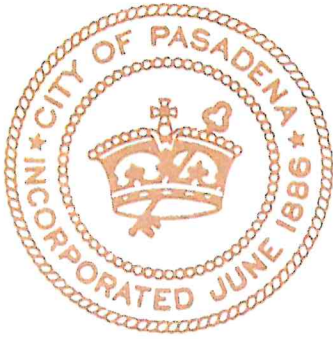




Agenda Report

October 20, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Public Works
SUBJECT: **DETERMINE THE BROOKSIDE PARK STORMWATER CAPTURE PROJECT IS CATEGORICALLY EXEMPT PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND APPROVE THE PROJECT DESIGN CONCEPT**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15301 (Existing Facilities), 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction), 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and 15332 (In-fill Development Projects) and that there are no features that distinguish the project from others in the exempt classes and therefore there are no unusual circumstances; and
2. Approve the Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project design reflected in the attached project design plans.

BACKGROUND:

The Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project is located within Parking Lot I of Brookside Park, immediately south of the Rose Bowl. The project is intended to improve water quality, increase groundwater recharge, and help the City meet requirements of the Los Angeles County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit. The project will divert dry-weather and stormwater runoff from the Seco Street Drain to a subsurface infiltration facility beneath the existing parking lot for treatment and infiltration into the Raymond Basin aquifer. Additional project components include bioretention facilities, vegetated bioswales, enhanced landscaping and tree canopy, repaving and restriping of a portion of the existing parking lot, and other associated parking lot and low impact development (LID) improvements. The project will capture and treat runoff from approximately 1,166 acres within the watershed while maintaining and enhancing the existing functionality of the parking lot and the recreational uses of Brookside Park.

On October 21, 2024, the City Council approved a professional services agreement with Black & Veatch to provide design and engineering services for the Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project. The current action consists of approval of the project design and associated environmental determination necessary to advance the project toward final design, permitting, and construction.

The California Environmental Quality Act (Section 21000 et seq. of the California Public Resources Code, hereafter CEQA) requires environmental review for discretionary projects that have the potential to result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

The Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project has been evaluated in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Based on the nature and scope of the proposed improvements, the project qualifies for categorical exemptions under multiple CEQA exemption classes. See attachment A to review the Categorical Exemption Determination for Brookside Park Project Executive Summary.

The project includes improvements to existing public facilities and stormwater infrastructure involving modifications to existing facilities with negligible or no expansion of existing use. The Project therefore qualifies under CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Existing Facilities). Portions of the project involving replacement or reconstruction of the existing storm drain and related infrastructure with facilities serving substantially the same purpose and capacity also qualify under CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 (Replacement or Reconstruction).

Additionally, the project includes construction of infrastructure and appurtenant features associated with stormwater treatment and infiltration improvements, including an underground infiltration facility, filtration structures, and parking lot improvements, including low impact development (LID) enhancements, which qualify under CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures).

The project also involves alterations to the condition of land within an existing developed parking lot and landscaped areas of Brookside Park, including installation of bioretention facilities, permeable pavement, replacement landscaping, grading, and subsurface infiltration facilities within previously disturbed areas. Following construction, the site will continue to function as an existing parking and landscaped facility, with the addition of stormwater management features and associated landscape improvements. The project includes the removal of nine existing trees to accommodate construction of the subsurface infiltration gallery. Based on the project arborist's assessment, the trees range from approximately 8 to 13 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH), which is below the 19-inch DBH threshold for mature trees established in Pasadena Municipal Code Chapter 8.52. In addition, the trees have not reached the maximum height or canopy spread typical for their species. The trees proposed for removal are primarily California sycamores, a species capable of exceeding 70 feet in height at maturity, whereas the subject trees are approximately 30 feet in height. The trees are located

within an existing developed parking lot and are not identified as scenic resources or as possessing unique scenic value. The project does not expand existing land uses, recreational activities, parking capacity, or public facilities. Accordingly, the project qualifies for a categorical exemption pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land).

Finally, the project qualifies as an in-fill development project under CEQA Guidelines Section 15332. Located on a previously developed and urbanized site less than five acres within Brookside Park, the project is consistent with the General Plan and zoning designations, maintains existing recreational and parking functions, and is substantially surrounded by urban uses. The site is adequately served by existing utilities and public services, and the project will not result in significant effects related to traffic, noise, air quality, or water quality. Instead, it will enhance stormwater management, improve water quality, and increase groundwater recharge.

The project site is located within a public parking lot adjacent to an existing developed urban park. The proposed work primarily occurs within previously disturbed areas and consists of infrastructure and parking lot improvements that are compatible with the existing use of the site. The project will not result in a substantial expansion of use, increase in traffic capacity, or introduction of new land uses.

Staff has considered whether any exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions identified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the project, including unusual circumstances, cumulative impacts, scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, or impacts to historical resources. Based on the environmental review completed to date and the nature of the proposed improvements, staff has determined that none of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions apply. There is no substantial evidence that the project would result in a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The project will continue to undergo technical review and permitting through applicable local, regional, and state agencies as final engineering advances. Any required permits and approvals associated with construction activities will be obtained prior to commencement of construction.

Following City Council approval of the project design and associated environmental determination, the City will file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) in accordance with CEQA requirements. The project is currently at 90 percent design phase. Staff will return to City Council for approval of the final design prior to proceeding with construction, which is currently anticipated to begin in Spring 2029.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

This project is consistent with the City Council's strategic goals to improve, maintain, and enhance public facilities and infrastructure; increase conservation and sustainability; support and promote the quality of life; and improve environmental health within the City.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

The Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project has been evaluated in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines. Based on the nature and scope of the proposed improvements, the Project qualifies for a categorical exemption under multiple CEQA exemption classes. Following City Council approval, the City will file a Notice of Exemption (NOE) in accordance with CEQA requirements.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Funding for the Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project design phase is included within existing budgeted appropriations in the Capital Improvement Program.

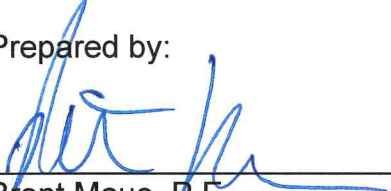
Future construction funding will be brought forward for City Council consideration at the appropriate time and is anticipated to include a combination of local, regional, and grant funding sources, including Safe, Clean Water Program (Measure W) funding, with \$16.75M already committed to construction through a Caltrans funding program.

Respectfully submitted,



GREG DE VINCK, P.E.
Director of Public Works

Prepared by:



Brent Maue, P.E.
City Engineer

Approved by:



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Interim City Manager

Attachments:

Attachment A - Categorical Exemption Determination for Brookside Park Project
Executive Summary

Attachment B - Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project design plans as of 04/17/26