



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PLAN

The creation of the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Revitalization Plan (*the Plan*) represents an extraordinary and timely opportunity for the surrounding communities to experience historic change. The Los Angeles (LA) River is a heavily channelized waterway, flowing 51 miles from its inception at the confluence of Bell Creek and Arroyo Calabasas to its outlet in Long Beach. It is surrounded by densely urbanized and populated land uses. The upper LA River meanders eastward through the Simi Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, the San Fernando Valley, and into the Elysian Valley, crossing multiple jurisdictions (see map on next page). While there are a few areas that have more natural river type features than the concrete channels the LA River is known for, these small pockets offer potential for ecological and wild-life habitat restoration. Portions of the tributaries also contain natural river features that foster ecology and habitat and offer potential as well as opportunities for varying scales of restoration. There are unique challenges that constrain state and local agencies as they attempt to manage, maintain, reimagine, and revitalize the River and its adjacent communities. This plan seeks to discuss, examine, and analyze the role of the often forgotten or neglected tributaries as described in Assembly Bill (AB) 466. This legislation authorized the creation of an appointed Working Group for the Upper LA River and Its Tributaries using a community-centric, watershed management approach to develop a revitalization plan—included hereafter.

A WORKING GROUP FOR THE UPPER LA RIVER WATERSHED

In September 2017, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 466 (AB 466)—establishing within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), a Working Group focused on the revitalization efforts of the upper Los Angeles River and its tributaries (ULART). This Working Group, similar to the Working Group established by the AB 530 for the Lower LA River, was charged with the development of a plan

“through watershed-based planning methods and community engagement, a revitalization plan for the Upper Los Angeles River, the tributaries of the Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash, and any additional tributary waterway that the Working Group determines to be necessary. The bill would require the revitalization plan to address the unique and diverse needs of the Upper Los Angeles River, Pacoima

Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash, and the communities through which they pass, and to include watershed education programs”. In addition, “The revitalization plan shall require a master planning process that includes community engagement and a prioritization of disadvantaged communities.” Governor Brown signed State Senate Bill (SB 1126) in September 2018, which added the Arroyo Seco as a waterway.

“The revitalization plan shall address the unique and diverse needs of the Upper Los Angeles River, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash and the communities through which they pass”

—AB 466



PLAN LAYOUT

This plan was laid out in two volumes; Volume 1 - The Plan and Volume 2 - Technical Appendices each with a different purpose and intended audience. Volume 1 is a brief description of the existing conditions in the watershed, working group process, and next steps for the plan. Volume 2 contains additional technical details, data analysis, and complete meeting materials, to be used as a technical reference for those reading the plan.



Glendale Narrows with Griffith Park in the background

Within ½ mile of the selected tributaries:

There are only **1/3** of the amount of parks than the LA County average

115 schools

1,535 acres of Significant Ecological Area

1.1 million people live



HISTORICAL CONDITIONS

PLACEHOLDER

THE APPOINTED WORKING GROUP WAS COMPRISED OF:

California State

- ▶ California State Assembly
- ▶ California State Senate
- ▶ State Parks Department

LA County

- ▶ Supervisor - First district
- ▶ Supervisor - Third district
- ▶ Supervisor - Fifth district
- ▶ Parks and Recreation Department
- ▶ Department of Public Works

Mayors

- ▶ City of San Fernando
- ▶ City of Burbank
- ▶ City of Glendale

LA City

- ▶ Los Angeles City Council- CD 7
 - Working Group Chairwoman
- ▶ Los Angeles City Council- CD 6
- ▶ Los Angeles City Council- CD 3
- ▶ City of LA Mayor's office
- ▶ LA Sanitation

Non-Governmental Organization

- ▶ Managing Director, Arroyo Seco Foundation
- ▶ Others

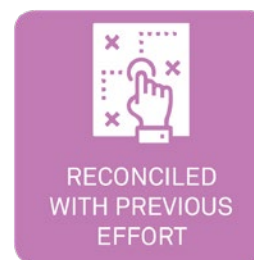
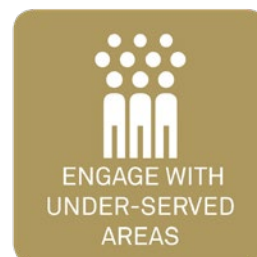
The complete list of Working Group Members can be found at <https://bit.ly/2ki6aQc>



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

During the first Working Group meeting, the Working Group established the course of *the Plan*, determined the focus of the two committees—Water and Environment and People and Recreation—and discussed the breadth and nucleus of the community engagement phases. Over 18 months, Working Group members and their alternates convened to develop *the Plan* through three main phases—Inventory and analysis, concept development, and *the Plan*. The mission of the Upper LA River & Tributaries Revitalization Plan is to develop prioritized opportunities with the following components:

- ▶ Nature based and watershed management
- ▶ Open space
- ▶ Multiple benefits
- ▶ Safe access
- ▶ Alignment with community needs and feedback
- ▶ Alignment with funding sources
- ▶ Reduction and management of existing flood risks to communities
- ▶ Culture, arts, and education
- ▶ Reconciliation with previous efforts



PROCESS

The Working Group used a **3-phase process** to develop *the Plan* and select the design areas (for complete explanation, see Volume 1 Chapter 2):

1. **Phase 1:** Define the Mission, Purpose, Goals and Objectives, and Identify opportunity areas for revitalizing the Upper LA River and its Tributaries
 - a. Reviewed maps, literature and existing plans, and discussed locations and areas for revitalization, known as *opportunity areas* (OAs)

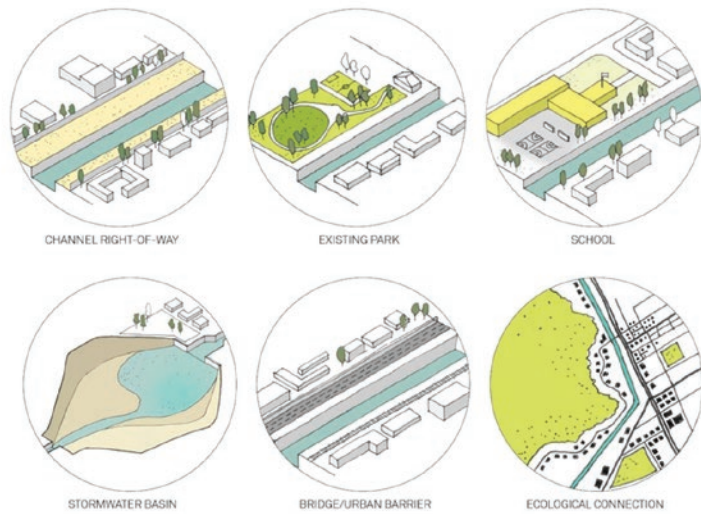


- b. Provided on the ground context for the areas around the tributaries, included problem areas, “would be nice to have’s”, and projects that have been discussed but have not had any major planning or funding.
 - c. Considered inspirational imagery of urban river revitalization processes to help visualize and provide their expertise on potential revitalization efforts for each OA. Community workshops presented similar imagery and asked similar questions about how area residents use the river and what they would like to see.

2. **Phase 2:** Develop scoring criteria, identify opportunity area “bundles”, which is a larger design area, comprised of one or more OAs, and select a design area for additional analysis and illustrative development in *the Plan*
 - a. Conditionally approved a process to score each OA.
 - b. Reviewed scores assigned to the OAs.
 - c. Discussed options for opportunity area “bundles” and recommended a design area for additional analysis.

Typology is a term often used by planners to describe areas with common characteristics. It is defined as the study of or analysis or classification based on types or categories¹
¹(Merriam Webster Dictionary)

3. **Phase 3:** Develop *the Plan* and rendered perspectives
 - a. Created illustrative plans and rendered perspectives for 6 design areas (more details provided in Chapter 3)
 - b. Identified 8 typologies, or templates, that can be developed and applied to multiple areas throughout the ULART study area: commercial, community connections, in-channel improvements, industrial, institutions, parks and ecological connections, and stormwater basins.

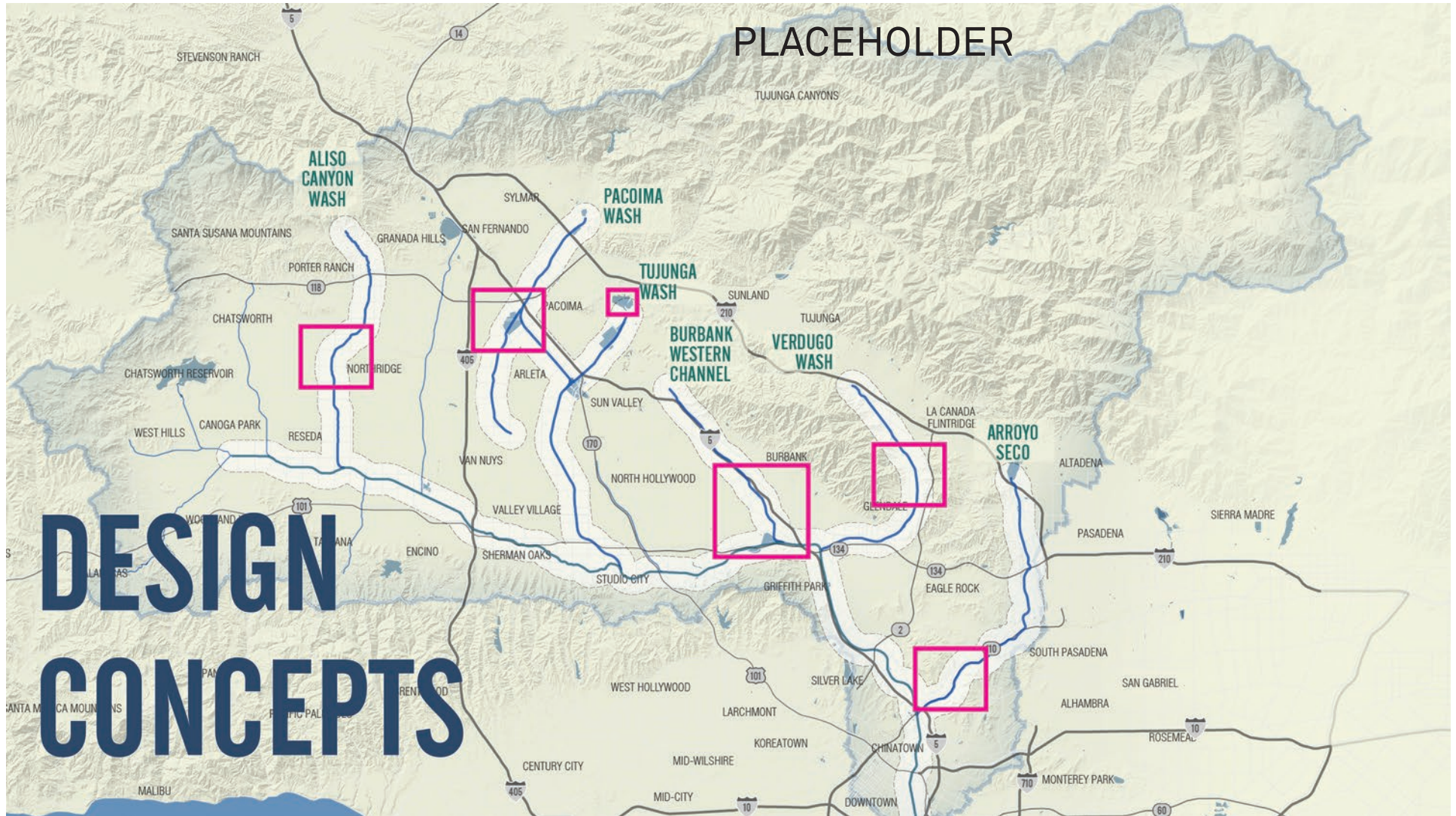


December People and Recreation committee meeting in Glendale



June People and Recreation Committee Meeting in Encino

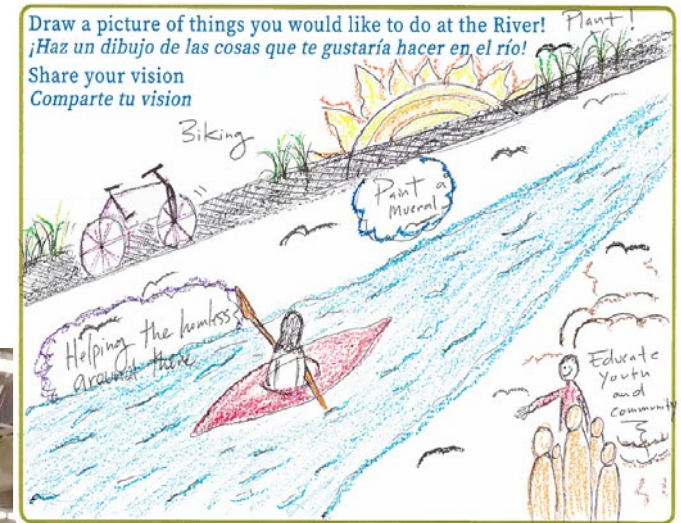
PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN PLAN



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Required by the legislation, the *Plan* must use watershed-based planning methods and community engagement to address the diverse needs of the Upper Los Angeles River, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, Verdugo Wash, Arroyo Seco, any additional waterways, and the surrounding communities.

Community engagement occurred over nine months, through three phases, and an online survey, collecting input and feedback from the communities in the upper LA River and its tributaries. The following chapters detail how and where the input and feedback were incorporated into the *Plan*.

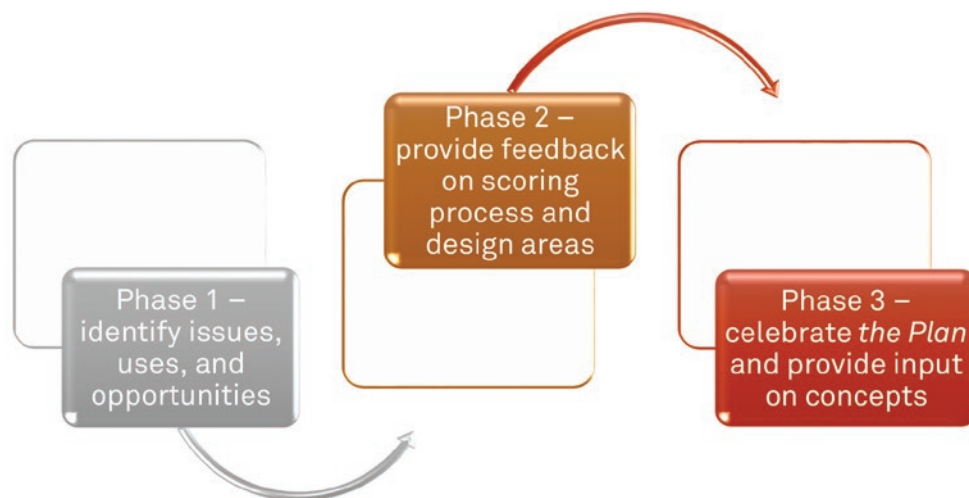


Phase 2 Community Engagement Event at the Discovery Cube in Sylmar.

NEXT STEPS

Acknowledging the need for project implementation and funding support, the following chapters of *the Plan* provide guidance on prioritization, funding, and implementation of projects. *The Plan* includes these elements to provide communities, advocates, agencies, and cities with tools to revitalize the Upper LA River and its tributaries in ways aligned with the Working Group's carefully developed goals and objectives. Benefits from these projects will only be realized if:

- ▶ Equitable planning approaches are used to select, place and scale projects while maintaining strong connections to the community.
- ▶ Projects are selected based on community support which meet the goals established by the Working Group and the community.
- ▶ Proposed projects are continued to be assessed and adapted based on community needs.
- ▶ Coordination with traditional and nontraditional partners is encouraged to ensure support, funding and maintenance.
- ▶ Projects are integrated into existing and future land use, infrastructure, transportation or river revitalization plans.





LA River near Griffith Park and I-5.

This *Plan* focuses on the LA River and tributary corridors per the legislative actions. Taken in total, the six tributaries within the Plan account for a majority of the water flowing from the overall watershed into the Los Angeles River mainstem. It is within and adjacent to the tributaries that projects have been proposed, with the intention that the multi-benefit approaches in each tributary represent templates—typical treatment components—that can be applied in multiple locations within each corridor as funding and planning progress. In this manner, the proposed projects do not need to be on a larger, regional scale. Rather, several smaller-scale efforts accomplished in an urbanized, space-restricted environment provide multiple benefits and positive impacts throughout the watershed and, by association, downstream in the Los Angeles River.