

# Lower Los Angeles River Implementation Advisory Group Meeting

May 22, 2019 | 9:00 – 11:00 A.M.

Compton Creek Natural Park  
941 W Cressey St, Compton, CA 90222

## Summary

**Purpose & Charge:** Provide a public venue for discussion of proposed projects related to the Lower LA River, ensure proposed projects are consistent with the goals and objectives of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan, and maximize multi-use opportunities and community benefits

### I. Welcome & Introductions

### II. Committee Meeting Summary

Dan Sharp (District) summarized the previous Committee meetings.

- Public Realm, Environment, Water & Infrastructure (4/9/2019)
  - Presentations on:
    - LB MUST Expansion Project – Melissa You (City of Long Beach)
    - Lower LA River Concrete Channel Enhancements – Robert Blankenship (Trout Unlimited)
    - Hollydale Park Green Infrastructure Development – Claire Robertson (Amigos de los Rios)
    - Julia Russ Asmus Park Storm Water Infiltration & Restoration Project – Chau Vu (City of Bell Gardens)
    - Conceptual Ideas – Jim Meyer (Trails4All)
    - Conceptual Ideas – Amanda Wagner (Heal the Bay)
- Public Advisory & Community Engagement and Programs & Policies (4/16/2019)
  - Discussed the Project Information Packet and mentioned adding the goal of the project proponent when going through IAG process
  - Question from East Yard Communities for Environmental Justice (EYCEJ) for Parque dos Rios: Has there has been community engagement for construction impacts or an anti-displacement analysis for the surrounding community?
  - Question from EYCEJ for River Ranger Program: What are the Ranger objectives and roles? What form of law enforcement will be provided by the rangers?

Due to low attendance of the Committee meetings, the next set of meetings will be combined into a joint meeting among all three Committees. However, there will still be three distinct Committees with their individual Chairs.

### III. Project Information Packet

- a. Project Review



Dan Sharp discussed the project review flowchart and described each stage of the process. There was a question from the Public Advisory & Community Engagement Committee Chair wondering if all projects would be seen by the Committees. Dan Sharp reiterated that each Committee Chair would be given the chance to decide if the Committees need to review the project.

b. Sample Review

Dan Sharp walked through the example Project Information Packet filled out for the LB MUST Expansion Project.

c. Draft Discussion

There were no comments on changes to the Project Information Packet.

#### IV. Project Discussion

a. Parque dos Rios

EYCEJ had questions for Parque dos Rios at the previous Committee meeting: Has there been community engagement for construction impacts or an anti-displacement analysis for the surrounding community?

From Debbie Enos (WCA):

*The Parque Dos Rios Overlook and Habitat Open Space project's recent outreach has included tabling at WCA's Gateway Greening Vision Plan and LLAR community events, as well as, a presentation this year at the LLAR IAG. A construction sign will be installed prior to the start of construction at the site and a ground-breaking event will be held in coordination with the City of South Gate.*

*LAHSA and PATH both provided homeless services outreach over a 9-month period between February and December 2018 in preparation for construction to begin.*

*The project will provide work-force training to at-risk youth with the Conservation Corps of Long Beach who is the General Contractor for the project. CCLB is also being considered as the on-going maintenance contractor for the project post construction, including local hires through their program.*

*Public access to the site is limited to the overlook/bike stop off the existing LLAR Trail where visitors can sit and enjoy the habitat value of the newly landscaped open space.*

b. River Ranger Program

Sally Gee (RMC) provided an update on River Ranger Program. The planning process is led by the Watershed Conservation Authority (WCA) and the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority (MRCA) and funded by San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) through Proposition 1 (Prop 1).

AB-1558 requires the development of a River Ranger Program to provide a network of river rangers who assist the public at sites along the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. There has been significant NGO participation and outreach with organizations such as Amigos de los Rios, From Lot to Spot, River LA, Trails4All and others. The outreach was focused around the Los Angeles River and its tributaries. The outreach revealed that “Care for Natural Resources” was the primary role that people want the River Rangers take on, followed by “Safety Presence” and “Undergo Maintenance & Operations.”

The guiding principles of the plan are Maintenance and Resource Management; Recreation, Interpretation and Education Programs; Outreach and Engagement; Public Safety; and Administration and Coordination. The program will be staffed by Sworn Peace Officer Rangers, River Stewards, and Program Staff.

There are 3 governance models being considered. Cooperating Entities, Regional or Municipal Agencies, and a hybrid of the two. The program will be rolled out by establishing REACH zones where the Rangers could provide services. This is expected to be \$1.9 million per reach zone, with costs decreasing after year one.

Next steps include selecting four REACH zones, securing funding, establishing partnerships, monitoring training and certification, evaluating REACH zones, and developing a Homeless Outreach Action Plan.

#### Questions and Comments:

- What is the recommendation for having armed versus unarmed Rangers? (Antonio Hicks, Programs & Policies Chair) – *The recommendation is the current tiered structure, with only the top tier of Rangers being armed.*
- Community members may be worried about guns. (Alessandro Negrete, Public Advisory & Community Engagement Chair)
- The River Ranger Program has to be creative to find funding. (Marybeth Vergara, RMC)
- The Army Corps of Engineers have River Rangers in the upper reach of the river and would like to sync up with the River Ranger Program. (Ed Demesa, United States Army Corps of Engineers)

#### c. LA River Master Plan Update

Riley James (District) provided an update on the LA River Master Plan Update (LARMP). The County is currently working on updating the LARMP which is scheduled to be completed in summer of 2020. The project team has performed needs, opportunities, and cadence studies, and is currently working on identifying potential project opportunity zones and sites. The next Community Meeting will be held on June 12th in Glendale, and the next Steering Committee Meeting #6 is scheduled for June 26th at LA County Public Works Headquarters.

#### d. LB MUST

Melissa You provided an update on the LB MUST Expansion Project. The project will treat urban runoff to comply with the NPDES permit & TMDLs as well as provide co-benefits such as trails and wetland habitat (linear wetlands along 8 miles of the LA River). It will connect to existing pump stations and transport water to the stormwater treatment facility.



The proposed expansion includes urban greening sites at Artesia Boulevard and Willow Street at LA River east bank, which includes water quality features, water storage & conveyance to LB MUST, open space, urban greening, and trails in disadvantaged communities and in park poor areas.

There was general consensus that this project is consistent with the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan.

Questions and Comments:

- What public access is available? (Ed Demesa, Army Corps of Engineers): *Portions of the project, such as the trails, wetlands, and open spaces, are publicly accessible.*

## **V. RMC Update**

Suely Saro (RMC) provided an update on the Lower LA River Recreation & Park District (SB 1374). RMC is committing funds for 3 years of staffing. The City of South Gate is preparing the application to LAFCO and is awaiting support from each of the representative cities. It was noted that the Park District could help implement the River Ranger Plan.

Marybeth Vergara (RMC) provided an update on the LA River Revitalization Summit and AB 1694. The LA River Revitalization Summit will take place on July 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. AB 1694 would expand the territory of RMC to include Catalina Island and Dominguez Channel Watershed.

Joe Gonzalez (RMC) provided an update on Prop 1 and Prop 68 grant funding. There is a call for projects for both Prop 1 and Prop 68. The Urban Orchard and the Conservation Corps of Long Beach Community Center have been awarded funds from Prop 1.

## **VI. Open Forum / Public Comment**

There were no comments.

## **VII. Next Steps**

- a. Project Identification
- b. Committee Meetings – July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- c. IAG Meeting – August 21, 2019

