



STAFF REPORT

TO: Recreation and Parks Commission

FROM: Kathy Woods, Administrator
Parks and Natural Resources Division, Department of Public Works

DATE: Meeting of January 7, 2003

RE: Information Update: Arroyo Seco Master Plan

At the last regular meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission, a timeline for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan approval process was presented and endorsed by this commission. Since that last meeting, several members of the community expressed the concern that the schedule was too tight and would not have allowed the public sufficient time to review staff's work. There are a number of grants for projects in the Arroyo Seco that cannot be completed until the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) is certified. Given this, staff needs to find a balance between allowing adequate time for review and still meeting grant deadlines. After further review and in response to community concerns, the City staff has decided to delay the report to City Council to at least the end of February 2003.

The following information is provided as an update on the revised timeline for the Arroyo Seco Master Plan approval process and a chronology of some of staff's preliminary findings and recommendations thus far.

Recent History

The following is a brief chronology of the recent history of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan process:

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| 2/97 | City Council approved in concept, the Draft Master Plan for the Lower Arroyo Seco (LAMP) |
| 1/97 | City Council established the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee (HWPAC) |
| 12/97 | The "Park Elements" that reflected the community's consensus towards the development of the Hahamongna Watershed Park were presented to City Council |
| 12/98-12/99 | Regular monthly meetings of the HWPAC were held and served as the forum for the development of the park master plan |

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| 11/99 | The Recreation and Parks Commission established the Central Arroyo Master Plan Advisory Committee (CAMPAC) to oversee the formulation of the Central Arroyo Master Plan (CAMP) |
| 11/99-1/01 1/00 | Regular meetings of CAMPAC were held, totaling 12 public meetings/workshops City Council approved in concept, the Draft Hahamongna Watershed Park Master Plan and requested that the MEIR examine several alternatives. |
| 9/00 1/01 | The Initial Study on the MEIR was released City Council approved in concept, the CAMP |
| 2/01-3/01 | Two public meetings/workshops were held on the update to the LAMP |
| 9/01-10/01 | Scoping meetings were held to gather input about the scope of the draft MEIR |
| 3/02 | The Arroyo Seco Master Plan project description, as presented in the draft MEIR, was provided to the public |
| 5/02 | The Draft Arroyo Seco Master Plan and the Draft MEIR on the Arroyo Seco Master Plan were made available to the public for comment |
| 6/02-9/02 | 2 public hearings on the adequacy of the Draft MEIR were held; public comment on the adequacy of the Draft MEIR was taken and recorded at the following commission meetings (some commissions had more than one meeting on this subject): Recreation and Parks Commission, Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee, Rose Bowl Operating Company, Design Commission, Cultural Heritage Commission, Planning Commission, Utility Advisory Commission; Comment period is extended three times |
| 9/16/02 | Comment period on the Draft MEIR closes |
| 12/02 | Draft Design Guidelines taken to both the Design Commission and the Arts Commission for approval |

Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

Nearly 600 comments were received on the draft Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). Staff and the MEIR consultant team are still in the process of cataloguing all the comments and preparing responses to those comments. A number of the same issues were mentioned in many of the comments. Staff has developed a preliminary response to frequently asked questions and provided them as an attachment to this update.

Staff has received basically two types of comments thus far. First are those on the process and adequacy of the MEIR. In some cases, we believe more work is required and additional biological and traffic work is underway. Second, are those comments on the impacts of the projects as discussed in the MEIR and what projects should be included in the final master plan. It is in response to these comments that staff has begun our recommendations and would like to begin these discussions with the Commission.

The public comments have also been valuable in pointing out the need for improvements in other areas of the master plan document that are not on a specific project and therefore do not have an environmental impact, but which set the tone for the City's vision. Staff intends to edit, modify and clarify a number of these areas of the plan. It is a work in progress but the following is a list of just some of the areas of the document staff is working on improving:

- Revise the Executive Summary to reflect modifications to the plan
- Demonstrate support for restoration of the Arroyo Seco streamcourse, where feasible
- Confirm references to City General Plan and other city and non-city governmental policies and ensure all references are accurate

- Be consistent in use of all terminology
- Clarify and expand the "goals" section
- Improve the "Project Implementation" section of the plan and clarify what will be required to implement a master plan project and ensure consistency and compliance with the municipal code, City policy and other regulatory agencies
- Improve the "History of the Arroyo Seco" in the document
- Make reference to and cite the Arroyo Seco Watershed Feasibility Study where appropriate; demonstrate support for the study
- Ensure all technical studies are clearly documented and appropriately described

Other Commissions

Since the last regular meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission, several other City commissions have convened on the Arroyo Seco Master Plan. At their regular meeting on December 9, 2002, the Design Commission met and discussed the Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines. A motion was made to not approve the Design Guidelines in their current form and to form a sub-committee to work with staff on the suggested edits to the Design Guidelines. The first meeting of the sub-committee occurred on January 2, 2003 and 2 of the 12 chapters in the guidelines were reviewed. The next meeting of this sub-committee is scheduled for January 6, 2003.

At their regular meeting on December 11, 2002, the Arts Commission met and discussed the Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines. A motion was made to not approve the Design Guidelines in their current form and to form a sub-committee to work with staff on the suggested edits to the Design Guidelines. The first meeting of the sub-committee is scheduled for January 8, 2003.

Timeline

The following timeline is presented as the most current schedule for the remaining major milestones of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan process:

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| Jan. 6 th | 2 nd meeting of Design Commission Sub-committee on the Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines |
| Jan 7 th | Regular meetings of the Recreation & Parks where status will be presented |
| Jan. 8 th | 1 st meeting of the Arts Commission sub-committee on the Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines |
| Jan. 27 th | Regular meeting of the Design Commission: Subcommittee to make recommendation to the full Commission on the Design Guidelines |
| Jan. 15 th | Regular meeting of the Arts Commission: Subcommittee to make recommendation to the full Commission on the Design Guidelines |
| Feb. 4 th | Regular meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission |
| Feb. 14 th | Copies of the draft Final MEIR and the City staff report are provided to the public and to the Recreation and Parks Commission for review prior to the special joint meeting on Feb. 18 th |
| Feb. 18 th | Special joint meeting of the Recreation and Parks Commission and the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee to hear staff 's recommendation on the adoption of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and the Certification of the Master EIR on the Arroyo Seco Master Plan |

Feb. 21st Copies of the City staff report, the Recreation and Parks Commission recommendation and the draft Final MEIR are provided to the public and to the City Council for review prior to the Council meeting on Feb. 24th

Feb. 24th City Council meeting on the adoption of the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and the Certification of the Master EIR on the Arroyo Seco Master Plan

Attachments: "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions"
Staff's Preliminary Recommended Project Alternatives