



**CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA  
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM**

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Report: The Verdugo Wash Visioning Study and release of a Request for Proposals

1. Motion to Note and file the report for the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study
2. Resolution Authorizing Staff to Issue a Request for Proposals for the Study

**COUNCIL ACTION**

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**Item Type:** Action Item

**Approved for** August 4, 2020 **calendar**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Approved by:**

Yasmin K. Beers, City Manager

## **RECOMMENDATION**

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That the City Council receive the report regarding the scope and authorize the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding the Verdugo Wash Visioning Study.

## **BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS**

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On June 2, 2020 City Council approved the FY 2020-21 budget, including a \$250,000 Measure S allocation to study the feasibility of improvements to the Verdugo Wash to serve as a linear park for the City of Glendale. The feasibility and visioning study will consider improving the Verdugo Wash to serve as a bicycle and pedestrian trail, as well as green and open space that may be located adjacent to, or over the wash while reclaiming natural habitat of the river. The Verdugo Wash offers a unique opportunity to serve as an identifiable and memorable placemaking experience that would substantially influence the character of the city.

The Verdugo Wash, a tributary of the Los Angeles River, is located entirely within the City of Glendale. The tributary's path, originally etched by nature, begins in the Crescenta Valley and runs in a southeasterly direction through communities such as Montrose, skirting the base of the Verdugo Mountains before making a turn towards the southwest through to complete its path towards confluence with the Los Angeles River, passing through neighborhoods such as Downtown and Rossmoyne in the process. In the 1930s, the path was encased in concrete as a flood control channel. The Verdugo Wash Visioning is a first step towards restoring its natural habitat and also reimagining it as an extraordinary urban experience connecting pedestrians and cyclists to varied urban centers and city parks along its approximately 9.5-mile length via a linear park and nature trail.

Though the community is accustomed to its presence, the wash often presents itself as a structural and visual disconnect between differing parts of the city, the downtown, and even between neighborhoods and neighbors along its approximately 9.5 miles of length. The reimagined Verdugo Wash would be transformative in character – a new urban linear park energizing the existing urban framework and fabric of Glendale with seamless connections and aesthetically enhanced experiences. It would expand the bicycle and pedestrian network with access to business and entertainment venues while enjoying nature, people, places, and culture as it interweaves several important city centers, services, and a multitude of neighborhoods that make up a large core of Glendale. The visioning is the opportunity to embrace and advance an urban design experience that creates memorability and recognition as a 'must visit' urban experience. As envisioned, it would make a significant contribution towards furthering the city's recognition as a unique and livable community. On its 9.5-mile course, the wash passes through diverse contexts or "segments" that have the potential or predisposition to possess a unique identity. In defining each segment, people and place should remain a

guiding principle by establishing a character and sense of destination that attracts activity and visitors.

The project will seek to create an urban experience found in projects such as:

### *Los Angeles River Revitalization*

Revitalization of the Los Angeles River seeks to restore the ecosystem of the original river while incorporating pedestrian and cyclist routes. The project seeks to convert the existing infrastructure that separates neighborhoods and communities into a multi-modal corridor. Adjacent green spaces and recreational fields will enhance the quality of life along the river and to the communities that surround it. The project follows principles established through many river revitalization projects across the country and the world.

### *Atlanta BeltLine*

The Atlanta BeltLine is a former interurban rail line that creates a loop around the city of Atlanta. The current plan reimagines this rail line as a multi-use trail that connects neighborhoods, people and places while establishing new open spaces and linkages to existing spaces. Several segments of the 22-mile route have been completed, transforming communities, creating new green spaces in park starved communities, and strengthening the multi-modal transportation network. The Atlanta BeltLine art program has catalyzed new means for public engagement and civic pride in the project.

### *Indianapolis Cultural Trail*

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail sought to create a world class public space for the city. It creates a route around the Downtown and connecting to important civic structures with separated bicycle and pedestrian paths. Along the route, curated art installations establish a linear gallery, with greenways and gardens to incorporate more natural habitat into the urban environment. The project has provided profound impacts to local businesses, identity, and tourism for the city.

### *Miami Underline*

The Miami Underline is a 10-mile recreational trail and linear park below the existing elevated Miami Metro rail line. The linear park is envisioned as a canvas for art, while incorporating recreation opportunities and multi-modal active transportation that connects to the existing mass transit system.

### *San Antonio Riverwalk*

Similar to systems in Southern California, the San Antonio River was designed to control flooding following a disastrous flood in 1921. The area has been reimagined as a city park and network of walkways along the river and has become a defining feature of

the city for tourism, businesses, and cultural identity. The project ultimately spurred development of an entirely new district to the city and remains one of the most popular attractions in San Antonio.

### The 606

The 606 is a multi-use trail that uses a former freight rail line. The trail connects four existing parks and created two new parks for the City of Chicago. Much like the Verdugo Wash, the rail line also separated and divided neighborhoods. The new trail has created opportunities to reconnect these communities through unique and identifiable design features such as art, lighting, and branded signage.

Each of these projects have used existing utilitarian infrastructure to be reimaged as public spaces and amenities while serving as a catalyst to define cities and neighborhoods. Staff will provide an overview of comparable projects to assist in the visualization of the scope of work and the potential of the Verdugo Wash.

### RFP and Scope of Work

Staff has developed a Request for Proposals (RFP) and a preliminary scope of work that will seek the expertise and skills of a highly qualified urban design team that will incorporate multi-modal transportation, engineering, and sustainability.

As part of the scope, staff will ask the selected consultant for the following tasks and deliverables:

- Develop two environmental analysis-ready alternatives that will reimagine the wash with bicyclist and pedestrian infrastructure, and new open space.
- Develop an overall urban design vision that will employ unifying design features to create an identity or brand for the project.
- Identify opportunities to create segments with unique identities that are compatible with the surrounding context, recognizing the unique neighborhoods and uses that surround the Verdugo Wash.
- Identify opportunities to create open space over or adjacent to the wash, including land use and property analysis.
- Identify opportunities for fixed or permanent uses to enhance the character of the route. These opportunities could include unique urban design elements and public art implementation.
- Identify early and easily implementable strategies. Recognizing that a project of this scale and scope may take several years to complete, the consultant will be asked to identify opportunities to realize segments or improvements as quickly as possible.

- Develop schemes that will explore opportunities for materials, paving, landscape, art, wayfinding, and other unique strategies that will reinforce the identity and brand of the Verdugo Wash
- Identify and develop schemes for environmental remediation and reclamation. New technologies and design solutions can allow the concrete channel to be reimagined with natural features and elements that still maintain the flood control responsibilities of the wash.
- Coordinate with the various entities, agencies, and public with vested interest in the projects. This will include the broader Glendale community, those with property interests in the immediate vicinity of the project; as well as key stakeholders such as the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the State of California Division of Flood Management, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

The final deliverable products from the scope of work will include a report that summarizes the alternatives, design solutions, challenges to the project, and next steps to realize the vision. Additionally, a robust community engagement plan will be developed to gather feedback from the neighboring communities and all of Glendale. This engagement process will pursue new ideas and strategies to gain insightful and valuable feedback, while also conveying the progress of the vision to the public and stakeholders.

#### Next Steps

Staff anticipates releasing the RFP by August 5, 2020 and returning to Council with a recommended consultant selection in early Fall of 2020. The timeline for the project is anticipated to run 12 to 18 months.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

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A total of \$250,000 has been appropriated for the Verdugo Wash visioning study within the adopted FY 20-21 Measure S budget. The funds will be allocated to a professional services contract to a qualified selected consultant. Staff will return to Council to award the contract later in 2020.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

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1: Note and file the report and authorize staff to release a RFP.

2: Note and file the report and provide revision recommendations to the Request for Proposals and preliminary scope of work.

3: Note and file the report and do not authorize the release of a RFP.

4: The City Council may consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

## **CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE**

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None

## **EXHIBITS**

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1. Maps of the Verdugo Wash, adjacent neighborhoods, and existing conditions.

2. Examples of Relevant Projects