

LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN (LLARRP) WORKING GROUP MEETING #22

Thursday, February 1, 2018 ♦ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
Bateman Hall, 11331 Ernestine Ave, Lynwood, CA 90262

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

INTRODUCTION

On February 1, 2018, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon of the 63rd Assembly District and the Rivers and Mountain Conservancy (RMC) co-hosted the twenty-second and final meeting of the Working Group for the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss any remaining concerns with the latest revisions to the Final Draft of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan; and reach a consensus to send the document to the state.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The twenty-second meeting of the Working Group occurred on February 1, 2018, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Bateman Hall, 11331 Ernestine Ave, Lynwood, CA 90262. Approximately 30 Working Group members and 30 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. City of Lynwood Councilmember Aide Castro welcomed everyone in attendance and expressed her appreciation for the work accomplished by the Working Group toward a “big picture” project with the potential to benefit all of the cities in the region. Daniel Iacofano of MIG, Inc., served as meeting facilitator and reviewed the meeting format before asking for self-introductions from all participants. After Mr. Iacofano provided an overview of the agenda (Attachment A), he announced the Speaker Cards available for any member of the community to make a comment.

Mr. Stanley continued the presentation as a “Journey to the Final Plan” with an overview of AB 530, the timeline of the process, the findings and recommendations, and the continuous community outreach accomplished as part of the process. Mr. Iacofano then invited the Working Group members and the public to contribute additional comments and ask questions. Finally, Mr. Iacofano led the consensus discussion and requested all Working Group members choose one of three statements as their final recommendation to send the plan to the state. A few Working Group members voiced issues they wanted addressed before their full approval to which Dan Sharp from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works responded. Overall consensus was reached to advance the Plan to the State by the meeting closure.

During each presentation, Mr. Iacofano facilitated discussions with Working Group members and other participants to address questions and comments. During these discussions, Andy Pendoley of MIG recorded key outcomes and discussion points on a wall-sized piece of paper, or “wallgraphic.” A summary of the discussion points is provided in the following sections, and a copy of the wallgraphic is included in the appendix to this report.

WORKING GROUP COMMENTS

Following the presentation, Working Group members were invited to make comments, ask questions and discuss any key issues, with project team responses in italics, as follows:

- The process was long and arduous but worth the effort
- Most comments and concerns regarding the prior draft of The Lower LA River Revitalization Plan were addressed. The process was responsive, and it is clear the team was listening
- Overall, we are satisfied with the results but still would like to see more creativity in the proposals to provide more connectivity along the river and open space, especially since Cudahy has a park adjacent to the River. – *The Implementation Advisory Group is the next forum where there will be continuous opportunities to introduce new projects and adjust project proposals*
- We are very enthusiastic to see the transformations and would like to see the river more visible beyond the cement landscape
- Although it is difficult to reach a consensus to the full satisfaction of everyone, the process was sensitive to the local issues that came up, like the recent issue voiced about street vendors
- Will there be a revision to the boundary of the multi-use trail? It would be preferable to see an adjustment so that the benefits also extend to the City of Lynwood. – *We will gladly review where the boundary line is now and where it should be. As a reminder, the visuals and maps in The Lower LA River Revitalization Plan are illustrative with more detailed considerations to be further discussed and incorporated at implementation*
- Connectivity for the City of Lynwood should be included as a priority, especially since it would have a double impact as the I-710 expansion plans move forward
- If it is possible, it would be good to leverage these efforts to reduce the barriers to access caused by the I-710
- This is the end of AB 530 but the beginning of the next step
- This is a radically different process than other processes for infrastructure projects which is refreshing and rejuvenating. If we can walk away from this with consensus, this would be a good model for other agencies. Most comments didn’t have to wait until the draft document was released. Instead, the draft plan already reflected the prior discussions of the Working Group. The only language that may be missing is the checklist text (bullet points) tied to each signature project that explicitly recommended

an assessment that addresses community stabilization, specifically identifies housing policies

- The City of Los Angeles is grateful to be a part of the process and is ready to be a partner.
- At the conference call prior to this meeting, Tamika Butler of the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust emphasized language in the plan should include stronger language regarding community engagement. Is it possible for more members of the community to be part of the committee for the Implementation Advisory Group? – *If the question is whether community members can be directly at the table, the advisory group could be represented by the people of the community as well. And, of course, public comment will always be a part of it. This Working Group attempted as much public comment as possible throughout the process. This is intended to continue for the Implementation Advisory Group*
- It is important to make sure the implementation does not gentrify the neighborhoods
- The Working Group allowed for continued peer-to-peer discussions and trust building which resulted in group more comfortable sharing ideas honestly
- There need to be more references and information on how to achieve water and environmental goals. Cities need to know how to create wetlands and make the river integrated to the neighborhood. – *This is a topic for implementation where itemization is more possible than in a planning effort. The document does identify an information gap and indicates more studies need to be done for each signature project*
- There are some language inconsistencies in the Equity and Community Access sections. Revise to make consistent
- Impressed street vending has been included even though the conversation about the topic didn't start until the figures in the rendering reminded us about it. That is an impressive demonstration that the team is listening. This is a decent plan but it is up to "us" to make it happen
- The implementation phase requires a lot of working together and collaboration is very important

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mr. Iacofano opened the floor for a public comment period from the audience following the Working Group discussion. Those who wished to speak submitted a speaker card. Project team responses are listed in italics, as follows:

- It is exciting to see what will happen with the stabilization toolkit and increased access to the river. However, the renderings still show a beautified concrete channel. The watershed is not as present as necessary for ecological or public health. There needs to be more watershed planning, studies and hydrology, and other efforts that would ensure a healthier River.
- How does this meeting comply with the Brown Act and Americans with Disabilities Act where a public official is making a vote outside of jurisdiction boundaries? Will this

presentation be repeated at the local municipalities impacted by its decision? Will the plan address water contamination and safety concerns? Bicycle accidents and even deaths are too common in relation to the river. – *First, this meeting does not fall under the definition of a “meeting” as referenced in the Brown Act. The meetings have and will continue to be open to the public, and be posted on the website. Nothing this group recommends is binding on any City participants. Any decision that will impact their jurisdictions will be voted upon at each City’s meetings where proper accommodations will be provided*

- Senator Lara’s office expresses appreciation and support for the Plan

CONSENSUS DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Working Group members provided their final thoughts about the final draft of the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan in advance of indicating their recommendation for advancing the Plan to the State.

- Language recommended after the last Working Group meeting was removed prior to this meeting. Consider reinserting the list of bullets identifying the toolkit and its specific recommendations (i.e., inclusionary zoning, rent control, not net loss) as a next step to *each* template. These specific issues regarding displacement risks were raised at the first meeting and have been consistently raised. The policies previously identified are important and have been removed following a recommendation for which we did not all agree
- The only concern with the specific policies is their impact on local authority for each municipality. At this stage, it is unclear who would be paying for any necessary subsidies to implement these policies. Although the Working Group is an advisory group, there are examples, such as the I-710 process, where decisions made at an advisory group are interpreted as mandatory. There can be no room for ambiguity that falsely raises expectations for constituents
- The only bullet point removed was the one related to housing because it was considered “too hot of an issue.” If it is reinserted, it would not be a problem because it is not mandatory. According to AB 530, this is a guiding document. The point of contention appears to be that the language removed could be interpreted as a mandate and not simply a recommendation
- There was also a recommendation to include stronger community engagement language
- To clarify, no one is disputing that this document is a recommendation nor under any illusion that it states requirements
- *The recommendation is to recognize the sensitivity of the issues, but it will ultimately be up to each community to agree on how to best approach*
- There is no cookie cutter solution to housing or displacement risks. If there are specific policies like rent control mentioned in the document, it is not sending the right message to residents. One city cannot simply apply policies other cities are

implementing because they are not always feasible or the best approach for their specific context

- *The agreement is then to reintroduce the language identifying some of the housing policies recommended as next steps but to state as clearly and as frequently as possible that these policies are not mandatory and up to the discretion of each city. This is agreeable to all*

Following the consensus discussion, Mr. Iacofano facilitated a final tally where each Working Group Member voiced their recommendation based on the following statements:

1. On behalf of my organization, I recommend the Plan be submitted to the State.
2. On behalf of my organization, I recommend the Plan be submitted to the State, even though I have a few remaining issues I would like to see addressed.
3. On behalf of my organization, I do not recommend submitting the Plan to the State.

Five members voiced agreement with statement number two (2.) above as follows: Mark Lopez (East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice), Bruno Naulls (City of Lynwood), Eddie de la Riva (City of Maywood), Keshia Sexton (Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust), Robin Mark (The Trust for Public Land), and Justin Yee (Urban Waters Federal Partnership).

Four members voiced agreement with statement number one (1.) above with the caveat to include the bullet points regarding housing as referenced during the discussion preceding the tally count. The four members were as follows: Viviana Franco (From Lot to Spot), Antonio Hicks (Public Counsel), Robin Mark (Trust for Public Land), and Elizabeth Alcantar (Los Angeles County Bike Coalition).

No members voiced agreement with statement number three (3.) above.

All other members present voiced agreement with statement number one (1.) above.

Consensus was reached to submit the The Lower LA River Revitalization Plan to the State.