



Regular Meeting Minutes

Phillips Ranch Assessment District Oversight Committee

Committee Chair – Yvonne Cobarrubias – District 3
Vice-Chair – Pauleen Aktinson – District 1
Committee Member Monika Salazar – Mayoral Appointee
Committee Member Bri Kennerson – District 2
Committee Member Yvonne Cobarrubias – District 3
Committee Member Bonnie Martinez – District 4
Committee Member Eric Trypucko – District 5
Committee Member Dr. Ronald Hensen – District 6

VISION STATEMENT

Pomona will be recognized as a vibrant, safe, beautiful community that is a fun and exciting destination and the home of arts and artists, students and scholars, business and industry.

Tuesday, September 2, 2025

6:00 PM

Chuck Bader Conference Room

6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Cobarrubias called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Cobarrubias lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Committee Chair – Yvonne Cobarrubias – District 3
Vice-Chair – Pauleen Aktinson – District 1
Committee Member Monika Salazar – Mayoral Appointee
Committee Member Bri Kennerson – District 2
Committee Member Bonnie Martinez – District 4
Committee Member Eric Trypucko – District 5
Committee Member Dr. Ronald Hensen – District 6

Absent:

None

STAFF PRESENT

Meg McWade, Public Works Director
Shandy Dittman, Public Works Fiscal and Project Manager

Danny Whaley, Parks and Facilities Manager
Lindsay McElwain, Senior Management Analyst
Christine Valerio, Management Analyst / Committee Secretary

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMUNICATION

No committee member communications were reported outside of discussion items.

CONSENT CALENDAR

MOTION BY COMMITTEE MEMBER MARTINEZ, SECOND BY COMMITTEE MEMBER ATKINSON, CARRIED 7-0 to accept the June 3, 2025, Meeting Minutes.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Budget Cost Savings by Category

Fiscal and Project Manager Dittman discussed potential cost savings for the Phillips Ranch Assessment District fund, now that the Greenbelt (Riparian area) maintenance is funded through the General Fund. Ms. Dittman also noted that the landscape maintenance contract is scheduled to go out to bid this year and cost increases are expected.

Ms. Dittman stated that water accounts for the Phillips Ranch Greenbelt are currently being transferred from the Assessment District fund to the General Fund. A recent report identified one water meter with active charges, which the Finance Department is re-coding to the General Fund. Senior Management Analyst McElwain provided a breakdown of water charges for both the current and previous fiscal years. Parks and Facilities Manager Whaley informed the committee that water bills are issued bimonthly for each meter.

Public Works Director McWade reported that CAL FIRE has recommended revised fire hazard distinctions in some areas, which may lead to updated clearance requirements. Updated recommendations are not yet reflected on the CAL FIRE website; therefore, the current 100-foot clearance requirement remains in place. Any increase in this distance may significantly impact the scope and cost of contracts.

Director McWade added that levels of service for tree and landscape maintenance, including watering schedules, may need to be adjusted depending on available funding. Safety concerns raised by the committee will be considered during contract negotiations.

Given the potential changes from CAL FIRE and rising service costs, City staff and the committee discussed strategies to address the gap between limited funding and the need to maintain essential services. Director McWade mentioned ongoing discussions with the City Attorney's Office to explore available options, considering the constraints of the General Fund, the Assessment District, and liability concerns.

Vice-Chair Atkinson emphasized the importance of educating the public about the distinction between the Phillips Ranch Assessment District and the General Fund, especially regarding taxes.

2. Historical Water Expenditure Reports

Committee Member Kennerson requested the locations of water meters throughout Phillips Ranch to assess where irrigation needs may be higher or lower.

Parks and Facilities Manager Whaley provided an overview of the water meter system, noting there are 31 sites within the Fuel Modification Zone and approximately 80 to 100 decorative sites, each with at least one water meter. In 2023, a review identified meters with zero water usage; these were shut off to avoid the water readiness fee, a baseline cost that varies by meter size. At the time, this fee was \$121 per month for a 1-inch meter. The shut-offs resulted in an estimated monthly savings of \$3,000 to \$4,000.

Assembly Bill 1572 was discussed by Manager Whaley; the bill prohibits the use of potable water for irrigating non-functional turf effective 2027. Since only potable water is currently available in the Phillips Ranch area, this requirement may directly impact landscaping practices.

Director McWade noted that an exemption was granted for disadvantaged communities until funding to support the transition to drought-tolerant landscaping becomes available. The Phillips Ranch area does not qualify as a disadvantaged community; however, other parts of the City of Pomona may be eligible for future funding assistance.

Staff and committee members discussed which systems should be prioritized for reactivation if funding is secured, and the potential risks of keeping the systems offline.

It was determined that homeowners may choose to clear brush near their properties, provided they meet certain requirements, use a licensed contractor, and secure a signed agreement with the City.

Staff agreed to verify whether drought-tolerant landscaping will be mandated by the State, as this could affect the ongoing California Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly) water conservation and landscaping study for the Phillips Ranch area. The subcommittee agreed to follow up with Dr. Brown to clarify whether the results of the study will cover the entire Phillips Ranch area or only specific sections.

3. Assessment Area Map

Chair Cobarrubias requested that the committee consider recommending City Council adopt a resolution formally defining the boundaries of the City's new Greenbelt Park. Director McWade noted that the city is already preparing a resolution for an upcoming Council meeting, which will identify park areas citywide. Clearly defining these areas is expected to support grant funding eligibility. The

committee also discussed long-term plans for the Westmont Hills area, including the potential to expand access. Director McWade emphasized that any changes to current access would require extensive community engagement with the residents.

4. Pesticide Application Update

Manager Whaley provided an update on Brightview's pesticide application and vegetation management efforts. Crews are actively spraying and clearing vegetation up to 100 feet from main dwelling structures. Payment for Brightview's July invoice is currently on hold, pending documentation of completed work areas.

Manager Whaley reported that eight sites still have piles of debris. Fuel modification has been completed in Areas 13, 14, 20, 21, and 30, while work is ongoing in Areas 18, 31, and 32. In the Greenbelt, Areas 16 through 21 have been completed. There are a total of 32 sites in the fuel modification area.

Manager Whaley also shared that Brightview recently acquired a new machine that clears large areas of debris and converts it into mulch. Crews then apply both a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent future growth and a post-emergent to eliminate any remaining vegetation. Blue and green dyes are used to mark treated areas.

Manager Whaley informed the committee that sidewalks are cleared once a month, and decorative landscapes near the paseos and streetscapes are cleared only once a year.

5. Cost-Benefit Analysis

There was no further discussion on Cost-Benefit Analysis.

6. Cal Poly Pomona Subcommittee

The committee and staff discussed whether a third member is required for the Cal Poly sub-committee. After reviewing the Bylaws, it was determined that two members are sufficient, and the active sub-committee members Kennerson and Salazar will proceed accordingly.

Committee Member Kennerson provided an update on the ongoing study with Cal Poly, which is currently reviewing CAL FIRE requirements and developing landscaping strategies to reduce fire risk in Phillips Ranch. The study will also include water conservation implementation plans, and the research team has requested a current vegetation map to support their analysis.

As part of the project, a biotic assessment is underway, requiring collaboration with the city to help define the future landscape of Phillips Ranch. Key project milestones include:

- Water and modeling analysis – to be completed by October 6
- Fire mitigation and fuel modification prioritization – expected by November 3
- Biotic process – scheduled for completion in November

Cal Poly Professor Dr. Brown has indicated that an objective, non-biased analysis will be presented by the end of January 2026 to support the committee in developing a multi-year plan focused on enhancing fire safety and reducing water costs. The student team preparing the analysis will be compensated from a grant secured by Cal Poly.

The sub-committee also noted that Dr. Brown is aware of current budget constraints. The final report is intended to serve as a guideline, with implementation decisions to be discussed collaboratively between the Phillips Ranch Assessment District Oversight Committee and the City, based on available funding.

Additionally, the plan will outline strategies the committee can use to educate the community, with the goal of securing support for an increased assessment to fund the proposed safety measures.

STAFF COMMUNICATION

Senior Management Analyst McElwain explained that the agenda sequence and format were updated to better align with the standard committee and commission Bylaws adopted by the City Council. Going forward, agendas will include a formalized report with attachments and a brief overview of discussion items for the public record, helping to inform those who may not have attended previous meetings.

Agenda topics should be submitted to the Chair via any preferred communication method, including text. Topics can also be proposed during meetings by committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cobarrubias announced the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, and adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

Christine Valerio
Management Analyst, Public Works /
Secretary of the Phillips Ranch Assessment
District Oversight Committee

Yvonne Cobarrubias
Chair of the Phillips Ranch Assessment
District Oversight Committee