

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
November 21, 2024

**SANTA ANA RIVER
OC RIVER WALK**

Project No. 21-071-01
Project Manager: Rodrigo Garcia

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to disburse up to \$1,200,000 to augment the Conservancy grant of \$5,000,000 previously authorized to the City of Anaheim to prepare plans, designs, permit applications, environmental review documentation, and conduct community outreach, for the “OC River Walk,” a project to improve and enhance a portion of the Santa Ana River Trail and Parkway in the County of Orange, including reconfiguration and vegetating the riverbank and creating new trail connections.

LOCATION: Santa Ana River, Anaheim, Orange County

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [February 3, 2022 Staff Recommendation](#)

Exhibit 2: [Project Location Map](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution and findings.

Resolution:

The State Coastal Conservancy hereby authorizes the disbursement of an additional amount not to exceed one million two hundred thousand dollars (\$1,200,000) to the City of Anaheim to augment the Conservancy grant previously authorized on February 3, 2022 for a total of amount of six million two hundred thousand dollars (\$6,200,000), to prepare plans, designs, permit applications, environmental review documentation, and conduct community outreach, for the “OC River Walk,” a project to improve and enhance a portion of the Santa Ana River Trail and Parkway in the County of Orange, including reconfiguration and vegetating the riverbank and creating new trail connections. This authorization remains subject to the same conditions contained in the Conservancy’s February 3, 2022 authorization.

Prior to further disbursement of funds, the grantee shall submit for the review and written approval of the Executive Officer of the Conservancy (Executive Officer) the following:

1. A revised work program, schedule, and budget.

Findings:

Based on the accompanying staff recommendation and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that:

1. The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's findings under its February 3, 2022 authorization.
2. The proposed project remains consistent with the current Conservancy Project Selection Criteria.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends the Conservancy authorize disbursement of up to \$1,200,000 to augment the Conservancy grant of \$5,000,000 previously authorized to the City of Anaheim ("City") to prepare plans, designs, permit applications, environmental review documentation, and conduct community outreach, for the "OC River Walk" on the Santa Ana River in the County of Orange (the "project").

The Conservancy authorized disbursement of up to \$5,000,000 for this project on February 3, 2022 (Exhibit 1). These additional funds are required due to additional design needs identified during early phases of the design process and escalating costs. With the 2028 Summer Olympic Games approaching, the City is keen on finalizing design and construction in time to showcase the Santa Ana River Trail and Parkway and the OC River Walk to a global audience with events taking place at the Honda Center.

The OC River Walk is a multi-partner and multi-benefit project to transform the Santa Ana River corridor in Anaheim. It seeks to re-establish the river corridor as a place of interconnectivity between people, local businesses, the nearby Angel Stadium, the Honda Center, and the Anaheim Regional Transportation Intermodal Center (ARTIC). The OC River Walk will improve recreation, aesthetics, and ecology of the river and adjacent land. It will also improve connectivity between transit opportunities at ARTIC, the Santa Ana River Trail, and Anaheim Coves. Anaheim Coves is a 26-acre nature park located along the Santa Ana River between Ball Road and Frontera Street offering multi-use trails, educational amenities, native habitat, and fitness zones. The proposed OC River Walk will include improved public access to the river, enhanced habitat and ecological functions, carbon sequestration through tree planting, and increased water reliability.

In 2021, the City developed the OC River Walk Engineering Feasibility Study for the two-mile stretch of the river from Ball Road to Orangewood Avenue. The Feasibility Study identified four elements to transform the river corridor: riverbank reconfiguration, installation of river water impoundment structures, trail extensions, and construction of a non-motorized bridge.

This project consists of preparation of design documents, geotechnical reports, topographic surveys, and permit applications; conducting community outreach; designing art installations for the four elements identified in the Feasibility Study listed above; and preparation of all the documents needed for environmental review and analysis under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Following completion of the project, the City will work to secure funding for final construction documents, and the construction of these four elements.

Other than the increase in costs and design needs, there are no other changes to the project as described in the February 3, 2022 staff recommendation.

Site Description: See Exhibit 1.

Grant Applicant Qualifications: See Exhibit 1.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s Project Selection Criteria, last updated on September 23, 2021, as described in the February 3, 2022 staff recommendation (See Exhibit 1).

PROJECT FINANCING

Coastal Conservancy	\$1,200,000
Coastal Conservancy (February 3, 2022 authorization)	\$5,000,000
Project Total	\$6,200,000

The anticipated source of Conservancy funding for this project augmentation is a fiscal year 2022-2023 appropriation to the Conservancy from the General Fund for the “Santa Ana River Conservancy Program.” This project is consistent with the goals of the Santa Ana River Conservancy program, as discussed in the Consistency with Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation section below.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S ENABLING LEGISLATION:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation as described in the February 3, 2022 staff recommendation (See Exhibit 1).

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY’S [2023-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN](#):

Consistent with **Goal 2.5, Recreation Facilities and Amenities**, the proposed project will plan recreational facilities & amenities.

Consistent with **Goal 3.2, Restore or Enhance Habitats**, the proposed project will plan for the habitat restoration and enhancement within the Santa Ana River watershed.

CEQA COMPLIANCE:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's February 3, 2022 findings that the project is exempt (See Exhibit 1). The project has not changed and there are no changed circumstances or information that would trigger the need for additional CEQA documentation.