LOS ANGELES RIVER
COOPERATION COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY

April 4, 2016

Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Conference Room A
900 S. Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, CA 91803

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<td>Angela George</td>
<td>Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD)</td>
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<td>Deborah Weintraub</td>
<td>City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, Bureau of Engineering</td>
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<td>David Van Dorpe</td>
<td>United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)</td>
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<td>Kecia Washington</td>
<td>City of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power (LADWP)</td>
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<td>Wing Tam</td>
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<td>Tom Gibson</td>
<td>City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP)</td>
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<td>Terri Grant</td>
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<td>Christopher Stone</td>
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<td>Sree Kumar</td>
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Welcome and introductions
Angela George, Assistant Deputy Director of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Watershed Management Division), welcomed the members of the committee and attendees.

Approval of October 5, 2015 Meeting Summary
Meeting Summary approved.

Items for the Committee's Consideration and Recommendation

CURRENT: LA Water – City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
Felicia Filer (Public Arts Director for the City of Los Angeles Department Of Cultural Affairs) presented on overview and the goals of the 2016 Current: LA Water Public Art Biennial initiative. This initiative will feature temporary art projects, public programs and ancillary events in every Council District in the City of Los Angeles. Each Current: LA presentation will focus on a public issue that affects LA and other global cities. This year’s exhibition will address the relevant and timely topic of water. Temporary art projects and public programs will be presented at 15 outdoor sites for one month during the summer of 2016. These temporary projects will be placed and held on Army Corp of Engineers, LA County Flood Control District and City of LA Rec and Park’s properties.

Jennifer Samson (Director of Real Estate Development for River LA) presented on the technical aspects of the initiative. For successful execution of the initiative, Ms. Samson stated that access, site security, and liability coverages will be required and will be working with the respective land owners to address those issues. After completion, the sites will be restored to its original condition.

River LA is requesting Letters of Non-Objection for temporary use of Army Corps fee-owned property in the Sepulveda Basin Recreation LA, temporary access to Los Angeles County Flood Control District fee-owned property at the Headwaters in Canoga Park, and Master Right of Entry Permit for temporary art exhibits at 12 park sites in the City of LA Recreation and Park properties. In addition, River LA is requesting access to the LA River along various locations for filming.

Next steps include technical reviews of the art projects by the County, Army Corps, and the City, finalization of the permit and public announcement of the art locations. The initiative is tentatively scheduled to open July 16, 2016.
There will be a press release on April 12, 2016 to announce the roster of artists and of the curatorial committee members.

Questions and Comments:

David Van Dorpe thanked the Department of Cultural Affairs and River LA for their efforts and requested that the team work with Ms. Lisa Sandoval from the Real Estate group on their request for the Letters of Non-Objection.

Angela George asked if the impacted agencies will have the opportunity to review and provide comments to the initiative once the art project details (location of art, type of art, materials, etc.) are finalized. Ms. Filer informed the committee that all the impacted agencies will have the opportunity to review and the project team will be coordinating meetings with the respective agencies starting April.

Committee Action: Recommended.

Items for the Committee’s Information

One Water LA – Los Angeles Department of Water and Power/ Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation

Serge Haddad (Los Angeles Department Water and Power (LADWP)) and Lenise Marrero (Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN)) presented on One Water LA, a collaborative approach to develop an integrated framework for managing the City’s watersheds, water resources, and water facilities in an environmentally, economically and socially beneficial manner.

One Water LA builds on the successes from the 2006 Water Integrated Resources Plan (IRP), which provided recommendations for projects and policies to improve the City’s wastewater system, multi-purpose/multi-benefit stormwater management, while maximizing water conservation and water reuse for the year 2020. Water IRP deferred $545 million in construction costs due to a successful water use efficiency programs. Mayor’s Executive Directive #5 (ED5) was issued on October 14, 2014 and the goals of ED5 includes 20% reduction of potable water use per capita by 2017, 50% reduction of purchased water by 2024, and creation of an integrated local water strategy. The 2015 Sustainability Plan (pLAN) recommended targets and goals to reduce average per capita water use, reduce number of annual sewer spills and develop an integrated stakeholder driven plan.

One Water LA will support the Mayor's ED5 goals, improve wastewater facilities, manage runoff to meet water quality requirement and increase stormwater runoff, and balance the City’s water needs. Phase I of the plan developed the vision and objectives of One Water LA and created the Initial Water Balance Tool. Various meetings and collaborative efforts were accomplished with City Departments, stakeholders, Advisory Groups and the Steering Committees. Phase II of the One Water will identify solutions to address the City’s water challenges moving forward. Key challenges include declining sewer flows, climate change impacts, potable reuse, funding, regional collaboration and balancing LA River needs. Next steps for Phase II includes discussions with City and regional agencies to increase coordination and partnership, move forward with the adoption of policies, develop integrated strategies, continue stakeholder outreach and engagement, and develop marketing/outreach strategy. One Water LA 2040 Plan is anticipated to be completed in January 2017 and the Programmatic EIR by January 2018.

Ms. Marrero mentioned that one of the special studies from One Water is the LA River Flow Study. The LA River Flow Study will define current and project flow conditions along the LA River. The scope includes defining existing flow-sensitive conditions and compiling flow data and future projections. The LA River Flow Study is anticipated to be completed April 2016. Additional information can be found at www.OneWaterLA.org.

Questions and Comments:

Deborah Weintraub recommended that the policies and the projects in One Water LA be consistent with the
City’s LA River Revitalization efforts (river restoration and water capture efforts).

Kecia Washington asked if there have been any public outreach efforts. Ms. Marrero answered that marketing and outreach strategy will be developed during Phase II of the plan. No public outreach efforts have been done at this time.

Angela George asked who will the main contact for the LA River Flow Study. Ms. Marrero answered that she is the main point of contact for this special study.

David Van Dorpe thanked the LADWP and LASAN for their efforts.

**Atwater Village East Bank Riverway – Atwater Village Neighborhood Council and National Park Service**

Karen Barnett (Atwater Village Neighborhood Council) presented on the Atwater Village East Bank Riverway Project. The project seeks to construct a 4-mile contiguous pathway along the east bank of the Los Angeles River from Verdugo Wash to Fletcher Drive and define management guidelines for east bank river access. Atwater Village Neighborhood Council (AVNC) received a technical service grant from the National Park Service in October 2015. As the first step, the AVNC will look to strategize and gather information on access rights and ownership along the project limits and discuss access limitations at Colorado Blvd, Los Feliz Blvd, Hyperion bridge and Fletcher Drive and the LA River.

The next steps include establishing project team, developing outreach and engagement strategy, gathering information and identifying existing conditions, analyzing opportunities, challenges and key issues, and developing recommendations for access points, pocket parks, design/management guidelines, and implementation strategies.

Questions and Comments:

Sree Kumar asked what type of recreation is being proposed along the project site. Ms. Barnett responded that the AVNC would prefer a multi-use trail for pedestrian and equestrian users.

Deborah Weintraub asked who the lead is on the Project. Ms. Barnett responded that the AVNC will be the lead and NPS providing technical assistance.

David Van Dorpe recommended the AVNC to consider three things. How this project will impact the Army Corp of Engineers LA River Ecosystem Feasibility Study and the projects along this reach. How this project will impact the Army Corps operations. Lastly, how the public safety issue will be addressed. Mr. Van Dorpe also asked who will be taking the lead on the environmental process and asked is NPS will be the lead. Ms. Barnett responded that the lead for the environmental process has not been determined.

**Safe Routes to the River – Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) and National Park Service (NPS)**

Brian Baldauff (MRCA) and Patrick Johnston (NPS) presented on the Safe Routes to the River program. Similar to the safe routes to school program, the program will identify safe routes to schools utilizing the river as alternative transportation routes. The program will conduct outreach to local communities and schools on topics such as water quality awareness, community greening, and recreational opportunities along the river.

The project strategy is to 1) build project partnerships 2) engage school and community youth 3) site inventory and assessment 4) identify priority recommendations 5) develop action plan 6) identify funding resources and 7) project and plan implementation.

A cohort of eight local high school students worked for six weeks on the education program. The students learned about community mapping, site scale designs and were utilized to provide local expertise of the
With the technical expertise and assistance from the MRCA, the program proposed site designs and recommendation for various sites along the river, including the headworks of the Los Angeles River and the Taylor yard parcel.

The project will implement an engagement program for communities adjacent to the river and train youth’s as “River Ambassadors”. The program was recently awarded $55,000 in grant funds from the US Environmental Protection Agency for the implementation of this program.

Carol Armstrong asked about the “Every Kid in a Park” initiative and asked the National Park Service to expand on the program. Mr. Johnston reminded the public that the new White House Initiative, Every Kid in a park, will allow all 4th graders and their families to visit national parks and other federal lands and waters for free for the entire school year. The initiative will make it easy for schools and families to plan trips, provide transportation support to schools with the most need, and provide educational materials.

Deborah Weintraub applauded MRCA and NPS on their efforts on this program.

**2015 Recreational Use Zone Update (MRCA)**

Fernando Gomez from MRCA presented a summary of the 2015 Recreational Use Zones in the Sepulveda Basin and along the LA River near the Elysian Valley. From the previous year, there was an overall drop in participation and visitors from approximately 6,000 to 4,000 people. There was an increase in the number of participants taking personal and private kayaks onto the river. One major injury was reported to the MRCA (a broken fibula). Throughout the duration of this program, MRCA has not made any 911 or emergencies calls for injuries as it relates to the use of the Recreational Use Zones.

MRCA also hosted a successful boat race in the Sepulveda Basin and had approximately 150 people in attendance. MRCA will also be hosting a similar event this upcoming season and is looking for ways to minimize traffic and impact to the nearby neighborhoods. MRCA mentioned that an extra access point was added mid-way along the Elysian Valley Recreational Zone to allow users to exit mid-way due to the difficulty of this kayak route.

MRCA received $100,000 in funding from LA Sanitation District and LADWP for the 2015 program. However, those funding sources have not been identified for the upcoming season. Mr. Gomez mentioned that without this funding source, MRCA will most likely not be able to maintain the current level of service along these recreational zones.

For the 2016 program, vendors will be issued multi-year permits. The 2016 program is anticipated to kick off on Memorial Day.

Kecia Washington asked if MRCA has a long-term plan or solution for funding. Mr. Gomez responded that MRCA does not have any long-term plan at this time. Mr. Gomez also re-iterated that the funding cut will have a direct impact to the level of service provided by MRCA.

**Interim Protective Measures Update – US Army Corps of Engineers**

Ms. Lillian Doherty (Chief of Operations for the Army Corps of Engineers) presented an update to the 2016 Interim Risk Reduction Measures and the Flood Risk Management plan for Fiscal Year 2016. Ms. Doherty gave a brief background on the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA). Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is responsible for the operations and maintenance of 5 dams, one debris basin and 38 miles of the channel. However, the LACDA project itself is larger in scale and encompasses all the channels that were constructed by the Corps during the early and mid-1900’s.
In the Glendale Narrows, there are reaches along the river that will not be able to contain the 4% annual chance storm due to the vegetation present in the channel. The 2016 Interim Risk Reduction Measures will reduce flood risks for approximately 2,200 people that may be adversely impacted by a significant flood event and save over $241 million in property damages. The Corps has been taking action to implement these protective measures and has placed over 3 miles of temporary barriers and has removed 3.7 acres of vegetation in the vicinity of Riverside Drive.

The Corps received over $4.6 million in additional Work Plan Funds. After $950,000 expended to date, Corps has $3.6 million in funding available for extraordinary work. The remaining funds will be used towards implementing the 2016 proposed plan, which includes strategic removal of the barrier, priority repairs, non-native vegetation removal and maintenance of remaining barriers. The barrier system impacting the equestrian and the bike path will be removed to restore access to the Los Angeles River. Upon removal of the temporary barriers, replacement is subject to the availability of funding and will expose areas to flood risk. The funds will be used towards repair and rehab work within the concrete and/or grouted stone embankment and toe of slope and towards removal of non-native vegetation removal activities.

The removal of the barriers is dependent on the weather and the last storm event of the season. The Corps will need clearance from its engineers before the removal can commence and will take 60 days to complete.

Question and Comments:

None.

Approval of Project Evaluation Form Update

Evelyn Cortez-Davis (City of LA, LADWP) reported that the Staff Focus Group (SFG) will bring an updated Project Evaluation Form for Committee’s Approval at the July Public Meeting. The updated form will include more targeted questions about water budgeting and water balance. Ms. Cortez-Davis mentioned that not all projects will be impacted by the change, but for those that have water impacts, the intent is for these questions to help with the planning and the decision making. To update the form and to have more in-depth discussion about LA River water issues, the SFG is dedicating additional discussions on water-focused issues, in part to evaluate the responses to the updated Evaluation Form questions.

Agency Updates

- Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Richard Gomez)
  - The Arroyo Seco Feasibility Study, in partnership with the USACE, is following a similar path to that of the LA River. The costs of the study have increased from $2.7 to $4.8 million. The USACE is now working to complete a Tentative Selected Plan (TSP) by October of 2016.
  - Lower LA River Revitalization Plan (AB530) was signed into law on October 9, 2015 and calls for the establishment of a local working group to lead the development of the revitalization plan. The State to announce the agencies and stakeholders who will be on the Working Group. The first Working Group Meeting to take place April 2016.
  - Tujunga Spreading Grounds Enhancement Project, in partnership with LADWP, will optimize storm water capture and recharge capabilities at this facility. The annual water conservation will increase from 4,000 acre-feet per year to 12,000 acre-feet per year. The project will be awarded in April 2016 and construction is expected to begin July 2016 and will last approximately 2 years. Phase 2 of the project will be constructed in the summer of 2017 and include construction of two new rubber dams and new intake structures to increase the intake capacity.

- US Army Corps of Engineers (David Van Dorpe)
  - USACE completed a major milestone, the Chief’s Report on the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Study, which was signed December 2015. The report is going through review by administration and is pending approval. Upon
approval it will be sent to U.S. Congress for authorization of funds to start implementation.

- The USACE received a request to host a three-day multi-extravaganza event in the Sepulveda Basin. The USACE is expected to issue a final decision on the proposed festival at the end of a 30-day public comment period, which is expected to start on April 18th. A public meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 26th.
- Reemphasized the purpose and the need for the protective measures due to the capacity issues along the LA River.
- Lieutenant General Thomas P. Bostick (Commanding General of the U.S Army Corps of Engineers) announced his retirement.

- City of Los Angeles (Michael Affeldt)
  - City intends to apply for the Federal Tiger Grant (transportation grant) to help fund the construction of river gaps for the Los Angeles River Valley Bikeway Project. The City, in partnership with the County, is currently in the process of selecting design consultants. The design is expected to start by the end of 2016.

**Call for Projects for Future Meetings**
Applications requested by April 18th which can be found at [www.lariver.org/rcc](http://www.lariver.org/rcc).

**Public Comments/Other Items:**
- FoLAR announced their 27th Annual Great Los Angeles River Clean Up. FoLAR will clean up 15 sites along the river in three days. The dates for the cleanup of the upper, middle, and the lower Los Angeles River is scheduled on April 16, April 23, and April 30, respectively.
- Karl Wood, public attendee, expressed his concern in regards to the removal of the concrete pits near Rio De Los Angeles State Park and in the Taylor Yard Parcel. Request that the City keep the concrete pits, which are currently used for drumming circles by the public.
- Jacob Varvarigos of SKN SMK, an urban adventure group, introduced his group to the public. SKN SMK is interested in planning urban events, playground projects, and outdoor facilities along the LA River for the youth.

**Next Meeting:**
The next RCC meeting will be hosted by the City on Monday, July 11, 2016, from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, Los Angeles City Hall, Room 1060, 200 N. Spring Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

**Closing Comments**
Angela George thanked all committee members and attendees for their participation.

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

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