



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: January 13, 2009

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Creeks Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Mission Creek Fish Passage Agreement With The Santa Barbara County Flood Control District For The Caltrans Channel

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council authorize the City Administrator to negotiate and execute an agreement with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District to modify the Caltrans Channel in order to make it passable for steelhead trout.

DISCUSSION:

Project Purpose

The primary goals of the proposed project are to improve upstream migration of the federally endangered steelhead trout by providing access to their historic spawning grounds in Mission Creek. The proposed fish passage project on Mission Creek at the Caltrans Channel would modify the concrete channel to allow steelhead trout to freely migrate between the ocean and spawning habitat in the mid and upper watershed. Removing this barrier (along with the 2 smaller barriers further upstream) would provide steelhead trout with 3.86 miles of additional creek channel, including 2 miles of moderate to high quality spawning and rearing habitat (Stoecker 2002).

Location

The Caltrans Channel includes 2 concrete sections. The upstream channel is approximately 0.3 miles long, extending between Los Olivos and Pedregosa Streets, and the downstream channel is approximately 0.8 miles long, extending between Arrellaga and Canon Perdido Streets.

Project History

For the last 3 years, the Creeks Division has been working with the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District (FCD), Environmental Defense Center (EDC), and resource agencies such as the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to develop a steelhead trout passage project within the Caltrans Channel portion of Mission Creek.

In June 2005, EDC, with funds from the Wendy P. McCaw Foundation, hired Northwest Hydraulic Consultants (NHC) to develop conceptual designs for making the Caltrans Channel passable for steelhead trout. In April 2006, NHC finished the draft conceptual design plans and feasibility analysis.

In order to continue the design work initiated by the EDC, the City received a grant from the DFG to conduct flume model testing of the conceptual design options. Additional funds for the flume model testing were received from the EDC through a grant from the Annenberg Foundation. In June 2007, the City hired NHC to perform the flume model testing. The final report on modeling results was completed in December 2008.

Flume Model Testing

The work completed by NHC consisted of construction of a flume model and testing of 5 conceptual design options. The flume model was used to evaluate the performance of each conceptual design with a focus on 3 primary criteria: flood elevations (channel conveyance capacity), sediment accumulation in the channel, and fish passage conditions (flow velocities and depth). Tests documented the performance of the design alternatives at various flows up to the flood of record, 5,120 cubic feet per second. The flume model testing identified the preferred design for improving fish passage at the Caltrans Channel on Mission Creek.

Flood Control District Agreement

Although the channel was constructed by Caltrans for expansion of Highway 101, the County FCD was given ownership and responsibility for maintenance and the City must obtain approval from the FCD to modify the Caltrans Channel. Now that a feasible design option has been identified and tested, the City and FCD are ready to take the next step in project implementation. Because preliminary plans will cost a significant amount of funds to complete (\$200,000-\$300,000) and will represent a significant commitment to this project, it is now time to formalize an agreement between the City and FCD concerning modification and maintenance of the Caltrans Channel. In addition, a \$500,000 grant application for preliminary/final design plans is pending with the DFG, and DFG staff has requested evidence of Council support for the project.

The purpose of the agreement is to define the rights and responsibilities of the City and the FCD with regard to the fish passage project and the Caltrans Channel. In exchange for the right to modify the channel, the City would agree to maintain the project for the useful life of the fish passage modifications (50 years). The agreement would outline the City's responsibility to perform long-term sediment maintenance caused by the project within the channel. The City would also be responsible for repair and structural maintenance of the modified portion of the channel, but would not be responsible for those sections of channel not altered by the fish passage project. The attached draft agreement is currently being reviewed by FCD and is modeled after a similar Secondary Use Agreement approved by the FCD Board of Directors and the City of Carpinteria. The FCD Board of Directors is expected to review the agreement in February 2009.

The project would be implemented and maintained by the City's Creeks Division. The cost for sediment maintenance within the channel is unknown at this time, but is expected to be approximately \$10,000 annually. Structural repair and maintenance costs are also unknown, but are anticipated to be less than \$5,000 annually until replacement of the entire channel is necessary.

The project and draft agreement received unanimous support from the City's Sustainability Council Committee and Creeks Advisory Committee. County FCD staff is also supportive of the project. Staff is recommending that Council authorize the City Administrator to execute the agreement once it is finalized.

Next Steps

After the proposed agreement is approved by the FCD Board of Directors in February 2009, the Creeks Division will issue a request for proposals from engineering firms to develop preliminary construction plans for the preferred design alternative. A design firm will be selected for Council approval by April 2009. Preliminary plans are expected to be complete in October 2009. Permitting and final design will be completed in 2010. Construction on the upper channel could commence during the summer of 2011.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

The cost to complete the flume model testing was \$213,000. Funding for the flume model testing included a \$155,000 grant from the DFG, \$44,200 from the EDC through a grant from the Annenberg Foundation, and \$13,800 from Measure B funds in the Creeks Division capital budget. The cost to prepare preliminary design plans is estimated to be \$200,000-\$300,000. The EDC has \$135,000 available from the Annenberg Foundation grant for preliminary design. The Creeks Division has also applied for a \$500,000 grant from the DFG for preliminary and final design. If grant funding is not received, the Creeks Division has \$185,000 available in the capital budget for Fiscal Year 2009. Creeks Division staff will seek additional grant funding for project construction. Once the project is constructed, funding for maintenance (\$15,000/annually) will be included in the annual Creeks Division operating budget.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

The purpose of the project is to improve fish passage on Mission Creek. These fish passage efforts will contribute to local, regional, and federal objectives of restoring the federally endangered steelhead trout within the Mission Creek watershed.

ATTACHMENT: Draft Agreement

PREPARED BY: Cameron Benson, Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office