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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"


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May 9, 2024

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: **SWP-3**
10570-1-1-F

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mark Pestrella, PE 
Director of Public Works

BOARD MOTION OF APRIL 9, 2024, AGENDA ITEM 17 RORY M. SHAW WETLANDS PARK PROJECT SITE IMPROVEMENTS 30-DAY REPORT BACK

The Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project is located in the community of Sun Valley in the City of Los Angeles. Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, and the Sun Valley Watershed Stakeholders Group collaborated to develop the Sun Valley Watershed Management Plan, which aims to solve chronic watershed issues through multi-benefit projects. The Rory Shaw project was identified as one of the keystone projects in the Sun Valley Watershed Management Plan. The project's objectives are to mitigate local flood risk and reduce stormwater pollution, while increasing water conservation, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat by converting a 46-acre inert debris landfill into a multi-benefit park. The park will feature a 21-acre detention pond that will collect stormwater runoff from the upstream tributary area via a proposed 4.75-mile-long storm drain system. The captured stormwater in the detention pond will then enter a 10-acre wetland that will act as a natural water treatment system by removing pollutants from the water. In addition, the wetlands will form a sustainable habitat for various plant and animal species. The treated stormwater will then be pumped to the existing Sun Valley Park infiltration basins for groundwater recharge. Additionally, this multi-benefit project provides 15 acres of much needed open space and recreational amenities for the community. Upon completion, the park will be turned over to the City of Los Angeles for ownership, operations, and maintenance. However, the 21-acre detention pond and storm drain system will be maintained by Los Angeles County Public Works.

On April 9, 2024, the Board adopted a motion directing Public Works and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District to report back in writing in 30 days on the following items relating to the Rory Shaw Wetlands Park Project.

- Identify existing and new security measures to deter and reduce illegal dumping, fugitive dust, and illicit activities, as well as measures to resolve the encampments by people experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services.

- Coordinate with the City to address the illegal dumping and encampments of people experiencing homelessness.
- Develop enhanced maintenance procedures that includes a status plan and schedule until the project enters construction.
- Explore interim greening elements and beautification measures along the site's perimeter to help improve the aesthetics of the site and deter illicit activities and trespassing.
- Develop a funding plan to complete the project through various funding opportunities including loans, revenue bonds, grants, legislation, and potential partnerships with other levels of government.

Recognizing that full funding for the entire Rory Shaw project has not yet been secured, Public Works is committed to working with the community to find cost-effective interim solutions to address the community's concerns related to vandalism, illegal dumping, and aesthetics at the site and continue to pursue additional funding for the completion of the project.

Item 1: Site Security and Maintenance

Public Works has taken steps toward improving the site conditions within County right of way (Exhibit A) including leveling the existing stockpiles of dirt to ground level to control fugitive dust and reinforce the fencing where frequent vandalism is occurring. We will also trim 13 trees and remove 2 dead trees along Strathern Street as recommended by an arborist. The anticipated completion date for these improvements is 90 days. Additionally, we will conduct weekly site inspections, as-needed herbicide management, periodic site clearing, and tree trimming.

For all issues within the City's right of way, Public Works has been and will continue to report such issues through the City's Bureau of Sanitation, Bureau of Street Services, and MyLA311 for the City to take the necessary actions. As an added deterrent, Public Works requested the City to install surveillance cameras with its right of way adjacent to the site and specifically along Tujunga Avenue; however, the City has advised that cameras are not available at this time.

Item 2: Interim Site Beautification

Public Works explored the following interim solutions that would improve the aesthetics of the site until the project is completed.

Fencing

As an immediate interim solution to the deteriorated and vandalized fence screening, we will install an 8-foot-tall, mini mesh chainlink fence along the site perimeter. The mini mesh fence is denser and more durable than standard

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chainlink. The estimated cost to remove the existing fencing and install the mini mesh chainlink fencing is approximately \$350,000.

Greening

Public Works is investigating the feasibility of planting an 8- to 10-foot plant buffer of California native shrubs and land cover along the perimeter of the site. We will consider other beautification options once we receive feedback from the community during the next Sun Valley Area Neighborhood Council's Planning and Land Use Management meeting in June 2024.

Item 3: Project Funding Plan

The Rory Shaw project's cost is currently estimated at \$240 million. Funding of \$37.8 million has been identified through the Safe, Clean Water Program, City of Los Angeles Proposition O, and Flood Control District funds. To meet the financial shortfall, we are pursuing funding opportunities through various programs such as the Clean Water State Revolving Funds, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and Fiscal Year 2025 Congressional Directed Spending.

Additionally, a cost-share agreement is being considered with the City to contribute funds either directly to the project costs or to help repay any approved loans for the project. Understanding that the opportunities and partnerships are not assured, Public Works is committed to actively seeking additional funding alternatives until all construction funding is secured.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Deputy Director Adam Ariki at (626) 458-4012 or aariki@pw.lacounty.gov.

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[HTTPS://LACOUNTY-MY.SHAREPOINT.COM/SWPD/BR/BOARD/MOTION 4.9.24 ITEM 17 - RORY M. SHAW PROJECT.DOCX](https://lacounty-my.sharepoint.com/SWPD/BR/BOARD/MOTION%204.9.24%20ITEM%2017%20-%20RORY%20M.%20SHAW%20PROJECT.DOCX)

cc: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office

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Exhibit A
Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project Site



MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

April 9, 2024

Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project Site Improvements

The Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park (Rory Shaw) Project is located in the community of Sun Valley in the City of Los Angeles. Los Angeles County, the City of Los Angeles, and the Sun Valley Watershed Stakeholders Group collaborated to develop the Sun Valley Watershed Management Plan, which aims to solve chronic watershed issues through multi-benefit [projects](#). Rory Shaw was identified as one of the keystone projects in the Sun Valley Watershed Management Plan. The Project’s objectives are to mitigate local flood risk and reduce stormwater pollution, while increasing water conservation, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat by converting a 46-acre inert debris landfill into a multi-benefit park. The park will feature a 21-acre detention pond that will collect stormwater runoff from the upstream tributary area via a proposed 4.75-mile-long storm drain system. The captured stormwater in the detention pond will then enter a 10-acre wetland that will act as a natural water treatment system by removing pollutants from the water. In addition, the wetlands will form a sustainable habitat for various plant and animal species. The treated stormwater will then be pumped to the existing Sun Valley Park infiltration basins for groundwater recharge. Additionally, this multi-benefit

MOTION

SOLIS _____

MITCHELL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

HORVATH _____

project provides 15-acres of much needed open space and recreational amenities for the community. Upon completion, the park will be turned over to the City of Los Angeles for ownership, operations, and maintenance. However, the 21-acre detention pond and storm drain system will be maintained by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Flood Control District.

The planning for the Project was initiated in the early 2000's after the adoption of the Sun Valley Watershed Management Plan. However, site investigations and environmental studies could not be conducted until after the adjacent land acquisition was completed in 2012. These studies were necessary to ensure the Project design was well-informed and robust. Public Works recently finalized the plans, specifications, and engineer's estimate for the necessary grading and site preparation needed prior to the construction of the park features. Due to the complexity of converting an inert debris landfill into a multi-benefit park, as well as inflation, the construction cost has significantly increased and is now estimated to be over \$200 million. As such, there is currently insufficient funding available to move the Project in total to construction. To date, Public Works has secured \$10 million through a Safe, Clean Water Regional Program grant. Additionally, \$17.8 million has been earmarked through the City of Los Angeles' Proposition O Program. To close the funding gap, Public Works is actively pursuing other funding opportunities, including grants and loans.

Over the years, Public Works has conducted routine maintenance at the Project site. However, due to ongoing Project delays, the property has remained vacant and is subject to illegal dumping, illicit activities, and encampments from people experiencing homelessness, with most of these issues crossing both City and County right-of-way.

While Public Works is proactively monitoring and addressing site maintenance, additional measures are needed, in coordination with the City, to respond more effectively and efficiently to community concerns and lessen the impact of the Project timeline.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct and authorize the Director of Public Works and Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, or his designee, to take the following actions, and provide a written report back in 30-days:

- 1) Identify existing measures and implement new measures to increase security at the site to deter and reduce illegal dumping, fugitive dust, and illicit activities, as well as measures to resolve the encampments by people experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services. Continue to coordinate closely with the City of Los Angeles to explore additional measures to improve response time and deter issues surrounding the site, which often cross over into both the City and County jurisdictions. Furthermore, enhance existing site maintenance procedures until the Project enters construction, including the status, plan, and schedule for the interim solutions.
- 2) Explore and investigate possible interim greening elements and beautification measures along the site's perimeter to help improve the aesthetics of the site and deter illicit activities and trespassing, including a plan and schedule for the interim solutions.

3) Develop a funding plan to complete the Project through various funding opportunities including loans, revenue bonds, grants, legislation, and potential partnerships with other levels of government.

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