



Park and Recreation Commission

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE COMMISSIONERS **DATE: SEPTEMBER 19, 2022**
FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: RIVERSIDE GATEWAY PARKS MASTER PLANS – FOLLOW UP

ISSUE:

Present the Commission with the Riverside Gateway Parks Master Plans follow-up information.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Park and Recreation Commission provide feedback on the Riverside Gateway Parks Master Plans and receive report for file.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Santa Ana River Task Force developed a vision and concept plan for developing a parkway along the river in Riverside. The plan recommends nature trails, a boardwalk, and a nature center with programming in the area now proposed for Camp Evans at Fairmount Park. The plan further recommends recreational improvements in the area around Tequesquite Avenue and the Old Landfill, and that Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park be further improved and renovated to support the Santa Ana River Parkway concept. The report can be viewed online at <https://aquarius.riversideca.gov/clerkdb/0/doc/101680/Page1.aspx>.

In 2009, the Santa Ana River Task Force reconvened to review and update their prior recommendations based on work accomplished and other changes since 2003. The report can be viewed online at <https://aquarius.riversideca.gov/clerkdb/0/doc/108342/Page1.aspx>.

In 2014, through Senate Bill 1390, the California state legislature created the Santa Ana River Conservancy Program within the State Coastal Conservancy. The program addresses the resource and recreational goals of the Santa Ana River region, including open space, trails, wildlife habitat, agricultural land protection, water quality protection, educational use, and public access. The Conservancy makes grant funding available to help agencies and non-profit organizations move forward with projects to meet these resource and recreational goals.

On May 21, 2019, City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the California Coastal Conservancy for a grant amount of \$2,358,500 to: acquire one property, to develop park master plans, and complete California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) analysis and documentation for nine project sites along the Santa Ana River corridor. The City Council authorized an appropriation of \$300,000 from Regional Park Development and

\$90,000 from Recreational Trail Development accounts for matching funds.

On December 26, 2019, the City of Riverside entered into a grant agreement with the California Coastal Conservancy for the Riverside Gateway Project Suite Design and CEQA project in the amount of \$1,960,000.

On January 6, 2020, the City of Riverside entered into a grant agreement with the Coastal Conservancy for the acquisition of the property at 5200 Tequesquite Avenue for the River-side Gateway Project Suite in the amount of \$65,000 which was later increased by \$62,500 for a total of \$127,500.

On May 11, 2021, the City Council approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement with MLA Green, Inc. dba Studio-MLA of Los Angeles, California, for the River-side Gateway Project Suite – Planning & Design for Park Master Plan and California Environmental Quality Act Services (CEQA) for Park, Trail, and Greenway Improvements at Nine Sites through June 30, 2023, in the amount not to exceed \$1,963,681.79.

On November 16, 2021, City Council approved the Purchase Agreement for the 4.08 acre property at 5200 Tequesquite Avenue.

On January 18, 2022, City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the submission of a grant application to the Land and Water Conservation Fund program in the amount of \$6,000,000 for construction of a portion of Camp Evans at Fairmount Park. Results of the application have not been received yet.

Community Workshops were held virtually on: October 27, 2021; February 2, 2022; and April 13, 2022.

Technical Advisory Committee meetings were held virtually on: September 15, 2021; January 10, 2022; and April 5, 2022.

On July 18, 2022, the Park and Recreation Commission received an update on the Riverside Gateway Parks Master Plans and requested additional information. The report for this agenda item can be viewed online at:

<https://riversideca.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11032084&GUID=F3C99E41-648C-4DB1-9881-848EDA1B7EBD>

and the presentation can be viewed online at:

<https://riversideca.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=11032076&GUID=DD134F97-3682-4892-8B00-9612936D46C6>.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the River-side Gateway Parks project suite (Project) is to facilitate implementation of several important regional and local plans and goals:

- The vision of the multi-jurisdictional Santa Ana River Parkway & Open Space Plan (2018), managed by the Santa Ana River Conservancy, is to integrate parks and open spaces into the Santa Ana River Trail Parkway beyond just the spine of the trail, to connect nearby

communities to the Santa Ana River Trail. The plan is available online at https://scc.ca.gov/files/2018/06/SARPOSP_Plan_FINAL.pdf.

- The vision of the City of Riverside 2003 and 2009 Santa Ana River Task Force, a Blue Ribbon Committee funded by the Wildlands Conservancy. The two reports are attached.
- Riverside's General Plan 2025 (2007), which calls for three acres of developed park per one thousand residents. We currently have 2.82 acres of developed parks per thousand residents. The City is roughly 56 acres short of developed park land. The Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan is available online at https://riversideca.gov/cedd/sites/riversideca.gov/cedd/files/pdf/planning/general-plan/15_Park_and_Recreation_Element.pdf
- Riverside's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Master Plan (2020), which is available online at https://www.riversideca.gov/park_rec/planning-projects/parks-master-plan-vision-2030. This plan recommends a more modern goal of five acres of developed park land per thousand residents, in which case the City would be 690 acres short of developed parks.
- Riverside's Trails Master Plan (2021), which is available at https://www.riversideca.gov/park_rec/planning-projects/trails-master-plan-2030. This plan calls for a decomposed granite multi-purpose trail along the Santa Ana River Trail.

The project team is about midway through the first steps of implementing the Riverside Gateway Parks project, which are to conduct community outreach, environmental inventory/analysis, park master planning, CEQA document preparation, and project prioritization. Community outreach is winding down, inventory and analysis is largely completed, and draft park master plans have been prepared for each site. The plans were presented to the Park and Recreation Commission in July 2022. CEQA work is underway and will continue for the next several months. Once CEQA documents are completed, the park master plans and CEQA documents will be presented to City Council for approval and certification, tentatively in fall 2023. The City Council will only be approving the park master plans and CEQA work, at this point, not construction.

The next steps, once the City Council approves the Park Master Plans, will be for PRCSO to begin seeking grant funding for construction of the highest priority site. Estimated maintenance costs will be included in the City Council reports both at the time of request to submit a construction grant proposal, and at the time that a construction contract is awarded after construction funding is secured. A supplemental budget appropriation will be requested to cover the anticipated maintenance costs at the time of construction contract award.

The current project proposes to develop about 50 acres of new recreation amenities, 64 acres of native and low water planting, and keep 169 acres as-is. 79% of the overall acreage will be left as-is or planted with native/low water plants. 21% of the overall acreage will be developed. The park master plans are a direct response to the community's top requests for:

1. Flowers and native plants
2. Shade structures/shade trees
3. Restrooms
4. Skatepark
5. Habitat conservation
6. Bike paths
7. Lighting
8. Nature/cultural interpretive trails
9. Walking/running paths/trails
10. Drinking fountains

- 11. Parking
- 12. Roller rinks

The master plans for each site can be viewed on the project website at <https://riversidegatewayparks.com/>. Printed versions can also be requested by the community by calling the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department at (951) 826-2000.

At the Park and Recreation Commission meeting in July 2022, the following additional information was requested.

Santa Ana River Reports

The Santa Ana River Parkway & Open Space Plan (2018), along with the Santa Ana River Task Force reports, provide a broad overview of the regional and local visions and goals for parks and open spaces along the Santa Ana River. The Riverside Gateway Parks project supports the goals outlined in these reports.

Fire

The Riverside Gateway Parks master plans have been carefully designed for fire management.

- All sites align with Fire Department's regulations for setbacks, emergency access and routes.
- Planting palette includes non-invasive fire-wise planting and native plants that are on State's Cal Fire approved fuel modification list.
- Design team has met virtually with the City Fire Department twice and continues to coordinate with them on the project

Parking

Parking for the park sites was designed using standards outlined in the Riverside Municipal Code, Chapter 17.188. Off-street parking standards are 1 space per 8,000 square feet of active recreational area within a park or playground, and 1 space per acre of passive recreational area. Each site provides at least the required number of off-street parking spaces. As a constrained site, the three parking spaces required for Loring Park will be supported by off-street parking proposed 0.3 miles away in the Camp Evans area. All other sites provide more than the recommended number of parking spaces.

ADA parking and access is a component of each site, to increase opportunities for Riverside's diverse community to visit and experience the various recreational opportunities included in the project. One parking stall is proposed for Loring Park, and it will be an ADA stall to support use of the ADA accessible paths proposed for the park. Visitors to Loring Park can use off-street parking at the southwestern corner of Camp Evans, approximately 0.3 miles from Loring.

The City's Traffic Engineering division has advised a few residents around the Loring Park and Tequesquite sites about the option and process for them to request Preferential Parking Zones (PPZ) if on-street parking becomes a problem in neighborhoods adjacent to the project sites. These areas are not currently PPZs, and these zones can only be established if parking problems are substantiated. Information about PPZs is online at:

<https://corweb.riversideca.gov/publicworks/traffic/preferential-parking-zones>.

Traffic

Traffic analysis is a component of the CEQA work that is now underway. The projects will include

mitigation for any traffic related impacts found. The City's Traffic Engineering division is providing project review and feedback for traffic concerns and has advised the project team on required components of the traffic analysis.

Skate Park Noise

Noise impacts are being analyzed as part of the CEQA work that is underway, and mitigation will be incorporated into the project if needed.

Motorized vehicles on bike trail

There is an on-going multi-agency and multi-departmental push to secure the edges of the Santa Ana River and trail from unauthorized motorized vehicles and motorcycles. New heavy-duty gates have been installed at the end of Wilderness Avenue and at Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park. Along with the gates, gaps in barriers will be blocked using bollards, 4-ton boulders, and telephone poles. This is on-going work that is constantly being refined to provide better solutions that work for all the agencies and departments that must regularly take access for emergencies and maintenance in and along the river and trail.

The Riverside Gateway Parks master plans have taken this problem into consideration and include solutions to help prevent intrusion of motorized vehicles onto the Santa Ana River and the trail, using a combination of large boulders, fencing, berms, bioswales, landscaping, and similar site improvements.

Homeless

There are on-going multi-agency and multi-departmental efforts to help house and provide services to people experiencing homelessness city-wide, and to address related concerns such as camping in parks and wildlands, and wildfires originating from campfires in the river area. The PRCSD will continue to partner with these teams to provide a positive park and open space experience in all our parks.

- Office of Homeless Solutions – develops private and public partnerships to provide direct outreach services that coordinates services director towards reducing and preventing homelessness by providing a wide range of services and resources for people experiencing homelessness and increasing permanent supportive housing opportunities for very low income and long-term homeless persons to end their homelessness in the City of Riverside.
- Public Safety Engagement Team – this multi-department approach is designed to maintain order in public places while also providing homeless individuals with a pathway out of homelessness. Team members specialize in providing resources and assistance while also addressing issues of unlawful panhandling, camping, abandoned personal belongings, and vagrancy.
- Park and Neighborhood Specialists – these new positions are a non-sworn classification within the Police Department and will be a civilian response to city parks, park facilities, wilderness trails, and adjacent neighborhoods.

The City Council recently approved an ordinance to regulate homeless encampments in the wildlands-urban interface. The ordinance:

1. Makes it unlawful and a public nuisance for any person to sit, lie, sleep, or store, use, maintain or place any bulky item or personal property in the Wildland Urban Interface;
2. Allows for a violation to be summarily abated which may include, but is not limited to, removal of bulky items, personal property, hazardous waste, infectious waste, discarded

- items, or debris; and securing the perimeter of the property with fencing, gates, or barricades to prevent further occurrences of the nuisance activity; and
3. Ensures that no person shall willfully prevent, delay, resist, obstruct, or otherwise interfere with a city official, employee, contractor, or volunteer in their execution of an abatement.

Maintenance

PRCSD already owns the project properties and is already required to maintain them based on Municipal, County and State codes. This master planning process is a long-range vision for future park development along the river and the parks won't be developed without City Council approval of additional maintenance funding. PRCSD is aware of maintenance concerns and continues to implement conservation strategies and develop parks with materials that are durable, sustainable and more cost effective to maintain.

Project Prioritization:

The projects will be prioritized for development based on community input and a prioritization plan will be included in the final park master plan documents.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The work contributes to **Strategic Priority 1 – Arts, Culture and Recreation**, which aims to provide diverse community experiences and personal enrichment opportunities for people of all ages; **Strategic Priority 2 – Community Well-Being**, which aims to ensure safe and inclusive neighborhoods where everyone can thrive; and **Strategic Priority 5 – High Performing Government**, which aims to provide world class public service that is efficient, accessible, and responsive to all.

Priority 1 – Arts, Culture and Recreation:

- **Goal 1.3:** improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs
- **Goal 1.4:** to prioritize safety at parks, trails, arts, cultural and recreational facilities

Priority 2 – Community Wellbeing:

- **Goal 2.3:** strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide, and

Priority 5 – High Performing Government:

- **Goal 5.3:** enhance communication and collaboration with community members to improve transparency, build public trust, and encourage shared decision-making.

The project aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – The planning process for the River-side Gateway Project Suite has relied on community engagement, including: three advisory committee meetings, three community workshops, four pop-up outreach events, presentations at community organization meetings, an online survey and interactive mapping tool, and a project website to distribute information and collect input from the community.
2. **Equity** – Multiple opportunities and modes have been used to get community input and a variety of tools and platforms have been used to advertise the opportunities to the

community. These outreach and engagement efforts were advertised using social media posts, e-blasts, newspaper ads, a press release, direct mailing to residents within a 10-minute walk of the sites, signs posted at the project sites, sidewalk decals, digital reader board/billboard and a Riverside Monthly television segment.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – The current scope of work is being accomplished primarily with grant funds from the California Coastal Conservancy and does not require use of the City's General Fund.
4. **Innovation** –The Riverside Gateway Parks Project responds to the community's changing recreational, social, and health and wellness needs. The project proposes to create the first nature playground, challenge course, and pump track in the City park system. The Project will integrate preservation and enhancement of natural resources and establish agricultural areas to nurture Riverside's movement towards its agricultural roots.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – The Project seeks to increase park and recreational resources to meet the needs of the present community, without compromising the needs of the future by finding solutions that help Riverside adapt to climate change and resource depletion through actions such as planting more trees, using native and low-water landscaping, implementing on-site stormwater infiltration, and supporting active transportation. The Project also seeks to protect and enhance natural resources and habitat as well as increasing agricultural opportunities which allows for more locally grown food.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report; however, below are rough estimates of future funding needs for construction and on-going annual maintenance. It is anticipated that the sites will be constructed in phases over several years, and that grants will be the primary source of construction funding. As the sites are constructed, supplemental appropriations for additional budget will be requested for maintenance, and it is anticipated that general funds will be the primary source. Supplemental funding or support could also be attained through sponsorships, rental fees, and similar revenue generating mechanisms.

Construction Estimate:

	Construction	Design, Engineering, Project Admin, Construction Admin	Total
Camp Evans	\$58,500,000	\$15,500,000	\$74,000,000
Loring	\$4,000,000	\$1,100,000	\$5,100,000
St. Francis/Carlson	\$2,000,000	\$600,000	\$2,600,000
Tequesquite North	\$40,600,000	\$10,700,000	\$51,300,000
Tequesquite South	\$69,000,000	\$18,300,000	\$87,300,000
Greenway	\$7,800,000	\$2,100,000	\$9,900,000
Martha McLean	\$16,100,000	\$4,300,000	\$20,400,000
Jurupa Trailhead	\$6,200,000	\$1,700,000	\$7,900,000

Annual Maintenance Estimate:

	Annual Maintenance
Camp Evans	\$275,000
Loring	\$12,000
St. Francis/Carlson*	\$4,500
Tequesquite North	\$211,000
Tequesquite South	\$212,000
Greenway	\$83,000
Martha McLean*	\$115,000
Jurupa Trailhead	\$32,000

*Carlson Park and Martha McLean are existing developed parks already being maintained. Costs shown here are in addition to current costs.

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Attachment: Presentation