

ASSEMBLY BILL 466
UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN
WORKING GROUP MEETING #5

Thursday, May 23, 2019 ♦ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N Buena Vista Street, Burbank CA 91505

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

INTRODUCTION

On May 23, 2019, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) hosted the fifth meeting of the Working Group for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Revitalization Plan (the Plan). The purpose of the meeting was to: receive reports from the Water & Environment Committee and the People & Recreation Committee; receive a report on key findings from the community engagement meetings during Phase 1; and consider a resolution for approving prioritization methodology for potential projects.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The fifth meeting of the Working Group occurred on May 23, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. at the Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N Buena Vista Street, Burbank. 17 Working Group members and alternates as well as approximately 20 community members attended the meeting.

Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Los Angeles City Councilmember, and Working Group Chair, called the meeting to order. Following the administration of the oath of office to Working Group alternates who had not yet received the oath, Chair Rodriguez called for approval of the meeting minutes among the Working Group members and opened the public comment period. Chair Rodriguez then called for reports from the chairs of the Water and Environment Committee and the People and Recreation Committee. Sarah Rascon of MRCA initiated the staff update with a report on the findings from the first round of community outreach meetings, with assistance from Andy Pendoley and Esmeralda Garcia of MIG, part of the project team.

As part of Working Group members' consideration of a resolution approving prioritization methodology, project team members Jan Dyer, Jean Yang and Mia Lehrer of MLA Studio presented a review of the data and analysis review conducted to date. Jaime Sayre of Tetra Tech, part of the project team, also contributed to the presentation by reviewing the typologies previously approved by the Working Group. Ms. Rascon and Ms. Sayre also presented on the proposed evaluation criteria for potential project sites, including the prerequisite requirements

and scoring methodology, and illustrated application of the criteria and scoring system against a selection of sites. Working Group members discussed input and proposed revisions to the criteria as part approval of the resolution. Chair Rodriguez concluded the meeting with announcements from Working Group members, and a reminder about future meeting dates.

During Working Group discussions and public comment periods, Mr. Pendoley of MIG recorded key outcomes and discussion points on a wall-sized piece of paper, or “wallgraphic,” and Payton Smith of Tetra Tech provided additional detailed notes to inform this summary report. The following sections include a summary of the discussion points, and a copy of the wallgraphic is included at the end of this report. Related meeting materials are available on the project website: www.upperlariver.org.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

Public Comment

Comments provided by members of the public in attendance included the following:

- Develop bikeways as part of improvements to Tujunga Wash and Pacoima Wash to address loss of bikeways on Van Nuys Boulevard, and to provide improved connectivity and recreation for these communities. John Laue
- Revise the proposed scoring criteria to include wildlife as part of: (1.) new access to the river and tributaries; and (2.) improve wildlife passage. John Howell

Committee Reports

Keith Lilley of the Water and Environment Committee reported that the committee addressed the project process and timeline, including the proposed web-based survey tool and project types and scales.

Miguel Luna of the People and Recreation Committee reported that the committee discussed similar topics and focused its discussions on the importance of the mission themes and the prioritization process. He also emphasized the importance of tracking and reconciling the data and input that are collected throughout the planning process

Staff Update: Community Engagement Phase 1

Ms. Rascon recapped the purpose of the first phase of community engagement meetings, including the non-governmental organizations that supported outreach, noticing and facilitation of the four meetings conducted throughout the plan area. Andy Pendoley of MIG provided a brief overview of key findings across the meetings, which included the public’s focus on safety and security, naturalized environments, local culture and history, watershed management, and a community-driven process. Ms. Rascon concluded the presentation by

noting that community engagement during Phase 2 will include public review of proposed projects through in-person meetings and an online survey.

Resolution: Approval of Prioritization Methodology

Ms. Dyer, Ms. Lehrer, Ms. Yang, and Ms. Sayre presented a review of the data and analysis review conducted to date, the approved typologies, and the proposed evaluation criteria for potential project sites with prerequisite requirements and scoring methodology. The presentation also included examples of scoring of the following sample sites: Wilbur Debris Basin (Aliso Canyon); Chandler Tributary Access (Burbank Western); Pacoima Spreading Grounds (Pacoima Wash); Flint Canyon Channel Enhancement (Arroyo Seco Wash); and Hansen Dam Lake Revitalization (Tujunga Wash).

Working Group members' discussion points and questions, with project team responses noted in *italics*, included the following:

- Revise the planning and evaluation approach toward comprehensive watershed management focused on watershed health, biodiversity, endangered species, climate change, and integrated planning with parallel efforts.
- Provide more details and context about potential project elements and designs
- How does the scoring system evaluate the value of proposed project designs? – *The scoring provides a value of the opportunities and potential.*
- Review potential redundancies in the scoring methodology. – *Some redundancies are important to validating a project's value*
- Include community members' perspectives in evaluating project sites and the scoring outcomes
- Are there scales or degrees of scoring? – *Some criteria including partial scoring*
- What is the process for amending the project list? – *The list is currently a working draft, and revisions are welcomed.*
- How is "transit" defined? – *Transit includes bus, light rail, and commuter rail*
- How will the criteria filter the potential sites? – Each tributary will include potential sites as a result of the scoring.
- How could the evaluation criteria be revised in the future? – *This could be included in the Revitalization Plan recommendations and as part of implementation. Additional discussion may be included in Phase 2 of the planning process.*
- Identify broader, watershed-wide strategies and approaches in a "top-down" approach – *The subcommittees could be charged with this level of review*
- Review how the collection of projects perform on a tributary.

The Working Group adopted the resolution approving prioritization methodology for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan with the following modification to resolution #6: "Approves the preliminary prioritization methodology for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan, recognizing that a final project list may result in modification."

Additionally, the working group made a motion to include the edits brought forth by John Howell, as noted in the public comment section of this report. Those edits pertain to the scoring criteria. Modifications in bold applied to the Core Qualities Score section:

Provides new **human or wildlife** access to the river, tributary, or open space.

Improves ecosystem health by adding at least 0.1 acre of habitat **or by improving wildlife passage.**

Mr. Brick was noted as being opposed to the main motion.

NEXT STEPS AND CLOSE

The project team briefly recapped the upcoming meeting dates for the Working Group and community engagement activities. Chair Rodriguez then closed the meeting by thanking Working Group members and members of the public for their participation and attendance.

ATTENDEES

Working Group Members: Michael Affeldt the alternate designee for Barbara Romero, Tim Brick, Eric Callow the alternate designee for Caroline Craven, Stephanie Campbell the alternate designee for Sean Woods, Bertha Ruiz-Hoffman the alternate designee for Alina Bokde, Hon. Emily Gabel-Luddy, Miguel Luna, Phuoc Le the alternate designee for Enrique Zaldivar, Yvette Lopez-Ledesma the alternate designee for Hon. Nury Martinez, Keith Lilley the alternate designee for Mark Pestrella, John Popoch the alternate designee for Hon. Bob Blumenfield, Chris Perry the alternate designee for Hon. Kathryn Barger, Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Julian Venegas the alternate designee for Hon. Sylvia Ballin, Marsha Ramos, Brian Stedje, and Jeremy Wolf.

Project team: Sarah Rascon (MRCA), Melissa Vega (MRCA), Mia Lehrer (Studio-MLA), Jan Dyer (Studio-MLA), Jean Yang (Studio-MLA), Jaime Sayre (Tetra Tech), Gina Palino (Tetra Tech), Payton Smith (Tetra Tech), Ira Artz (Tetra Tech), Andy Pendoley (MIG), Esmeralda Garcia (MIG).

WALLGRAPHIC

