

# LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN (LLARRP) WORKING GROUP MEETING #15

Thursday, July 6, 2017 ♦ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
Municipal Auditorium, 4900 Southern Avenue, South Gate

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

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### INTRODUCTION

On July 6, 2017, California State Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District and the Rivers and Mountain Conservancy (RMC) co-hosted the fifteenth 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 meetings of the Plan Element Committees, review the application of the evaluation framework, and verify the comprehensiveness of potential projects.

#### Meeting Format and Agenda

The fifteenth meeting of the Working Group occurred on July 7, 2017, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Municipal Auditorium, 4900 Southern Avenue, Southgate. 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 also highlighted the recent news of an additional \$100 million secured for continued planning and projects along the full 51-miles of the LA River thanks to the efforts of Assembly Speaker Rendon. Gladis Deras of the City of South Gate provided a welcome to the group. Daniel Iacofano of MIG, Inc., served as meeting facilitator and provided an overview of the agenda (Attachment A) and meeting format before asking for self-introductions from all participants. Diana Varat of the UCLA Luskin Center and Pauline Louie of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership provided a brief overview of graduate students' analysis of the Lower LA River. Andy Pendoley of MIG provided an update on recent efforts of the Community Engagement Committee and community activities, and Oliver Galang of Tetra Tech, part of the project team, provided an update from the Implementation Committee. Mr. Galang also reviewed updated goals and objectives defined by the Plan Element Committees for: Community Economics, Health and Equity; Public Realm; and Water and Environment.

Brad Wardynski of Tetra Tech, presented the methodology and sample outcomes for the Evaluation Framework to illustrate the scoring system and approach for analyzing potential projects. Mr. Iacofano facilitated discussions with Working Group members and other

participants to address questions and comments. Working Group members then reviewed the list of potential projects and identified additional potential projects as noted on maps of the river corridor segments displayed in the meeting room.

During the meeting presentations and discussions, 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 AGENCY’S PRESENTATION: UCLA LUSKIN SCHOOL**

Participants received a presentation from Diana Varat, Lecturer with the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs that reviewed research findings from a group of graduate students entitled: *Lower LA River Revitalization: An Inclusive Approach to Planning, Implementation, and Community Engagement*. The research question stated: How can the implementation of the Lower LA River Revitalization Master Plan promote equity, improve well-being, and foster engagement among the communities along the Lower LA River? The research found that one way to improve access to the river, better understand what local needs might be, and to reduce the potential for gentrification and displacement that may come from large-scale revitalization efforts, is to encourage low-cost, community-led, small-scale changes along the river. The researchers refer to these short-term interventions as “tactical urbanism.” The recommendations include: (1.) sustain community engagement; (2.) advocate for state funding; (3.) establish realistic cross-jurisdictional coordination mechanisms; and (4.) pursue small-scale, short-term projects.

Pauline Louie of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, who served as part of a review panel that received the students’ full presentation in a separate meeting, shared responses on behalf of the review panel. Key responses and observations included:

- analyze the value and efficiency of formal inter-jurisdictional structures (e.g., joint powers authority) versus coordination to support implementation;
- focus on implementing projects to ensure community planning efforts generate real results and benefits;
- consider establishing a “community engagement officer” who can serve to sustain engagement efforts;
- understand how to further support community members who rent homes as they are most vulnerable; and
- similarly, focus on the needs of small business owners, who also tend to be highly vulnerable to rent fluctuations, and who also tend to be local residents

### **SUMMARY OF PLAN ELEMENT COMMITTEES’ PRESENTATION**

Mr. Pendoley explained the latest developments and activities related to community engagement on behalf of the Committee. He explained the locations and levels of participation for pop-up events, river clean-up events, etiquette training sessions for multi-use trails, and the online mapping survey. He also provided a brief overview of key issues and opportunities

identified during the activities, which verify similar findings from the Working Group and Committees. Finally, he noted that planning efforts for the Watershed Education Program are underway with initial direction provided by the Committee at its recent meeting. Working Group members responded by noting that signage is an additional input heard consistently from the outreach efforts, and that it's important that outreach findings across the activities are accounted equally in the planning process.

Mr. Galang explained that the Implementation Committee will reconvene soon to further develop recommendations for a governance structure, as well as advise on implementation considerations for the new LA River Rangers program. He also reviewed updated goals and objectives statements for the Community Economics, Health and Equity Committee, which include revised language focused on community stabilization, inclusivity, equitability and transparency. New objectives include attention to wellness, physical activity and green infrastructure. The Public Realm Committee developed revised language to reflect community ownership and stewardship, connectivity, public spaces, experiences and access. The Water and Environment Committee developed revised language to reflect restoration of natural functions, ecosystem restoration, flood risk, water capture, habitat and floodplain.

Working Group and audience members provided feedback, as follows:

- Enhance the consistency of language and sentence structure across the goals and objectives in terms of level of detail, statement length, explanations, and intentions
- Be direct, clear and descriptive to ensure understanding of each statement
- Identify how objectives are linked across goals and plan elements

## **SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

Mr. Wardynski presented the latest development of the evaluation framework that is proposed for analyzing the potential of projects on the river corridor. He reviewed the previously presented structure of the framework and its elements including the baselines, objective, building blocks and strategies. He also reviewed corridor maps that identified locations of site-specific and open space opportunity areas identified to-date in the planning process, and the juxtaposition of land uses in those locations. In reviewing the Rio Hondo Confluence as a case study, he described that the objectives are considered for their applicability to the site, and, in turn, which performance metrics will provide the basis for understanding defining their outcomes. A selection of building blocks are applied to define the project components. After quantifying the performance of the strategies in achieving the objectives through the scoring system, the process may consider applying and testing additional strategies and building blocks that could improve the overall performance of project. Furthermore, additional distributed strategies could be applied to provide improved connectivity between specific opportunity areas as mutually-supportive efforts to improve their performance.

Working Group and audience members asked questions of Mr. Wardynski and the project team, with responses in *italics*.

- How are potential opportunities and projects outside of the watershed study area integrated with the revitalization plan? – *Such projects should be identified now and linked through regional planning and coordination.*
- The evaluation framework’s building blocks do not address all complex issues. How will these be addressed in the plan? – *Inter-jurisdictional and/or regional policy and program overlays will be important additions to the plan.*
- Consider applying a tiered approach to evaluating projects that provides an initial high level filter, followed by a more detailed evaluation.
- Develop and apply strategies that are contextual and realistic
- Consider applying a weighting system in the evaluation that highlights the levels of intervention and impacts in specific areas and project locations
- Engage local policy makers and residents to ensure that all corridor cities’ plans and projects are included in the evaluation
- Additional building blocks and qualitative factors should be included, such as micro-lending opportunities, rent control, multi-jurisdictional contexts, policy areas, and community engagement

## **REVIEW OF COMPREHENSIVENESS OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS**

Mr. Iacofano directed Working Group members to maps of potential projects organized by the river segments as displayed in the meeting room. Participants reviewed the maps, discussed ideas about additional potential projects with project team members, and annotated the maps with these ideas. Mr. Iacofano then reconvened the Working Group for brief, informal reports back. Detailed annotations are noted in Attachment E in the Appendix to this report. The River Segment Committees will review the potential projects in more detail at their next meetings.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Council member Denise Diaz, City of South Gate City Council thanked everyone for attending and Mr. Iacofano concluded the meeting by thanking Working Group members, reviewing upcoming outreach activities, and reviewing the next Working Group meeting dates and locations, which are listed on the project website.

The next Working Group meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, August 3, 2017, Maywood
- Potential hosts in Fall 2017: East LA, South Gate, Downey