


Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

December 13, 2021

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Consideration of resolution authorizing a General Fund grant to the City of Los Angeles for Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning within the Sepulveda Basin Master Plan.**

Staff Recommendation:

That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution authorizing a grant of General Funds to the City of Los Angeles for Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning within the Sepulveda Basin Master Plan in the amount of \$950,000.

Legislative Authority:

Section 33204 of the Public Resources Code; Budget Act of 2021, Section 64 Item 3810-101-0001.

Background:

On September 23, 2021, Governor Newsom signed a budget trailer bill that included a \$10 million allocation to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to help improve climate resiliency and the protection of the Los Angeles River Watershed as part of the Revitalization Plan developed by the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Working Group pursuant to Section 33220 of the Public Resources Code. The funding is designated for projects that include nature-based watershed management, open space, multiple benefits, safe access, alignment with community needs and feedback, alignment with funding sources, reduction and management of flood risks to communities, and provide culture, arts, and education. Conservancy staff have consulted with partner agencies, non-profit organizations, local tribes, and other stakeholders to identify projects which could be

implemented immediately as the total allocation amount is only available for encumbrance or expenditure until June 30, 2024.

The attached application from the City of Los Angeles proposes a project that will restore the Sepulveda Basin and improve the habitat, recreational access, public safety, connectivity, and natural function. The Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning project was initially proposed within an Opportunity Area (OA), in the Conservancy's adopted 2020 ULART Plan. Recently, The River Project conducted a Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Feasibility Study, funded by the Conservancy, that identified how the entire basin, including developed spaces, could be better integrated through process driven river restoration planning. In November, the ULART Working Group considered several options for projects that could be funded out of this allocation, and the subject project is one of the projects they recommended that the Conservancy consider funding. The proposed grant is designed to meet the short timeframe required. The Working Group's recommendations represent approval for projects from a wide range of stakeholders and community advocates.

The feasibility of the placement and proposed type of projects will be determined during the Feasibility/Conceptual Study Phase. The grant funding requested herein constitutes a portion of the total Study cost, and this scope will be limited in the Feasibility Study Phase for the Vision Plan that is compatible with OAs 814 and 821 identified in the ULART Plan.

This Project Planning and Design project will propose multiple benefit projects in the Basin that seek to improve connectivity to the surrounding communities and improve movement within the Basin to be designed as an early stand-alone phase of the Vision Plan which will facilitate the use of the Basin for the 2028 Olympics. The recommended River and new recreational changes within the Basin are to be formulated in accordance with the EA guidelines, as subsequent phases which will be mapped during the feasibility study to achieve the long-term Vision Plan in the most rational and achievable phasing.

The purpose of the Sepulveda Basin Master Plan is intended to result in a long term design goal for the future of the Sepulveda Basin that builds on the values of the Corps' 2011 Sepulveda Dam Basin Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, proposes creative changes that can be implemented in phases to improve the visitor experience, maximizes opportunities for recreation, improves access throughout the Basin, restores natural function to the River and its tributaries, and improves the flood control function of the Basin. The early implementation phases of the Master Plan will mark the initial transformation of the Basin into an international destination for Los Angeles during the Olympics and thereafter.

The Sepulveda Basin Master Plan will engage local communities, the greater Los Angeles area, and an international audience. The City will work closely with the community and the many stakeholders of the Basin to develop the Vision for the Basin, and to define the innovative projects. This Master

Plan will also build on other design efforts that have preceded this work. The ULART grant will fund the Feasibility/Conceptual Study Consultant costs.

Typically, Conservancy staff and grantees have several weeks to refine and coordinate the scope, timeline, budget, and other aspects of grant applications, and many projects are under development for years before being submitted for funding. Therefore, the attached resolution authorizes the Executive Director to make minor modifications to the grant proposal to ensure that the objectives of the program are met.

Consideration:

The grant application from the City of Los Angeles for Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning within the Sepulveda Basin Master Plan is for \$950,000.

Attached:

[Sepulveda Basin Grant Application Package](#)

[SBMP one pager final_211115](#)

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY GRANT APPLICATION			
Project Name: Sepulveda Basin Vision Plan	Amount of Request: Total Project Cost: Matching Funds:	\$950,000 \$3,500,000	
Applicant Name: City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering	Lat/Long: 34.1787333/ - 118.4775467		
Applicant Address: 1149 S. Broadway, Suite 700 Los Angeles, CA 90015-2213	Project Address: 6350 Woodley Ave, Van Nuys, CA 91436		
	County	Senate District	Assembly District
	Los Angeles	27	45
Phone: (213) 485-4935 Email: Gary.Lee.Moore@lacity.org	Tax ID: 95- 6000735		
Grantee's Authorized Representative: Gary Lee Moore, PE, City Engineer <i>Name and Title</i>		(213) 485-4935 <i>Phone</i>	
Overhead Allocation Notice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Any overhead costs will be identified as a separate line item in the budget and invoices. ✓ The Conservancy encourages grantees to reduce overhead costs including vehicle and phone expenses. ✓ The overhead allocation policy has been submitted prior to, or with, the grant application. Outreach and Advertising Requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Applicant has read the staff report and board resolution regarding contract policies. ✓ Applicant has adopted contract policies for the purpose of increasing outreach and advertising to disadvantaged businesses and individuals. <i>All check boxes must be checked</i>			
Brief Project Description: See Attachment No. 1			
Tasks / Milestones:	Budget:	Completion Date	
See Attachment No. 2			

Attachment No. 1 Project Description

At over 2,000 acres, the Sepulveda Basin is the largest open space in the San Fernando Valley and the second largest in the City of Los Angeles. The Basin is an important hub for outdoor recreation, containing many important community facilities including Lake Balboa, active recreational playing fields, golf courses, a model airplane facility, and the Japanese Garden, to name a few. It also provides critical habitat for plants and wildlife. It is first and foremost a flood risk management facility owned by the Corps of Engineers, and it is managed by the Corps to fulfill this function. A critical flood control dam sits at the eastern end of the Basin. The Corps has leased areas to the City and other public and private entities for recreation and other uses, which includes a City of Los Angeles wastewater treatment plant, the Tillman Water Reclamation Plant.

The Sepulveda Basin is not living up to its full potential. Los Angeles is one of the most park poor large cities in the United States according to the Trust for Public Land. The Basin is directly adjacent to two communities defined as being high, or very high need in the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment. Yet large areas of Basin remains undeveloped and underutilized. This includes approximately 325 acres of land designated as Inactive and/or Future Recreation in the Sepulveda Dam Basin Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, dated September 2011. In addition, 250 acres of land is designated as being either Environmentally Sensitive or Vegetative Management. These underutilized spaces within the Basin have become locations for negative activity, resulting in several large fires that have broken out over the past several years. However, under the Corps' EA, these underutilized spaces can be turned into amenities with new recreational facilities as well as trails, restrooms, benches and signage. This would further bolster the Basin's appeal as a regional park, which would be one of the most accessible in the City, as it has two adjacent Orange Line stations.

The Sepulveda Basin is also the focus of several important initiatives. It will serve as the Valley Sports Park for the 2028 Olympics and is bisected by the Los Angeles River in a critical location for its restoration. Opportunities abound to enlarge the footprint of the River and tributaries within the Basin to restore hydrologic function through naturalized restoration, and in some cases, remove concrete channels sidewalls where flood capacity is sufficient. Through restoration, the basin can integrate the River to improve habitat, recreational access, public safety, connectivity, and natural function. These efforts can be coordinated so they further enhance the basin and leave a lasting legacy for residents of the San Fernando Valley. Now is a critical moment to reimagine the Sepulveda Basin as the crown jewel of the San Fernando Valley through the creation of a master plan.

The feasibility of the placement and proposed type of projects will be determined during the Feasibility/Conceptual Study Phase. The grant funding of \$950,000 will be used in the Feasibility Study Phase for the Vision Plan as it relates to ULART funding.

The Vision Plan seeks to propose multiple benefit Projects in the Basin that can address Opportunity Areas 821 and 814 indicated in the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan (ULART). The projects that will be identified during the Feasibility Study will seek to improve connectivity to the surrounding communities and improve movement within the Basin to be designed as an early stand-alone phase of the Vision Plan which will facilitate the use of the Basin for the 2028 Olympics. The other changes to the Basin including River changes and new recreational projects which are to be formulated in accordance with the EA guidelines

as subsequent phases which will be mapped during the feasibility study to achieve the long-term Vision Plan in the most rational and achievable phasing.

The Vision Plan will

- 1) Audit existing land uses, landscaping, habitat value, and uses within the Basin and identify areas that can be enhanced.
- 2) Provide a framework for how future investments, such as the Olympic facilities and LA River restoration, can tie into the overall vision for the Basin.
- 3) Provide a framework for improving mobility and wayfinding to access the Basin, and to move around and within the Basin for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- 4) Outline a decision-making framework between the different government agencies with purview over the Basin, including the Army Corps, the County of Los Angeles, and the City of Los Angeles.
- 5) Increase recreational opportunities for long term use while preserving and enhancing wildlife and habitat areas.
- 6) Through a River focused planning process, integrate improved habitat, recreational access, public safety, and connectivity, and restore natural function to the LA River and the tributaries within the Basin.

The world class Vision Plan is intended to result in a long term design goal for the future of the Sepulveda Basin that builds on the values of the Corps' 2011 Sepulveda Dam Basin Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, proposes creative changes that can be implemented in phases to improve the visitor experience, maximizes opportunities for recreation, improves access throughout the Basin, restores natural function to the River and its tributaries, and improves the flood control function of the Basin. The early implementation phases of the Vision Plan will mark the initial transformation of the Basin into an international destination for Los Angeles during the Olympics and thereafter.

The Vision Plan will engage local communities, the greater Los Angeles area and an international audience. The City will work closely with the community and the many stakeholders of the Basin to develop the Vision for the Basin, and to define the innovative projects. This Vision Plan will also build on other design efforts that have preceded this work.

Development in the Basin may not impede Corp of Engineers Project Operations. The Sepulveda Dam Basin Proposed Land Use Classification Map within the EA identifies the land use classifications the Corps has approved. Projects that are identified shall meet the use classifications identified in the EA. Projects must also demonstrate a need, economic feasibility, and financial capability that takes into account long term maintenance, to the maximum extent feasible.

The primary constraint on land uses within the Basin is the periodic inundation of portions of the Basin for downstream flood risk management. The frequency, extent, and duration of flood inundation must be considered in the management and appropriate use of the Basin. The Projects should work around this constraint and highlight the importance of the Basin for flood risk management. As part of this EA, the filling frequency curves have been calculated and maps have been developed that illustrate flood stage elevations for the 10-, 50-, and 100-year floods. Areas within the Basin have been identified within the EA according to topographic analysis reflecting the level of flood inundation and activities and structures that may occur within each area of the Basin.

Per the guidelines of the EA, the Vision Plan tasked to the Consultant, must reflect the most current advances in restoration ecology and wildlife management in the context of the Corps' mission, regulations, and guidance. Therefore, any proposed addendums or supplements to the EA must be in alignment with the Corps mission, regulations, and guidance.

The Basin is identified by the Corps according to land use classifications, which are dictated by the Corps' policies and guidance. The Corps' 2011 Master Plan classifies land at the Basin in six (6) land use classifications: 1) Project Operations; 2) Recreation; 3) Environmentally Sensitive; 4) Multiple Resource Management - Recreation - Low Density; 5) Multiple Resource Management - Vegetative Management; and 6) Multiple Resource Management - Inactive and/or Future Recreation. The Corps' Master Plan provides guidance for balancing flood risk management requirements, recreation opportunities, and preservation of natural resources for current and future generations.

Attachment No. 2: Tasks, Milestones, Budget

The ULART grant will fund the Feasibility/Conceptual Study Consultant costs. The intent of the Feasibility/Conceptual Study is described in the Project Description (Attachment No. 1). The Study is anticipated to complete in September 2023, ahead of the Grant deadline.

Task Activity	Time	Completed	
Task Order Preparation and Advertisement	2 months		
Task Order Bid Period	1 month	2/1/2022	
Consultant Evaluations Interviews	1 month	3/1/2022	
Board Report Preparation and Approval	2 months	5/1/2022	
Project Notice to Proceed (Environmental and Feasibility/Conceptual Master Plan Study)	Milestone	5/1/2022	
Feasibility /Conceptual Master Plan Study ¹	16 months	9/1/2023	
CEQA/NEPA Environmental Review and Approval ²	18 months - 24 months	11/1/2024	
Total Duration³	36 months		
1. Feasibility/Conceptual phase overlaps with Environmental Review phase 2. CEQA/NEPA Environmental Review assumes to start six (6) months after Notice to Proceed 3. This duration assumes the more conservative case for the Environmental Review.			
Task Activity	Fees	ULART	Other Sources
Feasibility/Conceptual Study ⁴	\$2,000,000	\$950,000	\$1,050,000.00
Environmental Clearance	\$600,000		\$600,000.00
BOE City Staff Costs /Direct Costs	\$400,000		\$400,000.00
Contingency	\$500,000		\$500,000.00
Project Total Cost	\$3,500,000	\$950,000	\$2,550,000.00

4. The ULART grant will be used towards consultant costs and not BOE staff costs.

Grantee Data Sheet

Print Form



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy

5750 Ramirez Canyon Road
Malibu, California 90265
Phone: 310-589-3200
Fax: 310-589-3207
www.smmc.ca.gov

Date:

New Revised

Grantee Name:
Address:
State/Province:
Zip/Postal Code:
Tax ID Number:

Phone:
Fax:

Information

Will administrative/overhead costs be included?

If yes, is the overhead policy attached to this sheet?

Will vehicle costs be included?

If yes, is the vehicle policy attached to this sheet?

Will cell phone costs be included?

If yes, is the phone policy attached to this sheet?

I have completed and submitted the STD 204 Payee Data Record form.

I have read and accepted the policies and procedures within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Grant Administration Manual.

I am aware that the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy has urged a reduction of costs associated with overhead, cell phone, and vehicle charges.

*If a reduction in the above costs has been made, please document the reductions and attach to this data sheet.

Project Name:

Primary Contact Information

Name (1):
Address:
State/Province:
Zip/Postal Code:
Phone (1):
Phone (2):
Fax:
Email:

Name (2):
Address:
State/Province:
Zip/Postal Code:
Phone (1):
Phone (2):
Fax:
Email:

Notes:
The STD 204 Payee Data Form is in progress

Signature Field

Project Type: **PLANNING** (OAs_814; 821; 851; 872)

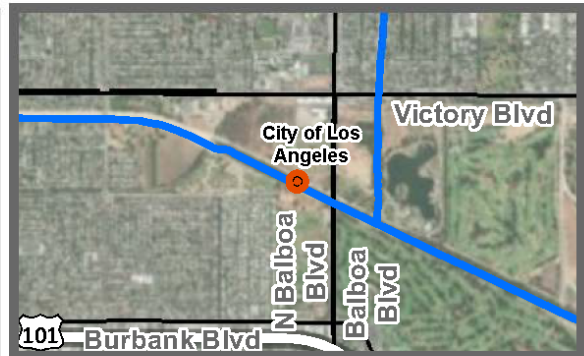
Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning PP&D

UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN

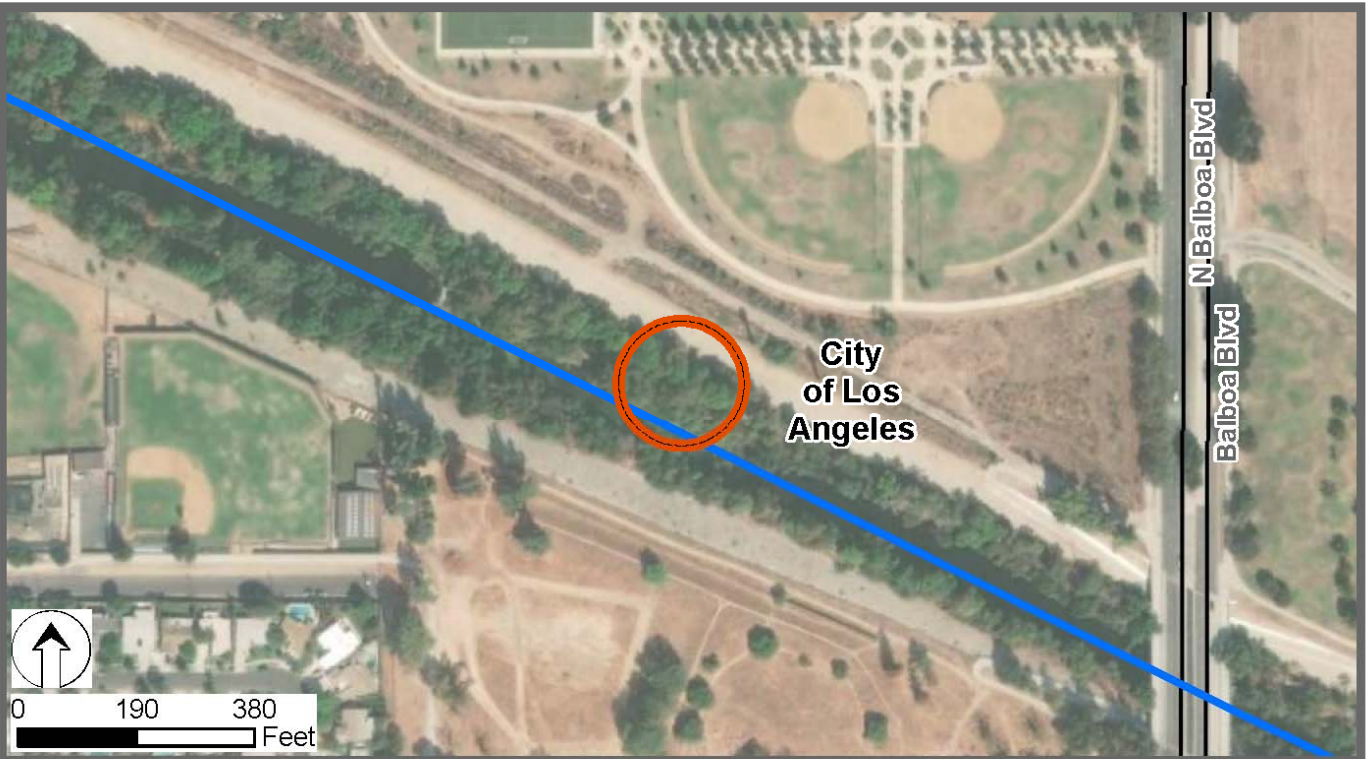
Opportunity Area Summary

Project: LAR Basin Greening and Recreation; OA_821

Footprint (acres or feet):	N/A (Point)
Tributary:	Bull Creek
Public ownership (%):	100
Project suggested by:	Public (WebTool Survey)
Primary Typology:	n/a
Secondary Typology:	n/a



Cities (%): Los Angeles: 100



 Featured Opportunity
 Other Opportunities
 — LA River/Tributaries
 City Boundary

Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Implementation Recommendations

Sepulveda Basin River Restoration Planning PP&D (City of Los Angeles—\$950,000)

Multiple OAs within Sepulveda Basin have been identified that present a number of multi-benefit solutions to the mainstem of the LA River and several associated tributaries. This project planning and design project would seek to prioritize river restoration opportunities within an upcoming Master Plan process that the City of Los Angeles is ready to initiate. Recently, The River Project conducted a Sepulveda Basin Feasibility Study, funded by SMMC, that identified how the entire basin, including developed spaces, could be better integrated through process driven river restoration. Benefits of the restoration would be significant and could be on display during the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Key Elements in the project include:

- Prioritizing river restoration efforts within the 2022-23 Sepulveda Basin Master Plan;
- Recommendation of solutions that restore geomorphic and ecosystem functionality to the River and riparian corridor within the Basin and could remove concrete and provide other modifications;
- Add capacity for stormwater detention to reduce downstream flood hazards and increase potential for groundwater recharge;
- Improve the recreational interface with the River and its tributaries, to enhance access and expand the existing River Recreation Zone and other passive recreational amenities compatible with nature.

