

LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN (LLARRP) WORKING GROUP MEETING #13

Thursday, May 4, 2017 ♦ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Barbara J. Riley Community Center, 7810 Quill Drive, Downey

S U M M A R Y R E P O R T

INTRODUCTION

On May 4, 2017, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon of the 63rd Assembly District and the Rivers and Mountain Conservancy (RMC) co-hosted the thirteenth meeting of the Working Group for the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP). The purpose of the meeting was to review related and connected planning efforts from a partner agency along the Lower Los Angeles River, review outcomes from recent Plan Element Committee meetings, and discuss emerging project opportunities at specific locations on the river.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The thirteenth meeting of the Working Group occurred on May 4, 2017, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Barbara J. Riley Community Center, 7810 Quill Drive, Downey. Approximately 30 representatives and 20 community members participated in the meeting (Attachment B).

Mark Stanley, Executive Officer of the RMC opened the meeting by welcoming attendees and explaining the purpose and objectives of the meeting. He then introduced Sean Ashton, Mayor Pro Tem, with the City of Downey, who provided an overview of major projects and initiatives in the City with support from his colleagues. Mr. Stanley then introduced Daniel Iacofano of MIG, Inc., who served as meeting facilitator and provided an overview of the agenda (Attachment A) and meeting format before asking for self-introductions from all participants. Omar Brownson of River LA provided a presentation of the organization’s purpose, recent efforts, and upcoming efforts. Representatives of the Plan Element Committees provided brief updates of the outcomes of their recent meetings and activities. Mr. Iacofano then led the Working Group in a review of emerging project opportunities at specific locations on the river as presented by Oliver Galang of Tetra Tech. Mr. Iacofano facilitated discussions and comments from the Working Group and audience members regarding opportunities.

During these reports, Andy Pendoley of MIG recorded key points on a wall-sized piece of paper, or “wallgraphic.” A summary of the presentations and discussion points are provided in the following sections, and a photo-reduced copy of wallgraphic is included as Attachment D.

SUMMARY OF PARTNER AGENCIES' PRESENTATIONS: CITY OF DOWNEY AND RIVER LA

Participants received presentations from representatives of the City of Downey and River LA.

City of Downey

In addition to being home to the assembly of the historic Apollo space craft vehicles, the City is advancing a number of projects that will support the future of the Lower LA River including implementation of the 2015 Bicycle Master Plan with major improvements to Gardendale and Brookshire. The City is also implementing Proposition 84 stormwater projects with bioswales and tree boxes at select locations, developing a "Regional Treatment Corridor" that includes a wilderness park, and conducting soil infiltration studies. As a major public event, the City is also hosting the "Ride & Stride" open streets event in partnership with LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority on May 7, 2017.

River LA

River LA is focused on addressing an over-arching challenge for the 51-mile LA River: greening the river conflicts with the need for flood control. The Healthy River Index is devised from River LA's analysis of over 9 master plans for portions of the river and 17 cities' plans for adjacent uses. The index includes flood risk management, water recharge, water quality, green house gases, ecology and habitat, open space and parks, public health, social equity, transportation and programming. Considerations for water, open space and community include: water conservation, clean water, protection from floods, clean air, restored environment, public parks, health and recreation, active transportation, arts and culture. As a major finding of River LA's work so far, in the upper portion of the Lower LA River study area, all park needs within a half mile of the river can be achieved with new park land on the river.

Working Group and audience members asked questions of Mr. Brownson, with his responses in *italics*.

- What are considerations for preventing displacement of existing residents due to increased land values from River LA's proposed project concepts? – *Linking to the social equity planning in the AB 530 process and the future LA River Master Plan Update will be important to addressing displacement. Infrastructure financing districts could be an effective tool.*
- Are there opportunities for design collaboration with LLARRP? – *Yes, River LA is part of the Working Group, and the AB 530 process is a collaboration space around these opportunities.*
- What are the project effects and impacts from changes to upper LA River tributaries on the lower portions? – *Modeling of these effects will continue to help understand these effects. There is little recent experience of actual floods in the region.*
- When will River LA's studies and modeling outcomes be available to the public and/or LLARRP? – *These will be available within months.*

- Where are the greening opportunities based on your analysis? – *The Rio Hondo confluence and Long Beach basin appear to be the best opportunities.*
- Community understanding of flood control issues is critical as it relates to future LA River improvements and greening opportunities

SUMMARY OF PLAN ELEMENT COMMITTEES' PRESENTATIONS

Mr. Galang provided an overview of the Plan Element Committees' recent efforts focused on goals, objectives, guiding principles, baseline metrics and the building blocks. He also explained that 74 building blocks are organized around a central "theme," such as water, stream restoration, multi-use trails, recreation, access points, and local workforce development. Next steps will include developing multi-functioning concepts that meet multiple objectives within each Plan Element, increase cost effectiveness, and enhance community support.

Plan Element Committee presenters included:

- Community Economics, Health and Equity: Jessica Prieto, East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice
- Public Realm: Tori Kjer, Trust for Public Land
- Water and Environment: Yareli Sanchez, Council for Watershed Health
 - Biodiversity Analysis in LA: Charlotte Pienkos, The Nature Conservancy
- Community Engagement: Stephen Mejia, Friends of LA River
- Implementation: Elizabeth Alcantar, LA County Bicycle Coalition

Community Economics, Health, and Equity

Goal

To ensure a restored Los Angeles River brings health, economic and environmental benefits to all residents and does not become a tool for further gentrification and displacement, revitalization efforts must foster stable communities free of residential and business displacement. Accordingly, all revitalization efforts must be guided by community-led decision making and be transparent and accountable to the public at every step. Restoration must prioritize and promote inclusive, equitable, health driven outcomes and promote climate resiliency. In short – River revitalization must be a model of equitable redevelopment. Our long-term quality of life as a region depends on it.

Objectives

- Prevent gentrification-induced displacement
- Address homelessness
- Support and develop local business and workforce
- Increase community access and assets
- Improve community identity and pride
- Provide river-focused education
- Increase economic mobility and neighborhood stability

Metrics

- Demographics – Socioeconomics
- Cost Burdened Housing
- Existing Affordable or Subsidized Housing
- Existing Rent Controlled Housing

Baseline Conditions

- 64.1% of LLAR residents are Low Income, Very Low Income or Extremely Low Income, source: 2010 Census data
- 93% of residents are members of a minority population, source: 2010 Census data
- 52% of households are considered cost burdened, source: 2010 Census data
- 7% of households are in subsidized or rent assisted housing, source: Affordable housing online
- No residential rental units regulated by rent control regulations are in the study; however, the number of low-income apartments, HUD housing, Section 8 apartments, subsidized housing and income-based housing in the study area is 27,321

Proposed Building Blocks

Of the 74 proposed building blocks, 68 meet objectives of this plan element. Some example building blocks include:

- Increased residential access
- Increased low income access
- Increased commercial access
- Living wage ordinances
- Living wage contractual requirements
- Community Benefits Agreements
- Support of local living wage advocates
- Property acquisition for open space/access/assets
- Adaptation of property suited for multi-use
- Undergrounding powerlines and utilities
- Ordinance updates to require rent control
- Establishment of EIFDs

Discussion and Identification of Gaps

Discussion points from the recent committee meeting include the following:

- Clarify the types of local businesses being included and how to caveat this distinction – all locally owned businesses
- Displacement could be curtailed by using EIFDs with caveats that public funds invested must go towards benefiting the community instead of towards business could be added. Local businesses need to be provided the tools to weather the change that will occur
- Rapid real estate changes remove control. Curtail having too many single use businesses such as coffee shops which may displace existing businesses such as dry cleaners.
- Incentivize use of empty businesses and store fronts instead of displacing current businesses or building new stores

Baseline gaps include the following:

- A missing metric may be capacity of city/staff to provide grant writing or technical resources to propose, implement, and maintain these projects
- What size are the homeless shelters? Location of shelters is important: people don't want to leave what they know to go across town for a bed for a few nights.
- Who is being served by the homeless shelters?
- Focus on not concentrating future resources to these already served affluent areas
- Consider calling low income access points – equitable access points

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members asked questions of and provided feedback to the committee, with responses in *italics*.

- Explore legalized encampments for homeless support
- Study the opportunity of navigation centers providing homeless services and support
- How is public health being addressed in this plan element? – *It's considered to be a major outcome of this plan element.*
- Ensure that active transportation and health are included in the plan element
- There is great urgency to address speculative development that may reduce opportunities for equitable projects. – *Existing efforts should be supported, with a focus on specific opportunities. Local jurisdictions should be encouraged to hold public lands to support these outcomes.*

Public Realm

Goal

The overarching goal is to ensure that the LLARRP features a multi-faceted, holistic approach to place-making along the Lower Los Angeles River.

Objectives

- Create continuous greenspace
- Enhance connectivity
- Provide multiple use and benefits
- Support and enhance existing communities
- Enhance public transportation and parking
- Increase safety
- Enhance amenities
- Provide education

Metrics (Enhance Connectivity)

- River crossings
- Miles between crossings
- Miles of bike path
- Miles without bike path

- Miles of multi-use trail
- Access points

Baseline Conditions (Enhance Connectivity)

- 24 river crossings
- Average distance between river crossing is 0.8 miles
- 2 crossings with bike lanes
- 21 crossings with sidewalks
- 12 crossings with 6 or more lanes of traffic
- 24 miles of bike path along the LLAR
- 8.7 miles of multi-use trail along the LLAR
- 37 access points on the east side
- 33 access points on the west side
- Average distance between access points is ~0.4 miles
- 6 gateways

Proposed Building Blocks

Of the 74 proposed building blocks, 72 meet objectives of this plan element. Some example building blocks include:

- Active space
- Community gardens
- Gateways
- Continuous park space
- Habitat areas
- Habitat corridors
- Historical, cultural, environmental education/assets/signage
- River overcrossings
- Passive space, natural space for exploration and unstructured play
- Plazas
- Pop-up parks
- Public art, murals
- Signage
- Traffic calming and user safety on feeder trails/roads
- Trailheads, staging areas, parking lots
- Tunnels
- Undercrossings

Discussion and Identification of Gaps

Discussion points from the recent committee meeting include the following:

- Local community using LA River as a place to recreate should included in the overall goal of the plan element.
- Distinguish between trails and bikeways
- Designing to the needs of the community instead of designing to avoid displacement
- Change parking to enhance access for all

- Be careful using the word “education”
- Include adjacent physical spaces as part of the public realm, including parks, plazas, overlooks, and schools

Baseline gaps include adding non-infrastructure amenities.

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members asked questions of and provided feedback to the committee, with responses in *italics*.

- How is lighting being considered as part of the public realm? – *A layered approach that closely considers design options based on a specific location and its context will be important to applying appropriate lighting.*

Water and Environment

Goal

The overarching goal is to ensure that the LLARRP includes multi-objective, coordinated, and actionable solutions to pressing environmental problems.

Objectives

- Enhance local water capture and use
- Improve stormwater quality and watershed health
- Manage flood risk
- Address ecosystem service and floodplain enhancement
- Provide environmental and watershed education

Metrics (Stormwater Quality and Watershed Health)

- Water quality priorities
- Stormwater effluent quality
- Receiving water quality
- Green infrastructure coverage
- Environmental contamination and brownfields
- Environmental health disparity and environmental justice

Baseline Conditions (Stormwater Quality and Watershed Health)

- Water quality priorities, which include TMDLs, 303d listings, and recent exceedances of receiving water limitations
- Lower LA River Watershed Management Program critical zinc load
- LA River Upper Reach 2 Watershed Management program critical bacteria count
- Average annual bacteria counts
- Non-stormwater discharge
- Wet and dry weather receiving water quality samples
- Green infrastructure coverage
- Number of Soil contamination cleanup sites

- Number of Brownfield sites
- Contaminated parcels in acres
- The areal extent of soil and groundwater contamination
- Number of unique brownfield contaminants
- The environmental health disparity

Proposed Building Blocks

Of the 74 proposed building blocks, 40 meet objectives of this plan element. Some example building blocks include:

- Boardwalks and wildlife viewing overlooks
- Brownfields remediation
- Floodplain expansion
- Green infrastructure
- Habitat areas
- Habitat corridors
- Infiltration basins
- Low water crossings
- Low-flow channel modification
- Oyster bed restoration
- Rubber dams and inundation areas
- Shallow groundwater banking and new extraction wells
- Sub-regional water recycling facilities

Discussion and Identification of Gaps

Discussion points from the recent committee meeting include the following:

- Ecosystem services and conservation should be included in the overall Goal of the PEC.
- Habitat and wildlife connectivity are missing from the goal and objectives
- The overlap between flood risk management and floodplain enhancement should be more defined
- The message of some of the Sub-elements is muddled by words like “inform”, which is very top-down language. Use words like “engage” and “literacy” to demonstrate that this community driven and to activate and build power

Biodiversity Analysis in LA

The Nature Conservancy is partnering with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County to complete a Biodiversity Analysis in Los Angeles (BAILA). This planning exercise will allow us to use existing information that has been gathered about the plants, animals, and natural communities within the urbanized parts of Los Angeles to build a spatially-explicit understanding of biodiversity in the built areas of the county.

- Creating a new typology that leverages biodiversity data from the built environment
- Producing a biodiversity inventory and map to explore locations where biodiversity may be enhanced
- Tracking approximately 25 species as indicators
- Promoting citizen science and participation

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members asked questions of and provided feedback to the committee, with responses in *italics*.

- What is the hypotheses of the BAILA project? – *The LA region has a rich biodiversity.*
- Study native fauna effects on wildlife
- How do we address community fears about wildlife in urban environments? – *Educate the community about species' value in communities through use of the data.*

Community Engagement

Overview

The committee recent meeting involved reviewing the community outreach event schedule, the final toolkit materials, the interactive mapping tool accessible at LowerLARiver.org/survey, and the City presentations and workshops schedule.

Completed Outreach Events

- April 5, High School Outreach Program with East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ)
- April 14, Bell Food Truck with Pop Up Event with From Lot to Spot (FLTS)
- April 22, South Gate Earth Day Celebration Pop Up Event with FLTS
- April 29, The Great LA River CleanUp with Friends of the LA River at:
 - Compton Creek @ Artesia Station
 - Compton Creek @ Del Amo Station
 - River Rover Site
 - Golden Shore Marine Reserve
 - Willow Street Estuary
- May 3, High School Outreach Program with EYCEJ

Upcoming Outreach Events

- May 5, Bixby Knolls First Fridays with FLTS
- May 7, Downey Street Faire with FLTS
- May 20, Lynwood Unified School District Arts Festival, with FLTS
- June 1, High School Outreach Event with EYCEJ
- Two Multi-Use Trails Clinics on June 4 and June 11 hosted by Trails4All. These include interactive education on how to approach trail users on horseback
- LACBC is planning two bike tours, one in the Middle River segment and one in the lower River segment, dates to be determined

City Council Presentations

The City Council presentations completed to date include:

- Gateway City COG Board of Director's Meeting – Wednesday, April 5, 2017
- City of Cudahy – Monday, April 24, 2017
- City of Long Beach - Tuesday May 2, 2017

The City of South Gate City Council presentation will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Community Workshops

The community workshops include:

- City of South Gate – Thursday May 11, 2017
- City of Cudahy, Bell or Maywood – date to be determined
- City of Long Beach – Saturday, June 10, 2017

Outreach Toolkit

Toolkit materials include:

- Project information sheet
- Presentation
- Community input forms
- FAQs
- Project maps
- Table cloths
- AB 530 LLARRP Display Board Pop-Up

Interactive Mapping Tool

The interactive mapping tool is still live and we're counting on Working Group members to continue to get the word out through social media and email

Watershed Education Program

Potential ideas and topics for the watershed education program identified by the committee include:

- Build on existing watershed education programs
- Highlight the importance of the LA river to people's lives, while including some technical aspects of the River and watershed
- Design for use during LLARRP planning process and after LLARRP is completed
- Suitable for multiple audiences
- Contain a unified message and terminology for the entire LA River and for all aspects of the program to facilitate collaboration and communication
- Engage the community, with components like water quality sampling, school design products, treasure hunts, or nature walks with docents and/or local professionals and professors

Next Steps

Next steps for the committee include:

- Continuing to implement the community outreach events and workshops
- Begin compiling and analyzing the community input from the outreach events and interactive mapping tool

Implementation

Overview

The committee's recent meeting focused on the following:

- Governance approach for the Lower LA River (planning, implementation, and operations and maintenance)
- Evaluate local/applicable example governance structures that could be considered by the committee
- Evaluate governance options and approaches (JPA, MOU, existing organizations, etc)

Recommended Governance Structure

The committee reviewed other governance structures, including the Chesapeake Bay Program incorporating partnerships with agencies and non-government organizations. The proposed structure for the Lower LA River Revitalization is as follows.

- Management District:
 - **Goal.** The purpose of the management district is to evaluate and provide guidance on proposed projects (permits, funding, etc) for review and recommendation for approval/support by the District
 - **Agency Representatives.** Consisting of the 13 cities, LACFCD, and the Army Corps of Engineers
 - **Technical Advisory.** Internal committees of the "outside" participants provide technical advisory, science/technology, communication, etc. committees as needed

To establish the district, a MOA/MOU would be executed by the multiple agencies. The district would be governed by committee, with monthly/quarterly reports available to the public.

Funding Recommendations

- Build funding for project purposes around the following funding sources:
 - Water quality: County's Water Resilience Funding Measure
 - Parks and open space: park bonds
 - River improvement projects and operations and maintenance: existing funding (LACFCD, USACE, City/County general funds)
 - Bridges and trails: transportation funding sources
- Supplement funding: federal and state grants, and future bonds

Next Steps



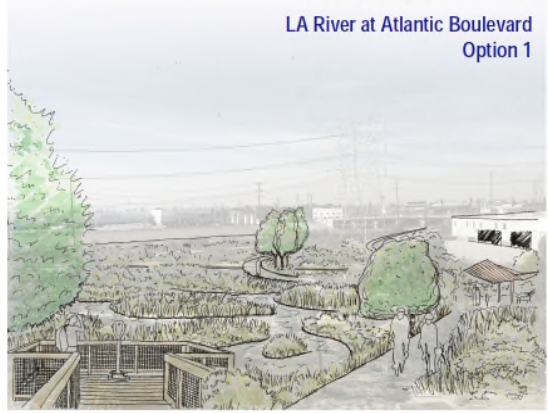

- Review the governance recommendation
- Review the funding and financing strategies
- Develop the policies, procedures, and programming approaches for revitalization of the Lower LA River

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: EMERGING PROJECT OPPORTUNITIES

Mr. Galang presented a series of potential project opportunities with design options at specific locations on the Lower LA River. Mr. Iacofano facilitated an interactive discussion with participants regarding their reactions to the opportunities and options, asking if each option is suitable to the specific location on the Lower LA River. Participants provided their responses to these questions through multiple choice answers displayed in the presentation. Participants used electronic polling “clickers” to submit their responses to each question, and the results displayed instantly on screen for viewing. Detailed slides and images of the case studies are available in the appendix of this report. Following are concise summaries of participants’ general responses to the questions and discussions.

LA River at Atlantic, Vernon

Typology: Wetlands, Community Space, Low Water Crossing, Pocket Park

Option 1	Option 2																				
																					
 <p style="text-align: center;">LA River at Atlantic Boulevard Option 1</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">LA River at Atlantic Boulevard Option 2</p>																				
<p>Is this type of development suitable for this location on the Lower LA River?</p>																					
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>It's worth considering</td> <td style="text-align: right;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td style="text-align: right;">23</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	14	It's worth considering	5	No	1	Not sure	3	Totals	23	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>It's worth considering</td> <td style="text-align: right;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not sure</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td style="text-align: right;">20</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	2	It's worth considering	11	No	6	Not sure	1	Totals	20
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<p>Which option do you prefer for this location on the Lower LA River?</p>																					
<table border="0"> <tr> <td>I prefer Option 1</td> <td style="text-align: right;">16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>I prefer Option 2</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Either option is OK</td> <td style="text-align: right;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Let's go back to the drawing board!</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Totals</td> <td style="text-align: right;">21</td> </tr> </table>	I prefer Option 1	16	I prefer Option 2	1	Either option is OK	3	Let's go back to the drawing board!	1	Totals	21											
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Working Group members expressed concern about the safety of an active railroad line in the park area related to collisions and air quality. Lack of parking in the area would be a hindrance to public access.

LA River at Rio Hondo Confluence

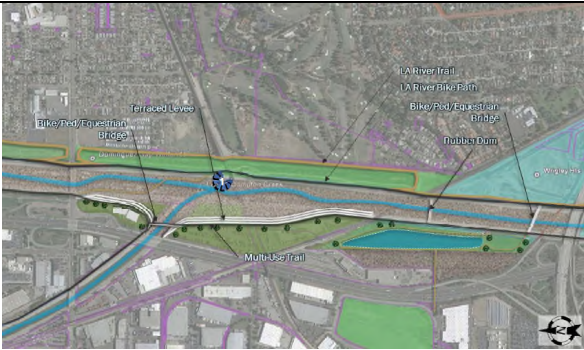

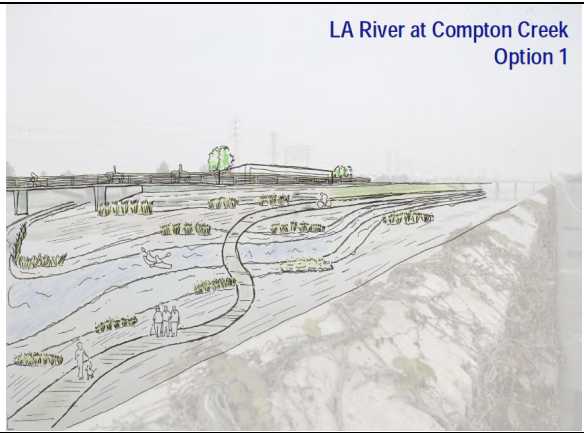
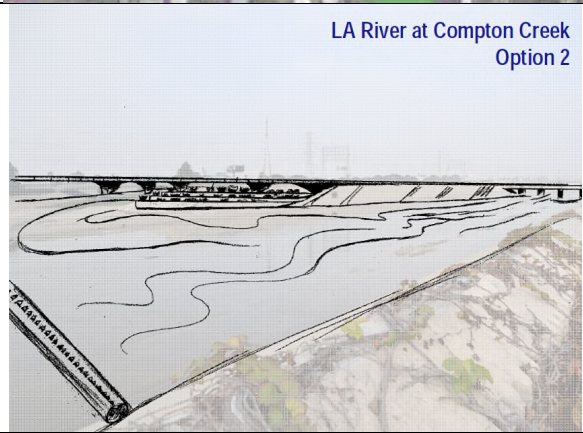
Typology: Terracing, Rubber Dams, Stormwater Harvesting, Bridges

Option 1		Option 2	
<p>LA River at Rio Hondo Option 1</p>		<p>LA River at Rio Hondo Option 2</p>	
Is this type of development suitable for this location on the Lower LA River?			
Yes	8	Yes	6
It's worth considering	10	It's worth considering	11
No	0	No	1
Not sure	3	Not sure	1
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Which option do you prefer for this location on the Lower LA River?			
I prefer Option 1	6		
I prefer Option 2	8		
Either option is OK	2		
Let's go back to the drawing board!	6		
Totals	22		

Working Group members supported Option 1 for the gathering space and another concept for an amphitheatre, but some expressed concern about its remoteness and accessibility. Related to Option 2, Working Group members appreciate the greening and crossings. Many suggested another option that combines elements of the original options, particularly with a community center.

LA River at Compton Creek

Typology: Terracing, Rubber Dams, Stormwater Harvesting, Bridges

Option 1	Option 2																				
																					
<p style="text-align: center;">LA River at Compton Creek Option 1</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">LA River at Compton Creek Option 2</p> 																				
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Working Group members supported Option 1 for the crossings, in-river greenery and Compton bike path connectivity, but questioned the viability of boating. Option 2 generated support for attracting birds and revitalizing wetlands, but some expressed concern about an excessive concentration of water. Some suggested creating more options, and addressing water flow projections from associated integrated water management plans.

NEXT STEPS

Mr. Iacofano and Mr. Stanley concluded the meeting by thanking Working Group members and reviewing objectives for the next committee meetings, which are listed on the project website.

The next Working Group meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, June 1, 2017, South Gate