

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTER-DEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE

CAO WA# 0220-05151-0488
Council File No. – N/A
Council District – 14

Date: October 5, 2023

To: Los Angeles City Council

From: Matthew W. Szabo, Chair 
Measure W - Safe, Clean Water Program - Administrative Oversight Committee

Subject: **TRANSMITTAL – RECOMMENDATIONS RELATED TO A REQUEST FROM THE BUREAU OF SANITATION FOR AUTHORITY TO ISSUE A LETTER OF NON-OBJECTION FOR THE ELEPHANT HILL OPEN SPACE AND STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council, subject to approval by the Mayor,

1. APPROVE the recommendation by the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) for the Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) to issue a letter of non-objection for Save Elephant Hill's submission of the Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study (Project) to the Safe, Clean Water Regional Technical Resources Program;
2. AUTHORIZE LASAN, with the concurrence of the Office of the City Administrative Officer (CAO), Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) and the Mayor's Office, to draft and issue a letter of non-objection for the Project; and,
3. AUTHORIZE the CAO and CLA to make technical corrections consistent with the Mayor and Council action on this matter.

SUMMARY

At its regular meeting on September 28, 2023, the Administrative Oversight Committee of the Measure W – Safe, Clean Water Program (Measure W AOC) considered a report from the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) dated September 28, 2023, regarding a request for approval to issue a letter of non-objection for the Los Angeles River Habitat Restoration and Stormwater Capture Project (Project).

In accordance with the Measure W Letter of Support Policy (C.F. 18-0384-S3), the Measure W AOC considered the request, approved the letter of non-objection for the Project, and amended the recommendations to authorize LASAN to draft and issue the letter, with the concurrence of the Office of the City Administrative Officer, Office of the Chief Legislative Analyst, and the

Mayor's Office. The amended recommendations reflect the intent of the Measure AOC and are hereby transmit to Council for consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the General Fund resulting from the recommendations included in this report, as the action is administrative only.

FINANCIAL POLICIES STATEMENT

The recommendations of this report comply with the City's Financial Policies in that there is no anticipated impact to the General Fund or City's special funds.

Attachment – September 28, 2023 LASAN Report for Round 5 (FY 24/25) Safe, Clean Water Community Proposed Project Proposal Evaluation for a Letter of Non-Objection from the City of Los Angeles - Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study by Save Elephant Hill

MWS:PJH/JVW:jcy/jpq:10240057

**CITY OF LOS ANGELES
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE**

Date: September 28, 2023

To: Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee
Matthew Szabo, City Administrative Officer
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
Ryan Jackson, Office of the Mayor

From: Michael Scaduto, PE, ENV SP, Principal Engineer
Safe, Clean Water Implementation Division
LA Sanitation & Environment

Michael Scaduto

Subject: Round 5 (FY 24/25) Safe, Clean Water Community Proposed Project Proposal Evaluation for a Letter of Non-Objection from the City of Los Angeles - Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study by Save Elephant Hill

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Approve the recommendation by LA Sanitation and Environment (LASAN) for the Measure W: Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) to issue a Letter of Non-Objection to Save Elephant Hill's submission of the Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study to the Safe, Clean Water Regional Technical Resources Program (TRP).
2. Authorize the City Administrative Officer, with the concurrence of the Chief Legislative Analyst and the Mayor's Office and the assistance of LASAN, to draft and issue a Letter of Non-Objection for the Project.

BACKGROUND

The Safe, Clean Water Regional TRP application process requires community proposed project applicants, such as Save Elephant Hill, to include a Letter of Non-Objection (Letter) from the municipality in which the project is proposed. The Letter issued by the City of Los Angeles (City) summarizes the identified need for the project, the project's benefits to the City, and emphasizes the future need for detailed operation and maintenance plans.

Save Elephant Hill is requesting a Letter from the City for the Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study (Project) located in El Sereno of the northeast Upper Los Angeles River watershed. Save Elephant Hill (Project Proponent) is a non profit organization advocating for the preservation of open space in northeast Los Angeles.

This application was submitted as part of the Round 5 Regional Safe, Clean Water TRP to the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area through the application module on July 31, 2023. The Project Proponent hopes to develop the remaining technical details of the Project using Regional TRP funds and potentially apply for future Regional Infrastructure Program funding in future Safe, Clean Water funding rounds.

In the early 2000's, the 110-acre area was designated as open space as a result of legal proceedings. In addition, the Project Proponent has secured documentation proving the existence of an intermittent spring fed by the permanent presence of groundwater in the nearby

lower valley deposits. These factors will play a significant role in determining the Project's benefits to water quality and water supply.

The Project Proponent has provided a preliminary estimated total construction cost estimate of \$990,000 and proposes to beautify the local open space by developing nature-based stormwater infrastructure such as bioretention, filtration, biofiltration, and rain gardens on the hillside and surrounding streets. Furthermore, the Project aims to provide community benefits by restoring the park space and habitat on the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA) owned parcels on Elephant Hill. Infrastructure to capture, treat, and retain stormwater will be used to self-irrigate the various nature-based best management practices (BMPs) and aid in the treatment of stormwater pollutants, including bacteria, metals, toxins, and trash.

CONSIDERATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

LASAN leads City efforts to review requests for letters of support or non-objection for the Safe Clean Water Regional Program. As part of the review process, LASAN coordinated and received feedback from various stakeholders: including the project proponents, watershed coordinators, other City departments, and the City's Safe, Clean Water Program Working Group (Working Group), to make final recommendations for the AOC to consider. In the review of this specific request, and in alignment with the City's Policies and Procedures for Review of Non-City Safe Clean Water Program projects, it was determined that:

- The Project generally aligns with Safe Clean Water Program guidelines and provides potential benefits of water quality, water supply, and community investment benefits.
- The Project has strong community support from various stakeholders.
- The Project will need to establish clear plans for operation and maintenance, permitting and right of way ownerships, detailed cost estimates, and other technical details during the feasibility study development process, if approved for TRP funding.

Therefore, LASAN recommends that the AOC supports a Letter of Non-Objection to Save Elephant Hill's submission of the Project to the Upper Los Angeles River's Safe, Clean Water Regional Round 5 (FY 24/25) Technical Resources Program. LASAN will continue to coordinate with and provide input to the Project Proponent to ensure that the scope continues to support the goals of the City and SCWP both before application and after potential funding is received. This letter should not be interpreted as a letter of support. The City will carefully consider the updated information provided for any potential future funding requests to the Safe, Clean Water Program for project design, construction, and delivery.

Attachment 1: Project Summary

cc: Patty Huber, CAO
Jacqueline Wagner, CAO
Jessica Quach, CAO
Janice Chang Yu, CAO
Rafael Prieto, CLA
Blayne Sutton-Wills, CLA
Barbara Romero, LASAN
Traci Minamide, LASAN
Julie Allen, LASAN

ATTACHMENT 1: Project Summary

Brief Description

Elephant Hill is an 110-acre area of undeveloped open space in the eastern limits of the Upper Los Angeles River watershed, and is the site of a potential project applying for Technical Resources Program (TRP) funding. The TRP would assess the feasibility of improving habitat, restoring an underground stream and intermittent spring, and developing opportunities to treat and retain stormwater for onsite water reuse. The project site itself is made up of a mix of City of Los Angeles (City), Mountains Conservation & Recreation Authority (MRCA), and privately owned land that is surrounded by a highly urbanized, residential community. Proposed components for this project include the construction of various stormwater BMPs for potential capture, treatment, and reuse, such as bioswales, water storage tanks, storm drains with inlet filters, and ecological gardens.

Surrounding Site Conditions

- Land Ownership:
 - City-owned: 20 acres
 - MRCA-owned: 8 acres
 - Private residential-owned: 85 acres
- Disadvantaged community areas are located West, East, and South of the project site.
- Frequent illegal off-roading and debris dumping are observed at the location.
- The San Gabriel Valley GW Basin is located southeast of site location (Low water supply priority, not subject to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act)
- There is evidence of an intermittent underground spring and the presence of longstanding groundwater.

Preliminary Hydrology

- Total Capture Area: 13.21 acres
 - Pervious Area: 9.05 acres (68.5%), Impervious Area: 4.16 acres (31.5%)
- 85th Percentile, 24-Hour Storm rainfall depth: 1"
- Estimated Runoff from 85th Percentile, 24-Hour Storm: 0.75 AF

Cost Breakdown

Estimated Construction Cost: \$988,568

Total Maintenance Cost: \$362,076

Total Monitoring Cost: \$43,219

Technical Factors that TRP Feasibility Study Should Consider Before Project

Implementation

- Detailed operations, maintenance, and monitoring plans/agreements
- BMP specifications and hydrologic technical breakdown
- Water supply benefits and mechanism
- Drainage area delineations (2007 study provides delineations via aerial imaging)
- Updated total project cost estimate and total funding request
- Permitting and right-of-way designations

Right of Way Map

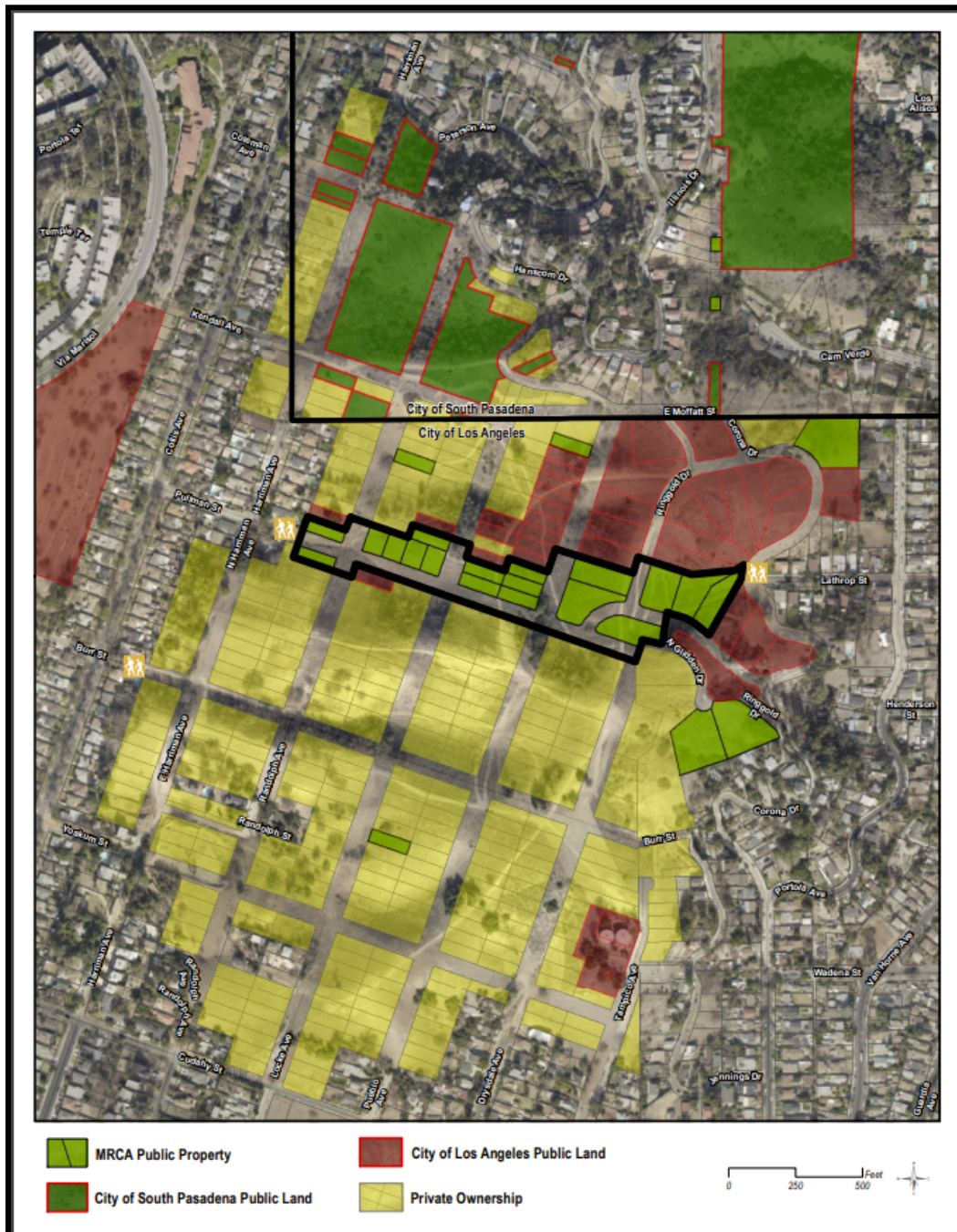


Figure 1: Elephant Hill Right of Way Map