

El Moro Multi-Use Path Landscape Restoration Project - Proposal

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The Tree and Landscape Committee of the Los Osos Community Advisory Council proposes the restoration of the native plant landscaping along the El Moro Bike Trail in Los Osos, California. This area consists of seven blocks along the El Moro right-of-way from 12th Street east to South Bay Boulevard with a planting area of approximately 102,000 square feet. The project site was originally planted in 2000. Landscape plantings often require renewal after many years. The site is currently covered with invasive weeds, has experienced sedimentation and erosion, and many of the original plantings have died or are in poor health. The site would benefit from regularly scheduled maintenance and the incorporation of fire breaks along property lines.

The goals of this project are to restore and replant native plants of maritime chaparral and coastal live oak woodland similar to the original design¹ to provide habitat for local wildlife species including the Morro Shoulderband Snail, partial shade for pedestrians and cyclists especially the school children who frequently utilize the trail, and beautify the neighborhood with the cooperation of the Los Osos community.

At about 2.3 acres², this project will require considerable expertise and labor to be successful. Key challenges will be providing water, plant care and protection, and maintenance at the proper seasons. Once a landscape master design for this restoration is completed, we propose installation of smaller sub-projects (one to two blocks at a time) over several years. Initial weeding, site preparation and maintenance, and then planting could be undertaken with the California Conservation Corps and other groups.

Currently, there are 21 coast live oak trees that have survived from the original planting although most of them are only 3 to 4 feet tall. That is less than 4 oaks per block (each block is 250 feet long). These oaks are in need of care to grow into healthy trees, and require protection from mechanical weeding. Care of these existing 21 oaks would be a good initial task. A follow-up project could focus on planting more coast live oaks to serve as a protective foundation for a future greater mix of plant species.

In summary, work tasks include protection of surviving oaks, removal of invasive weeds, planting of native species with plant protection cages below and above ground, and establishment of a maintenance program to assure healthy survival of plants. The project will utilize local volunteers; paid consultants and contractors with grants and

¹ Firma Consultants, Preliminary Landscape Plan, [date?], El Moro Bike Path Suggested Landscape Plants Native to Los Osos, [attachment to County of San Luis Obispo Minor Use Permit D990196P].

²We are not recommending planting on the most eastern block between 18th Street and South Bay Boulevard as this section is already surrounded by native plants. Therefore, the actual 2.3 acres of planting would occur along the 6 blocks from 12th to 18th Street.

fund-raising dollars; and assistance from County staff with long term maintenance, mulch supplies, and debris hauling. An initial outline of a multi-year schedule of tasks is attached.

TIMELINE - El Moro Multi-Use Path Landscape Restoration Project		
Year 2020	1. Initial Assessment	Conduct a site survey and prepare plan view drawings with location of existing plants indicating species, health, and size. Show relevant site conditions like drainage structures, utilities, barriers, weed patches, trash, sedimentation, and erosion. Evaluate which plant species survived well and recommend substitute plant species for those that did not survive. Map target areas for removal of invasive weeds.
Year 2020	2. Community Outreach	Communicate with Los Osos community, particularly adjacent neighbors, and regulatory agencies for their project input. Determine responsibilities and interests of relevant parties. Determine measures to protect the Morro Shoulderband Snail and Covid-19 precautions. Recruit and organize volunteers. Outreach will be repeated several times throughout the process and the project will include education about local habitats and how to protect the plantings.
Year 2021	3. Design	Creation of landscape Master Plan including plant palette, species, source, planting method, site preparation, irrigation, weeding, plant protection, and future maintenance. Design other elements of project including installation of infrastructure for irrigation, drainage, and educational demonstration talking circle.
Year 2021	4. Funding	Estimate costs for all steps. Apply for grants and appeal for funding.
Year 2021+	5. Weeding and invasive plant removal	Initial weeding will clear areas around existing native plants and create room for new plantings. Weeding will be repeated several times per year especially in the early years. Provide means for disposal of weeds. Weeding will focus on priority areas and use methods and occur at seasons most successful for target weeds. Include weed prevention such as mulching. Adjust weeding as necessary to avoid impacts to Morro Shoulderband Snail.
Year 2021	6. Site Preparation	Regrade, decompact soils, control erosion and sedimentation, protect structures, install water tanks and irrigation pipes as needed, obtain tools and materials.
Years 2021-23+	7. Planting	Install plants once site preparation, approvals, and labor force are ready. Seeding of local native plant species may also occur. Install plant protective structures and irrigation at specific plant locations. Planting will generally occur in the November/December period and may be conducted in phases.
Years 2021-23+	8. Maintenance	Water plants in the first three years and provide supplemental water in drought years thereafter. Weeding, pruning, mulch replacement, removal of screens, and replacement of dead plants are occasional tasks that will occur in subsequent years.