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# Complaints heard



Staff photo by WALT MANCINI

**VISITORS ENJOY** the casting pond area of the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena on Tuesday. The city has removed several controversial projects from the proposed Arroyo Seco Master Plan in response to feedback from the public.

# City scales back projects in draft Arroyo Seco plan

By Gary Scott

STAFF WRITER

**P**ASADENA — City officials have decided to scale back the proposed Arroyo Seco Master Plan, eliminating several controversial projects and following a more environmentally sensitive approach advocated by a coalition of conservation groups.

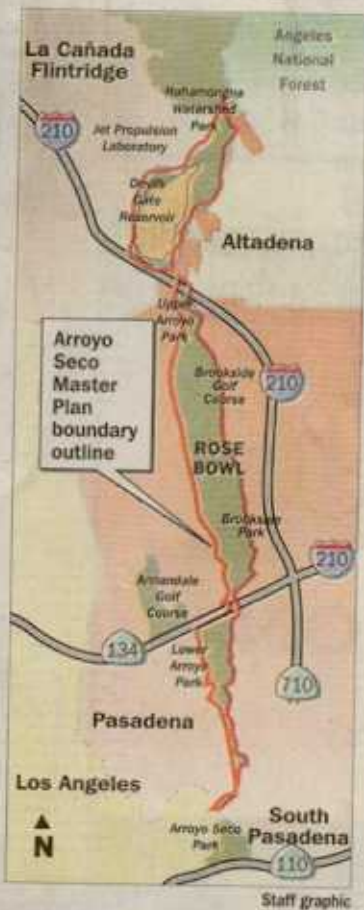
When the draft master plan was released earlier this year for public review, the city was flooded with criticism for including parking lots, bike paths and playing fields. The draft was based on a series of conceptual plans for the Lower Arroyo, Central Arroyo and Hahamongna Watershed Park — 1,000 acres in all — that had already been adopted by the City Council.

"I can barely contain my enthusiasm," said Richard Davis, West Pasadena Residents' Association board member, after reviewing the changes. "It certainly appears that staff has listened to the public."

Davis wrote a five-page response to the plan and accompanying environmental impact report on behalf of the association. He had criticized the city for creating what appeared to be a "series of public works projects" in "an irreplaceable and unique natural area."

The WPRA joined a half dozen other groups — including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, Arroyo Seco Foundation and West Pasadena Residents' Association — to form the Coalition for the Protection of the Arroyo Seco. Each group in the coalition filed a sep-

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Staff graphic



# ARROYO

## Plan revision based on public comments

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arate response to the draft plan and EIR, some hundreds of pages long.

"It is even more apparent that the underlying goal is to increase the number of active recreation areas and to develop new revenue sources for the city," writes the Pasadena Audubon Society, a coalition member, in a Sept. 13 letter criticizing the plan. "Good habitat for wildlife is not good habitat for humans."

Altogether, the city received nearly 600 comments from the public. Most of the criticism was focused on plans for the Lower Arroyo, said Kathy Woods, the city's parks and natural resources administrator. As a result, the city decided to remove most of the new structures in that area and scaled back projects in the Central Arroyo and Hahamongna Watershed Park.

The Recreation and Parks Commission reviewed the proposed changes on Tuesday. The following projects are being eliminated:

- A paved bike path in the Lower Arroyo. Instead, a walking path will probably be built, probably using compacted soil;
- A new pedestrian bridge in the Lower Arroyo;
- A picnic area and six parking spaces at the Roving Archers' clubhouse;
- A gated parking lot at the Lower Arroyo's south entrance;
- An extension of the Westside Arroyo Inner Park access road;
- A 1,200-space parking structure for JPL in the Hahamongna Watershed;
- An equestrian waste disposal area at the end of West Arroyo Inner Park Road.

The final master plan proposal is scheduled for review by a joint meeting of the Hahamongna Watershed Park Advisory Committee and the Recreation and Parks Commission on Feb. 18. City officials hope to bring the plan and EIR to the City Council for a final

vote Feb. 24.

There are a number of issues that conservationists and the city may yet fight over. Two man-made fishing lakes proposed for the Hahamongna Watershed — 3.6 acres and 4.8 acres in size, respectively — remain over the objections of some conservationists.

Sports fields are also proposed for the Hahamongna. Woods said the comments supported a mix of natural and recreational uses in that area. Councilman Victor Gordo is one who would like to see the playing fields built.

"Any time we have an opportunity to create more playing fields for the kids in our community, we have to look long and hard at doing just that," Gordo said. "Nobody wants to do away with natural space; what we want to find is a balanced plan."

He knows his position is unpopular in conservation circles. "There is going to be a battle, there is no doubt about it," he said.

One of the most contentious issues is the plan to increase events at the Rose Bowl, includ-

ing the possibility of bringing in a pro football team, which would increase vehicle traffic in the area.

A few projects discussed in the plan must wait until other agencies finish their work. For instance, expanding the spreading grounds to increase water percolation into the Raymond Basin will be delayed until NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory cleans up perchlorate and other contaminants in the soil.

The city has set aside \$7 million to begin work in the Arroyo Seco, but to complete all the planned work could cost \$30 million or more.

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