

LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN (LLARRP) WORKING GROUP MEETING #11

Thursday, March 2, 2017 ♦ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Center for Sustainable Communities, 1051 W. Rosecrans Ave., Compton

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

INTRODUCTION

On March 2, 2017, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon of the 63rd Assembly District and the Rivers and Mountain Conservancy (RMC) co-hosted the eleventh 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 two partner agencies along the Lower Los Angeles River, as well as to select a preferred concept for community branding.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The eleventh meeting of the Working Group occurred on March 2, 2017, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Center for Sustainable Communities, 1051 W. Rosecrans Ave., Compton. Approximately 24 representatives and 25 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 Lori Gay, President and CEO of Neighborhood Housing Services of Los Angeles County, who provided background on the Center for Sustainable Communities facility, which would open to the public within weeks. She expressed support for identifying how the LLARRP could support addressing housing and livability needs of communities along the corridor, particularly focused on those with the greatest needs and through community-based efforts.

Mark 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. Representatives of the City of South Gate and LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority provided presentations of their respective projects with direct bearing on the Lower LA River. Representatives of the Plan Element Committees provided oral reports of the outcomes of their recent meetings, including an extended presentation from the Community Engagement Committee of community engagement activities and the final selection of a community brand. Mr. Iacofano facilitated questions and comments from the Working Group and audience members regarding the reports.

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 PRESENTATIONS FROM PARTNER AGENCIES

Participants received two presentations from partner agencies within the Lower L.A. River corridor: the City of South Gate, and L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) I-710 Corridor. The purpose of the presentations was to provide Working Group members with the latest updates on the partners’ planning and implementation efforts that may have direct or indirect influence on the LLARRP.

City of South Gate

Michael Flad, City Manager of the City of South Gate provided a 15 minute slideshow presentation that provided a basic background of the City and initiatives that may have influence on the LLARRP. Overall, he explained that much of the City’s efforts are focused on engaging with and connecting to future improvements on the Lower LA River and the I-710 corridor, and conceiving projects that are multi-objective, including mobility, park and open space, and development projects:

- Mobility: Regional Bikeway Connectivity Program, ECO-RAPID transit, and complete streets projects on Garfield Avenue and Gardendale Street
- Park and open space: UPRR Trails Corridor, Imperial Highway Annexation, Hollydale Regional Park Green Infrastructure and Extension, Southern Avenue Park Improvements, Parque Dos Rios, the Urban Orchard Project, and multiple park master plans
- Development: Jordan Downs Development, LAUSD Legacy High School, South Gate Transfer Station, Clearwater Communities, Tweedy Boulevard Specific Plan, and Hollydale Village Specific Plan

Working Group members asked the following questions of Mr. Flad, and his responses are noted in *italics*:

- What funding sources are supporting the City’s projects? – *A number of funding sources fund these projects, usually in combinations, including grants/funds from Metro, RMC, Active Transportation Program, Proposition 1, and the City’s general fund.*
- Does the Clearwater housing project provide affordable housing? — *Many other projects in the city provide affordable units.*

Metro I-710 Corridor

Ernesto Chaves, Director of Highway Program for Metro, provided a 15 minute slideshow presentation that explained the purpose and need for the I-710 Corridor Project, the alternatives under consideration, and additional project benefits and features. Overall, he

explained that the project is focused on addressing air quality, public health, traffic safety, design deficiencies, projected traffic volume, and projected growth in population, employment and economic activity related to goods movement. He also described the alternatives under consideration, the current EIR/EIS process, and additional considerations and projects under development in a parallel process created by Motion 22.1, including:

- New crossings and improvements to existing crossings: Humphreys Avenue, Clara Street, Pacific Place, Spring Street, and Hill Street
- Upgrades to the existing LA River Bike Path: landscaping, hardscape, lighting and access enhancements
- I-710 corridor bikeway projects

Finally, Mr. Chaves described the next steps in the EIR/EIS process and the identification of a Preferred Alternative.

Working Group members asked the following questions of Mr. Chaves, and his responses are noted in *italics*:

- Share the EIR/EIS status with the Working Group
- Link the LLARRP developments and outcomes with the I-710 Corridor planning and development efforts
- What is the additional cost of the freight corridor in Alternative 7? – *The cost is approximately double of Alternative 5c while providing similar levels of community and air quality benefits.*
- How is the project connective with Long Beach planning and mobility initiatives? – *Metro is in regular communications and coordination with the City.*
- Is the Federal EPA's focus on environmental justice providing support to the project? – *While the EPA is generally supportive, at this time there they are not providing direct, material support.*
- Are Port funds of \$64M available to address goods movement impacts in local communities applied to this project? – *Metro is focused on the I-710 Corridor and community health benefit program.*
- Include equestrian uses in the development of crossings
- Will there be a new bridge across the Rio Hondo as part of this project? – *This is to be determined. A stronger connection at Imperial Ave is a priority.*

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS FROM PLAN ELEMENT COMMITTEES

Mr. Iacofano recapped the roles and responsibilities of the committees. Primarily, the committees direct the development of chapters that will be incorporated in LLARRP and/or the outreach to support the development of the plan, including:

- Identify issues, opportunities, and partnerships
- Conduct review and analysis
- Coordinate with advocates, experts, and/or communities
- Report findings and recommendations

First, Oliver Galang of Tetra Tech, part of the LLARRP project team, provided a brief review of the how the Working Group's input will inform development of the framework, including candidate projects, programs and policies. He also explained how upcoming Plan Element Committee and River Segment Committee meetings, as well as community outreach activities, will inform development of framework iterations in the coming months.

Mr. Iacofano then introduced representatives of the Plan Element Committees, who provided brief oral reports with accompanying PowerPoint slides (Attachment B) on the outcomes of their recent meetings:

- Community Economics, Health, and Equity: Pauline Louie, HUD/Urban Waters Federal Partnership
- Public Realm: Keshia Serton, LA Neighborhood Land Trust
- Water and Environment: Chris Solek, Expert
- Implementation: Wendy Ramallo, Council for Watershed Health
- Community Engagement: Stephen Mejia, Friends of the LA River

Following are summaries of the reports.

Community Economics, Health, and Equity Committee

Overview and Recent Activities

The recent meeting of the Committee occurred on February 9, 2017, and included the following outcomes:

- Reviewed priorities determined in December PEC meeting
- Reviewed results of the survey based on these priorities
- Reviewed potential projects and opportunities along the Lower LA River and how each of the projects potentially addressed these priorities
- Determined gaps and needs based on this evaluation
- Discussed next steps
- Formed a subcommittee to coordinate urban planning research and social justice efforts

Project Prioritization Criteria and Results

The Committee's priorities for projects include the following:

- Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts that support affordable housing and economic opportunity
- Public funding with equitable outcomes
- Private funding should increase economic mobility and neighborhood stability
- Acquisition/use of River adjacent properties that increase public access and assets
- Environmental remediation must engage community and create opportunities
- Public space must be accessible and responsive to the needs of low-income communities
- Local business and workforce development

- Health and environmental
- Diversity of users

Results suggest that potential projects score well on some criteria, but there is room for improvement and gaps to address with affordable housing and homelessness.

Next Steps

Next steps in the prioritization process include:

- Evaluate city policies in coordination with cities and communities
- Promote small business development
- Reevaluate priorities to include displacement, affordable housing and homelessness
- Focus workforce development efforts: more coordination, landscaping jobs, O&M jobs, construction
- Establish specs for project: size and shape dictates type of development (affordable housing versus open space)

Next Steps for the Committee include:

- Review updated project opportunity lists from the River Segment Committee
- Evaluate opportunities relative to Committee goals
- Develop a preliminary list of Committee priority projects
- Use priorities established by the PEC to develop 4-5 guiding principles for the PEC

The Committee also formed subcommittee to coordinate urban planning research and social justice efforts. UCLA planning will conduct a review and synthesis of the Cities general plans and housing plans. East Yard for Community and Environmental Justice will review City housing policies and meet with City councilmembers and staff. The Federal Reserve Bank Conference and Workshop will be organized to help establish housing trusts, develop policies, and determine available funding sources.

Working Group Discussion

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

- How can we define sharper priorities? – *A larger sample size will help this effort.*

Public Realm Committee

Overview and Recent Activities

The recent meeting of the Committee occurred on February 15, 2017, and included the following outcomes:

- Reviewed priorities determined in December PEC meeting
- Reviewed results of the survey based on these priorities
- Reviewed potential projects and opportunities along the Lower LA River and how each of the projects potentially addressed these priorities

- Determined gaps and needs based on this evaluation
- Discussed next steps

Project Prioritization Criteria and Results

The Committee's priorities for projects include the following:

- Continuous park space
- Multi-use trail
- Connections and gateways to communities
- Improve existing access points
- Additional access points
- Restrooms
- Safety –security with signage
- Way finding –security
- Signage –to restaurants
- Lighting
- Maximize benefits
- In-channel access for diverse users and disadvantaged communities
- Diversity of user
- Disadvantaged communities
- Prevention of the displacement of existing communities
- Expanding public/open space into privately held areas –example, Wrigley Heights in Long Beach
- Facilities adjacent to the trail
- Museums, arts, aquariums, community center, education center, community garden, ball fields, camping facility, overnight area –signage to nearby hotels, regional park, stables
- Nature

Results suggest Committee members rate these priorities very closely with small differences between the top priority (maximize multiple beneficial uses) and the lowest priority (signage to restaurants and areas of interest near trail). Scoring of the opportunities show that gaps exist in wayfinding, signage, access, and other topics.

Additional Gaps and Needs

Based on the results, Committee members identified additional gaps and needs as follows:

- Public transportation
- Parking
- Additional access points
- Connection between the Lower LA River and the Upper LA River through downtown LA
- Cantilever bridge/crossings from channel walls (using box channels –examples in upper LA River)

- Bike lanes and paths connecting the communities and cities to the LA River trail: greenways along the bike paths in the communities
- Make river appeal to public –change public perception
- Amenities
- Shade
- Historical education and signage (about the river and community served)
- Continuity of green space –expand to all areas of the Lower LA River –empty portions of map lacking project opportunities

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Committee include:

- Review updated project opportunity lists from the River Segment Committee
- Evaluate opportunities relative to Committee goals
- Develop a preliminary list of Committee priority projects, including identifying short term and immediate actions
- Use priorities established by the PEC to develop 4-5 guiding principles for the PEC, including cross-over with the other PECs

Working Group Discussion

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

- Can directional signage focus on local businesses such as restaurants and cafes? – *Yes, this can be studied.*
- Develop guidelines for signage and wayfinding
- Include mile markers for guidance
- Plan for flexibility to incorporate new communications and interpretive technologies
- What are examples of river-oriented businesses that may be appropriate on the Lower LA River? – *We will identify cases studies for consideration.*
- Consider folding smaller projects into larger scale projects
- Engage the Implementation Committee, particularly around public/private partnerships
- Study use of “adopt/sponsor a trail”

Water and Environment Committee

Overview and Recent Committee Activities

The recent meeting of the Committee included the following activities:

- Reviewed priorities determined in December PEC meeting
- Reviewed results of the survey based on these priorities
- Reviewed potential projects and opportunities along the Lower LA River and how each of the projects potentially addressed these priorities
- Determined gaps and needs based on this evaluation
- Discussed next steps

Project Prioritization Criteria and Results

The Committee's priorities for projects include the following:

- In-channel hydrological and environmental benefits, in-channel habitat
- Flood risk management
- Distributed Green Infrastructure and Natural Treatment
- Centralized Green Infrastructure and Natural Treatment
- Upland habitat (to promote connectivity)
- Dry weather water quality improvement
- Wet weather water quality improvement
- Flow-resilient vegetation selection/design
- Water capture and reuse, Drought Resilience/Preparedness and/or Local Water Supply Development
- Water quantity and management of base flows
- Enhanced biodiversity
- Maximizing self-regenerating native vegetation
- Air quality improvement
- Water and environmental education
- Shade, cooling, and heat island alleviation
- Floodplain conservation, expansion, restoration
- Off-channel storage

The results demonstrate that members rated these priorities very closely, with small difference between the top priority (water capture and local supply) and the lowest priority (upland habitat). In reviewing potential projects, there is some room for improvement and some gaps to be addressed, including base flow management and air quality.

Additional Gaps and Needs

Based on the results, Committee members identified additional gaps and needs as follows:

- Upstream land uses and industries –what is there? How can these projects be tailored to these?
- Hydraulics –confluences, terracing, vegetation in the channel, off-site storage, flood capacity/control –workshop for group
- Look like a river/function like a river –low flow channel, vegetation
- How to use the existing pump stations?
- Identify plumes, contamination
- Work with lease-holders
- Baseline eco data –crowd source the data using communities? Develop app or twitter/snapchat/FB for photos of birds, animals, etc. (geo-tagged)
- How can we use water in a more beneficial way?
- Create a capture strategy for the reach
- How will projects impact baseflow?

- How much remediation is required at some of these sites? How much reclaimed water for plants? Habitat? Land use zoning. Elements in environmental restoration projects
- Address air quality
- USACE requirements
- Programmatic component of existing programs –integrate communities and other groups
- Biofiltration included on all projects –including bike path and green infrastructure on streets leading to river

Next Steps

Next Steps for the Committee include:

- Review updated project opportunity lists from the River Segment Committee
- Evaluate opportunities relative to Committee goals
- Develop a preliminary list of Committee priority projects
- Use priorities established by the PEC to develop 4-5 guiding principles for the PEC, including cross-over with the other PECs

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members provided feedback to the Committee.

- Provide a “hydrology 101” overview to identify opportunities and constraints
- Weave in the I-710 Corridor projects and the Public Realm Committee projects for joint analysis of opportunities and implementation

Implementation Committee

Overview and Discussion Items

The first meeting of the Committee occurred on February 22, and included the following discussion items:

- Governance of the River
- Implementation Policies
- Funding Strategies
- Safety
- Project Programming

Governance

Governance and management of the River is divided as follows:

- River Operations and Management is between the following:
 - US Army Corps of Engineers (Vernon to Southern Ave and at the Long Beach Harbor)
 - Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Southern Ave to the Long Beach Outlet)
- The Bike Path is managed by the County of LA Road Department, while the equestrian paths are management by County Parks and Recreation.
- Multiple jurisdictions along the river are responsible for their residents, security, local parks, streets, roads, bridges, and crossings

- In addition, Caltrans manages the I-710 Freeway, while City of LA Dept of Water and Power and Southern California Edison have power easements within the project study area

Funding Strategies

Committee members discussed the following potential strategies:

- At the local level, infrastructure funding (transportation, water quality fee, parks bonds)
- Joint Powers Authority, to allow government agencies to combine resources
- Developer fees to provide a funding source for river-oriented development
- State grants and funding (Caltrans transportation, implementation agreements, Proposition 1 bonds)
- Federal funding (Federal projects, LA River Ecosystem Restoration, etc)

Project Programming

Project programming for proposed LLARRP projects under development by the River Segment Committees will be evaluated based on implementation costs. The Committee will evaluate phasing of projects/programs/policies and leverage existing/proposed developments. In order to measure progress, metrics will be developed by the committees to demonstrate project benefits and progress.

Next Steps

Next steps for the Committee include:

- Conduct a priorities criteria evaluation and survey to establish the priorities of the PEC
- Review ranked priorities to determine any gaps and needs
- Develop the guiding principles of the PEC
- Develop a model for governance for river operations, management, and improvements
- Identify areas for collaboration along the river for multiple jurisdictions as well as areas of independent agency responsibility, such as
 - Land use and zoning (city responsibility)
 - Safety and security
 - River parkways (individual or multi-jurisdictional)

Working Group Discussion

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

- Engage the LLARRP cities in the Committee discussion
- Focus on reimagining public safety: create safe environments and facilities, not on more policing activities
- Explore creation of human service/ambassador corps, and business improvement districts
- Is a stormwater fee a funding option? – *The Committee will review Measure A and Measure M as models for pursuing such a fee.*

Community Engagement Committee

Overview and Recent Activities

The recent meeting of the Committee occurred on February 21, 2017, and included the following activities:

- Finalize the LLARRP brand/logo
- Develop and demonstrate the online questionnaire and outreach toolkit
- Draft the schedule for the implementation of the Community Engagement Plan
- Develop Watershed Education Program in the coming months for the LLARRP

Community Engagement Program

The approach to the community engagement program includes

- Timeframes for implementation
- Phases consistent with the overall development of the LLARRP
- Activities that support the LLARRP
- Audiences from the local communities

The Community Engagement program will include presentations to communities, bike tours, river clean ups, outdoor movie events, and high school outreach.

Community Engagement Presentation

The presentation includes key elements such as the background of the revitalization plan, the structure of the Working Group and Committees, and the Revitalization Plan –Conceptual Planning Process Road Map.

- Purpose: Build community awareness of the LLARRP through informational presentations to community organizations
- Target Audiences: Elected officials, community and neighborhood organizations, Interested recreational users
- Schedule: March–April 2017

Community Engagement Activities

Community activities and schedule for March and April, then mid-Summer (late June, early July), include the following team members:

- Conservation Corps of Long Beach: neighborhood outreach events
- East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice: school events and Youth in action and #ReclaimingTheLARiver events
- Friends of the LA River: river clean up events with River Rover presentation
- From Lot to Spot: pop-up events
- LA County Bicycle Coalition: bike tours
- Trails4All: trail user training sessions

Outreach Toolkit

The outreach toolkit will include multiple tools that may be applied to the activities, including the following:

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

Online Community Mapping Tool

The online community mapping tool, which is currently being tested in its beta version will be available mid-March in English and Spanish languages. The tool will include options to select a location with a pin, and ask a few questions about that location. Users will be able to select and add trails and paths, parks, access points and gateways they use. Question topics include:

- Where you live
- Places you visit
- Trails you use
- Issues and challenges at these locations

Community Branding

The Committee developed the LLARRP brand over a three month period through a series of workshops and webinars. The Committee reviewed and provided direction on refinement to multiple concepts, leading to a final recommended selection of concepts.

Next Steps

Next steps for the Committee include the following:

- Manage implementation of the Community Engagement Plan
 - Finalize the outreach toolkit
 - Develop a schedule for the outreach activities
- Develop Watershed Education Program

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members provided feedback to the Committee.

- Focus on bringing more residents into the process

SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY BRANDING CONCEPTS AND SELECTION

Mr. Pendoley provided a brief recap of the purpose and process for developing a compelling brand for the LLARRP that reflects the comprehensive nature of the work and honors the diverse communities in the region. The goals of the brand include:

- Educate: Teach people about the Plan

- Engage: Get people excited about the Plan
- Motivate: Inspire people to get involved
- Act: Offer people ways to take action

Key principles that define the brand include:

- Community: Establish a sense of place and connection
- Inclusivity: Ensure that the Plan embraces all people
- Ecology: Respect the natural environment
- History: Honor the rich traditions of the region
- Opportunity: Show the Plan’s potential

The audiences for the brand include:

- The Public: The people who live, work and play near the River—families, seniors, singles, teachers, students, workers, etc.
- Influential Partners: Elected officials, advocacy groups, community organizations, businesses, agencies, etc., who can help inform the public about the LLARRP

The final concept logos include:

Concept 1	Concept 2
	

Working Group Discussion

Working Group and audience members provided feedback about the branding concepts.

- The word “lower” may have negative connotations for some community members
- The word “lower” helps to distinguish this portion of the river, but requires community education
- Reconsider the word “revitalization”
 - Some may perceive negative connotations related to gentrification and displacement
 - The Army Corps of Engineers uses “LA River Revitalization” as an initiative title

- Consider moving the bird from the right to the left side, and reverse the direction it faces in Concept 1
- Consider replacing the bird with plants
- Ensure the graphic identity will bring in black and white
- Consider “Our LA River” in the title

Working Group Selection of the Brand

Mr. Iacofano distributed a set of three cards (green, yellow and red) to each Working Group member (one representative per organization). Green refers to “like”, yellow refers to “maybe”, and red refers to “dislike.” He then led them through a series of four selections to identify their preferences for the brand and use of the word “revitalization”, with the results as follows:

	Concept 1	Concept 2	Include “revitalization”	Do not include “revitalization”
Green/”Like”	11	3	3	10
Yellow/”Maybe”	7	9	10	11
Red/”Dislike”	4	10	10	3

Based on these results, the brand will be Concept 1 without use of the word “revitalization.”

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, April 6, 2017, Long Beach/Bixby Knolls
- Thursday, May 4, 2017, Downey
- Thursday, June 1, 2017, South Gate