



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JULY 28, 2026

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARD: 1

SUBJECT: ADOPT A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE ACCEPTANCE OF \$75,000 IN GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CALIFORNIA STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY FOR THE SANTA ANA RIVER ROOTED IN RIVERSIDE PROGRAM – SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION

ISSUE:

Adopt a resolution approving the acceptance of \$75,000 in grant funds from the California State Coastal Conservancy for the Santa Ana River Rooted in Riverside Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a Resolution accepting a \$75,000 grant award from the State of California Coastal Conservancy;
2. Authorize a grant funding Agreement with the State of California Coastal Conservancy;
3. With at least five affirmative votes, and upon grant award, authorize the Chief Financial Officer, or designee, to record an increase in revenue, in the amount of \$75,000, or actual award amount, and appropriate an equal amount in expenditures in the Grants and Restricted Program Fund, Rooted in Riverside revenue and expenditure accounts; and
4. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute the necessary agreements and any other documents necessary to effectuate the work described herein, including making minor and non-substantive changes.

BACKGROUND:

In 2003, the Santa Ana River Task Force was established, followed by the creation of a series of Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Committees throughout the Santa Ana Watershed.

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.

One of the opportunities the State Coastal Conservancy helps create access to the Santa Ana River is through the Explore the River (“ETR”) grant program. The program seeks to provide experiences for people and communities who face challenges or barriers to accessing or enjoying the river (“ETR Priority Communities”). The ETR grant program will focus on the river and its tributaries excluding the coastal areas.

DISCUSSION:

In August 2025, the California State Coastal Conservancy released a grant opportunity to support projects that enhance community engagement with the Santa Ana River. Eligible projects were required to align with the following priorities:

- Provide an enjoyable and meaningful experience at the river;
- Reduce economic, physical, operational, or social barriers to accessing or enjoying the river; and
- Inspire long-term stewardship through education, active learning, and interactive programming.

In response, the City of Riverside Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department submitted a proposal titled “Rooted in Riverside”. The program is designed to serve low-income youth and families from historically under-resourced neighborhoods located near the Santa Ana River corridor, including Eastside, Casa Blanca, Arlanza, and La Sierra. These communities are characterized by higher concentrations of minority populations, including Latino and Black/African American residents, and a significant percentage of households classified as moderate to low-income. Many families live below 200% of the federal poverty level, and many youth attend Title I schools with limited access to enrichment, outdoor recreation, and nature-based programming. Additional barriers such as cost, transportation, language, and limited familiarity with local natural resources further restrict access, challenges this program is specifically designed to address.

The “Rooted in Riverside” program will deliver a comprehensive series of outdoor educational and recreational experiences centered on the Santa Ana River. The program will feature one large, two-day signature event consisting of an overnight family campout and a morning fishing derby. Participants will engage in approximately 12 hours of programming, including eight hours during the campout and four hours during the fishing derby.

In addition, the program will offer four single-day workshops throughout the year, each providing approximately six hours of hands-on learning and engagement. Collectively, participants may receive up to 36 hours of programming over the course of the program.

Programming will be implemented in partnership with organizations including the Rivers and Lands Conservancy, Scouts of America, the Cahuilla Tribal community, Riverside Fly Fishers, and other community partners. Activities will include interpretive education on the history of the Santa Ana River, its role in shaping Southern California, and its significance to the development

of the City of Riverside. Participants will also learn about current river restoration and ecological stabilization efforts, fostering a deeper understanding of environmental stewardship.

In February 2026, the City was officially awarded \$75,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy to implement the “Rooted in Riverside” program. These funds will directly support expanded access to outdoor recreation, environmental education, and community engagement opportunities for Riverside residents who have historically faced barriers to participation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of the action is an increase in revenues and expenditures of \$75,000. Upon Council approval and grant award, an increase in revenue in the amount of \$75,000, or actual award amount, will be recorded and an equal amount appropriated in the Grants and Restricted Programs Fund, Rooted in Riverside, revenue account 9356700-334100 and expenditure account 9356700-440210.

Prepared by:	Jessica Ochoa, Recreation Superintendent
Approved by:	Pamela M. Galera, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director
Certified as to availability of funds:	Julie Nemes, Finance Director
Approved by:	Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Resolution
2. Grant Agreement