water Code direct program staff to connect with small communities and encourage community participation in project development and stewardship.

The USRP Grant Program is administered by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and is a competitive grant program for river parkways projects. DWR will make available as much as \$10 million for the USRP solicitation.

The USRP will reserve as much as \$1 million to fund technical assistance and planning-only grants for projects that serve disadvantaged communities. Technical assistance is defined as a range of multidisciplinary services that are provided by RSP staff to support development of a project that meets the RSP's goals. For the purposes of quantifying this set-aside, funding for planning-only grants that serve disadvantaged communities will be counted toward this commitment. City staff utilized the mapping tool provided by DWR to identify both the disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities proximate to the project area and that will be served by this proposed project if grant funds are awarded. Entities that have received technical assistance from the RSP will have greater priority for project implementation grants in future solicitations. The Department of Public Works has received technical assistance from the DWR for the Berkshire Creek project, currently being implemented and funded by a previous USRP grant.

Examples of technical assistance activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Planning and Design:** project concept development; project design or design criteria including habitat design and plant selection; cost estimates; and project management.
- **Environmental and Scientific:** watershed science; environmental planning; permit preparation; coordination with local, state, and federal regulatory agencies; protected species surveys and monitoring; construction monitoring; environmental compliance; iterative performance assessment; data collection; and study design.
- **Long-term Management:** land management (monitoring and maintenance) planning.
- **Outreach:** education and capacity building in local communities; curriculum development; meeting facilitation; and educational development.

The project area will include the reach from the base of the Devil's Gate Dam to just south of the Colorado Street Bridge. See Attachment A. This reach of the Arroyo Seco

Watershed will need to be studied since recommendations critical to the creation of the functional soft-bottom stream areas may include design solutions at more than one location within this project area. The funding would pay for the planning, design, preparation of construction documents, the CEQA document, various technical studies, regulatory permits for the rehabilitation of this area, and would result in a "shovel ready project." Ownership of the project area is shared between the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, the City of Pasadena and Caltrans. The project area was selected because a new design solution needs to be considered within this reach that will properly handle the amount of sediment flowing into this area and to ensure an improved source of clean water to feed the low-flow streams under the Colorado Street bridge without sediment blockage of the stream inlets. A sustainable solution is being sought for this critically dynamic area of the Arroyo Seco Watershed and to ensure the successful long-term operation of the low-flow stream system in the Lower Arroyo Seco.

The proposed project is not a part of the current Capital Improvement Program (CIP). This is a unique grant opportunity specifically suited to the lower and central reaches of the Arroyo Seco stream in Pasadena. If funded, staff will return to City Council to add the project to the CIP.

This grant program requires that the project have two-applicants: one public agency and one citizen group or non-profit. The primary manager for the *Planning and Design for the Stream Restoration of the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco* will be the Department of Public Works, and the co-applicant will be the Council for Watershed Health (CWH). CWH was founded in 1996 by Dorothy Green to promote more efficient use of stormwater resources by providing leadership, guidance, and technical assistance to agencies and organizations to affect sound watershed planning and management.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The Urban Streams Restoration Program is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure, and support and promote the quality of life.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

The actions proposed herein are an application for funding that anticipates planning and design only, with no construction. This action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to the statutory exemption set forth in State CEQA Guidelines Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies. A project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the agency, board, or commission has not approved, adopted, or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does require consideration of environmental factors. Consideration of environmental factors was given in that this project area was selected because a new design needs to be considered at this location that will properly handle the amount of sediment flowing into

this area and to ensure an improved source of clean water to feed the low-flow streams without sediment blockage of the stream inlets.

Finally, other resource agencies that may have jurisdiction over the work area will be contacted for consultation and any necessary approvals before and during the environmental review process. In addition, the planning and design will result in a preferred construction solution along with the preparation of construction documents and the appropriate CEQA document. Completing the CEQA process prior to the award of the funds is not a requirement of this grant program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The City has the potential of receiving up to \$998,550 for the Arroyo Seco Watershed to plan and design a practical environmental solution for the management of sediment that flows through the Arroyo Seco stream between Devil's Gate Dam and the Lower Arroyo streams just south of the Colorado Street Bridge. If the grant is awarded, the Department of Public Works will return to Council to appropriate the funds to the proper budget account.

Respectfully submitted,



ARA MALOYAN, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Rosa Laveaga
Landscape Architect

Approved by:



STEVE MERMELL
City Manager

Attachment A – Project Location