

**ASSEMBLY BILL 466
UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES
REVITALIZATION PLAN
WORKING GROUP MEETING #4**

Thursday, March 28, 2019 ♦ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
L.A. Sanitation Media Center, 2714 Media Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065

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

INTRODUCTION

On March 28, 2019, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) hosted the fourth 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 and Environment Committee and the People and Recreation Committee; review and provide feedback on the draft outline for the Plan; consider a resolution for adopting universal typologies for the Plan; conduct a polling activity to identify participants' project improvement priorities; and receive a presentation on the Los Angeles River Flows Project.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The fourth meeting of the Working Group occurred on March 28, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. at the L.A. Sanitation Media Center, 2714 Media Center Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90065. 17 Working Group members and alternates participated in the meeting. Approximately 10 -15 community members were present.

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 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 status report on the community outreach meetings conducted to date, including a sample of inputs provided by participants. As part of this update, Brad Wardynski of Tetra Tech, part of the project team, provided an overview of the Plan outline and answered questions of Working Group members.

Mr. Wardynski also presented on proposed universal typologies for the Plan for discussion and consideration of a resolution for adoption by the Working Group. Mia Lehrer of Studio MLA, part of the project team, then presented on improvement themes for the tributaries for the Working Group to provide input on their priorities by tributaries

(to be continued at a later date via a web-based input activity.) Finally, staff members from the State Water Resources Control Board presented information on the Los Angeles River Flows Project and answered questions of Working Group members.

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 Gina Palino 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. 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:

- Yolie Anguiano: Support Vitalize San Fernando Valley’s project—Pacoima Spreading Ground Enhancements—by improving connectivity to adjacent communities.
- Paul Rabinov: Link to planning efforts with County Flood Control District to improve access into the river.
- Melanie Winter: Clarify whether the project’s methodology is focusing on a watershed management versus corridor-based approach as it is causing confusion among stakeholders.

Committee Reports

Miguel Luna of the People and Recreation Committee reported that the committee focused its discussions on the data compilation efforts and the five-step methodology for analyzing potential project sites. The committee also reviewed the emerging typologies and advised the project team on refinements.

Carolina Hernandez of the Water and Environment Committee reported that the committee addressed similar topics, with significant discussion on the gaps analysis, initial discussions about potential project sites and the five-step methodology, and the typologies.

Draft Outline for the Revitalization Plan

Mr. Wardynski presented an overview of the draft outline for the Plan, including the anticipated length and chapters. Working Group members’ discussion points and questions, with project team responses noted in *italics*, included the following:

- What section will provide the history of the river and tributaries? – *A comprehensive history is anticipated over a couple of pages of the document, including geomorphology. The Working Group is encouraged to provide additional guidance.*

- What section will include funding? – *This is anticipated to be a subsection of the Governance chapter, but a more discrete section may be in order.*
- How will the project selection and community engagement outputs be aligned to define the Plan outcomes? – *The integration of the technical and engagement processes will be inter-woven throughout the Plan. This will be developed in greater detail.*
- How will the document’s outcomes connect to outcomes of the LA River Master Plan Update (LARMPU) and additional concurrent planning efforts? – *The plans will be compatible, with ULART informing the LARMPU. Specifically, links will be clearly defined in the literature review and implementation sections.*
- Will the plan be easily accessible via the web? – *Web-based accessibility and interactivity will be critical to supporting implementation efforts among the multiple jurisdictions and community partners.*
- Add an “on-going efforts” section.
- Identify key partners and agencies associated with each project.

Resolution: Universal Typologies for the Plan (Agenda item #8)

Mr. Wardynski presented the proposed universal typologies for the Plan for the Working Group’s consideration. Typologies are a planning tool that promote a balanced, multi-benefit and inclusive way to provide a basis for developing recommendations for types of revitalization improvements and land uses. During the recent committee meetings, participants reviewed an initial set of six typologies including: channel right-of-way; existing park; school; stormwater basin; bridge/urban barrier; and ecological connection. Additional potential typologies could include utility easements, residential and river confluences.

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

- Include river parks as a typology: parks or open space along the tributaries that can be integrated with the river, support habitat, and promote sustainable multi-use approaches. Overall, such a typology promotes naturalization of tributaries to strengthen environmental benefits.
- Include under-utilized public lands, which may be easier project site opportunities for public agencies
- Provide clearer definitions for each typology
- Address the significant variations of stormwater basin typologies
- Include daylighting of hidden tributaries
- Link public lands and utilities
- Include private/public realm interfaces: commercial spaces, vehicle crossings, utilities
- Leverage other public projects for project opportunities (e.g.: LA Metro; trail plans; Caltrans’ bridges)

The Working Group unanimously adopted the resolution for universal typologies for the ULART Revitalization Plan to include the following:

- Channel right-of-way
- Parks
- Schools
- Stormwater basins
- Urban barriers
- Ecological connections
- Utility easements and public land
- River confluences
- River Parks
- Hidden tributaries
- Commercial/industrial
- Residential
- Bridge crossings
- Transportation corridors

Polling Activity: Project Improvement Prioritization (Agenda item #9)

Ms. Lehrer presented the mission-driven framework of six components that form a multi-benefit approach, including: nature-based solutions, watershed management, flood risk, access and connections, open space and recreation, and community. She then initiated a presentation of each of the first of six tributaries, for which Working Group members were to identify their initial priorities for improvement themes by tributary. Due to time constraints for the remaining part of the meeting, this discussion item was continued to occur through a web-based input activity at a later date.

Los Angeles River Flows Project (Agenda item #10)

Project team members Kristine Taniguchi-Quan, Sean Maguire, and Steve Weisberg (via phone) from the State Water Resources Control Board presented on the Los Angeles River Flows Project. The purpose of the project is to characterize aquatic life and recreational uses in the river and quantify necessary flows to support uses. The primary activities conducted in the study are as follows:

1. Stakeholder coordination (ongoing)
2. Non-aquatic life use assessment
3. Aquatic life use assessment
4. Effects of flow modification/management
5. Monitoring and adaptive management

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

- What level of analysis will apply to endangered species? – *The assessment will focus on presence and absence of species.*

- How can cities participate on the Technical Advisory Committee? – *Generally, participants from agencies that are biologists and hydrologists that specialize in environmental flows.*
- Study the flow issues of the upper portions of the tributaries and clarify the assumption of upper habitats serving as “offsets” for other portions of the river. – *The project team is open to extending the analysis. “Offsets” generally refer to alternative management strategies.*
- Account for water reclamation considerations.
- How will you address seasonal non-aquatic uses versus aquatic needs? – *The study will develop recommendations for balancing trade-offs between uses and needs.*
- How will you address non-native species? – *Focused meetings will study these species.*

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.

WALLGRAPHIC

