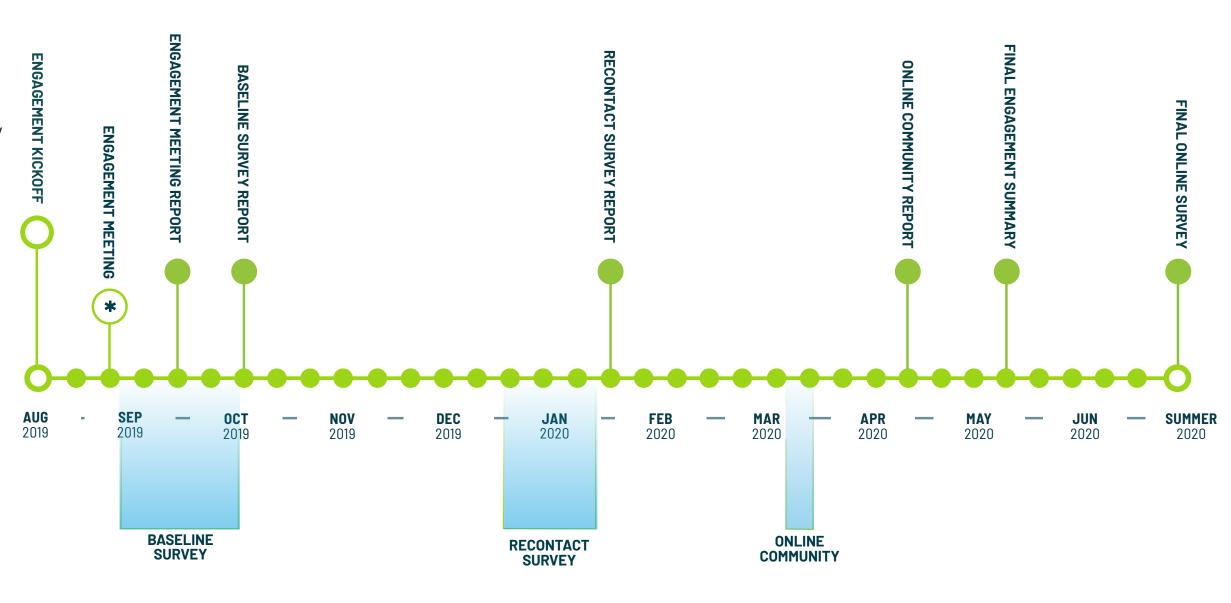
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT
ENGAGEMENT MEETING
BASELINE SURVEY - DIGITAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL (DPET)
RECONTACT SURVEY - DIGITAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL (DPET)
ONLINE COMMUNITY - DIGITAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL (DPET)
SITE CONCEPT BOARDS
SUMMARY

## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

The community engagement process was designed to gather and interpret community members' needs, desires, wants, and concerns as related to the transformation of the Rio Hondo Confluence Area. A study area of surrounding communities was directly and comprehensively engaged in a culturally appropriate manner.

For the Rio Hondo Confluence Area Project (RHCAP) Site Design Concept Phase, public engagement consisted of a robust program that built on the existing community input from the LA River Master Plan (expected completion 2020) with innovative quantitative and qualitative methods to better and more deeply understand the current public sentiment in SELA around the LA River.





#### OVERVIEW AND GOALS

The best public engagement processes open opportunities for meaningful dialogue and connection, sharing, and learning. Robust community participation informed the process and improved it, which in turn created buyin that will promote successful long-term outcomes for the project and community. A comprehensive public engagement program offered community members, including local business owners, NGOs, and many others, an outlet for their ideas for the revitalization of the LA River and the areas around the Rio Hondo confluence. A truly representative community resource was the goal.

This robust public engagement program was the critical piece to finding common ground and understanding amongst a diverse set of stakeholders in SELA and along the LA River, as well as allowing for the river's complex set of data, its history, and its uses to inform the process. As a complement to regional community meetings and digital interactions for the full LA River Master Plan, the quantitative approach for the RHCAP is scalable for future major project selections and will help to build a larger, richer data set to better inform both current and potential future projects and planning along the entire river corridor.



Source: OLIN

## **COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

INNOVATIVE + TRADITIONAL APPROACHES

For the RHCAP, the Public Engagement Program utilized effective technology to create an innovative public feedback method to incorporate perspectives from an exponentially larger sample of community members than traditional approaches. This method allowed stakeholders to voice their opinions, concerns, and understanding of the LA River revitalization efforts. Digital engagement was cost-effective, but, more importantly, it captured a broader set of feedback, which is why it was so successful. Additionally, this technology allowed members of the public to offer feedback to Public Works on potential uses of emerging concepts and to test specific concepts around the design and programming at the Rio Hondo Confluence.

Importantly, the program complemented existing public engagement efforts for the proposed SELA Cultural Center with measurable input data on community interests, concerns, and ideas.

Complementary to these innovative approaches, the Consultant Team continued regular outreach with key stakeholders using traditional methods, including one-on-ones, small and large group meetings as needed, and shared information with the broader community to keep stakeholders engaged and informed. The team partnered with local groups to help reach the diverse demographic and geographic sets of communities in the region, so as to expand access to the design process beyond traditional participants to all.

In addition to a Digital Public Engagement Tool with multiple phases, a public Engagement Meeting was held to mark the beginning of the process to gain community needs and desires for the study area as well as to provide a framework for discussion on what is possible from design and hydraulic perspectives. A second meeting was planned to continue the discussion with the community and to hone in on specific feedback based on initial concepts, needs, and desires. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and LA County's stay-at-home orders, the meeting was cancelled.



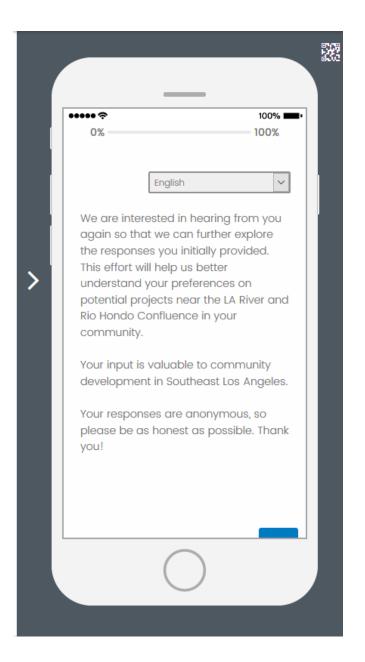
#### DIGITAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL (DPET)

#### **OVERVIEW**

A Digital Public Engagement Tool (DPET) was deployed by the Consultant Team for use as a part of the overall public engagement process to inform potential projects near the Rio Hondo Confluence. The DPET engaged participants to share their feedback through digital platforms online, which are accessible via multiple means, including computer and mobile devices, such as cell phones or tablets. The objective of using this technology was to obtain and evaluate both qualitative and quantitative feedback regarding the LA River from a demographically representative sample of the community, including most importantly, local residents that do not typically attend community meetings or other traditional community engagement events.

#### **KEY BENEFITS**

The multi-phase DPET employed innovative techniques and technology to consistently represent larger pools of respondents, faster responses, and more thorough perspectives compared to traditional research methods. Moreover, participants were representative of the demographic make-up of the community. In this case, the DPET was deployed to engage and seek feedback from residents that live within a two-mile radius of the Rio Hondo Confluence, many of which do not typically attend community meetings or other traditional community engagement events. The capabilities of the DPET were not limited to a "snapshot" in time, but also were longitudinal in that survey participants were engaged over time in a manner that generated both current and future opinions.



Source: RiverLA



The community meeting was held on September 10, 2019 at the South Gate Girls Club House in South Gate.

At this meeting, 68 members of the public attended, with an estimated overall attendance of 90 people. Community member and Cudahy City Council Member, Elizabeth Alcantar, was the emcee and gave welcoming remarks. Diana Morales, Field Representative for Speaker of the Assembly Anthony Rendon, Antonio Chapa, from Supervisor Solis' office, Carmen Gosey, from Supervisor Ridley-Thomas' office, Jacob O'Donnell, from Senator Gonzalez's office, and Viviana Gomez from Assemblymember Garcia's office also attended and gave welcoming remarks. After a brief presentation, members of the community were invited to view informational boards, provide input, and speak with members of the project team.



Source: OLIN

## **ENGAGEMENT MEETING**

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BOARDS**

In addition to the brief slide presentation, several boards were on display at the Open House stations. The "Where do you live?" board provided meeting attendees with the opportunity to share their address/community location. A large table-sized aerial map was utilized for comments regarding where community members would like to see better access to the river trail.

#### List of Boards:

- About LA County Public Works
- About the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan
- About the LA River Master Plan
- · Previous and Ongoing Planning
- Site History
- People
- Environment
- Water



**DOG WALKING** 

**GARDENING** 

**CONCERTS** 

**ARTS FESTIVALS** 

STREET ART

**URBAN CAMPING** 

**BIKING** 

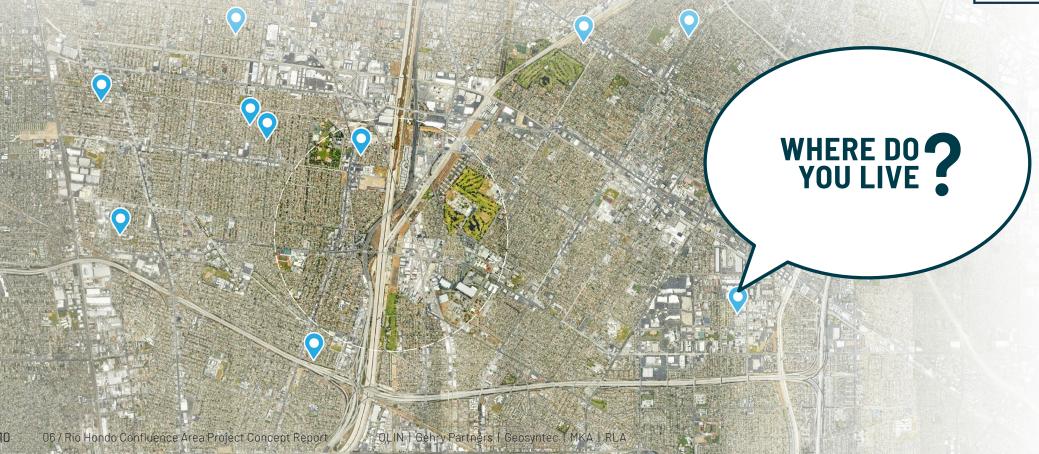
**EXERCISING** 

**HORSEBACK RIDING** 

**SKATEBOARDING** 

**PARKOUR** 

**ROCKCLIMBING** 



IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

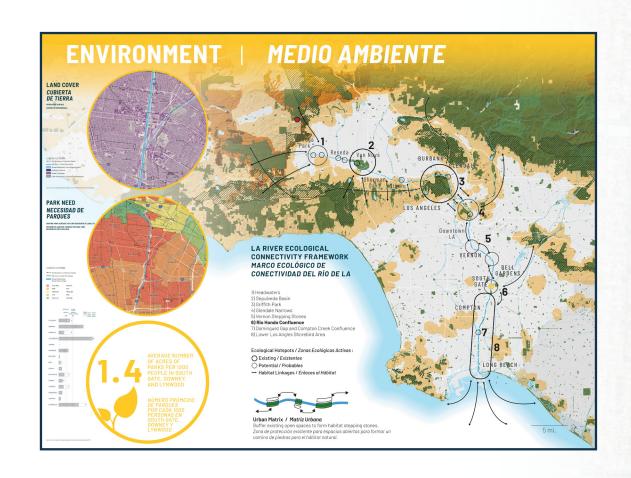
CONTROL WATER QUALITY

CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS

MEETING SPACES **URBAN ORCHARDS** 

ENHANCE HABITATS WILDLIFE

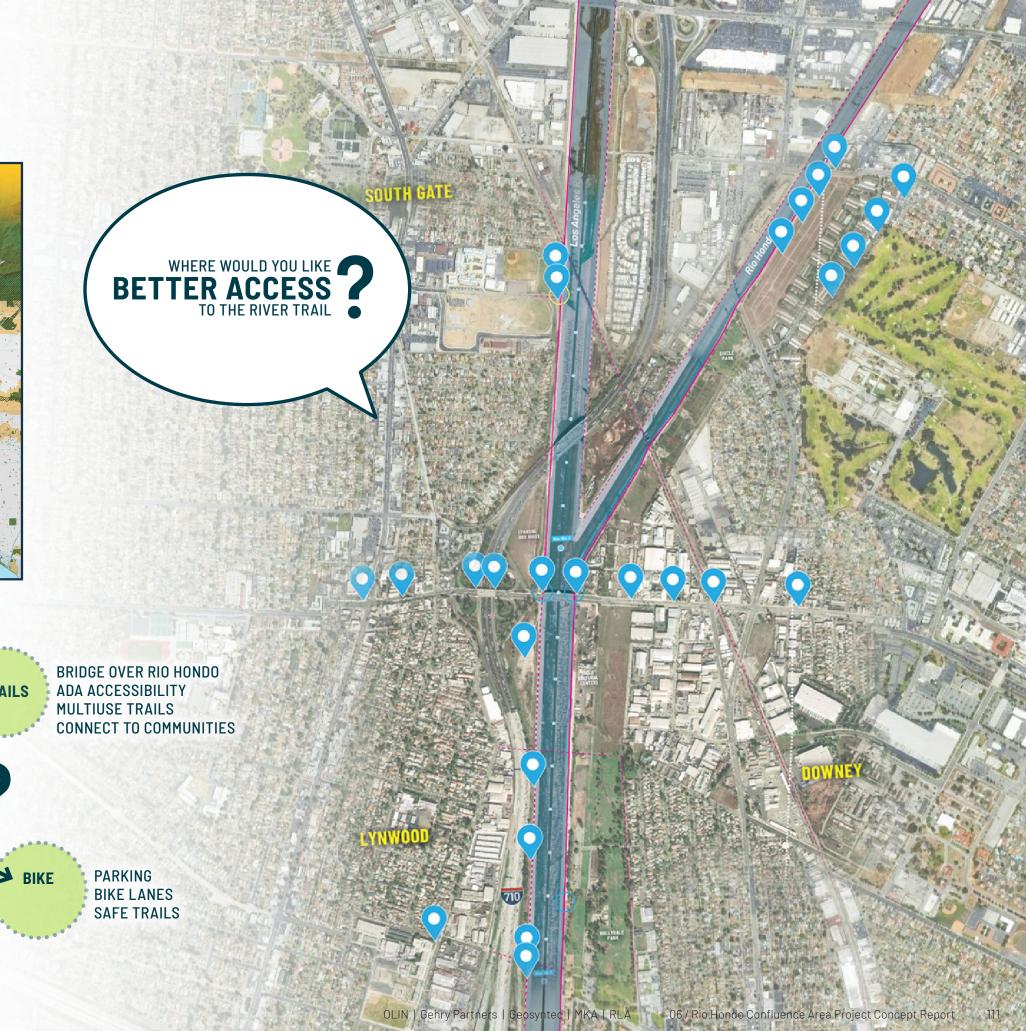
COMMUNITY SPACES



**TRAILS** 

WHAT FEATURES 7

DO YOU WANT AT THE RIO HONDO CONFLUENCE



## **BASELINE SURVEY (DPET)**

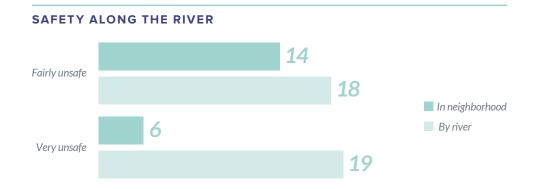
## SEPTEMBER 2019 - OCTOBER 2019

The first phase of DPET research consisted of a baseline survey with 1,000 demographically representative respondents to initially quantify the attitudes, opinions, and behaviors around their community, the LA River, and local parks. All respondents lived within a two-mile radius of the Rio Hondo Confluence and completed the survey online, via phone, or in person.

Almost 70% of the baseline respondents reported visiting the LA River. Of these, more than one-third claimed to feel unsafe doing so at night. Concern over safety by the river at night was almost twice the level of concern comparatively expressed over safety concerns in their neighborhood at night.



agreed that a safer LA River might increase their river usage



In comparison to parks/open spaces, the LA River had very low levels of visitation. Safety, at least partially, drove this, as three-quarters (74%) responded that a safer LA River might increase their river usage – which was selected more than any other option.

**Before** taking the survey

**62%** 

of respondents were unaware of plans to change the LA River.

81%

of respondents thought that the LA River would have a **positive** impact on their community.

#### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Art and Culture was viewed as important to 79% of respondents.

The most popular programs for a prospective community center were a library with a small computer lab, a concert space, open space to display local art, and a children's play area.

A more aesthetically pleasing landscape, a safer LA River, and the opportunity to improve their own health and well-being were the most popular options to increase respondents' use of the river.

Rebuilding of natural habitats, a new park and/or open space near the river, and a bridge park that connects both sides of the river were projects that respondents would most like to see along the LA River.

- RESTORATION OF WILDLIFE HABITAT
- 2 INCREASED **RECREATION** OPPORTUNITIES
- 3 MORE OPEN SPACES FOR **OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**

were found to have the **greatest benefit** for the community.

### **SURVEY TOPICS:**

#### **Lifestyle & Profiling**

Develops an understanding of respondents, their interests, and their involvement in the community.

#### **Community Sentiment**

Examines community needs and develops an understanding of important issues in the area.

#### **River Awareness**

Checks respondents' prior knowledge and opinions on plans to revitalize the LA River.

#### The Individual and the River

Examines the safety and accessibility of the LA River.

#### **Community Benefits**

Understanding community needs and how the LA River could have a positive impact.

#### **Project Tracks**

Discussing program options for the LA River and determining what will bring most people into the space.



Source: OLIN

RESPONDENTS WERE INTERESTED
IN A CULTURAL CENTER CLOSE
TO THE LA RIVER

## RECONTACT SURVEY (DPET)

## DECEMBER 2019 - JANUARY 2020

A second phase of digital engagement consisted of a recontact survey of 500 community members, including respondents who completed the baseline survey, within the two-mile radius of the river. The purpose of the recontact survey was to further explore the insights gained from the baseline survey and feedback provided at the first public community meeting to better understand the respondents' attitudes and opinions around

potential LA River projects. Since all recontact respondents had taken the baseline survey, we could be more specific and create detailed respondent profiles for segment analysis. The recontact survey consisted of multiple-choice and scale-based questions, with focused qualitative questions to help develop the next research phase, the week long Online Community.

#### Which LA River project features do you imagine would most improve the environment and quality of life for residents in your community?" "Unfortunately, the river is pretty ugly and dirty and has a bad reputation, so we'd have to clean everything up and give it a new reputation as somewhere nice to go. This will be very difficult because the homelessness Definitely green spaces. There is so "Safety features i.e. adequate much **natural beauty** and **native** lighting and law enforcement. plants and animals that could be Family oriented spaces and and crime and community members will be a roadblock to this. If we can solve these problems then we can go on to build a center or a park(s) or other useful things and attractions to visit..." developed and explored. Safety is an activities. Attractive issue. If you do all the work but the landscaping." homeless just take over, what it the point?" "Having beautiful, natural elements "LA river is not currently very pleasant "I like that we are getting community to visit or safe so we all support this plan. We do not want it to cost us so with safety features like good lighting feedback like this to involve our added to draw people into the area and opinions. I think the top priority would feel the ability to display unique cultural my plan would be to a) make it safe b) be to improve the environment here." elements to those local to the keep it clean c) make it green with community to create a sense of pride plants and trees d) make it family and ownership."

#### Features to include in your ideal river project:

**50%** 

PARK / OPEN SPACE

48%

MULTIUSE PATHS

48%

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

#### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Respondents prioritized public safety, natural beauty improvements, and increased recreation areas in order of importance in their plans to change the river.

SAFE AND COMFORTABLE SPACE TO VISIT

2 EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**3** CONNECTION TO NATURE

THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS FOR A PARK

## **SURVEY TOPICS:**

#### Part A: Demographics & Psychographics

Develops an understanding of respondents, their habits, and their behaviors.

#### **Part B: Community Involvement**

Explores respondents' relationship with their community: the issues it has, how to best solve them, & how to increase involvement.

#### Part C: Ideal Park

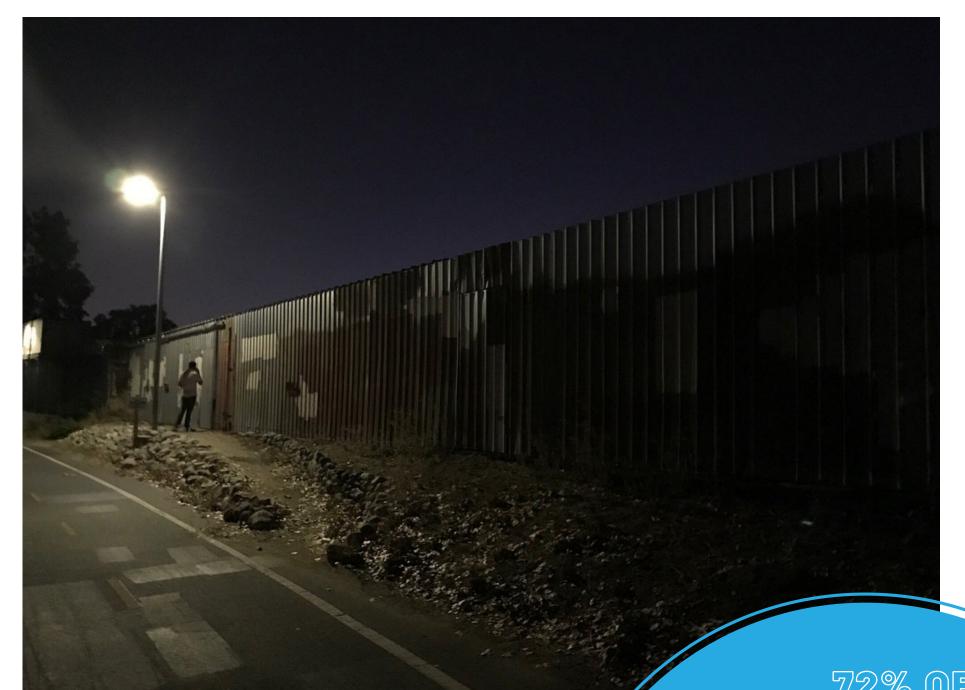
Looks at what respondents would most want to be included in any changes made to the LA River.

#### **Part D: Rio Hondo Confluence Site**

Introduces the project site, measuring participants reactions.

#### Part E: Sense Check

Checks how enjoyable respondents have found the process of sharing their views.



Source: https://twitter.com/evolveprojectla

RESPONDENTS RANKED PUBLIC SAFETY AS A TOP PRIORITY IN PLANS TO CHANGE THE RIVER, AND A LACK OF LIGHTING WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT SAFETY CONCERN

## **ONLINE COMMUNITY (DPET)**

## **MARCH 2020**

The third phase of digital engagement consisted of a seven-day Online Community, akin to a focus group, encompassing feedback from 50 respondents from within the two-mile radius of the river. The Online Community questions were qualitative in nature and the

platform functioned similar to a chat room that was moderated 24/7. The Online Community discussion further explored insights received from the previous baseline and recontact surveys, and informed the concept design work.

## **EXAMPLE PROJECT CONCEPT**





#### Top features ranked among proposed projects:

#1

MULTIUSE PATHS AND NATURE TRAILS

#2

NATURAL AND WILDLIFE HABITATS
AND VIEWING PLATFORMS /
OBSERVATION DECKS

#### **KEY TAKEAWAYS**

Safety is of utmost concern to residents in this area, especially in open, public areas such as parks. The themes of wildlife and nature were very important to most participants' understanding of health and well-being, and very attractive as a central focus of any new project. Providing entertainment spaces, locations to display local art, and exercise/recreation areas were also important to celebrate the diversity of this area.

The majority of participants were very impressed with the proposed project concepts they were shown, asserting that the ideas captured aspects and features which were important for the community. Respondents further conveyed that with significant thought and effort to mitigate potential issues around safety in these new areas, they would be excited for plans to get underway.

SAFETY

HOMELESSNESS

**3** HOUSING PRICES

TOP ISSUES AFFECTING THE COMMUNITY

## **SURVEY TOPICS:**

#### Part A: A Focus on Community Life

Life within the community; Issues within and around the community; Prospect of a new park or river area and the potential impact on community issues.

#### Part B: Existing Park Experience

Describing a typical visit and focus on safety and security.

#### Part C: Existing Park Experience

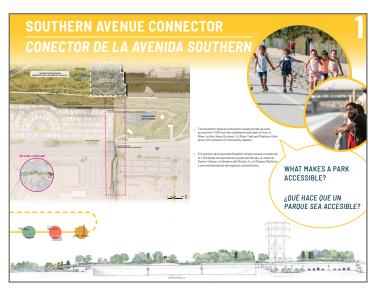
Imagining the ideal park experience.

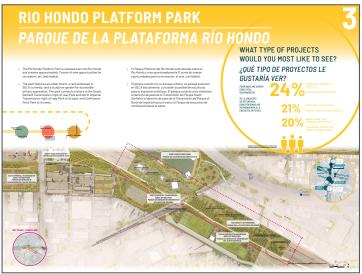
#### **Part D: Project Concepts**

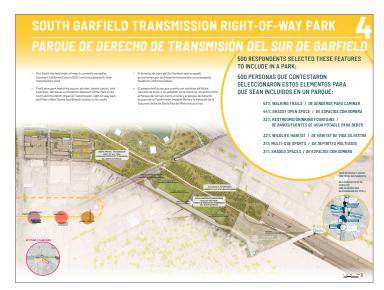
5 example project concepts (Imperial Wetlands, Confluence Point Park, Blue Park, Platform Parks and Connector Gateways) with many features listed and ranked along with the concept of Story Loops, routes around different projects and the ability to enjoy certain activities on the way (Arts and Culture, Health and Wellness, Ecosystem Exploration, Water Education, and Equestrian).



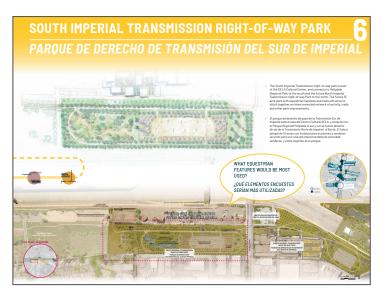
## **SITE CONCEPT BOARDS\***

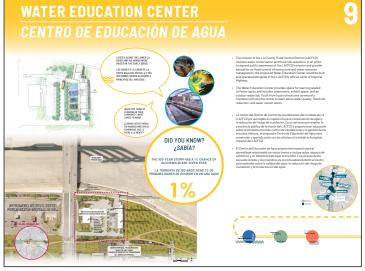










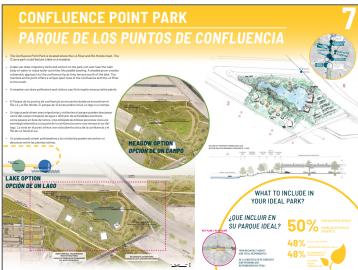




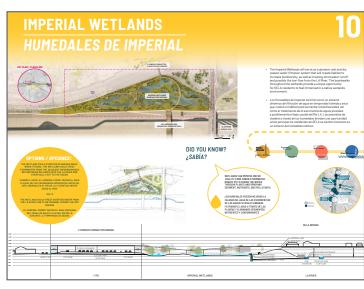


<sup>\*</sup>Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings the scheduled public meeting to review the proposed Site Design Concept was replaced with an online survey and comment opportunity.

















## **ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY**

Spanning approximately six months from Fall 2019 through Summer 2020, the comprehensive community engagement process consisted of multiple phases of digital and in-person community outreach. Engaging community members through these various types of discussions and interactive means allowed Public Works to collect data and feedback and helped to refine an understanding of program needs, concerns, and desires throughout the Rio Hondo Confluence Area.

Throughout the engagement process, the majority of people were highly interested and positive about the prospect of new park space, especially as a way to bring the community together. Arts, culture, and community-based events were seen as significant assets of the area, and many people expressed interest in the growth of these initiatives. Safety, housing affordability, homelessness, maintenance, and access were consistent concerns, and a desire to augment the area's natural and wildlife spaces was expressed as an important way to benefit the health and well-being of the community. As projects continue, engagement is critical.

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings the scheduled public meeting to review the proposed Site Design Concept was replaced with an online survey and comment opportunity in August/September 2020.