

**Dunsmuir Sediment Placement Site Landscaping Project  
Responses to Questions from the September 12, 2011, Community Meeting**

**LANDSCAPING ISSUES**

Selection of Plants

- *What plants are being considered? Will there be pine trees?*

The landscaping plan does not include the planting of any additional pines. The landscaping plan consists of numerous native plant species, including, but not limited to:

- Trees: Coast Live Oak, Mexican Elderberry, Flannel Bush
  - Large shrubs: Sugar Bush, Hollyleaf Cherry, Big Berry Manzanita, Laurel Sumac
  - Medium shrubs: California Buckweed, Big Pod Ceanothus, Deer Weed, Brittle Bush, California Sagebrush, Chamise, Our Lord's Candle, Monkey Flower, Black Sage
  - Ground cover: Coyote Brush Pigeon Point, Manzanita Pacific Mist, Purshiangs Lotus, Dwarf Goldfields, California Bluebells, California Poppy
- *Is cost the main factor in selecting tree size?*

No. The main factors for selecting the tree size for planting on the site are long-term survivability, and in the case of the lower slope area at the highly visible intersection of Markridge Road and Dunsmore Avenue, the desire to provide more immediate aesthetic benefits the neighborhood.

- *Is hydroseeding annual or perennial?*

The species being used for hydroseeding are a mix of annuals and perennials. The hydroseeding will be a one-time action in fall 2011.

- *Please develop and provide Glendale Parks' staff with a document that describes the rationale behind the plant selections, including some of the issues such as availability.*

The species selected for the landscaping project have been vetted by the City of Glendale's Parks', Public Works, and Fire Department staff. If the City request such a document, Public Works will provide it.

- *In your landscaping plan are you going to make up for the trees that you already removed and those you are going to remove?*

The landscaping plan for the newly formed permanent fill slopes includes native species trees (Coast Live Oak, Mexican Elderberry, and Flannel Bush). The proposed trees are not serving as replacements for the trees removed, as the trees removed were Canary Island Pine trees, which are non-native and not protected by the City's tree ordinance.

- *Consider planting a vineyard instead, since that is what was on the property before the sediment placement site (SPS), and it would be consistent with the history of the area. Is there any reason that grapevines could not be planted on the slopes?*

The landscaping plan for the newly formed permanent fill slopes takes into account that native species are part of the area's history too. Once established, the long-term water usage for the native species is very low with eventually little, if any, dependence on artificial irrigation. The long-term water usage for grapevines, which are non-native, is significantly higher and will always require artificial irrigation. Landscaping with native species is more consistent with the low-water usage goals of the region than a vineyard.

### Fire Hazards

- *Why are Laurel Sumac and Chamise among the species in the plant palette for the SPS? Aren't they fire hazards to the neighborhood?*

Laurel Sumac and Chamise are in the plant palette because they are among the species that are native to Dunsmore Canyon area. However, in keeping with the City's fire ordinance, these species will not be planted anywhere within 100 feet of any structures.

### Native Landscaping Suggestions

- *Please consider starting with small plants, they eventually grow larger.*

The landscaping plan will use smaller plants, except for the lower slope area at the highly visible intersection of Markridge Road and Dunsmore Avenue, due to the desire to provide more immediate aesthetic benefit at this highly visible location.

- *Please highlight that each plant be installed on a little hill and a watering basin constructed behind it, such that the root crown is always above the maximum water level in the adjacent basin. Please add Mycorrhiza (fungus) to the plants to make them healthier. Please use adequate mulch around each container plant at the time of installation to minimize weeds and unnecessary watering.*

These items and methodologies are part of the landscaping project's specifications.

- *Make sure the County's forces/contractors are properly trained on handling, planting and watering native species.*

Public Works will take steps to ensure its personnel and contractors receive training on the handling, planting, and watering of native species.

- *Use locally indigenous plants in an attempt to blend in with the surrounding hillsides.*

If by locally indigenous the comment is asking for plants from seeds collected from the hillsides adjacent to the site, then growing landscaping stock from such seeds would delay the landscaping project by one to two years. To avoid delays of this magnitude and loss of momentum in implementing the project, Public Works is specifying native species container stock that is more readily available for planting.

- *Include a handful of some of the truly local native species, such as the Hoaryleaf and Buckbrush varieties of Ceanothus, as they are available; even if the remainder of the quantity needed for the project ends up being a different species.*

The species we specified in the landscaping plan are native to the area. Public Works is using the Big Pod variety of the Ceanothus, which is local instead of the Hoaryleaf or Buckbrush varieties. The availability of container plants in the latter two varieties is extremely limited, since there is not a big demand for them. We are looking into trying to secure as many container plants of these two varieties as we can, although we understand the number will be very low.

- *Highlight the habitat value of the proposed plantings and call attention to the birds and butterflies that will be supported by the native vegetation.*

It is expected that landscaping with native species will provide habitat value. Due to the continued presence of existing non-native trees and bushes on the site's older fill slopes facing Boston Avenue and Markridge Road, Public Works recognizes that the overall habitat value of the site will not be quite as much as if we were starting the landscaping on the site from scratch.

## Location of Plantings

- *Could you ask the seismic engineers if their models make any distinction between the presence or absence of coherent root systems in a slope?*

Root systems do not play a significant role in the seismic stability of slopes, so they were not incorporated into Public Works' seismic stability analysis for the site.

- *Please plant additional trees/shrubs on the old fill slopes that already have the pines. The slopes are still too bare. Please plant trees behind the existing pines, as there would be nothing when the pines eventually die.*

Additional plantings were considered. However, the success of establishing plants in between the existing pines is unlikely, due to the thick layer of pine needles that shed from those trees. Therefore, additional plantings between the existing pines are not part of Public Works' landscaping plan. As for the existing pines, their expected remaining life span is over 100 years.

## Maintenance

- *Landscaping needs proper irrigation. Will there be an irrigation system? Will the new system be an improvement on the existing irrigation system?*

Public Works' landscaping plan does include an irrigation system. Maintenance of the landscaping of the site, including the irrigation system, will be incorporated into one of Public Works' landscaping maintenance contracts.

- *The irrigation system will need an irrigation timer.*

Timers are part of Public works' irrigation design plan.

- *Please make sure plants are planted correctly, properly irrigated, and properly maintained on an ongoing basis.*

Maintenance of the landscaping of the site, including the irrigation system, will be incorporated into one of Public Works' landscaping maintenance contracts.

- *Please make sure weeding is incorporated into site maintenance.*

Maintenance of the landscaping of the site, including weeding, will be incorporated into one of Public Works' landscaping maintenance contracts.

- *Will there be a contact person at the County to notify when plants are dying?*

Yes. A contact name at Public Works will be provided at the time of landscaping installation, and a Public Works contact name will be provided at the time the site is incorporated into one of Public Works' landscaping maintenance contracts.

### Cost

- *What is the cost of the proposed landscaping?*

The cost of the proposed landscaping is \$1.2 to 1.5 million.

## **SEDIMENT PLACEMENT SITE ISSUES**

### Existing Stability

- *If we have a heavy rain that is followed by an earthquake, will there be liquefaction? Is the site stable? Will the slopes come down on the neighborhood?*

Dunsmuir SPS is not located within the California Geological Survey's (CGS) mapped Seismic Hazard Zones for liquefaction. The underlying geology of the area, with its shallow bedrock, makes the potential for liquefaction unlikely at this location. We modeled the fill slopes of the SPS and conducted static (i.e., stationary) and seismic slope stability analyses according to generally accepted geotechnical engineering industry standards for projects of this magnitude. Static and seismic slope stability met or exceeded those standards.

### Site Drainage

- *There is mud on the streets below the SPS during and after storms. Does the site have proper drainage?*

The site has proper drainage. Much of the mud on the streets after storms comes from the highly erosive and burned native slopes above the SPS.

- *Which way does the water flow on the flat tops? How do these areas drain?*

Water on the flat tops drain towards inlet towers that connect to underground drains within the site that connect to an existing storm drain located on Dunsmore Avenue.

## Height/Aesthetics

- *How much more sediment is expected to come into the site?*

At the September 12, 2011, community meeting, we stated the remaining capacity was at least 200,000 cubic yards (cy). The ultimate fill plan has been compared to a recently completed contour map of the existing site that includes the recent fill slopes. This comparison yielded a remaining estimated capacity of 470,000 cy. This is consistent with the figures for the originally estimated ultimate capacity (approximately 2,029,000 cy) and the amount of fill that has been placed at the site since its establishment in 1952 to today (approximately 1,500,000 cy).

- *Where will the additional fill be on the site?*

Much of the new fill will be placed in the center of the SPS (at the intersection of Dunsmore Avenue and Markridge Road.) with new fill on the east and west sides as well.

- *How high did the recent sediment placement go in the center area of the site? How much higher does the ultimate fill plan propose to go on the site?*

To provide a clear answer to this question; discussion of the site is divided into three major sections, the center, west and east areas:

Center Area: The center of the fill site is currently around 80 feet higher than the street level on Markridge Road. The ultimate fill elevation will be an additional 80 feet higher, at approximately the same level as the ultimate fill elevations for the west and east areas. Public Works, has over the years, provided the ultimate fill elevation and height information to the City of Glendale.

West Area: The top elevation of the west area site is currently around 100 feet higher than the street level on Markridge Road. The ultimate fill level will join the street level at the northerly end of Boston Avenue and be around 110 feet higher than street level on Markridge Road.

East Area: The top elevation of the east area site is currently around 140 feet higher than the street level on Markridge Road. The ultimate fill level will be around 160 feet above street level.

- *At the top of the ultimate fill, how much of it will be usable?*

The top of the ultimate fill will have two flat areas, one on the west side of the site and the other on the east area of the site. The total acreage of these two flat areas will be almost 6 acres.

- *Please grade the slopes with more irregular contour surfaces, especially on the east side next to Deukmejian Park.*

Public Works adopted the current regular fill configuration for the site to maximize stability of the site. We understand the desire for softening the aesthetics of the site. We also recognize that site stability is of even greater concern, not only to Public Works, but also to the City and the residents in the neighborhood. With these stability concerns in mind, the regular configuration will remain and continue to be followed at the site.

#### Requests for Removal/Discontinued Use of SPS

- *This site has a huge visual impact on the neighborhood and Deukmejian Park. Please stop adding any more fill to the site, especially from areas outside the neighborhood. Please take the sediment from the County's facilities to places in the valleys.*

The site was purchased by the County in the 1950s to serve as a sediment disposal site. The site predates most of the homes in the surrounding neighborhood and predates the City's park. Development subsequent to the site's establishment does not negate the purpose or use of the site for that purpose. The site serves debris protection facilities in the Crescenta Valley region. Annexations and incorporations of some portions of the region that occurred after the establishment of the site did not negate the extent of the site's service area, since such actions did not negate the County's flood protection service to the communities of the Crescenta Valley.

The valleys and places the comment above has in mind are the gravel pits and landfills in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. The sediment produced by the hillsides in the Crescenta Valley area does not naturally make its way to the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys. Dunsmuir SPS is located in the Crescenta Valley. Trucks hauling sediment from the Crescenta Valley to the other two valleys' facilities will have to go through other people's neighborhoods and business districts, which have their own truck traffic. These other neighborhoods may object to accepting sediment from outside their areas.

The longer haul distances to the pits and landfills in the San Fernando and San Gabriel Valleys will also result in longer haul times. This, in turn, may result in slower cleanouts for facilities in the Crescenta Valley area, including the Dunsmuir facility's neighborhood. Slower cleanouts could be a serious issue in between storms.

- *Due to concerns voiced about increasing the size of the site, please consider moving some of the dirt at the site further away now and the near future. This would restore capacity at the site for future use when the County needs the site's proximity to ensure quick removal of sediment from area flood protection facilities between storm events.*

Public Works would like to avail itself of opportunities where sediment placed at Dunsmuir SPS could be removed to provide beneficial use to other entities and at least partially restore the site's capacity for future use. Such beneficial use projects would have to account for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and impacts to the native species planted at the site.

- *Please consider taking all of the sediment out of the site and out of the neighborhood, even if it means trucking it through the neighborhood. The community may not oppose trucking if it means this huge mound of dirt above goes away.*

Public Works would like to make the sediment the site available for other entities' beneficial use projects. To date, about 1,500,000 cy of sediment have been placed at Dunsmuir SPS. Public Works has not encountered or been informed of any beneficial use projects needing such a large volume of sediment, so it does not foresee such projects of such magnitude in the future.

- *Sediment will happen. Look at the sediment as a flow instead of piling it up. The community should get involved with County's Sediment Management Task Force to work with the County to stop filling hillsides and get the sediment to the ocean.*

Numerous factors need to be considered in determining where sediment should be delivered. What constitutes natural processes needs to be properly identified. Public Works' Sediment Management Task Force; which is working with numerous stakeholders, including community members, gravel pit operators, environmental regulatory agencies and other environmental groups; is looking at the feasibility and prudence of various sediment management alternatives, including the approach of "send everything to the ocean."

#### Suggestion on Short-Term Usage

- *Will there be walking trails through the sediment placement site?*

Public Works is not installing walking trails through the site, as the site is still being used for sediment placement and thus closed to walking traffic. The long-term understanding between Public Works and the City is for the site to be transferred to the City when the site is filled. Locations of trails will be considered by City of Glendale in the future or after the time of actual transfer.



## Future Use of the SPS

- *Are there still plans to restore the helipad on the site? Where would the helipad be on the site?*

Public Works intends to restore the helipad. The location of the helipad will likely be on the east side where it was prior to the postfire cleanouts. The timing of the helipad restoration will depend on the sediment load during the next three years from the burned hillsides that are still recovering from the 2009 Station Fire.

- *There are concerns that the City of Glendale won't have money to develop any park on the top of the ultimate fill. Since the County is the one who inconvenienced the community, the County should repay the community by building the park at County expense and then donate it to the City.*

Dunsmuir SPS was established to enable flood protection for the community. The community has therefore benefited from the existence and use of this site. The proposed landscaping is bringing additional benefit to the community. The issue of what park amenities should go on the top of the site is an issue best considered by the City in the future or after the time of the actual transfer from the Flood Control District to the City.

## **OTHER POST-FIRE ISSUES**

- *When will the k-rails in the neighborhood be removed?*

The City of Glendale installed the k-rails to protect neighborhood residents during the several years of postfire recovery of the hillsides burned by the 2009 Station Fire. The City will decide when the k-rails will be removed.