

Pacoima Headworks Natural Park Project Summary

The Pacoima Headworks Natural Park project consists of converting a 3-acre publicly owned access parcel at the northern end of the Pacoima Wash Spreading Grounds into a natural open space public park. The project is in both City of Los Angeles Council District 6 and 7 boundaries.

The conceptual design is led by landscape architect Studio-MLA and engineering by Sherwood Design Engineers. The community outreach and engagement is led by Pacoima Beautiful. During the community engagement and design effort, the project team coordinated with the Council District 7, Council District 6, Supervisor District 3, RAP Planning and Operations staff, tribal partners, and with Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

There has been a total of three in person community meetings and one virtual meeting to develop a recommended concept for the project. All materials presented were in both English and Spanish, and the meeting was simultaneously translated in Spanish.

The first community meeting was on 10/01/2022, based on the meeting's feedback and comments, there was a significant interest in a natural park that has programmatic opportunities, and interest in the park highlighting local cultural identity and reinforcement, concerns about security, a focus in environmental sensitivity and sustainability, and a high interest in nature and shaded respite.

The second in-person community meeting was on 5/06/2023, based on the feedback heard at the first meeting, 3 concept alternatives were developed: the Nature Trail, the Overlook, and the Arroyo. The preferred concept was the Arroyo, in addition there was positive interest in the walking loop, nature paths, and a desire for a community garden space. A virtual meeting was held on 5/11/2023, staff provided the same presentation and materials as used for the in-person meeting.

The third community meeting was held on 8/19/23, to present the recommended final concept plan to the community. Much feedback received was in support of the amenities presented in the recommended concept, such as the nature trail, the arroyo feature, the nature play area, and the amount of shading offered. However, there was a concern regarding the placement of the parking lot. The recommended final concept was updated to relocate the parking lot along Arleta Ave, per the feedback heard. The deadline for the survey period was 9/24/2023 and 130 surveys were received. Staff is currently planning a tribal focus meeting to present the final concept design alternative for tribal feedback on how the park could be developed to best support tribal use and celebrate local tribal history.

The final concept design package, including a cost estimate, is expected to be submitted by Studio-MLA within the next month. Design Development has begun and will be completed by early/middle 2024.

The grant is on track to be closed out by February 2024.

Hansen Dam Improvements PP&D Project Summary

Using ULART Funding, a feasibility study was conducted to analyze whether the Holiday Lake concept, at Hansen Dam could be revived. The objective of the Study was to evaluate the feasibility of recreating Holiday Lake and the surrounding area with consideration for user groups, habitat needs, opportunity to incorporate tribal spaces and or cultural gatherings, and critical environmental site factors, including reduction of potable water usage.

The study was performed by consultants Sherwood Engineers and landscape architect Studio-MLA. During the study, the project team coordinated with the Office of Monica Rodriguez-Council District 7, City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Planning and Operations staff, tribal partners, and with the property owner the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE).

In August 2022, Sherwood provided the Final Report and concept rendering for the Holiday Lake Feasibility Study. The study identified three concept alternatives with varying degrees and locations of lake restoration. After analysis and consideration with the Council District 7, the Concept 2 alternative was selected for further development. Concept 2 best addressed the goals and elements found in the ULART Plan while balancing the needs of the operations, which includes reducing the use of potable water in the existing aquatic lake.

In December 2022, the Conservancy authorized funding for Project Planning and Design for the Hansen Dam Improvements project. The PP&D grant is intended to fund planning and design studies to develop a restoration plan, based on Concept 2 that enlarges and naturalizes the existing recreation lake at the Aquatic Center. This scope would achieve the ULART plan goals, provide sustainable public amenities, and have a beneficial effect on surrounding lands and habitat.

In January 2023, staff presented an overview of the ULART Plan and the results of the study at RAP's to the city's Facility Repair and Maintenance Commission Task Force for their review, comment, and consideration. As a result of the presentation, RAP was supportive of a future planning phase that would focus on identified elements from the study as well as a community engagement and outreach process.

In February 2023, staff received a proposal from Sherwood for a technical study referred to as a Water Balance Study to analyze creation and maintenance of a recreational lake, as had been identified in the final report. Included in this scope, Sherwood built on the 2022 Report to provide technical analysis for Concept 2 to determine a range of suitable technical options that elevate hydrologic and ecological performance of the naturalized lake. The Draft Final Report was received in July, 2023, and Sherwood is currently working to incorporate feedback received into the report. The Final Report is expected to be completed by the end of the year. Once completed, MRCA plans to brief Council District 7 with the results, and then bring it back to RAP for their review and consideration. Upon coordination with the City, MRCA also aims to host a series of community meetings to get feedback on the proposed improvements for the Hansen Dam site.

The grant is on track to be closed out by February 2025.

Hazard Creek Restoration Summary

MRCA received a \$350,000 grant from the SMMC in December 2022 for the pre-restoration planning work for a naturally occurring stream located in Los Angeles' Hazard Recreation Center (also known as Hazard Park). The City Park is bisected by an old rail corridor which now contains a degraded stream. While the stream has been slowly making a comeback, and has seasonal surface water, it is susceptible to a number of factors that could hinder establishment of a rich riparian or wetland habitat without significant intervention.

The project site is located within a disadvantaged community, and restoration of the stream has been proposed for many years. Community stakeholders proposed restoration of a one-half mile creek corridor and enhancement of existing wetland habitat during the Conservancy's planning process for the *2020 Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan* (ULART Plan). The project is identified in the adopted plan as Opportunity Area (OA 763).

There have been previous planning efforts to study the restoration of Hazard Creek streambed and wetland. From 2005-2007, the community-based non-profit organization Northeast Trees (NET) developed a preliminary design to revive Hazard Creek. The project lost momentum when public support waned and land development around the area became a priority. NET graciously shared the preliminary design and associated studies with MRCA. MRCA planning staff issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant to review NET's design feasibility and other preliminary reports. Inter-Fluve (consultant) was the lowest responsive proposal received. They reviewed materials and conducted an on-site survey to review the design feasibility. They concluded the design was still feasible but provided an updated concept and outlined next steps. Next steps include additional water studies that will help inform if the creek is a sustainable feature all year round, even in a dry year. Inter-Fluve also proposed subcontractors to provide the reviews on the water studies, as well as assistance with real estate support given the underlying ownership is understood to remain with Union Pacific. Inter-Fluve also included community outreach and a percentage of design and development with their proposal. The MRCA Governing Board approved Inter-Fluve's contract at the October 4th meeting. Inter-Fluve's real estate support is reaching out to Union Pacific Railroad for permission to conduct water studies on their property.

Arroyo Seco/ Pasadena Ave Summary

In November 2022, Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority considered authorization of a grant for \$500,000 from the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for Project, Planning, and Design of the Arroyo Seco/Pasadena Ave Pasadena site. The site is a 2.7-acre parcel that has been vacant for 30 years. The site lies within the historic Arroyo Seco Parkway Scenic Byway Corridor, and lies adjacent to the Arroyo Seco, one of the major tributaries to the Los Angeles River. The parcel was identified as a potential park in 1997. MRCA did planning and design work dated from 2001-2004. Ultimately, MRCA did not acquire the site as negotiators could not come to terms. Leaking underground storage tanks and other facilities had contaminated the soil. While it had been cleaned, the owner desired to shed all liability, so MRCA did not proceed with the project. It has now gone through continued cleanup efforts, but depending on the work plan, additional efforts might be needed. In March 2023, MRCA had Rincon Consultants prepare a Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment to identify whether recognized environmental contamination remained on site. The final report was submitted in June and recommended continued DTSC oversight, subsurface investigations, and a soil management plan.

Appraisal of the site completed in April 2023 and had a valuation of \$10,065,000. MRCA has met with the current site owner every other month to share updates and express continued interest in acquiring the site. There are current plans for creating a shipping warehouse on site; but Council District 1 has been very supportive of the park space, so MRCA has continued to express interest and work on possible acquisition. The current efforts for acquisition funds include creating design concepts from local landscape designers to aid in stakeholder outreach.

Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Revitalization Plan Project Implementation Project Summary

In June 2020, the Conservancy adopted the ULART Revitalization Plan, which was the legislative initiative that authorized the creation of an appointed Working Group within the Conservancy to develop a revitalization plan for the Upper Los Angeles River and its tributaries using a community-centric, watershed management approach, with a prioritization on disadvantaged communities.

In September 2021, Governor Newsom signed a budget trailer bill that included an allocation to the Conservancy for ULART projects. The following year, the Budget Act of 2022 included an additional allocation to the Conservancy. This funding is designated for projects that include nature-based watershed management, open space, multiple benefits, safe access, alignment with community needs and feedback, alignment with funding sources, reduction, and management of flood risks to communities, and providing culture, arts, and education.

Since the Plan's adoption, Staff have been working with the Conservancy to administer the Working Group and implement identified projects from the Plan. To date, a total of fourteen ULART projects are currently active and continue to make progress. Staff continues to help coordinate and track the full portfolio of funded ULART projects and have developed a series of support documents to reflect the current portfolio of projects plus development of future projects that can be presented at future Working Group meetings.

Staff are also working to identify potential projects that could quickly utilize ULART General funds, and preparing in case there will be a future appropriation to have projects ready for submittal. This grant helps to ready identified opportunity sites toward specific project funding. A goal exists to advance ULART projects throughout the tributaries in the planning area. Staff will continue to have a list ready if additional ULART funds are allocated to bring new projects to the Working Group.

Staff supports the Working Group acting as board secretary, developing board materials, helping to coordinate and navigate grantee's projects through the Working Group and SMMC grant approval process. This includes review and analysis of projects to determine if they meet ULART criteria and many project meetings with project stakeholders and applicants.

The grant is on track to be closed out by February 2025.