

ASSEMBLY BILL 466
UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN
WORKING GROUP MEETING #6

Thursday, July 25, 2019 ♦ 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Studio-MLA, 251 S. Mission Road, Los Angeles, CA 90033

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

INTRODUCTION

On July 25, 2019, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) hosted the sixth 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; consider a resolution supporting recommended design areas per tributary; and receive an update on the formation of the Plan.

Meeting Format and Agenda

The sixth meeting of the Working Group occurred on July 25, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. at Studio-MLA, 251 South Mission Road, Los Angeles, CA 90033. 17 Working Group members and approximately 20 community members participated in the meeting.

Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Los Angeles City Councilmember, and Working Group Chair, called the meeting to order. 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 the MRCA initiated the staff update with a report on the recent public workshops. Esmeralda García (MIG Inc.), member of the project team, provided an overview of the workshop format, input solicitation tools, and feedback received. Following the workshop overview, Sarah Rascon presented the webtool input received to date. The webtool will be available for input online until September 7, 2019.

Members from the project team, Jaime Sayre PhD, P.E. (Tetra Tech) and Jan Dyer (Studio-MLA) presented an overview of design areas for consideration of a resolution supporting recommended design areas per tributary to include in the Revitalization Plan. Following the overview was a concept presentation and request for input.

Finally, 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, Esmeralda García 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:

- Add Hazard Stream to the project list for restoration and include a sub watershed feasibility study - Opportunity to restore an historic wetland and improve ignored public open space
- Include more naturalized walk and bike path along the Verdugo Wash. Adjust the confluence design area for Verdugo Wash to go from the confluence to the college to create more connectivity, active transit, and connection from disadvantaged communities to park rich areas

Committee Reports

Marsha Ramos of the People and Recreation Committee reported that the committee focused its discussions on the nine key components and three requirements for the proposed design areas. The committee also reviewed project opportunities within each of the tributaries.

Keith Lilley of the Water and Environment Committee reported that the committee addressed similar topics.

Consideration Resolution: Recommended Design Areas per Tributary

Jaime Sayre PhD, P.E. (Tetra Tech) and Jan Dyer (Studio-MLA) presented the design area overview which was comprised of the recommended project areas and elements for each tributary. This was followed by a presentation by Margot Jacobs (Studio-MLA) highlighting the design concepts.

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

Verdugo Wash

- The Verdugo Wash/Los Angeles River confluence is already included in the Los Angeles River Master Plan Update (LARMPU), so it is not necessary to include in this Revitalization Plan.
- Adjust the project boundary from the edge of the confluence to Glendale community college. This area has a higher CalEnviroScreen rating and connection between two other projects. Because the LA River Master Plan update is already exploring a project at the Confluence, up to a ½ mile out, Ms. Ramos requested that the section beyond that ½ mile to the college be included, this could be done by stretching/altering Design area B or C.
- Would this be trail or stream restoration? Since these are not fully fleshed out projects it is hard to select between each one.
- Is water riparian habitat included?
- The recommended projects are not focused on watershed management and do not appear to be grounded in scientific analysis.
- Flood protection needs to be prioritized.
- The habitat corridor project but is a good one but should include best practices
- The design process will include due diligence to enhance watershed management, maintain flood control, and align with the ULART values
- It is an interesting project overall, however constraints, public ownership, and land locked areas are a concern
- The recommended project elements have already been presented to members of the public; amendments would change things. The community input needs to be respected and recognized.

Arroyo Seco

- Lower Arroyo Park has already been studied and has funding associated with furthering the planning effort.
- Heritage Square has not received funding, there have been no studies, and there is interest from the City of Los Angeles to further this as a project.
- The ULART Revitalization Plan presents a good opportunity to include Heritage Square. This area has not been a focus in LA river planning.
- The Southwest site is a good project because there are many schools, historic sites, transportation options, and opportunity to turn Heritage Square into a destination.
- It seems that many of the recommended projects emphasize urban parks, these are not enhancing natural features or watershed.
- Not to include the Lower Arroyo Park will pass up an opportunity for stream restoration.
- The proposed project areas are not mutually exclusive, they will be included but one per tributary will be conceptually designed.
- All projects will be included.
- The Heritage Square project has community support.

- The Council of Arroyo Seco Agencies (CASA) at a previous meeting provided its support for the Lower Arroyo Park project.
- There has been historical underinvestment in Heritage Square.
- Lower Arroyo Park has already been included in a study and some design has been developed. Even though it is not the recommended project in the ULART Revitalization Plan, it will still be included within the plan.

Burbank Western

- Part of the site includes a residential development project with an affordable housing component, this should be removed from the bundle.
- The boundary should be amended so that the project stretches its geographic boundary into Council District 2.

Aliso Canyon

- Ensure that the project, in that area, that Bureau of Engineering is leading is not being duplicated.
- Identify areas with existing plans.

The Working Group unanimously adopted the resolution supporting recommended design areas per tributary for the ULART Revitalization Plan to include the following:

- Aliso Canyon - Wilbur Debris Basin
- Pacoima Wash - The Pacoima Junction
- Tujunga Wash - Hansen Dam Lake
- Burbank Western - Multiuse Green System (amended to exclude private property which already has planning underway from this plan. Add the portion further north in the channel to improve connectivity.)
- Verdugo - San Rafael Ecological Connector
- Arroyo Seco - Heritage Square

Draft Outline for the Revitalization Plan

Jaime Sayre presented a report on the Plan's progress including the Plan's content development timeline, anticipated length and draft Revitalization Plan sections. There were no comments on this item.

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

AB466 UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER & TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN
Working Group
 MEETING # **6**
 RESOLUTION: DESIGN & REAS
 SUPPORT RECOMMENDED AREA
 COMMITTEE REPORTS

PUBLIC COMMENT

- ▷ ADD HAZARD STREAM RESTORATION
 - INCLUDE SUBWATERSHED
 - RESTORE HISTORIC WETLAND
- ▷ NATURALIZED PATHS ALONG VERDUGO WASH
 - BIKE & PED
- ▷ VERDUGO WASH AREA BOUNDARY
 - EXTEND TO COLLEGE
 - CREATE MORE - ACTIVE CONNECTIVITY TRANSP
 - CONNECT DAC'S TO OPEN SPACE

PEOPLE & REC. WATER & ENV. ADDRESSED SAME TOPICS

- DESIGN AREA CRITERIA
 - NINE OBJECTIVES
 - THREE REQ'D
- TRIBUTARY PROTECT OPPORTUNITIES

FUTURE MEETINGS

WORKING GROUP 9/26
 12/12
 COMMITTEES 8/29
 10/24

DESIGN AREAS BY TRIBUTARY

VERDUGO WASH

- ▷ CONFLUENCE W/ LA RIVER
 - INCLUDED A.S AREA IN LARMP
 - 1/2 MILE FROM LAR
- ▷ EXTEND BOUNDARY TO GLENDALE C. COLLEGE
- ▷ DAC AREA & HIGHER CAL ENVIRO SCREEN
- ▷ TRAIL VS STREAM RESTORATION
- ▷ DEFINE WATER ELEMENTS
 - HOW THESE QUANTIFIED
- ▷ PRIORITIZE FLOOD PROTECTION & WATERSHED MANAGEMENT
- ▷ HABITAT CORRIDOR OPP.
 - CONSIDER SEPARATE STUDY
- ▷ LAND CONSTRAINTS
 - OWNERSHIP
 - LAND LOCKED

ARROYO SECO

- ▷ LOWER ARROYO PARK
 - PLANNED/STUDIED HAS COUNCIL SUPPORT TO ALAMEDA
 - FUNDING - PRT
 - STREAM RESTORATION OPP.
- ▷ HERITAGE SQ
 - NO FUNDING COMMUNITY
 - NO PLANNING/SUPPORT
- ▷ STUDIES
 - HISTORIC UNDER INVESTMENT
 - NOT FOCUSED IN LARMP PLAN
- ▷ SOUTHWEST GOOD PROJECT
 - PROXIMITY TO SCHOOLS/HISTORIC SITES
 - TRANSPORTATION
- ▷ PROJECT GOALS URBAN PARKS VS. WATERSHED
- ▷ ALL PROJECTS INCL. IN PLAN
 - RECOMMENDED PROF. DEFINED CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
 - NON RECOMMENDED PROJECTS INCLUDED

BURBANK WESTERN

- ▷ REMOVE HOUSING DEVT TO D
- ▷ EXTEND BOUNDARY TO ALAMEDA
- BEYOND BETTE DAVIS PARK
- BIKE PATH ADDRESSED IN OTHER PROJECTS
- ALSO CANYON
- ▷ CONSIDER EXISTING PLANS
- AVOID DUPLICATION OF PROJECTS - BOE

