Welcome and Introductions
Gary Lee Moore, City Engineer of the City of Los Angeles, welcomed the members of the committee and attendees.

Los Angeles County Flood Control District and the USACE reported rainy weather operations are going well.

Approval of October 3, 2016 Meeting Summary
Meeting Summary approved.

Items for the Committee’s Consideration and Recommendation
Arundo donax Eradication Project – Council for Watershed Health
Jason Casanova (Director of Planning and Information Design, Council for Watershed Health) presented the Arundo donax Eradication Project.

Mr. Casanova provided background on the Arundo donax. The plant is originally from India and was brought for erosion control and used for roofing. However, the non-native species soon ran rampant. It spreads horizontally underground via its rhizome root structure. Arundo is a high water user (one acre transpires 24 acre ft/yr vs. a native plant transpires four acre ft/yr). The San Gabriel River has existing eradication programs using a systematic approach. The issue with eradication is regrowth despite best efforts. Eradication must start upstream because the plant will spread downstream. The plant also clogs beaches downstream and acts as a fire ladder in wildfires.

The Council for Watershed Health proposes eradication in the upstream watershed. It would like to perform 70-80% of its proposed eradication in the Glendale Narrows to complement the vegetation removal by the USACE. A complementary effort is working to eradicate 57 acres in the Upper Tujunga Wash by the National Forest Foundation and LADWP, using LA County IRWMP Prop 84 funds. Council for Watershed Health is securing permits and rights of entry by first mapping work areas to check the eradication methodology with each property. Once permits are obtained they will enter treatment and implementation, which includes chain sawing the Arundo and applying herbicide to the roots. Biologists will monitor on site and Arundo biomass will be pushed away from native vegetation. Treatments are expected to be effective for 10 years (Years 1-3 large biomass removal; Years 4-10 regrowth monitoring). If regrowth occurs after the ten years, they would work with the property owners (USACE and LACFD) on maintenance. The cost is about $25,000 per acre for full eradication. LADWP is the project sponsor.
Questions and Comments:

- Kecia Washington asked if there will be annual schedules and if the proposal will further lay out details, such as establishing the first year treatment locations once they have performed assessments.
  - Mr. Casanova responded that it depends first on the right of entry permits and the priority areas. They will perform an analysis after the mapping is completed to see which areas to target first and work with the landowners on the treatments selected. Subsequently every year there will be monitoring and treatments or just monitoring if there is no regrowth.

- Keith Lilley asked what happens to the biomass when cut down.
  - Mr. Casanova replied that will depend on the method that is used. In some areas they are allowed to spray herbicide and leave the Arundo in place for it to biodegrade naturally. Another method is cutting it down and chip it remotely or onsite. It depends on the landowner, fire hazards and flood capacity of each location.

- Shahram Kharaghani asked if the herbicide will affect water quality.
  - Mr. Casanova responded there will be BMPs [Best Management Practices] in place and they will treat only at certain times of the year and outreach and signage will be placed so that people are aware of the chemical treatment.

Mr. Moore opened the questions to the public.

- Deborah Deets asked now that NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act] is in place upstream, will downstream be re-prioritized?
  - Mr. Casanova responded that their efforts will complement and support the USACE eradication efforts in the Glendale Narrows and those areas will be prioritized because they are already working on.

- Mr. Moore inquired about the funding status.
  - Mr. Casanova responded that Council for Watershed Health is seeking implementation funding. LADWP is providing seed funding to perform mapping, analysis and permitting.

Committee Action: **Recommended**

Mr. De Mesa stated he is a non-voting member but fully supports this project recommendation.

**Items for the Committee's Information**

**Arroyo Seco Restoration Feasibility Study – United States Army Corps of Engineers:**

Ed De Mesa (Chief, Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District) and Maricris Lee (Lead Planner, Arroyo Seco Restoration Feasibility Study, Planning Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District) presented on the status of the ecosystem restoration feasibility study and project. LA County is the sponsor along with City of Los Angeles, Pasadena, South Pasadena and La Cañada Flintridge. It began as a watershed study in 2003 and transitioned into an ecosystem restoration study in 2014. The USACE sees it as complementary and a continuation of the USACE’s LA River Ecosystem Restoration Project with the City of Los Angeles.

USACE is currently identifying a tentatively selected plan with the County and the cities. The objective is to restore quantity and quality of habitat. Out of that plan would come the federally supported plan and request funding as part of the FY17 USACE Work Plan. If successful, they will complete and release a Draft Report. The Arroyo Seco study area is divided into eight reaches and borders the LA River Ecosystem Restoration Project ARBOR area. The array of measures the study is considering, while maintaining flood protection and conveyance capacity, include: low-flow channel; notched side walls; RCB [Reinforced Concrete Box]
(in a box channel, buried); floodplain benching (naturalizing the channel and restoring habitat) and sheetpile bank protection with floodplain benching. The measures and floodplain benching to restore aquatic species (fish) have been placed in a matrix by study reach and are accompanied by cross-sections of each reach in the presentation.

The preliminary costs are from the lowest at $10k for invasive vegetation removal to the most expensive at $292 million to bury the channel in RCB and restore above it. Preliminary alternatives cost $311 million. The smallest project is $208 million; largest is $400 million.

USACE will be ready to release the Draft Feasibility Study report in about a year from now in 2018.

**Los Angeles River Valley Bikeways & Greenways Design Completion Project – City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering**

Nur Malhis (Project Manager/Civil Engineer, Architectural Division, Bureau of Engineering, City of Los Angeles) presented on the project scope, feasibility study tasks and community and advisory meetings. The project consists of approximately 13 miles of Class I bikeway and greenway alignment selection through five Council Districts. This project fills in the current gaps in the LA River Valley Bike Path and crosses twenty-three streets. The project will modify ten street endings and connect to 16 existing Class I bike paths. The project will include pocket parks at key locations.

The project’s funding and 23 intersection crossings are challenging elements of the project. Overcrossings, undercrossings, and tunneling are being considered. The project team is attempting to avoid crossing streets at-grade. The project is working in several jurisdictions and with different land owners. There are 40-50 utility companies to work with including drainage improvements. The project team is working on preliminary CEQA and NEPA documentation and identifying challenges to inform the design selection. They are coordinating with other segments of the path that are in construction or already existing. The alignment feasibility study began in August 2016 and will be completed in Spring 2017. The outcome of the feasibility study will be alignment options, cost analysis and tentative schedules.

Mr. Malhis reviewed conceptual images and the public engagement meeting calendar. The next public meetings will be in May 2017 to review the preliminary alignment. The ballpark estimate for the project could be as much as $150 million. Sixty-million dollars of funding is identified.

Questions and Comments:

Mr. De Mesa commented that he would like Mr. Malhis to be in contact with the USACE regarding 408 permitting as soon as possible.

Mr. Moore emphasized the importance of the feasibility study that it places BOE in a better position to start design, finish design and implement the project in phases and looks forward to the next update.

**Agency Updates**

- Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Richard Gomez)
  - The County will begin providing updates at the RCC on the Los Angeles River Master Plan Update on a quarterly basis. A template Memorandum of Understanding will be developed by April 2017, which agencies can opt to enter into to share information related to the Plan. Following a competitive process, the County plans to hire a consultant by October 2017 who will help facilitate the Plan. The County will host the first public meeting on the plan update in October 2017.
  - The County is working closely with the ABS30 Lower River Working Group, which meets on a monthly basis. The working group has formed subcommittees to look at different areas and issues along the river. Three public engagement events were held in November and December 2016 to gather community input on the plan. The Lower LA River Revitalization
Plan is anticipated to be complete by early 2018. General information can be found at www.lowerlariver.org.

- **City of Los Angeles (Michael Affeldt)**
  - City is negotiating acquisition of the G2 parcel. City Council is moving forward on that effort. Updates will be provided to the committee as they become available.
  - Albion Riverside Park, which was recommended by the RCC, is in bid and a groundbreaking is anticipated in 2017.
  - The Riverside Bridge Project and associated Roundabout is opening in January 2017 and will provide open space and an artistic element next to the LA River.
  - Congratulations to Nur Malhis on the Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway and Greenway update on behalf of the City.
  - Friends of the Los Angeles River held an event in December to celebrate Lewis MacAdam’s tenure as Executive Director for 30 years. Mr. MacAdams is moving to its Board. Marissa Christensen is now Executive Director. Mr. Affeldt congratulated both.

  Mr. Moore took the opportunity to thank Gail Farber, who retired from LA County, for her work advocating for the LA River and the RCC, stating the City looks forward to working with her future replacement.

- **US Army Corps of Engineers (Ed De Mesa)**
  Mr. De Mesa reported that USACE updates were provided earlier in the meeting.

**Call for Projects for Future Meetings**
Applications requested by January 18th for the April 3rd RCC which can be found at www.lariver.org/rcc. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis.

**Public Comments/Other Items:**
- Mary Dixon (Walk/Bike Burbank, a local chapter of LACBC) wished to bring to the Committee’s attention that Park Rangers are preventing cyclists from using roads in Griffith Park that they have a right to use on Zoo Drive to Universal Studios and to encourage shared use. Cathie Santo Domingo (RAP) offered to speak following the meeting to facilitate a conversation.

**Next Meeting:**
The next RCC meeting will be hosted by the County on Monday, April 3, 2017, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Alhambra Room, 900 S. Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803.

**Closing Comments**
Gary Lee Moore thanked all committee members and attendees for their participation.

Comments regarding this meeting summary should be directed to Amalia M. Merino, amalia.merino@lacity.org.

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