

## **ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ARROYO SECO MASTER PLAN AND MEIR**

1. Isn't the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) just a list of capital improvement projects? Why doesn't the Arroyo Seco Master Plan (Plan) and the MEIR have more projects to restore and preserve the habitat, instead of building new structures, etc.?

The intent of the Plan is twofold: (1) To enhance the natural environment and cultural resources that define the unique character of the Arroyo. A major component of the Plan is habitat restoration, conservation and preservation throughout the Arroyo Seco. The document is being edited to more accurately reflect the goals that have been inherent in this process since the inception of this work. (2) To upgrade existing infrastructure and facilities so they will be in compliance with current safety, accessibility and water quality standards, as well as improve or replace deteriorating facilities, so the public can continue to enjoy this precious open natural space. There are several new structures proposed in the Plan. Based on public comments received, some of the proposed structures may not be a part of staff's final recommendation to the Recreation and Parks Commission on the adoption of the Plan.

2. Why isn't the City moving ahead with plans to implement the Arroyo Seco Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study prepared by Northeast Trees and the Arroyo Seco Foundation?

The Arroyo Seco Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study started after the City's Master Plan and MEIR process and therefore was premature to include within the context of these documents. However, based on common goals and objectives with the Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study, staff will be recommending modifications and clarifications to the Recreation and Parks Commission on the adoption of the Plan. The study presents concepts and ideas for attaining valuable environmental goals, but because they are part of a feasibility study and therefore at an early stage of the process, they cannot be implemented or environmentally evaluated at this time. However, the City is actively involved on the Council of Arroyo Seco Agencies (CASA), which will work toward the next step of defining projects that are technically viable, economically feasible and environmentally acceptable. Environmental analysis and public input will be required for any project proposals within Pasadena that are suggested by CASA for implementation.

3. What are the City's plans to remove the concrete flood control channel?

The City is supportive of stream restoration, where feasible, and is working aggressively with the L.A. County Department of Public Works and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on alternatives to the concrete channel. There are no plans to remove any section of channel at this time. A specific project may be considered for implementation when the impact to existing conditions is better understood and there is an assurance that the safety of Pasadena residents and property are not threatened. The City supports the ongoing work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as well as ongoing work related to the Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study.

4. What kinds of projects will be subject to the Design Guidelines? Can some projects happen without review?

Based on comments from the public, staff anticipates recommending revisions to the Design Guidelines to tighten the thresholds for review of projects by the Design Commission. If this recommendation is approved, a broader range of projects will be required to receive advance approval from the Design Commission.

5. Why are the trails in the Arroyo Seco being changed? How wide will they be?

The arroyo trails, many with historic stone walls and steps in need of restoration, are a cultural resource that contribute to the unique character of the Arroyo Seco. The Arroyo Seco Design Guidelines set a minimum width and clearance for safe public use while minimizing environmental impact. Prior to restoring existing trails

or building proposed new trails, site-specific plans will be prepared for review and approval by the appropriate City Commissions. Based on comments from the public, staff anticipates recommending revisions to Design Guidelines to clarify proposed improvements and ensure a comprehensive review and approval process for all trails in the Arroyo Seco.

6. What will the bicycle path be paved with throughout the Arroyo Seco? Why is a bicycle path included as a project if some residents have raised objections?

The bike path as currently proposed in the Master Plan and evaluated in the MEIR would not be paved and was proposed to be surfaced with compacted native material. However, based on staff's review of the public comments received to date, staff will not be recommending this project for inclusion in the master plan when staff's recommendations on the adoption of the Master Plan are presented to the Recreation and Parks Commission.

7. Why are soccer fields included as a project? Do we really need them? Won't the fertilizing of the soccer fields lead to chemical pollution?

In the public review process in preparing the Draft Hahamonga Watershed Park Master Plan, a compromise was reached between those who wanted many new fields and those who wanted no new fields. The proposal for the renovation of two existing fields and the addition of two new fields was recommended by the Recreation and Parks Commission and conceptually approved by the City Council for the Draft Hahamonga Watershed Park Master Plan. The Arroyo Seco Master Plan and the final MEIR will clarify best management practices for mitigation from irrigation and fertilizers, should the City Council elect to make these a part of their final approval.

8. What is the purpose of spreading basins?

In Southern California, water is becoming an increasingly valuable commodity. Instead of rainwater running to the ocean, it can be diverted from the upper Arroyo Seco stream and pumped from behind Devil's Gate Dam to holding basins. These basins spread water over an area so it can soak into the ground and replenish the underground aquifer. Pasadena pumps 40% of our domestic water from the Raymond Basin Aquifer. The more rainwater saved and spread in basins, the less water will have to be purchased from the Metropolitan Water District. However, changing the existing method, area and pattern of spreading could affect the movement of the underground-contaminated water, thereby jeopardizing the effectiveness of the proposed NASA/JPL cleanup. This issue will need to be further evaluated and coordinated with NASA/JPL prior to implementing any new spreading.

9. Why is a parking structure proposed in Hahamonga Watershed Park?

A major component of the Draft Hahamonga Watershed Park Master Plan is to remove the asphalt parking used by JPL on the east side of the Arroyo. It is proposed to use this area for habitat and water conservation. Based on comments from the public and from JPL, staff anticipates recommending no parking structure on the west side of the Arroyo. The recommendation for expanded spreading basins in the area of the existing east arroyo parking area will require further evaluation and coordination with NASA/JPL prior to implementation.

10. How will the City fund the projects listed in the Arroyo Seco Master Plan and evaluated in the MEIR?

To implement projects, the City continually seeks grants from a number of sources to fund projects. To date, the City has been successful in receiving nearly \$7 million in grant funding to implement projects in the Arroyo Seco.

*Last revised: 1/8/03*