



## ***Minutes***

### ***Measure M2 Environmental Oversight Committee***

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#### **Committee Members**

*Brian Goodell, Chair  
Ajay Khetani, Taxpayer Oversight Committee  
Alben Phung, Caltrans  
Dan Silver Endangered Habitats League  
Daniel Vasquez, CA Wildlife Conservation Board  
Derek McGregor, DMc Engineering  
William Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service*

*Orange County Transportation Authority  
Conference Room 07  
550 South Main Street  
Orange, CA*

***Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at  
2:30 p.m.***

#### **Member(s) Absent**

*Karen Drewe, CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife  
Veronica Li, US Army Corp of Engineers*

#### **Member(s) Teleconferencing**

*Bev Perry, Civic Engagement Consultant  
Katrina Foley, OCTA Board of Directors  
Joe Navari, CA Wildlife Conservation Board  
Melanie Schlotterbeck, Vice Chair*

#### **Teleconference Location:**

*Brea City Sports Park  
3333 E. Birch Street  
Brea, CA 92821*

*New Natural Resources Headquarters  
715 P Street  
Conference Room 17-201  
Sacramento, CA 95814*

*Office of Katrina Foley  
34475 Golden Lantern Street  
Dana Point, CA 92629*

#### **1. Welcome**

Chair Brian Goodell called the Environmental Oversight Committee (EOC) meeting to order.

#### **2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Alben Phung lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **3. Approval of August 2, 2023, Minutes**

A motion was made by Derek McGregor, seconded by Melanie Schlotterbeck to approve the minutes. Motion passed, William Miller abstained.

### **4. Irvine Ranch Conservancy Restoration Projects Update**

Lesley Hill, OCTA Planning, and Michael O'Connell, Robert Freese and Collin Raff of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy presented the update. <This presentation available upon request.>

#### Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked about the new techniques referenced and what animal species have come back. Michael O'Connell responded they rely heavily on seeds, a mix of functional groups, diversity of species and a brief period of irrigation. The observed animal species that have returned are the California gnatcatcher, Orange-throated whiptail, and Cactus wren.

A committee member asked if there were lessons learned and a knowledge base and would there be workshops to train others. Michael O'Connell responded they use target invasive control as a pro-active approach to managing the sites. For training, they are using newsletters, periodic workshops and a presentation at the next SERCAL (California Society for Ecological Restoration) Conference. A lesson learned was how to approach planting the different plant species.

A committee member asked what was done for site preparation. Michael O'Connell responded, clearing the site of thatch, applying herbicide to kill non-native seeds in preparation for seeding and planting.

A committee member asked what herbicide was used. Michael O'Connell responded Roundup and other select herbicides for grasses and broadleaf.

A committee member asked if that is the approved method. Michael O'Connell responded yes, it is the most effective and fastest.

A committee member asked if there is another source of weed abatement that can be used due to concern over contamination of the environment. Michael O'Connell responded Roundup is used at the lowest possible dose, formulations of Roundup can be used for aquatic habitats.

A committee member asked if the cost of each of the projects is over the whole duration. Lesley Hill responded yes, that is the final cost.

A committee member asked if that amount is what we are paying to the private nonprofit to do the work. Lesley Hill responded yes, OCTA has a specific agreement with Irvine Ranch Conservancy to reimburse for the funds spent from the beginning of the contracts. The \$1.6 million Agua Chinon restoration project also includes the Bee Flat

Canyon Restoration project.

A committee member asked if the land was still owned by The Irvine Company. Lesley Hill responded yes but believes The Irvine Company will be transferring this portion of the land to the City of Irvine.

##### **5. Fairview Park Restoration Project Update**

Lesley Hill, OCTA Planning, and Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director, City of Costa Mesa, and Kelly Dalton, Fairview Park Administrator, City of Costa Mesa presented an update on this item. <This presentation available upon request.>

###### Committee Member Comments:

A committee member asked if there is a way to expedite the project and what is the hold up. Raja Sethuraman responded that the project has been delayed due to the funding, which was authorized in this budget cycle, and the environmental concerns, the archeological surveys and monitoring.

A committee member asked if the people-made trails through the area were going to go away. Kelly Dalton responded that is being addressed in the Fairview Master Plan parkwide.

A committee member asked is the full cost of the restoration budgeted in the city council budget, and how much. Raja Sethuraman responded yes, approximately \$1.2 million for the phase shown in the exhibit, and there are additional funds to continue restoration to the south of the site.

A committee member commented they had concerns over the timeline and that there will need to be consultation to confirm that what is being proposed is acceptable mitigation. Lesley Hill responded that she believes the city has noted that coordination will occur with restoration ecologists and the mitigation entities to review the plan to ensure it is sufficient for restoration. William Miller, US Fish and Wildlife Service, responded they should be able to review the restoration plan within a couple of weeks after receipt.

A committee member asked if the site preparation and irrigation timeline in the spring of 2024 was feasible and if the City is doing something that allows a shorter site preparation time for the planting within six months. Kelly Dallton responded the temporary irrigation system shown in the timeline is not for the planted and seeded portion but is part of the site preparation to remove the non-native seed bank.

A committee member asked if the projected planting in the fall of 2024 needs to be revised. Raja Sethuraman responded it depends, they will continue to remove non-natives but may get started on the plantings in some areas. Kelly Dallton responded there may also be areas where container plants are able to be put in as vegetation buffers instead of fencing, and it is not necessarily the full planting of the 10 acres in the fall of 2024.

A committee member asked if the City, through its Fairview Master Plan, would be designating which trails stay and are designated as the legal authorized trails and which would be retired. Kelly Dallton responded yes.

A committee member asked how the timeline presented impacts any OCTA deadlines. Lesley Hill responded the agreement with the City of Costa Mesa was specific for the 23-acre restoration project and there was not a specific deadline. The legal agreement did not have a date of when this had to be completed.

**6. OCTA Conservation Plan Annual Reports**

Lesley Hill, Planning, <This presentation available upon request.>

Committee Member Comments:

There were no member comments.

**7. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

**8. Committee Member Reports**

A committee member thanked Dan Phu and Lesley Hill for their participation in The Southern California Association of Governments Greenprint Technical Advisory Committee.

**9. Next Meeting** February 7, 2024, at 2:30 p.m.

**10. Adjournment** Meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.