



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: March 24, 2015

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Resolution For Grant Application For Las Positas Creek Restoration Project

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council adopt, by reading of title only, A Resolution of the Council of the City of Santa Barbara Approving the Application for a \$1,000,000 Urban Streams Restoration Program Grant and Determining the Appropriate Environmental Impact Document; Conditionally Accepting the Grant, if Offered, Subject to City Council Approval of the Final Language of the Grant Contract; and Designating the Project Representative, Contract Manager, and Fiscal Agent.

DISCUSSION:

Las Positas Creek is one of the major tributary creeks to Arroyo Burro. It is 1.3 miles long and flows from the Santa Barbara municipal golf course, under Earl Warren Showgrounds and Highway 101, then on the west side of Las Positas Road, where it eventually flows into Arroyo Burro near the intersection of Las Positas Road and Veronica Springs Road. Las Positas Creek has been heavily modified by urban development, resulting in roughly half of the total length of natural waterway being converted to storm drain pipe or concrete drainage channel.

The Las Positas Creek Restoration Project (Project) is focused on improving water quality and habitat throughout the lower half of the creek, including the reach that is currently a concrete drainage channel. Removing the concrete, restoring a more natural stream bed, and establishing willows, oaks, and other riparian vegetation are primary Project goals. Reducing flooding in the area is also a major Project objective. Currently, all the homes in the Las Positas Place and Veronica Place cul-de-sacs are in the FEMA 100-year floodplain, with 18 of those homes sited in the regulatory floodway. Preliminary engineering analysis indicates the Project would decrease flood potential by widening the creek to accommodate larger creek flows.

The Project is included in the Creeks Division Fiscal Year 2015 Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan. It is also identified in the City's General Plan as a possible implementation strategy to restore City creeks and improve water quality. To begin Project implementation, the Creeks Division developed conceptual designs, conducted public outreach, and actively pursued grant funding opportunities. In January 2015, the Creeks Division applied for a \$1 million grant through the California Department of Water Resources Urban Streams Restoration Program (USRP). This grant program provides money to local communities for projects that reduce flooding and erosion and associated property damage; restore, enhance or protect the natural ecological values of streams; and promote community involvement, education and stewardship. The USRP guidelines require that the applicant's governing body adopt a resolution approving the application for grant funds. The guidelines also state that if the resolution cannot be drawn up and adopted before the application is due, a letter of intent will be accepted until the resolution can be submitted. The Creeks Division submitted a grant application and a letter of intent from the City Administrator before the deadline in early January.

The USRP also requires the City to partner with a non-profit organization on the grant application in order to foster community involvement. The Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council agreed to partner with the City on this grant application.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The total Project cost, including design and construction, is estimated to be \$2.8 million. The Creeks Division's Capital Program for Fiscal Years 2015, 2016, and 2017 proposes a total of \$1,505,747 to partially fund Project design and construction. The Creeks Division is requesting \$1 million from the Urban Streams Restoration Program for project construction. It is anticipated that the Creeks Division will return to Council in April with a final design contract to ensure that the Project can move forward.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

This project will restore native plants, improve water quality, and reduce flooding in Las Positas Creek, thereby improving water quality downstream in the Arroyo Burro Estuary, and the coastal ocean at Arroyo Burro Beach.

PREPARED BY: George Thomson, Creeks Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office