

ASSEMBLY BILL 466
UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN
WORKING GROUP MEETING #9

Thursday, April 16, 2020 ♦ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Teleconference Meeting

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On April 16, 2020, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) convened the ninth 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 an overview on updates regarding materials staff had been working on since the last Working Group meeting, including but not limited to, refinements- where feasible to the final draft Plan per comments received during the public comment period, public information materials, approval and adoption of the Plan.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The ninth meeting of the Working Group occurred on April 16, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. via teleconference, due to the coronavirus pandemic. 19 Working Group members and approximately 30 community members participated in the meeting.

Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Los Angeles City Councilmember, and Working Group Chair, called the meeting to order. An opening blessing was sung by Tribal President Rudy Ortega of the Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, joined by Vice President Mark Villaseñor.

Chair Rodriguez called for approval of the meeting minutes among the Working Group members (Motion from Thomas Siefert, Miguel Luna seconded); and opened the public comment period.

During Working Group discussions and public comment periods, Lou Hexter of MIG recorded key outcomes and discussion points on an electronic whiteboard. The following sections include a summary of the discussion points, and a copy of the wallboard is included at the end of this report. Meeting materials are available on the project website: www.upperlariver.org.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Public Comment

Luke Ginger, representing Heal the Bay

We support this effort to revitalize LA river and tributaries, and we have sent a comment letter. Among our comments, we want to ensure that Native voices are heard! Also, the Plan is difficult to navigate online: it should be available as one single document.

The Plan needs to explicitly state the next steps regarding implementation and ongoing opportunities for community engagement. It is also important to articulate how the Plan will work in conjunction with the LA River Master Plan, otherwise there will be confusion about the relationship between the Plans.

The Plan needs to address climate change more directly and take a watershed-wide approach to ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Consider Blue Sky designation for all opportunity areas. Why should we limit ourselves in what we can accomplish before we try to implement these ideas?

Staff Report

Sarah Rascon of the MRCA and Jaime Sayre PhD, P.E. (Tetra Tech) reported on the process by which the Draft Plan had been circulated for public comment. The Draft Plan has been live on the [upperlariver.org](https://www.upperlariver.org) website and has received 577 comments. The Plan was reviewed in community workshops (Listening Sessions) on January 9, 2020 and the public comment period closed on January 21, 2020. Next Mia Lehrer highlighted some of the refinements in the Draft Plan: including updated maps showcasing the Opportunity areas and updated sustainability metrics. Of the 344 opportunity areas identified, 190 met scoring requirements; however all opportunities are included in the Plan. The Plan is available for viewing and download at the project site here: <https://www.upperlariver.org/>. Staff provided a verbal update and shared the finalized public information materials which included: a 1-page information sheet, the Reader's Guide- which is a condensed, summary version of the Plan- all of which are available in English and Spanish, and also showcased an informational video that was created to offer an overview of the Plan; it is available on the project site with both English and Spanish closed captioning here: <https://www.upperlariver.org/>

Legislative Update

Staff reported that there is a legislative proposal for the Working Group to continue to meet up to twice a year through June 2023 to oversee Plan progress and implementation. Proposed language is expected to be included in the August Natural Resources Trailer Bill.. The proposed legislative language would also add a seat to the SMMC Advisory Committee, thus creating representation for the ULART Working Group, of which the ULART chair would assume.

Consideration of resolution approving and adopting the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan, and recommending approval and adoption of the Plan to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

Chairwoman Rodriguez entertained a motion to approve and adopt the ULART Revitalization Plan and recommend to Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The motion was made by John Popoch and seconded by Emily Gabel-Luddy. A roll call vote was taken. The item was approved and adopted.

Working Group member's discussion and comments are included in the following:

- Emily Gabel-Luddy: This is an extraordinary path. 17.5 square miles is equal to the city of Burbank. Congratulations on that metric!
- Excellent job in distinguishing connections – identifying the “green lungs,” and areas that can become ecological restorations. Appreciate the attention to natural and accessible environments. Thank you, Team!
- Burbank is constructing a bike path connection from Metrolink to the bike path at Alameda.
- Joe Edmiston: adding 6% access to open-space (600,000 people) ... that's amazing!
- Marsha Ramos: This has been an extraordinary process, and it has been an honor to be a part of it. The video is great. How are we going to get this out? The blue sky is there, and every area has been looked at. The design team has done a terrific job!
- John Popoch: This group has benefitted from great leadership, and it has been an honor to be a part of this process. I especially enjoyed learning about the various tributaries. Thank you, and congratulations on a job worthy of being proud.
- Jeremy Wolf: What a great process for learning about LA! It has been a process of connecting different people, with the best minds coming together. This network will be strong going forward.
- Yvette Lopez-Ledesma: Thanks to everyone who has participated. This Plan is another tool to close the gap in park access. But the Plan is only as good as its implementation; let's move it forward! This pandemic has helped demonstrate the need for access to open space!
- Nick Kimball: Thank you, Working Group members! The City of San Fernando is looking forward to doing our part to implement the Plan.

- Michael DeGhetto: This Plan was not easy, but it has been done admirably! There has been great leadership, and the entire consultant team has been excellent. Let's remain committed to implementation.
- Caroline Craven: Everyone had a great vision and worked well together. Thank you for thinking about the fish!
- Tim Brick: This is the beginning, not the end! More work to do linking the tributaries and developing the watershed approach. Let's enhance the centrality of climate change and bring back the steelhead through an effective watershed management plan. Thanks to the Chair, all Working Group members, staff and consultants.
- Chairwoman Rodriguez: Great job on the video! And thanks to all who participated in this work -- including my own staff who worked in between meetings to keep us moving. I am excited to be at this moment!

NEXT STEPS AND CLOSE

Chair Rodriguez then closed the meeting by thanking Working Group members and members of the public for their participation and attendance.

Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group Meeting #9

April 16, 2020

Attending Members



4. Public Comment

LUKE GINGER (HEAL THE BAY) SUPPORT THE EFFORT TO REVITALIZE LA RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES... WE HAVE SENT A COMMENT LETTER. WE WANT TO ENSURE NATIVE VOICES ARE HEARD!

THE PLAN NEEDS TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE -- SINGLE DOCUMENT. DIFFICULT TO NAVIGATE ONLINE.

PLAN NEEDS TO EXPLICITLY STATE NEXT STEPS RE: IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

HOW PLAN WILL WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH LA RIVER MASTER PLAN -- CAN LEAD TO CONFUSION ABOUT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANS

NEEDS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE MORE DIRECTLY, HAVE A WATERSHED-WIDE APPROACH -- ENSURE THAT THE SUM IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS. BLUE SKY DESIGNATION FOR ALL OPPORTUNITY AREAS. WHY LIMIT OURSELVES IN WHAT WE CAN ACCOMPLISH BEFORE WE TRY TO IMPLEMENT?

5. Staff Update

EMILY GABEL-LUDDY: IT'S AN EXTRAORDINARY PATH. 17.5 SQ MILES IS EQUAL TO THE CITY OF BURBANK. CONGRATULATIONS ON THAT METRIC!

EXCELLENT JOB IN DISTINGUISHING CONNECTIONS -- GREEN LUNGS, AND WHAT CAN BECOME ECOLOGICAL RESTORATIONS. NATURAL AND ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENTS. THANK YOU, TEAM!!

BURBANK CONSTRUCTING BIKE PATH CONNECTION FROM METRO LINK TO BIKE PATH AT ALAMEDA!

JOE EDMISTON: ADDING 6% ACCESS TO OPEN-SPACE (600,000 PEOPLE) ... THAT'S AMAZING!

MARSHA RAMOS: AN EXTRAORDINARY PROCESS -- AN HONOR TO BE A PART OF IT. HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THIS OUT? THE VIDEO IS GREAT.

ALL OF THE PROJECTS -- THE BLUE SKY IS THERE! EVERY AREA HAS BEEN LOOKED AT. DESIGN TEAM HAS DONE A TERRIFIC JOB.

JOHN POPOCH: GREAT LEADERSHIP. HONOR TO BE A PART OF THIS PROCESS. ENJOYED LEARNING ABOUT VARIOUS TRIBUTARIES. THANK YOU, AND CONGRATULATIONS FOR A JOB WORTHY OF BEING PROUD.

JEREMY WOLF: WHAT A GREAT PROCESS FOR LEARNING ABOUT LA. CONNECTING DIFFERENT PEOPLE, BEST MINDS COMING TOGETHER. THIS NETWORK WILL BE STRONG GOING FORWARD.

YVETTE LOPEZ-LEDESMA: THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HAS PARTICIPATED. THIS IS ANOTHER TOOL TO CLOSE THE GAP IN PARK ACCESS. PLAN IS ONLY AS GOOD AS IMPLEMENTATION. LET'S MOVE IT FORWARD! THIS PANDEMIC HAS HELPED DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE!

NICK KIMBALL: THANK YOU WORKING GROUP MEMBERS. CITY OF SAN FERNANDO IS LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING OUR PART TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN.

MICHAEL DEGHEGHTO: PLAN WAS NOT EASY; BUT IT'S BEEN DONE ADMIRABLY! GREAT LEADERSHIP AND THE ENTIRE CONSULTANT TEAM. COMMITTED TO GETTING TO IMPLEMENTATION.

CAROLINE CRAVEN: EVERYONE HAD A GREAT VISION AND WORKED WELL TOGETHER. THANK YOU FOR THINKING ABOUT THE FISH!

TIM BRICK: THIS IS THE BEGINNING, NOT THE END! LINKING THE TRIBUTARIES, DEVELOPING THE WATERSHED APPROACH. ENHANCE THE CENTRALITY OF CLIMATE CHANGE. LET'S BRING BACK THE STEELHEAD, WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN. THANKS TO CHAIR, WG MEMBERS, STAFF AND CONSULTANTS.

CHAIRWOMAN RODRIGUEZ: GREAT JOB ON THE VIDEO. THANKS TO ALL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THIS WORK -- INCLUDING MY OWN STAFF WHO WORKED IN BETWEEN MEETINGS TO KEEP US MOVING. EXCITED TO BE AT THIS MOMENT!

6. Legislative Update

LANGUAGE HAS BEEN CRAFTED TO EXTEND THE WORKING GROUP DESIGNATION TO MEET UP TO TWICE A YEAR THROUGH JUNE 2023 TO OVERSEE IMPLEMENTATION. LOOKING AT INTRODUCING LEGISLATION IN THE FALL. THIS WOULD ALSO ADD A SEAT TO THE SMMC ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE CHAIR OF THIS WORKING GROUP.

8. Resolution Approving and Adopting Plan

Consideration of resolution approving and adopting the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Pla, and recommending approval and adoption of the Plan to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The item was approved and adopted.

MARSHA RAMOS: WHEN WE ADOPTED THE DRAFT PLAN, I ASKED THAT WE INCORPORATE INTO VERDUGO WASH PLAN THE CONFLUENCE OF LA RIVER UP TO GCC. DON'T SEE THIS ON THE OPPORTUNITY MAP. MAKE SURE IT'S INCORPORATED INTO THE FINAL PLAN.

GUADALUPE DURAN-MEDINA: WOULD LIKE TO SEE DESIGN AREA FOR HERITAGE SQUARE -- WAS THIS PRIORITIZED? THANKS FOR THE GREAT WORK! THIS IS AN AREA THAT IS VERY DISADVANTAGED, BUT HAS GREAT LINKAGES. HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS PROCESS!

Public Comment

MELISSA VON MEYERHAUSER: THANKS, TEAM, FOR CONSIDERING WRITTEN COMMENTS! INCREASING PARK EQUITY AND RECOGNIZING TRIBUTARIES AND INCORPORATING TRIBAL PERSPECTIVES ... RECOGNIZING AS A LIVING BEING! WE NEED TO BE MORE AGGRESSIVE WITH CLIMATE RESILIENCY. WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS TO ACHIEVE SYNERGY WITH OTHER PLANS. ACTIONABLE STEPS AND METRICS. (RESPONSE: WORKING GROUP WILL CONTINUE TO MEET AND MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION.)