

From: Omari Ferguson
Sent: Friday, May 23, 2025 9:03 AM
To: Ted Gerber; Todd Hileman
Cc: Anteneh Tesfaye
Subject: Fw: Scoping Meeting for Water Reuse Project: 5/28, 6-8 PM, So Pas Community Room

Hi Ted,

I was reviewing this project and wanted to confirm the cost structure. County leases the space (is there a cost - and would that be paid by south Pasadena or Pasadena). Also while there are funds available for the construction - Pasadena has the construction and south Pasadena is responsible for operations? Would that mean that over time we will receive funds for the ongoing O&M costs?

Thanks for any clarification you can provide,

Omari

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From: Barbara Eisenstein <barbara.eisenstein@51586805.mailchimpapp.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 22, 2025 10:24:53 PM
To: Omari Ferguson <oferguson@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Scoping Meeting for Water Reuse Project: 5/28, 6-8 PM, So Pas Community Room

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Big Plans for the Arroyo Seco

South Pasadena, in partnership with Pasadena as the lead agency, is moving forward with a multi-million dollar initiative known as the *Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project*. While positioned as a forward-thinking water infrastructure investment, the project raises serious concerns—it poses threats to local trees, wildlife, and the natural water flow that our communities and ecosystems rely on.

Earlier this year, the two cities settled a lawsuit filed by Clara Solis, leader of the [Save San Pascual Park](#) group. The lawsuit called for a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR) on the project, challenging the lack of transparency and environmental accountability in the planning process. Now is the time to speak up for a better path forward.

San Pascual Park Cleanup

To raise awareness, Save San Pascual Park will be hosting a [cleanup](#) of the [Los Angeles area of San Pascual Park](#) on **Saturday May 24 from 8am – 12pm**. Councilmember Ysabel Jurado and Assemblymember Jessica Caloza are also scheduled to attend to support the cleanup efforts. This is a good event to learn more about the project, while cleaning up our community parkland.

Public Scoping Meeting

The cleanup event comes several days before Pasadena will present a public scoping meeting about a draft EIR on the proposed project. The meeting will be held to share information regarding the project, and according to the announcement is “an information-gathering meeting, not a public hearing, and no public testimony or recordation of the meeting will occur.”

The meeting will be held on **Wednesday, May 28 from 6pm – 8pm** at the South Pasadena Community Room, 1115 El Centro Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030.

The public may submit comments about this project through June 13, 2025.

More information may be found [here](#).

My Concerns

As the organizer of [Friends of South Pasadena Nature Park](#), a volunteer stewardship group I've led for nearly 20 years, I feel compelled to share my deep concerns about the *Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project*. While many of the project's goals are worthwhile, the plan as presented in official documents and public meetings raises serious issues.

Perhaps most disappointing is the missed opportunity to embrace nature-based solutions. Instead of relying on traditional infrastructure, we could invest in approaches that restore natural flows, improve wildlife habitat, and expand public access. A healthier, living river could one day even support the return of [steelhead trout](#)—if we make the right choices now.

Given the project's complexity, I've outlined a few of my key concerns here. Still, the issues go far beyond what's listed and deserve much broader public scrutiny.

Habitat at Risk

136 mature trees—including native oaks and sycamores— could be removed or damaged in the disturbance area of the San Pascual project site.

While the majority of these trees are nonnative, including 83 Mexican fan palms, the **removal of 36 native, protected trees** would result in significant ecological impact – the loss of approximately 1.234 acres of Coast Live Oak–Western Sycamore woodland, as reported in the project's [Mitigated Negative Declaration](#), p 2-19.

The presence of nonnative plants in an area does not justify habitat destruction through the indiscriminate clearing of both native and nonnative vegetation.



Note the proposed loss of woodland in this area. The image in the lower left shows the existing forested riparian habitat, which is rich with bird life. The rendering shows trees after years of growth and proper management - a best case scenario.



All of the light green circles are trees that will be removed!

Reduced Downstream Flow and Transparency in Water Use

The proposed project raises significant concerns about reduced downstream flow in the Arroyo Seco, particularly given the diversion and potential non-return of water to the stream. In light of increasing drought conditions, we need transparent, data-driven assessments of water allocation and usage.

Furthermore, approximately 30 acre-feet per year (~10 million gallons) will be provided for irrigation of the golf course in South Pasadena. According to the Mitigated Negative Declaration Draft ([MND, p. 1-12](#)):

"The annual irrigation water demand has been estimated at 30 acre-feet per year [~10 million gallon] for the Arroyo Seco Golf Course. The San Pascual BMP has been designed to provide the total estimated annual irrigation water to the Golf Course, thereby reducing demand on potable water supplies."

This statement prompts several critical questions:

- Will the Golf Course be guaranteed its full irrigation allocation regardless of future climate variability or water scarcity?
- Will the City of South Pasadena, as the golf course's owner, pay for the diverted and purified water?
- Is the City of South Pasadena entitled to this water?

- How is water allocation prioritized, and who makes these decisions?

Additionally, the draft estimates that 320 acre-feet per year (over 100 million gallons) will be infiltrated into the groundwater system. While groundwater recharge is indeed crucial, such a substantial diversion suggests a potentially significant reduction in surface water flow in the Arroyo Seco. Despite functioning as a flood control channel, the Arroyo has important ecological value that could be adversely impacted downstream.

We need clear, publicly available information on:

- How much water is diverted
- Where it is going
- Who is paying for it
- What long-term impacts it will have on the Arroyo Seco and surrounding ecosystems

Responsible resource management requires a full accounting of both benefits and trade-offs—especially when it comes to such a vital and limited resource.

A Better Way Forward

- Nature-based solutions can restore habitat, improve access, and support a living river.
- Let's protect the Arroyo **and** improve water quality.

Be Involved and Let the City Know What You Want!

If you want to help protect one of the [last wild areas in South Pasadena](#)—and maybe even see [trout](#) flourish in the Arroyo—take some time to learn about this project and let the city know where you stand. **Written comments, including e-mails, must be submitted in writing by 5:00 PM on June 13, 2025.**

As noted above, a **Scoping Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, May 28 at 6:00 PM** in the **Community Room of the South Pasadena Library**.

Online Resources

- [Save San Pascual Park](#)
- [Stewards of the Arroyo Seco](#)
- [LA City Information Report on the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project](#)
- [Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration: Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project](#)
- [San Rafael-San Pascual Project Summary, Attachments](#)
- [City of Pasadena, Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Public Scoping Meeting \(5/28/25\)](#)
- Written comments can be sent to: Christina Monde, P.E. Christina Monde, P.E. City of Pasadena Department of Public Works 100 North Garfield Avenue, Suite N306 Pasadena, CA 91101 Email: CMonde@cityofpasadena.net

Upcoming Events and Dates

- [Save San Pascual Park Cleanup](#), Saturday, May 24, 8 am - 12 pm
- [Water Reuse Project, Public Scoping Meeting](#), Wednesday, May 28, 6-8 PM, South Pasadena Community Room, 1115 El Centro St, South Pasadena, CA 91030
- [Written comments](#), including e-mails, must be submitted in writing by 5:00 PM, Friday, June 13, 2025.



Possibly one of the only "wild" places left in South Pasadena. Majestic western sycamores and rambling wild cucumber can be seen in this picture. (May 1, 2023)



This place is special and needs a whole lot of love. Currently with no clear trails, behind a rusty chainlink fence, this area is hard for the public to reach. Removing weeds, while nurturing the native elements would greatly enhance the area.



This Southern California black walnut is special tree that used to grow all over our region, but is largely gone due to development. We cannot afford to lose even more. Note the western sycamore and nonnative and invasive Mexican fan palm behind it.



I believe that these two oaks are targeted for removal. Yes, they need care, but 24-inch box trees are no replacement for these venerable ones.

[Find Out More](#)





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