



# City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: APRIL 21, 2026

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARD: 3

SUBJECT: ADOPT CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, WITH CONDITIONS, AND ADOPT THE MARTHA MCLEAN ANZA NARROWS PARK AND JURUPA AVENUE TRAILHEAD MASTER PLANS

## **ISSUES:**

Adopt California Environmental Quality Act Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, with conditions, and adopt the Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park and Jurupa Avenue Trailhead Master Plans.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the City Council:

1. Adopt California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, with the condition that Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan requirements are completed and approved by the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority prior to starting design development; and
2. Adopt the Martha McLean Anza Narrows and Jurupa Avenue Trailhead Master Plans.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In 2003, the Santa Ana River Task Force was created, followed by a series of Mayor's Blue-Ribbon Committees throughout the Santa Ana River 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 has grant funding available to help agencies and non-profit organizations move forward with projects to meet these resource and recreational goals.

On March 14, 2018, the Coastal Conservancy approved the Santa Ana River Trail and Parkway Open Space Plan – ‘Expanding the River’s Reach’.

On December 26, 2019, the City of Riverside entered into a grant agreement with the California Coastal Conservancy for the Riverside Gateway Project Suite Park Planning and CEQA project in the amount of \$1,960,000. This planning effort received extensive community input concerning the design of 250 acres of undeveloped or underutilized City owned parkland over 8 park sites, that can serve as gateways to the river.

On May 11, 2021, the City Council approved a Professional Consultant Services Agreement with Studio-MLA to perform community outreach, park master plan preparation, and California Environmental Quality Act compliance work.

On June 3, 2025, the City of Riverside Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department (PRCSD) submitted a grant application to the California State Coastal Conservancy (Coastal Conservancy) for \$6,000,000 for Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park. If awarded, the grant funds will be used for design development and partial construction of the planned Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park Master Plan. The project is being recommended for award at the Coastal Conservancy Board meeting on April 23, 2026.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Santa Ana River Conservancy Program, managed by the California State Coastal Conservancy, envisions the river as a vibrant, continuous parkway that serves as a regional centerpiece for recreation and nature. Its primary goals are to complete the 110-mile Santa Ana River Trail from the mountains to the sea, restore critical wildlife habitats, and expand equitable outdoor access for the millions of residents in the surrounding urban communities. A significant focus of their 2023–2027 strategy is environmental equity, specifically directing funding to "park-poor" or disadvantaged communities along the river to reduce barriers to nature.

The City of Riverside has taken a multi-pronged approach to “put the river back in Riverside,” including the River District study and the Riverside Gateway Parks planning project. Funded by a California Coastal Conservancy grant, the River District feasibility study was recently completed. This study provides a roadmap for creating a vibrant public realm along the river. The Riverside Gateway Project suite focuses specifically on master planning several city park sites along the river, including Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park, the subject of this report. The park master plans propose improvements to create both active and passive recreational opportunities at 8 undeveloped and underdeveloped park spaces along the Santa Ana River to give the community more reasons to visit the river area.

Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park serves as a gateway connecting the community to the Santa Ana River. It is an existing 40-acre developed park situated on a bluff overlooking the Santa Ana River. Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park is actively used for disc golf and passive recreation, but the park is generally turf and trees, with few recreational amenities to serve families. The park does not currently have a playground nor a restroom. The new master plan proposes to add a playground, water play area, restrooms, outdoor classroom to support river camps and outdoor education, a small bandshell and grassy community meadow, and “river overlook swings”. The Santa Ana River Trail (SART) runs along the northern edge of the park. The SART will span over 100 miles from the mountains to the sea once completed. The trail is about 70% completed with just a couple gaps (outside the City of Riverside) yet to be constructed. The Martha McLean Anza Narrows park project includes creation of trailhead amenities and signage

for the Santa Ana River Trail. All the proposed improvements take place within the existing developed footprint of the park. The estimate of probable cost for the entire project is around \$12,000,000.

If awarded, the \$6,000,000 Coastal Conservancy grant will be used to pay for design development and construction documents for the entirety of Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park, and partial construction of the proposed new park improvements such as a playground and restroom building. Site improvements to prevent unauthorized vehicles from driving through the park and into the Santa Ana River will also be prioritized. Vehicle intrusion to the river has been a significant problem that causes degradation to the river environment and increases wildfire risk. If the grant is awarded, the Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department (PRCSD) will return to City Council for approval of the grant resolution after the Coastal Conservancy Board meeting in late April. The PRCSD will continue to seek additional grant funds to pay for the rest of the planned improvements at Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park.

The Jurupa Avenue Trailhead property is about 8 acres of undeveloped park land along the Santa Ana River Trail. The project will create a bike hub to support SART users by providing restrooms, drinking water, shade, and parking. This small park site will also include a nature play area, native plant demonstration garden, and interpretive/educational displays overlooking an arroyo. At this time, construction funding is not available, but the PRCSD will seek grants to build this park in the future.

#### Mitigated Negative Declaration, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

An Initial Study, Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program were prepared to cover both Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park and the Jurupa Avenue trailhead park master plans. Both sites are similar in environmental context so were combined into a single MND document for efficiency. The document was circulated for public review and posted to the State Clearinghouse for agency reviews, with both completed in January 2026. Comments received were considered and none of them provide substantial evidence of an unmitigated impact.

Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) compliance is required because Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park is in criteria cell 621 and about 1,200 square feet (0.4%) of the Jurupa Avenue Trailhead parcel is in criteria cell 617. A Joint Project Review (JPR) application was submitted February 2024 along with an MSHCP Consistency Analysis and a Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation (DBESP) document. The Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Agency (RCA) provided initial review comments and the City's environmental consultant has made revisions as requested by the RCA, and the documents are now being packaged to be resubmitted. The JPR and associated documents were prepared to cover the entire Riverside Gateway Project suite to show the RCA how mitigation will be balanced over the suite of eight sites. The PRCSD is requesting the mitigated negative declaration for Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park and Jurupa Avenue Trailhead be adopted by City Council with the condition that design development not proceed until MSHCP JPR compliance work is completed and approved by the RCA. The mitigated negative declaration needs to be adopted now, prior to MSHCP finalization, for the Coastal Conservancy grant application to move forward in consideration for award of \$6,000,000.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct fiscal impact with adoption of the park master plans and CEQA mitigated

negative declaration.

If awarded, grant funds in the amount of \$6,000,000, or in the amount as awarded by the Coastal Conservancy if different, will be appropriated into the Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park Improvement project expenditure account in the future. No matching funds from the City are required. The PRCSD will seek additional grant funding for full build out of the Martha McLean Anza Narrow park master plan. The department would return at a later date for the appropriation should the grant be awarded.

Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park is an existing developed park and already being operated and maintained by the City. Operating and maintenance costs are not expected to increase significantly.

Prepared by: Alisa Sramala, Principal Park Project Manager  
Approved by: Pamela M. Galera, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director  
Certified as to  
availability of funds: Julie Nemes, Interim Finance Director  
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager  
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reibold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park Master Plan
2. Jurupa Avenue Trailhead Master Plan
3. Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park and Jurupa Avenue Trailhead
4. Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for Martha McLean Anza Narrows Park and Jurupa Avenue Trailhead
5. Presentation