# RIO HONDO CONFLUENCE AREA PROJECT

## CONCEPT REPORT


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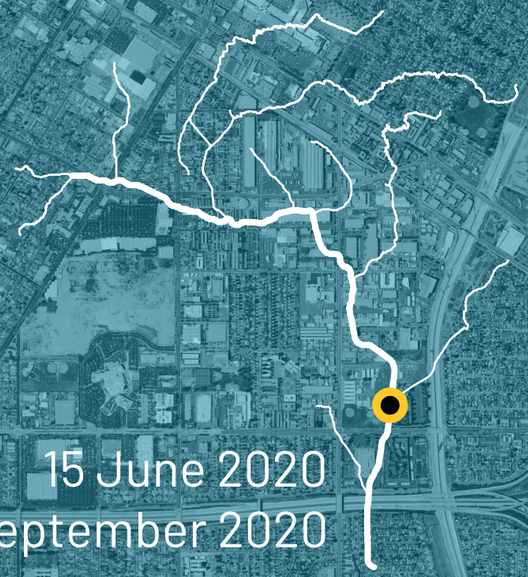

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rio Hondo Confluence Area Project (RHCAP) is located in Southeast Los Angeles (SELA), at the confluence of the LA River and Rio Hondo in the cities of South Gate, Lynwood, and Downey, and is comprised of twelve potential project opportunities that can be phased in accordance with community needs and other planning efforts. The project area was identified as an area of high need in the LA River Index (2016) and the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP, 2018) and is further defined as part of a "Major Project Zone" in the LA River Master Plan Update (expected completion 2020). The RHCAP was chosen based on the LLARRP's two years of studying and prioritizing opportunities for revitalization along the lower section of the LA River. The LA River and Rio Hondo Confluence site was one of the highest scoring opportunity projects in the LLARRP.

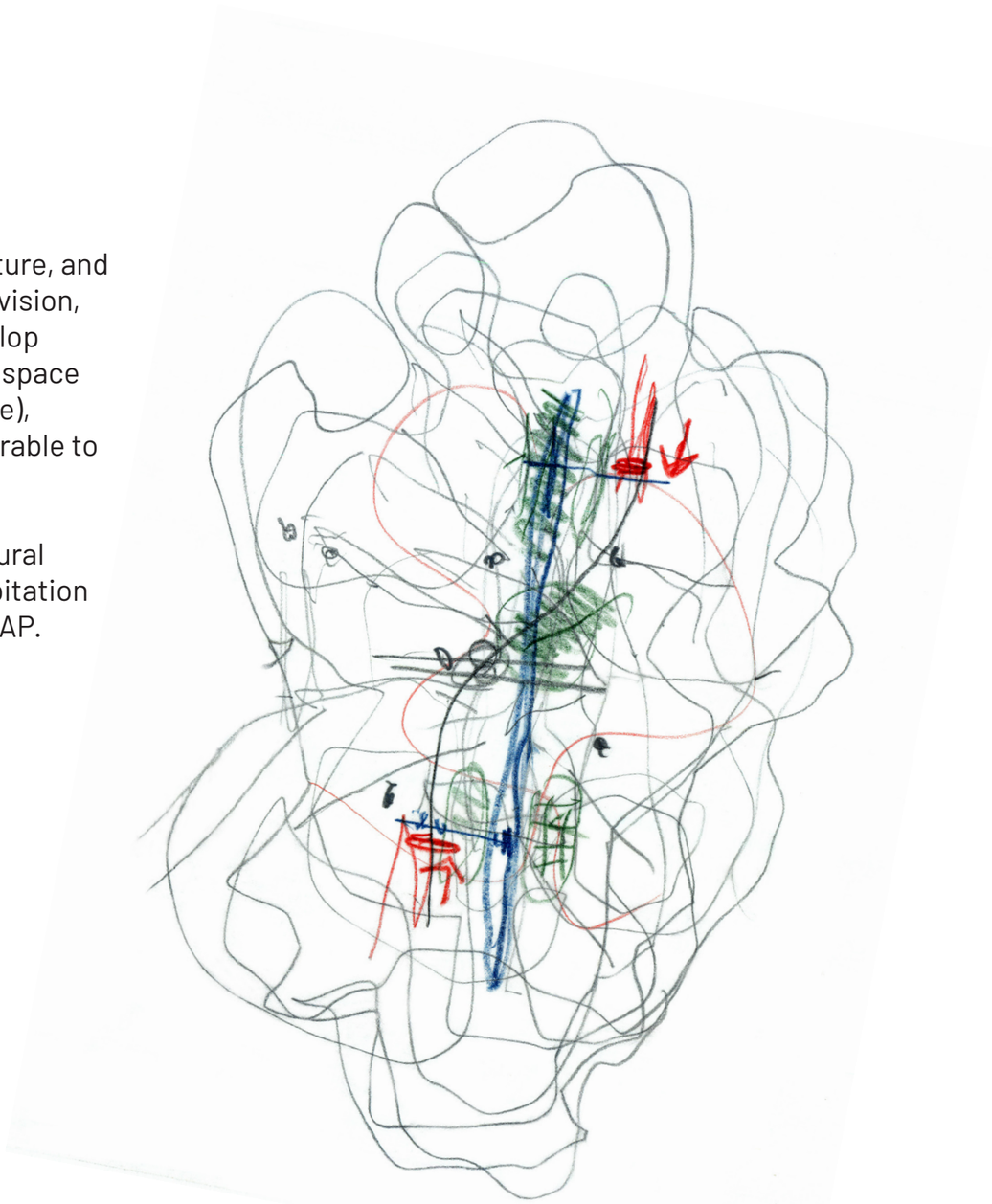

NATURE TRAIL
MULTIUSE PATHS
LA RIVER
MILE
12.5

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Background**

Because the confluence area was prone to flooding, early development was limited to ranchland, agriculture, and orchards. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the introduction of railroad lines, land subdivision, highway construction, and, ultimately, levees and channelization of the LA River allowed the area to develop into a dense built-out matrix for residential, industrial, and commercial uses. With a general lack of open space and limited tree canopy, the study area is now densely populated (10,000 to 30,000 people per square mile), fragmented by infrastructure, and includes neighborhoods that are identified as some of the most vulnerable to pollution and poor health outcomes in LA County.

The communities within the Rio Hondo Confluence Area are in critical need of park space, access to cultural amenities, and improved environmental living conditions. Additionally, as the climate changes and precipitation events become more intense, community resilience should be integrated into all projects within the RHCAP.



CONCEPTUAL SKETCH OUTLINING POTENTIAL SELA RIVER DISTRICT

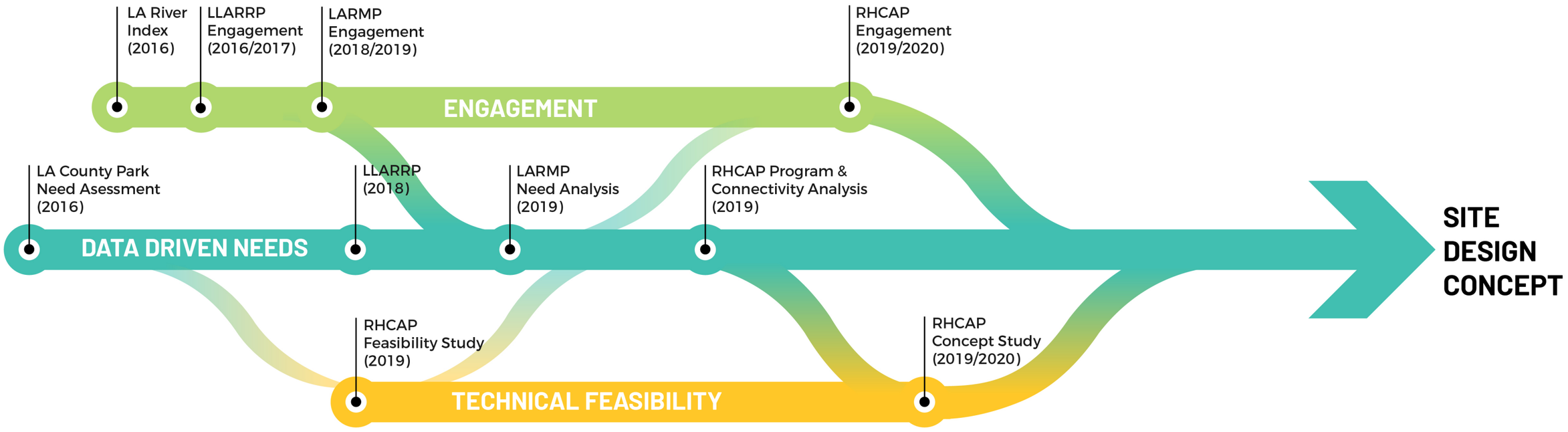
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Process**

This concept phase of work is comprised of three parallel threads:

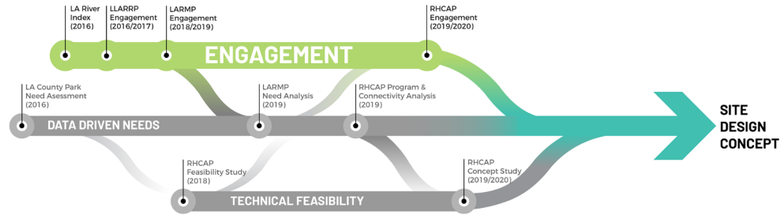
**ENGAGEMENT**
**DATA DRIVEN NEEDS**
**TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY**

The RHCAP team is working to braid these threads together to combine what is desired, what is needed, and what is possible into projects at the Rio Hondo Confluence.

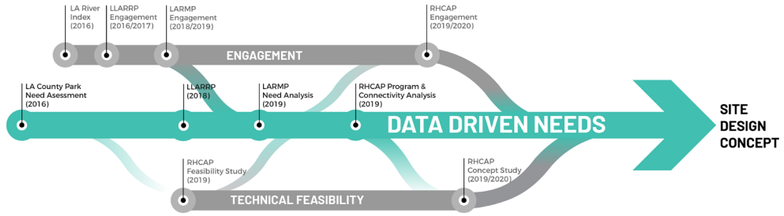


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

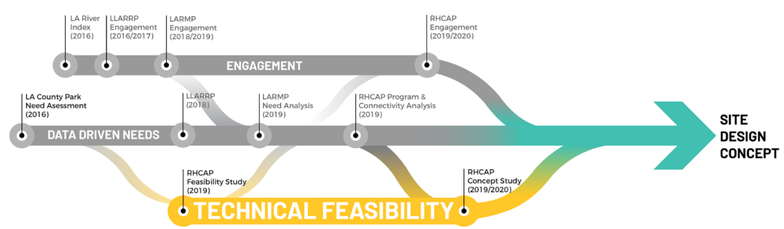
**Engagement**
In addition to traditional community meetings, this concept phase for the RHCAP included an innovative approach to community engagement centered around a digital survey tool, reaching one thousand residents near the site to engage in a digital baseline survey. Residents also engaged in a recontact survey, and online community discussions to help inform project development. Community responses to the multi-phase digital survey and comments at the public engagement meeting have defined the site design concept program and project outlines.




**Data Driven Needs**
As identified in the LA County Public Works (Public Works) RHCAP Feasibility Study (February 2019) for the area, the confluence of the LA River and the Rio Hondo represents a significant opportunity to integrate infrastructure, parks, and mobility improvements for the benefit of adjacent communities. This Concept Report builds upon the work in the LLARRP Signature Projects, the needs analysis of the LA River Master Plan, and the RHCAP Feasibility Study to further define specific projects that Public Works or partner agencies can undertake to reimagine this stretch of the LA River and meet community needs. The proposed improvements within this study propose a range of strategies for opportunity sites identified in the LA River Master Plan. These proposed sites are located within the channel, adjacent properties, and parallel electrical transmission line rights-of-way (ROWs).




**Technical Feasibility**
Hydraulic analyses reveal that the addition of vegetation along the sides of the channel or across the bottom of the channel in this area greatly reduces the channel capacity due to friction, reduction in cross sectional area, and the resulting hydraulic impacts (LA River Index 2016). Additionally, encroachment of development and infrastructure has foreclosed the possibility of significantly expanding the width of the river to create park space or vegetated areas within the channel without significant costs for land acquisition and infrastructure retrofits. The strategies within this Concept Report seek to create connective park space and water resources benefits while realistically addressing channel hydraulics and site needs without reducing the channel's flood capacity.




In addition to improving access to open space, creating active and passive recreation, and improving stormwater capture and onsite storage, the site has a significant opportunity to improve connectivity for communities separated by the 450-foot-wide LA River channel and the parallel I-710 freeway.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Projects**

Overall, twelve distinct projects are contained within this report. Multiple projects may be undertaken at once or projects can be phased. Projects include low flow modifications for habitat improvement and educational opportunities, wetlands for habitat and water quality improvement, bridges for improved connectivity, multi-benefit parks and trails, and platform parks (large-scale bridge parks) to create new open space and foster connectivity, ecosystem function, and cultural resources while respecting the very critical need for flood risk management.

1 SOUTHERN AVENUE CONNECTOR
2 LA RIVER PLATFORM PARK
3 RIO HONDO PLATFORM PARK
4 SOUTH GARFIELD TRANSMISSION RIGHT-OF-WAY PARK
5 NORTH IMPERIAL TRANSMISSION RIGHT-OF-WAY PARK
6 SOUTH IMPERIAL TRANSMISSION RIGHT-OF-WAY PARK
7 CONFLUENCE POINT PARK
8 BLUE PARK
9 WATER EDUCATION CENTER
10 IMPERIAL WETLANDS
11 SELA BRIDGE PARK
12 LYNWOOD CONNECTOR

The SELA Cultural Center, a project of the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, is adjacent to the RHCAP and is currently at a similar stage of project development. Other projects, such as Parque Dos Rios near the confluence and the Urban Orchard just north of the site are underway. Lastly, the Metro West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) line, which runs through the site near the confluence, is expected to be complete by 2028 and will significantly transform local and regional transit accessibility. A stop near the Rio Hondo is currently undergoing a feasibility study while the overall project is going through an environmental impact study (expected completion December 2020). All of these projects together along with other sites north of the Rio Hondo confluence comprise the "Major Project Zone" identified in the LA River Master Plan. Given this concentration of infrastructure and parks improvements planned for this zone, social and cultural effects of the improvements must be assessed for each project, and affordable housing requirements, local jobs programs and training, and cultural preservation must be planned in parallel. In addition to project concept designs, this report outlines strategies to address these topics in a way that can help build social and climate resilience.  Finally, phasing and coordination approaches are recommended that allow the timing of the 12 RHCAP projects to be orchestrated in parallel with other design efforts. Also, cost opinions for each project allow for prioritization and implementation decision making.