

# LOWER LOS ANGELES RIVER REVITALIZATION PLAN (LLARRP) WORKING GROUP MEETING #12

Thursday, April 6, 2017 ♦ 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm  
Expo Arts Center, 4321 Atlantic Ave, Long Beach

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

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### INTRODUCTION

On April 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 twelfth 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 expanded definitions of the planning framework and elements, and discuss potential types of river-oriented development.

#### **Meeting Format and Agenda**

The twelfth meeting of the Working Group occurred on April 6, 2017, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Expo Arts Center, 4321 Atlantic Ave, Long Beach. Approximately 20 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 then introduced Al Austin II, Councilmember for the Eighth District of the City of Long Beach, and President of the Board of Directors of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments. Councilmember Austin expressed his enthusiasm for and the importance of AB 530 and the planning process, particularly because it is facilitating closer collaboration among the jurisdictions and partners along the Lower LA River corridor. He also highlighted related projects in the City that have direct bearing on the corridor, including: Dominguez Gap, Deforest Wetlands, the Riverwalk housing project, and over 40 acres of passive and active recreation spaces under development in the Eighth District alone. He concluded his welcoming remarks by celebrating the many positive changes in recent years in the City, as well as it's diversity of people, uses and opportunities.

Mark Stanley then introduced Daniel Iacofano of MIG, Inc., who served as meeting facilitator and provided an overview of the agenda (Attachment A) and meeting format before asking for self-introductions from all participants. A representative of the City of Long Beach provided a presentation of projects with direct bearing on the Lower LA River. Representatives of two Plan Element Committees provided brief updates of the outcomes of their recent meetings and activities. Representatives of the River Segment Committees provided oral reports on emerging opportunity areas and potential projects for closer study. Mr. Iacofano then led the Working

Group in a review of case studies of river-oriented development, and he facilitated discussions and comments from the Working Group and audience members regarding examples that may be instructive to initiatives on the corridor.

During these reports, 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 PRESENTATIONS: CITY OF LONG BEACH AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK**

Participants received presentations from representatives of the City of Long Beach and the project team to provide the latest updates on the City’s and LLARRP planning and/or implementation efforts.

### ***City of Long Beach***

Larry Rich, Sustainability Coordinator of the City of Long Beach provided a slideshow presentation that provided a basic background of the City and initiatives that may have influence on the LLARRP. He explained the current status and future plans for the following projects:

- Deforest Wetlands
- C. Davis Molina Park
- Wrigley Greenbelt
- Willow Springs
- Drake Chavez Greenbelt
- Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater

### ***Planning Framework***

Oliver Galang, Project Manager with Tetra Tech, provided an overview of the iterative and analytical process for the development, screening, and prioritization of opportunities along the Lower LA River. He explained that in the Initial Assessment, baseline conditions are analyzed and provide a starting point for defining objectives within each of the plan elements. Metrics will be defined to provide measurement standards within each objective: for example: acre-feet of water captured for stormwater interventions. He also explained that the LLARRP “building blocks” will consist of these interventions and their implementation measures, which will be evaluated for their performance. Based on the evaluation results, these building blocks may be modified to improve performance towards the objectives. In terms of process and schedule, multiple iterations of this process will occur, with the aim of achieving a final set of interventions and initiating additional technical analysis of the final framework by July 2017.

Mr. Galang also explained that the Goals, Objectives and Baseline Conditions Memo distributed to the Working Group in the preceding week provides a detailed overview of river by the plan

elements: Water and Environment; Public Realm; and Community Economics, Health and Equity. For each element the memo outlines the goals, objectives, guiding principles and baseline metrics and conditions. Working Group comments are encouraged within the coming week.

### ***Guiding Principles***

Mr. Galang also provided an overview of the guiding principles by plan element, as follows:

#### **Community Economics, Health, and Equity Principles**

- Prevent Gentrification and Displacement
- Address Homelessness
- Develop Local Business and Workforce
- Increase Public Access and Assets
- Improve Community Identity and Pride
- Provide Education
- Increase Economic Mobility and Neighborhood Stability

#### **Public Realm**

- Create Continuous Green Space
- Enhance Connectivity
- Provide Multiple Uses and Benefits
- Support Existing Communities
- Enhance Public Transportation and Parking
- Provide Education
- Increase Safety
- Enhance Amenities

#### **Water and Environment**

- Enhance Local Water Capture and Use
- Increase Stormwater Quality and Watershed Health
- Address Ecosystem Service and Floodplain Enhancement
- Manage Risk of Flooding
- Provide Education

### ***Working Group Discussion***

Working Group and audience members asked questions of and provided feedback to the committee, with project team responses in *italics*.

- When will we engage the community with these latest developments? – *The community engagement efforts that are being launched now will include opportunities to review this information, particularly in the community workshops anticipated to occur in May 2017.*

- Will city councils and elected officials throughout the corridor receive this information?  
– *Yes, the project team will request to make public presentations to elected officials in the near term.*

## **SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS: PLAN ELEMENT COMMITTEES**

Participants received presentations from representatives of two Plan Element Committees to review the latest updates on the committees' outcomes and next steps in the planning process.

### ***Community Engagement Committee***

Mr. Pendoley provided a brief update regarding the Community Engagement Committee's recent activities.

- **Branding:** The Working Group and Committee confirmed the final brand and logo design as shown in the slideshow and emerging project collateral, including the guidelines for using the logo and the Project Information Sheet
- **Interactive Mapping Tool:** The tool is now live and available for public participation. Mr. Pendoley encouraged Working Group members to share it with their communities and constituents
- **Upcoming Engagement Activities:** Community presentations, river and trail tours, pop-up events, and community workshops are all in the process of being scheduled to occur in the next two months
- **Outreach Toolkit:** The toolkit contains the Project Information Sheet, input forms, maps, FAQs, and display materials.

Next steps for the Committee include implementation of the activities and incorporating the brand in all project materials.

### ***Implementation Committee***

Mr. Galang presented on behalf of the Implementation Committee, explaining their latest developments. Recent Committee discussions focused on the following:

- Governance approach for the Lower LA River (planning, implementation, and operations and maintenance)
- Local/applicable example governance structures that could be considered by the committee
- Governance options (e.g., JPA, MOU, existing organizations, etc)

The Committee developed a matrix that outlines topical areas related to governance as currently identified by the other committees. It also identifies existing and conceptual organizations that may have a role in these areas.

Multi-objective efforts that may require new governance approaches may include the following:

- Habitat/Greenspace
- Transportation (pathways)
- Recreation (types: active/passive)
- Homeless encampments
- Watershed education
- Safety and security for the local community and for the users

Additional areas that require additional discussion and analysis include the following:

- Implementation of land trusts as an approach to control housing/rental costs
- Brownfields remediation at many available areas along the Lower LA River require some level of remediation, which require significant resources and investments that are no longer available through redevelopment funding
- Historical/philanthropic efforts/centers are not addressed, but would require a structure to support its implementation
- Funding organizations and strategies are needed to enable access to apply for funding grants.

The Committee will meet again in April to discuss the following:

- Potential governance structures
- Funding and financing strategies available, in development, or needed revenues
- Policies/programs required to support implementation

## **SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS: RIVER SEGMENT COMMITTEES**

Participants received presentations from representatives of the River Segment Committees. The purpose of the presentations was to review each committee's guiding principles, site opportunities, and gaps for additional opportunities to develop the building blocks.

### ***Vernon to Rio Hondo Segment***

Elizabeth Alcantar with the County of LA provided the segment presentation. For the portion located at Atlantic Boulevard in the City of Vernon, and the adjacent cities of Bell and Maywood, the potential opportunities include the following.

- Water resources – water quality and potential water supply from the storm drain
- Access and connectivity – need for a new multi-use trail and a bridge to connect the communities to the site, to the adjacent facilities (park, YMCA, school)
- Habitat restoration – along the river, adjacent to the 710 Freeway

At the Firestone area, with Bell Gardens to the east and South Gate to the west and south along the River, the following potential building blocks are being considered:

- Bridge connection across the river and the 710 freeway
- Environmental restoration areas on both sides of the river. Once restored, both areas have the potential to provide development/recreation opportunities for these communities

- Multi-use trail opportunity along the east side of the river

At the Rio Hondo confluence, following are multiple opportunities and potential building blocks:

- The proposed Urban Orchard Project has the potential to provide water resource benefits for water quality and stream restoration, park space, and environmental restoration
- Connectivity with multi-use trails and bridges across the LA River/Rio Hondo Channel
- The Parque Dos Rios provides habitat, water quality, and potential water supply through recharge

Opportunity gaps for the segment include the following:

- River-oriented development Opportunities for both housing and commercial development areas. A focus on local business is paramount for this community
- Connectivity should be considered not just to the river, but to communities and destination areas
- Enhanced signage to reflect the historical significance of these areas. This will enhance the community identify and value towards the history of the area
- Artwork/murals have potential applications, particularly at Atlantic, where the river levee is elevated with a retaining wall

### **Working Group Discussion**

Working Group and audience members asked questions of and provided feedback to the committee, with responses in *italics*.

- What under consideration related to water resources? – *This includes opportunities for reclamation and conditions related to infiltration.*
- What crossing opportunities are under consideration? – *Multiple locations have been identified, with the need to also identify potential funding.*

### ***Rio Hondo to Compton Creek Segment***

Jim Meyer with Trails4All presented the latest developments with the Rio Hondo to Compton Creek Segment Committee.

The southerly portion is adjacent to Hollydale Park in the City of South Gate. The following potential opportunities are being considered for this area:

- Water resource potential with inundation areas: stormwater capture can be applied for beneficial use, such as irrigation water for the adjacent park area
- Multi-use trail for the west levee of the river can be continued
- Additional habitat restoration opportunities that are within the south side of Imperial Highway

The Compton Creek Confluence area is adjacent to the Dominguez Gap wetlands on the east side, and the groundwater recharge basin on the west side of the river.

- Water Resources opportunities include potential water quality enhancement by diverting additional flows, inundation areas with a rubber dam, and potential water supply through stormwater harvesting techniques.
- Trails and access are particularly needed, since there are equestrian communities on the west side
- The bike path from Compton Creek needs to connect to the LA River bike path. Additional trails and bridges are required to accomplish this
- Available vacant areas have the potential for park space, open space, or development opportunities

The Wrigley Heights and old Driving range area is north and south of the 405 freeway, in Long Beach. The potential opportunities include the following:

- Large undeveloped areas have the potential for water quality and water supply
- Bridges are required to provide connectivity to trails and for the local community
- Environmental restoration of the Wrigley Heights area may be required, also provide for development opportunities for park space, commercial space, or a combination
- Multi-Use trails and river crossings will provide access to additional areas along the LA River

Opportunity gaps for this segment include the following:

- Engage river adjacent businesses to create river-facing enhancements (landscape, lunch/picnic areas, etc)
- Create street ends/green streets leading to the River (like Frog Spot)
- Install a permanent kiosk at the parks with information about the WG and project
- Propose rent and housing prices stabilization measures
- Preserve the vacant spaces as open and green space
- Improve signage for more effective shared use of trails
- Address the unique needs of equestrian users including crossings and shared trails

### ***Compton Creek to LA River Outlet Segment***

Michelle Mowery with the City of LA Trails4All presented the latest developments with the Compton Creek to LA River Outlet Segment Committee.

The Willow Street location is a very unique area as it is the beginning of the soft-bottom section of the LA River. This area is within the City of Long Beach, and has the following potential opportunities:

- Multi-Use trails and bridges to provide community access to both sides of the river levees
- Water resources potential include adjacent stream restoration to divert upstream stormwater to the adjacent areas of the levee
- Potential in-channel access and walking areas during the dry season

The LA River near the Shoemaker bridge/Shoreline Drive is in the City of Long Beach. Potential opportunities within this area include:

- Water quality and supply potential for the Long Beach MUST Project and wetlands area
- Recreation and habitat potential along the east levee and Drake-Chavez Park
- The Shoemaker Bridge provides the opportunity to create a bridge development, commercial space, park space, and trail connectivity

The opportunity gaps include the following:

- Water and Environment: Water supply, habitat balance, plant palates
- Public Realm: Access points, restrooms, continuous greenspace, open space, recreation (active)
- Community Economics, Health, and Equity: Measure H – leverage for addressing homelessness, affordable housing development

### ***Next Steps***

Next steps for all of the River Segment Committees are as follows:

- Advance opportunity sites and apply additional building block opportunities
- Conduct a cursory, preliminary assessment
- Identify multi-benefit opportunities

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION: RIVER-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Iacofano facilitated an interactive discussion with participants regarding the concept of river-oriented development. First, he explained that it is physical development which responds to and enhances the river environment and its surroundings, and that it can include all types of development such as: housing, retail, office, manufacturing, community centers, open space, trails, stormwater infrastructure and transit centers. Desired outcomes for this type of development include the following:

- Community development: homes, neighborhoods, recreation, cultural institutions, and infrastructure
- Economic development: job creation, public revenue generation
- Ecosystem restoration/preservation: waterways, habitat, water supply and quality

Policy and program considerations for this type of development include equity, inclusivity, affordability, connectivity and quality of life.

Mr. Iacofano then showcased a series of case studies of river-oriented development. After a brief explanation and review of imagery of each study, he asked participants to respond to the following series of questions:

- Is this type of development suitable for the Lower LA River?
- Which factors would be necessary to make this type of development more acceptable?
- Where would this type of development be most appropriate?



Participants provided their responses to these questions through multiple choice answers displayed in the presentation. Participants used electronic polling “clickers” to submit their responses to each question, and the results displayed instantly on screen for viewing. Detailed slides and images of the case studies are available in the appendix of this report. Following are concise summaries of participants’ general responses to the questions and discussions.

### **Seine River, Paris, France**

- Flexible or pop-up oriented interventions and activities are appropriate
- Activities could include street-vending from local small businesses to support economic development and business growth
- Water-oriented and sand-based activities are not relevant as the LA River typically has minimal water, and such activities are available on the coastline

***Working Group Scoring Summary:*** *Worth considering in some form but seems to be more appropriate where there is water permanently in the channel.*

### **Bikeway Village, Imperial Beach, CA; Press Café, Fort Worth, TX**

- Projects that support active transportation and trail uses are very suitable for the corridor
- Repurposing of existing industrial facilities for commercial/civic uses could occur at multiple locations throughout the corridor

***Working Group Scoring Summary:*** *Strong yes!*

### **Torpedo Factory, Arlington, VA**

- Projects that may facilitate gentrification or displacement are undesirable
- Artists spaces and collaboratives that are not live/work may be acceptable
- Affordability is important for artist opportunities
- Such projects should be located near transit
- Appropriate reuse of existing facilities should be “four sided” (i.e., easily accessible) and inclusive of everyone
- Appropriate live/work opportunities may include: commerce, job development, existing residents and support services
  - Street-vending focus may be relevant to the Lower LA River communities

***Working Group Scoring Summary:*** *Worth considering if anti-gentrification and anti-displacement mechanisms are in place; lower scale and less intense development would be more appropriate.*

### **Napa River, Napa, CA**

- It is important to distinguish between interventions/projects designed for flood control versus river-oriented development
- Ensure that buildings are not too tall and block views (though possibly strategic to block poor views with appropriate standards)

**Working Group Scoring Summary:** *Worth considering if anti-gentrification and anti-displacement mechanisms are in place; lower scale and less intense development would be more appropriate.*

### **Davis Farmers Market, Davis, CA**

- An open market facility in public open space or park areas would be relevant
- Explore creation of community gardens that could feed the market sales
- Create policies that promote a localized food system

**Working Group Scoring Summary:** *Strong yes! Spaces for all types of community-owned retail should also be considered.*

### **Michelle Obama Library, Long Beach, CA; Center for Sustainable Communities, Compton, CA**

- Community-serving, nonprofit organizations are needed in the corridor communities and would be appropriate

**Working Group Scoring Summary:** *Strong yes!*

### **Anacostia 11<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, Washington DC**

- The practicality of affording the heavy investment of such a project is a major concern
  - A long-term phased approach could make this implementable
- Many similar crossings and opportunities exist on the Lower LA River
  - Urban Orchard
  - 710 freeway cap
- Effective design should focus on human-scale, multi-modal, and landscaping
- The Sixth Street Bridge in the City of LA may be a strong local example

**Working Group Scoring Summary:** *Worth considering in some form but could be less fancy.*

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Waterfront Park, Chattanooga, TN**

- Strong gentrification and displacement controls would be necessary for this to be appropriate on the corridor
- Such a project may be appropriate near the outlet at Long Beach

***Working Group Scoring Summary:*** *Worth considering in some form.*

**NEXT STEPS**

Mr. Iacofano and Mr. Stanley concluded the meeting by thanking Working Group members and reviewing objectives for the next committee meetings, which are listed on the project website.

The next Working Group meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Thursday, May 4, 2017, Downey
- Thursday, June 1, 2017, South Gate