

DATE: September 21, 2017

TO: Watershed Conservation Authority Governing Board

FROM: Johnathan Perisho, Project Manager

THROUGH: Mark Stanley, Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Item 13: Consideration of a resolution to ratify application for grant funds from the California Active Transportation Program Augmentation for the River Wilderness Park Front Entry Improvements Project roundabout and associated elements.

RECOMMENDATION: The WCA Board ratify application for grant funds from the California Active Transportation Program (ATP) Augmentation in the amount of \$1,932,000 to fund the River Wilderness Park Front Entry Improvements Project Roundabout and Associated Elements.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: River Wilderness Park is envisioned as a gateway for the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument at the northernmost terminus of the San Gabriel River Bikeway along natural river flow in the Azusa Canyon off State Route 39.

The roundabout on SR 39 is a critical component of the park design: supporting and providing safe crossing for the extension of the 38-mile San Gabriel River Bikeway, a safe entrance and exit for the increasing access for the developing park, and a significant stretch in extending utilities into the site. Early construction will both minimize impacts on park improvements and streamline ongoing park implementation. The California ATP is one of the only possible sources that can fund the proposed active transportation and road improvements along the SR 39, making this a key application of funds. Application summary is included as Exhibit A, timeline to be updated.

BACKGROUND: The California ATP is a vehicle for state and federal funds administered by Caltrans. This program specifically makes funds available for improvements that benefit the safety and accessibility of active transportation. The improvements this grant can fund are imperative to realize the potential of River Wilderness Park as a local and regional resource.

The WCA has previously applied to three cycles of the California ATP with support from LA County Metro, Caltrans District 7, the US Forest Service, representatives of the California senate and assembly, the City of Azusa, and community organizations. The WCA has received a high score of 81.25 out of 100. Following California Senate Bill 1 this year additional funds were allocated for the ATP program, resulting in the ATP Augmentation. Staff only became aware of the grant availability by limited word of mouth through Caltrans, with a narrow window to reapply. Of primary significance, unlike other cycles these funds come only from the state and will not require federal review which is anticipated to greatly expedite the implementation process.

Recognized as an important regional project at the gateway to one of the most accessed parts of the National Forest the active transportation improvements would have a significant impact on the safe access and prominence of River Wilderness Park. The park is both a programmed terminal point for the regional approximately 38-mile San Gabriel River Bike Trail, and the northernmost jewel of the 17-mile Emerald Necklace along the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo Rivers. Conditions at the intersection of State Route 39 and Old San Gabriel

Canyon Road are currently regarded as unsafe with a steep drop into the river channel, no fencing, and minimal markings where vehicles are known to move swiftly around blind spots into and out of the mountains. This is a major impairment for active transportation access and demands are anticipated to increase exponentially with planned improvements. This is a significant threat to active transportation users, and maximizing the benefits of the park.

The project has additional interest as one of the first implementations of a strategy Caltrans promotes. The first Caltrans facility roundabout was completed in Palmdale in 2009. Now recognized as a great success the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol have reported no fatal accidents following completion of the roundabout as of May 2017.

FISCAL INFORMATION: The request for funding from the California ATP in the amount of \$1,932,000 would match \$851,634 of the approximately \$2.3 million in funds secured to date for River Wilderness Park. This funding is key to leveraging funds and completing planned park elements in a first implementation phase, and in delivering a complete new entrance and river overlook together with the \$299,862 from the California Natural Resources Agency River Parkways funding.

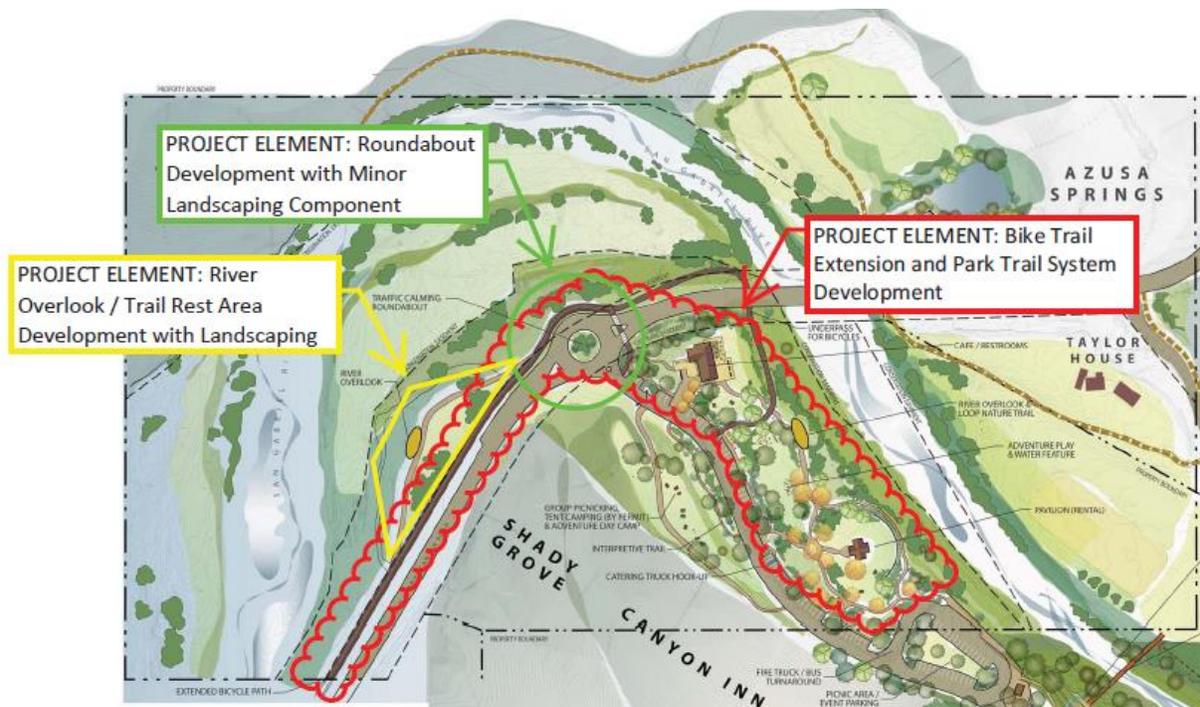


Project Overview of Closure, Roundabout and Park Entry Improvements

The Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA), is a joint powers entity of the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD).

The River Wilderness Park has been planned and designed as a major gateway to the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (SGMNM) and serves as a park destination along the San Gabriel River. The Watershed Conservation Authority is responsible for managing the existing park and for planning and implementing future improvements.

Project Description: The purpose of this project is to accomplish a northerly extension and completion of the San Gabriel River Bike Trail in accordance with established and adopted plans for this regionally significant bikeway. This project will include 1750 feet of class-1 bike trail, a safe crossing of State Highway 39 using a roundabout, a trail-side rest area, and limited internal park trail system development.



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RESOLUTION 2017-29

RESOLUTION OF THE WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TO RATIFY APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS FROM THE CALIFORNIA ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM AUGMENTATION FOR THE RIVER WILDERNESS PARK FRONT ENTRY IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT ROUNDABOUT AND ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS.

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has been established as a joint powers agency between the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District; and

WHEREAS, the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) has further been established to focus on projects which will provide open space, habitat restoration, and watershed improvement projects in both the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers watershed; and

WHEREAS, this action authorizes the Chair, or designee, the discretion to authorize a grant application for the California Active Transportation Program Augmentation for the River Wilderness Park Front Entry Improvements Project Roundabout and Associated Elements; and

WHEREAS, the proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); NOW

Therefore be it resolved that the WCA hereby:

1. **FINDS** that this action is consistent with the purposes and objectives of the WCA.
2. **FINDS** that the actions contemplated by this resolution are exempt from the environmental impact report requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).
3. **ADOPTS** the staff report dated September 21, 2017.
4. **AUTHORIZES** an application for grant funds from the California Active Transportation Program Augmentation in the amount of \$1,932,000 to fund the River Wilderness Park Front Entry Improvements Project Roundabout and Associated Elements.

~ End of Resolution ~

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Motion: _____ Second: _____

Ayes: _____ Nays: _____ Abstentions: _____

Passed and Adopted by the Board of the
WATERSHED CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
On September 21, 2017

M. Janet Chin, Governing Board Chair

ATTEST: _____
David Edsall
Deputy Attorney General