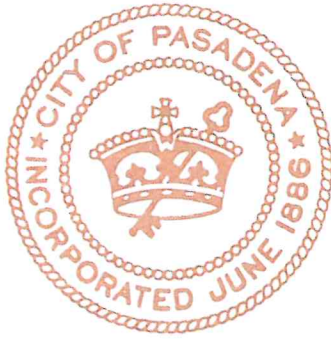




Agenda Report

November 3, 2025

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

FROM: Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A SPONSOR AGREEMENT WITH THE CALIFORNIA CONSERVATION CORPS FOR NON-NATIVE VEGETATION REMOVAL IN THE ARROYO SECO AND ACCEPT AN \$84,500 DONATION FROM THE ONE ARROYO FOUNDATION FOR GOAT GRAZING

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed vegetation management and goat grazing activities are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, Class 1 (Existing Facilities) (§15301) and Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) (§15304), and are further statutorily exempt as specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate a wildfire emergency under Public Resources Code §21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines §15269(c);
2. Authorize the City Manager to execute a sponsor agreement between the City of Pasadena and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to assist with non-native vegetation removal and habitat restoration activities in the Arroyo Seco; and
3. Authorize the City Manager to accept the donation of \$84,500 from One Arroyo Foundation for goat grazing services in the Arroyo Seco.

BACKGROUND:

In a concerted effort to enhance the City's brush clearance and wildfire mitigation programs, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCS) is coordinating two complementary initiatives in partnership with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and the One Arroyo Foundation.

California Conservation Corps Partnership

The CCC is a state development program that provides young adults (ages 18–25) and military veterans (up to age 29) with educational opportunities and job skills training through

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environmental projects and disaster response efforts. Participants, known as Corpsmembers, undergo a thorough screening process and must complete initial training to join. All Corpsmembers are California residents.

For FY 2025–26, the Los Angeles and Pomona CCC satellite locations received a combined allocation of \$384,008 which is equivalent to 9,456 working hours from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to support greenhouse gas reduction projects. These efforts include removing dead and dying trees, brush, and vegetation to reduce wildfire intensity and spread.

The CCC has invited the City of Pasadena's PRCS Department to serve as a sponsoring agency for upcoming projects. As a sponsor, the City will not be responsible for any labor costs; Corpsmembers are compensated directly by the CCC. The City's role will be to provide orientation and hands-on training on equipment and power tools commonly used by the Parks Division.

Under this agreement, Corpsmembers will work on fire hazard mitigation maintenance projects in the Lower and Central Arroyo Seco and Hahamongna Watershed Park from January through May 2026. The scope of work includes:

- Selective thinning of hazardous vegetation
- Removal of invasive plant species that contribute to fuel loading
- Restoration of native habitat structure and function

During inclement weather or excessive heat, PRCS staff will conduct classroom-based training covering topics such as safety procedures, turf management, irrigation repair and installation, fertilization, plant and tree identification, and sports field maintenance.

The City has previously partnered with the CCC to provide environmental education and job training to young adults while advancing conservation goals. Past collaborations in 2014 and 2022 included trail restoration, brush and trail clearance, and enhancement of native plant communities in the Lower Arroyo Seco. The proposed work by the CCC will supplement the regular weed and brush clearance services provided by City staff and the brush abatement contractor. This partnership strengthens the City's vegetation management and conservation efforts by adding workforce capacity and promoting environmental stewardship. When feasible, PRCS will seek future opportunities to collaborate with the CCC as funding and program availability permit.

Goat Grazing Program with One Arroyo Foundation

To complement manual and mechanical vegetation management, the One Arroyo Foundation has proposed funding a goat grazing program to help control dense brush and invasive weeds, particularly on steep or difficult-to-access terrain within the Arroyo Seco.

This partnership reflects the City's ongoing commitment to sustainable land management and wildfire prevention. Goat grazing offers an efficient, environmentally friendly, and low-impact method for reducing hazardous vegetation while promoting native habitat restoration.

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By integrating goat grazing with Corpsmember fieldwork from the CCC, the City will strengthen its long-term vegetation management program and help maintain fire-safe conditions throughout the Arroyo Seco and Hahamongna Watershed Park areas year-round.

The One Arroyo Foundation has pledged a donation of \$84,500 to support the implementation of goat grazing services, which will be carried out by a qualified contractor specializing in ecological vegetation management. This contribution demonstrates the Foundation's continued dedication to advancing ecological restoration, wildfire resilience, and community stewardship in alignment with the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and its mission to restore and enhance the Arroyo as Pasadena's premier open space corridor.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

These projects are consistent with the Arroyo Seco Master Plan to reduce fire hazards in critical areas and is compatible with the City's Climate Action Plan to protect essential habitat corridors and key habitat characteristics. In addition, the project is consistent with the City Council's goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure and support and promote the quality of life and local economy.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines in accordance with Article 19, Class 1, Existing Facilities, and Class 4, Minor Alteration of Land, as well as statutory exemption from CEQA to prevent and mitigate a wildfire emergency.

Class 1 (CEQA Guidelines §15301) exempts from environmental review, among other things, the repair, maintenance, and minor alterations of existing structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of the use. CEQA Guidelines §15301(h) specifically includes maintenance of existing landscaping and native growth in this categorical exemption. The proposed project consists of minor alterations of public lands that would not result in an expansion of use.

Class 4 (CEQA Guidelines §15304) exempts from environmental review 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 proposed project consists of vegetation maintenance to reduce wildfire hazards. No healthy, mature, scenic trees would be removed.

There are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt classes and, therefore, there are no unusual circumstances.

In addition, specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency are statutorily exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) §21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines §15269(c). The proposed project is specifically designed to prevent and/or mitigate a wildfire emergency.

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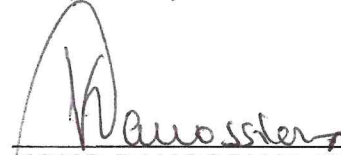
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FISCAL IMPACT:

The City will not incur any direct costs as a result of this action. The Corpsmembers will be compensated directly by the CCC. City staff will provide guidance and training throughout the project, with associated costs absorbed within the existing PRCS operating budget. The One Arroyo Foundation will provide an \$84,500 donation to support vegetation management and will fully reimburse the City for the \$84,500 goat grazing contract.

Respectfully submitted,



KOKO PANOSSIAN, Director of
Parks, Recreation and Community Services

Prepared by:



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Parks Superintendent

Approved by:



MIGUEL MARQUEZ
City Manager