



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: July 26, 2017
TO: Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department
SUBJECT: Arroyo Burro Open Space Restoration Project Update

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a report on the Arroyo Burro Open Space Restoration Project.

DISCUSSION:

Background

The Arroyo Burro Open Space, located at the end of Alan Road, includes approximately 1,600 linear feet of creek frontage on lower Arroyo Burro, and provides a significant opportunity for creek restoration and water quality improvement as well as public open space.

The \$4 million acquisition of the property was funded with \$2.7 million from the Creeks Reserve Fund, and \$1.3 million in grant funding secured by The Trust for Public Land. As a requirement to receive these grant funds, a conservation easement over the property was granted in perpetuity to the County of Santa Barbara, the California Coastal Conservancy, and the California Natural Resources Agency. The conservation easement prohibits any use that would impair or interfere with public access or the conservation values of the property including its natural conditions, scenery, open space, and fish, plant, and wildlife habitat.

Planned creek restoration efforts would further improve conditions in the watershed, building upon several other restoration and water quality improvement projects undertaken in the watershed by the Creeks Division, including the restoration of Mesa Creek and the Arroyo Burro Estuary, Upper Las Positas Creek at the Municipal Golf Course, and the recently completed Upper Arroyo Burro Restoration Project at Barger Canyon.

Restoration Project Update

In September 2016, as part of the annual Creek Week festivities, the Urban Creeks Council and Friends of Arroyo Burro held an event at the open space park with informal talks on the watershed and a vision for a future restoration project at the site. In October

2016, the Creeks Division hosted community meetings with a variety of stakeholder groups and neighboring property owners to discuss restoration opportunities and future park maintenance activities. In June of 2017, draft concept designs were shared with neighbors and stakeholders at two additional community meetings held at the open space park to solicit feedback on the proposed designs.

The Creeks Division has been working with Waterways Consulting (Waterways) to develop restoration designs for the property. Waterways has completed intensive creek surveys, as well as hydrologic modeling and analysis for the site. Draft concept designs have been prepared which demonstrate the major components that would be included in a restoration project based on the existing conditions, preliminary modeling, and community input.

General goals of the restoration project include improved stream function, wildlife habitat and water quality. Restoration efforts will include:

- removal of pipe and wire revetment and concrete debris from the creek channel,
- regrading of steep and incised creek banks,
- channel re-alignment to provide increased flow access to floodplain habitat,
- removal of non-native invasive plants,
- increasing diversity and cover of native trees and plants,
- improving wildlife access and habitat within the creek corridor.

Grant applications were submitted to the California Coastal Conservancy and Wetland Recovery Project, and are currently under review.

Next Steps

The Creeks Division will continue to target additional relevant grant opportunities through the end of 2017 to secure matching funds for the implementation portion of the project. Creeks Division staff will work with Waterways Consulting to further develop the designs and initiate project permitting. Final design plans, bidding, and construction cost estimates are expected to be completed in the first half of 2018. Construction is currently planned for summer 2018.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Site Location
2. Arroyo Burro Plan

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REVIEWED BY: Cameron Benson, Creeks Division Manager

APPROVED BY: Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director