

Agenda Report

July 10, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION FOR THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM (RTP) GRANT FOR THE ARROYO CRITICAL LINKAGES PROJECT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Sections 15301, Existing Facilities, 15304 Minor Alterations to Land, and 15311 Accessory Structures, and that there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt class and therefore there are no unusual circumstances; and
2. Adopt a resolution authorizing the City submit a grant application for the Recreational Trails Program in the amount of \$500,000 for the planning and construction of the One Arroyo Critical Linkages Project; and
3. Authorize the City Manager or his designee to approve any documents in connection with the RTP grant application or, in the event that the City receives an award, any RTP grant contract documents that may be required by the State of California.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Pasadena applied for grant funding from the annual Recreational Trails Program for the 2023 funding cycle for the One Arroyo Critical Linkages Project. The State Department of Parks and Recreation has been delegated with the authority to distribute funds that develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The City partnered with the One Arroyo Foundation to complete the application which was submitted on June 15, 2023. The One Arroyo Foundation is a nonprofit organization that was created to

supplement available public funding to complete enhancement projects for the Arroyo Seco.

The One Arroyo Critical Linkages Project seeks to restore, enhance, and connect the 22 miles of trail along the Arroyo Seco where significant deterioration has caused the trail to become noncontiguous, difficult to navigate, and in some areas, inaccessible and unsafe. The project will provide maintenance by rebuilding sections of the Upper and Lower Loop trails connecting the three main areas of the Arroyo Seco - Hahamongna, Central Arroyo and Lower Arroyo. The project will enhance the Arroyo by the addition of wayfinding signage and learning areas along the trail system consistent with the natural environment.

The project will improve not only the trail system within the 900+ acre Arroyo Seco parklands in Pasadena, but also the trail and access connections to the north into the Angeles National Forest in the Arroyo Seco watershed and to the south along the Arroyo Seco to the Los Angeles River and the on-going efforts in this important planning area.

The scope of work includes:

- Trail restoration and enhanced pathways
- Grading
- Trail out sloping
- Rock armoring
- Slope stabilization
- Clearing debris and erosion
- Road crossings to enhance access and connectivity
- Wayfinding signage
- Habitat restoration
- Planting of native species
- Natural seating and learning areas

The One Arroyo Demonstration projects will provide a safe, enhanced outdoor experience by providing much needed upgrades to the trail system. Revitalizing Pasadena's historic Arroyo Seco will allow people of all ages and incomes in Pasadena and the greater Los Angeles area to access and enjoy the health, recreational and educational opportunities this tremendous open space has to offer.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed action is consistent with the City Council Strategic Planning Goals including increasing conservation and sustainability and ensuring public safety.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The action proposed herein is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to Class 1, "Existing Facilities", Class 4, "Minor Alterations to Land", and Class 11, "Accessory Structures".

Class 1 Categorical Exemption

Pursuant to Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Class 1 exemption applies to the following type of projects:

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use.

The examples of appropriate projects identified for this class of CEs in Section 15301 of the State CEQA Guidelines relevant to the Project include but are not limited to:

- (c) Existing highways and streets, sidewalks, gutters, bicycle and pedestrian trails, and similar facilities..., and other alterations such as the addition of bicycle facilities, including but not limited to bicycle parking, bicycle-share facilities and bicycle lanes, transit improvements such as bus lanes, pedestrian crossings, street trees, and other similar alterations that do not create additional automobile lanes; and*
- (d) Restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety, unless it is determined that the damage was substantial and resulted from an environmental hazard such as earthquake, landslide, or flood.*

The Project is the repair and other minor alteration of existing public facilities with negligible expansion of use. The proposed trail improvements would involve limited expansion of the trail system, through additional connections between existing trail segments. The existing bicycle, pedestrian, and/or equestrian trails would be restored or rehabilitated from a moderately to severely deteriorated condition to help provide safer trails and greater accessibility to more users of the Arroyo Seco trail system. All improvements proposed as part of the One Arroyo Trail Demonstration Project fall within the Class 1 categorical exemption as minor alterations of the existing trail system.

Class 4 Categorical Exemption

Pursuant to Section 15304 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Class 4 exemption applies to the following type of projects:

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

The examples of appropriate projects identified for this class of CEs in Section 15304 of the State CEQA Guidelines relevant to the Project include but are not limited to:

- (a) *Grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent...*;
- (c) *Filling of earth into previously excavated land with material compatible with the natural features of the site; and*
- (f) *Minor trenching or backfilling where the surface is restored.*

The Project involves minor public alterations in the condition of land, with some localized alterations to vegetation, and does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Most of the proposed trail improvements involve changes in surficial conditions (e.g., trail outslope, grade reversal, rock armoring, stone terracing, elevating trail) to repair and better manage erosion from storm water drainage. There are two locations with grades greater than 10 percent—the northern portion of the upper loop trail and an area adjacent to the Mayberry & Parker Bridge. These areas of the Project site would not be subject to wholesale grading/earthmoving but are proposed to have either rock armoring or stone terracing, which would involve hand tools to establish very localized changed in grade to allow installation of the armored surface or terraces.

Class 11 Categorical Exemption

Pursuant to Section 15311 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Class 11 exemption applies to the following type of projects:

Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities...

The examples of appropriate projects identified for this class of CEs in Section 15311 of the State CEQA Guidelines relevant to the Project include but are not limited to:

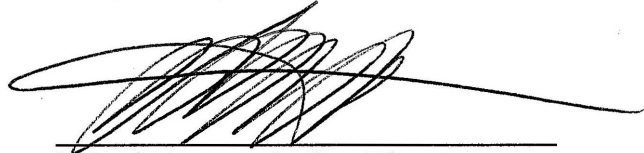
- (d) *On-premise signs...*

The Project would involve placement of new signage on-site that is accessory to the existing trail system. New signage would be limited and include the proposed monumentation at the Rosemont Avenue and West Washington Boulevard intersection and potential locations for trail markers at the northern terminus of the Lower Loop at North Arroyo Boulevard. All signage would be designed and installed in compliance with the *Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines* (Pasadena 2003a). Therefore, the proposed Project would be consistent with the requirements of Section 15311 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT:

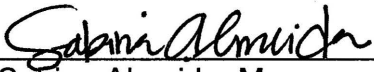
If the City of Pasadena is successful in obtaining funding from the Recreational Trails Program, it will receive \$500,000 and staff will return to Council to appropriate the funds to the proper budget account.

Respectfully submitted,



Lola Osborne, Acting Director
Parks, Recreation and Community
Services

Prepared by:



Sabina Almeida, Management Analyst IV
Parks, Recreation, and Community
Services

Approved by:



Miguel Márquez
City Manager

