Welcome and Introductions
Massod Eftekhari, Deputy Director, welcomed the members of the committee and attendees.

Approval of January 6, 2014 Meeting Summary
Meeting Summary approved.

Items for the Committee’s Information

Doran Street and Broadway/Brazil Safety and Access Project

Don Sepulveda (Metro) provided a presentation on the Doran Street and Broadway/Brazil Safety and Access Project. The purpose of the project is to improve safety by separating vehicle and pedestrians from trains at railroad crossings, maintain easy access for emergency responders to business and residential area, and develop a solution that will enhance mobility and quality of life for the community. The project site is located near the confluence of the Los Angeles River and the Verdugo Wash. Metro has identified different alternatives (Doran Overpass and Fairmont and Salem/Brazil Overpass) that are compatible with Alternative 20 of the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Study. Currently, the project is only in phase 1 and is in the process of identifying alternatives for the project. The construction is projected to start in the summer of 2016.

Questions and Comments:
Shahram Kharaghani inquired about the budget of the project. Don Sepulveda responded that the project budget is roughly around $40 million.

Urban Waters Federal Partnership

Pauline Louie (Urban Waters Federal Partnership) provided a presentation on the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program for the Los Angeles River Watershed. The purpose of this program is to reconnect urban communities with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies and collaborating with community-led revitalization efforts to improve our nation’s waterways. Los Angeles River Watershed is one of the seven pilot watersheds acknowledged in the Urban Waters Program. In addition, there are over 35 environmental, community and other local stakeholder organizations within the Los Angeles River Watershed partnership alone. In the next six months, the program will focus on
building federal pathways for engagement, improve coordination among the cities within the 51 mile stretch, create work groups to capture expertise, and improve operations and efficiencies.

Questions and Comments:

Romel Pascual asked how the Los Angeles River Watershed compares to the other pilot programs. Pauline Louie responded that the Los Angeles River Watershed is way ahead of the pilot programs in terms of showcasing the projects done within the watershed.

Los Angeles River Regional Bike Path

Chris Hudson (LACDPW PDD project manager) provided an update on the Los Angeles River Regional Bike Path. The Board of Supervisors instructed the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to assemble a task force to assist in the planning process for a regional bike path along the Los Angeles River from Studio City to Griffith Park (Whitsett Avenue to Riverside Drive) and the construction of a segment of the regional bike path from Lankershim Blvd to Barham Blvd. A consultant has been selected to prepare a preliminary scoping report for the bike path from Lankershim Blvd to Barham Blvd and the report is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2014. A consultant will be selected in the future to prepare design plans for the proposed bike path between Lankershim Blvd and Barham Blvd.

Questions and Comments:

Carol Armstrong asked if the Regional Bike Path Project incorporated greenways as part of the study. Chris Hudson responded that the study primarily focused on at-grade crossings within the project limits.

Native Seed Resources Committee

Ellen Mackey (Council for Watershed Health) gave a presentation on the goal of the Native Seed Resources Committee and the importance of protecting local genomes and plants before it gets lost or contaminated. The committee promotes water conservation as well as protection and enhancement of the ecological health of native plant population through the use of locally-native plants in landscaping and restoration projects. The committee publishes and authors plant/species lists and maintenance guidelines that can be utilized along the Los Angeles River.

Questions and Comments:

Carol Armstrong asked where people can access the operation and maintenance guidelines and checked if Caltrans is involved with their efforts. Ellen Mackey responded that all contents published by the Native Seed Resource Committee can be obtained at their website and that Caltrans has come out to a few of their monthly meetings.

2014 Los Angeles River Boating Program

Fernando Gomez (MRCA) provided the committee with an update of the 2014 Los Angeles River Boating Program. The program allows public access to the River for non-motorized activities, including kayaking, walking, bird watching and fishing. The 2013 Boating program was a huge success with over 3,000 participants. The 2013 program garnered positive reviews from the public. Similar to the 2013 boating program, the 2014 program will be administered by the MRCA with the City of Los Angeles as the partner. Both the Army Corps and Engineers and the Los Angeles County Flood Control District issued a letter of no-objection to the program.

Questions and Comments:

Carol Armstrong thanked all the parties that helped make this program possible and commended MRCA on their efforts.
Items for the Committee’s Consideration and Recommendation

Los Angeles River In-Channel Bike Path Connector

Lewis MacAdams (FoLAR) gave a brief introduction to the project and Yuval Bar-Zemer (Linear City Development LLC) presented on the Los Angeles River In-Channel Bike Path Connector. The bike Path will construct approximately eight (8) miles of bike path along the invert of the Los Angeles River connected two existing bike paths, resulting in 31 miles of uninterrupted bike path. Mr. Bar-Zemer emphasized the need for more accessibility and bike path with the City of Los Angeles, and that this project is consistent with the City of Los Angeles’ bike plan. Total of five ingress/egress access points are located within the project reach for both bicyclists and maintenance vehicles. Geosyntec Consultants conducted a hydraulic study with the designed 6” high bike path and results showed that the design had minimal impact to flood protection and allowed the bike path to be utilized 360 days a year. The design of the bike plan is still ongoing, however the consultant has had discussions with civil engineers and other hydrologist to identify any potential drainage and flood control issues. The long-term maintenance and operations of the project has not been identified, the presented recommends a joint agreement between the City of Los Angeles, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the LACFCD for the operations and maintenance. The project is estimated to cost around $20 million and will take 2.5 years to complete.

Committee Discussion:

The project was recommended with modifications by the committee. The committee approved the project in concept, but the project still needs to address the issues that were brought up during the discussion. The committee recommended coming back to the RCC committee in the future with design plans that addressed all the committee’s concerns. David Van Dorpe stated that the Army Corps main concerns are with the maintenance of the channel and the safety of the public. All committee members agreed that this portion of the river is the most difficult reach because of the existing conditions and commended Mr. Bar-Zemer on his efforts.

Los Angeles River Veterans Tribute Park

Larry Smith (Los Angeles Conservation Corps) presented on the Los Angeles River Veterans Tribute Park. The park proposes to convert a two-acre open lot to an accessible passive recreation outdoor park. The project site was identified by the Sepulveda Dam Basin Master Plan, and the project is consistent with the Los Angeles River Master Plan and the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan. Park elements include bioswales, native plantings, permeable paving, rain gardens, bike path and more. Multiple community and stakeholder group meetings to provide opportunities for community involvement in the planning and design phase of the project. The operations and maintenance of the park will be done by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, high school volunteering program and others. The estimated timetable for the project is two years and is estimated to cost $5.5 million.

Committee Discussion:

The project was recommended and approved by the committee. All the committee members were impressed with the level of community involvement during the planning phase and commended Mr. Smith on his efforts.

Taylor Yard Bikeway and Pedestrian Bridge

Carl Nelson (City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering) and Zoltan E. Pali (Studio Pali Fekete Architects) presented the Taylor Yard Bikeway and Pedestrian Bridge Project. The project will involve construction of a 400 foot bridge over the Los Angeles River to connect the existing bikeway along the west bank of the River to an existing road on the eastside of the River. The bridge design will focus on the visual aesthetics and include a recycled water line from Department of Water and Power. The project received $1 million in funding from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for only the design of the project. Majority of the bridge components will be construction offsite, and brought to the river to minimize construction time and impact. The estimated timetable for this project is two years.
Committee Discussion:

The project was recommended with modifications by the committee. David Van Dorpe asked if the project is compatible with the Army Corp’s Feasibility Study and Cark Nelson explained that the project will be adjusted to be compatible with the option selected in the Feasibility Study. Keith Lilley asked if there will be temporary piles or support during the wet season and Carl Nelson specified that there will be temporary wood support during those seasons.

Agency Updates

- US Army Corps of Engineers (David Van Dorpe)
  - 2014 Los Angeles River Boating Program: Issued a letter of Non-objection for the upcoming boating program to MRCA. The Corp will issue a public notice to issue licenses to non-profit organizations to offer guided and non-guided programs. The lease is 5 years.
  - Sepulveda Dam Boating program: A public notice was issued to grant 3 licenses. The Corp will grant MRCA a 5 year lease program, while other agencies will be granted 1 year leases.
  - 408 Permit: The Corp is in the process of streamlining the 408 process. The Corp will be more stringent on when the project will require a minor or a major 408 permit. The major 408 permit will need to be reviewed by the national office.

- LACFCD (Richard Gomez):
  - Los Angeles River Headwaters Project: This project will feature a 1.25 mile greenway, pedestrian path with landscaping; City of LA will provide bikepath as a later phase of the project. This project is expected to have its grand opening on July 12th, 2014 at 11:00am.
  - North Valleyheart Riverwalk Project: This is a half-mile greenway with benches, landscaping, and other cultural amenities. This project is expected to have its grand opening on June 21st, 2014 at 11:00am.

- City of Los Angeles (Carol Armstrong):
  - Sustainable Communities Planning Grant: Metro is applying for a $1 million grant from the State Strategic Growth Council’s grant to develop design concepts that will close the gaps in the existing valley bikeway/greenway network and connect to other greenway projects that are underway. City of Los Angeles will submit the documents required for the grant in June of this year.
  - One Water LA: Collaborative approach to develop an integrated framework for management the City’s watersheds, water resources and water facilities in an environmentally, economically and socially beneficial manner. Workshops will be held on April 10th, 2014 from 9:00am to 2:00pm at the Los Angeles Zoo.

Public Comments/Other Items

- Debra Lee George (Encino neighborhood Council) requested that the Los Angeles River Project office to meet with the Encino Neighborhood Council for potential projects (park or kayaking) in Encino
- Jennifer from the LA Conservation Corps expressed their support for the Los Angeles River in-channel bike path connector project.
- Geosyntec consultants provided an update on the waterwheel project. Geosyntec is working with the Corps for the 408 permit and the final design is almost completed. In March, the CEQA was approved, water rights were purchased, the minor 408 permit was initiated, and the MTA property sale was approved. Construction of the pit is to start in December and the construction of the waterwheel is projected to begin in April 2016. Maintenance and Operation will be funded by Metabolic Studios.
Mary Rodriguez from Council District 13 informed the group about their upcoming 5k fun run along the Los Angeles River. The purpose of the event is to help raise funds for various river stakeholder groups.

Next Meeting

The RCC meeting scheduled on Monday, July 7, 2014 from 1:00 – 3:00pm has been cancelled.

The next RCC meeting (tentative) will be hosted by the County of Los Angeles on Monday, October 6, 2014, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Conference Room A, 900 S. Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803.

Comments regarding this meeting summary should be directed to Kevin Kim, kkim@dpw.lacounty.gov, and Richard Gomez, rgomez@dpw.lacounty.gov

For more information about the LA River Cooperation Committee, and to access meeting documents, please visit: www.lariver.org/rcc.