



Los Angeles River Master Plan Update Public Engagement Report

Wednesday, Apr 21, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – 8:15 p.m.

Location

Virtual Meeting

Community Meeting for the Public Draft

1. Meeting Summary and Findings

A virtual community meeting for the LA River Master Plan public draft was held on April 21st, 2021. Three hundred ninety-three people registered for the event, and there were 224 unique viewers tuned in for the meeting. The team received 107 questions during the event from 33 identified users and 27 anonymous individuals (which could have been unique or repeat commenters), 30 of which were answered by the team live and numerous others that were similar to those answered live. Slides were presented in English and Spanish with live Spanish translation available to all attendees.

2. Purpose

The goal of the virtual Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP) community meeting was to review the planning process and public draft briefly and answer public comments and questions about the plan. Following the previous two and half years of engagement, this meeting was developed to convey information to community members, review and respond to their questions, and recognize their concerns and aspirations during the public comment period of the public draft. Attendees were encouraged to submit official comments through the LA River Master Plan website.

3. Outreach Methods - Turnout

An array of methods was used to generate interest and garner attendance and RSVPs for the event. Social media blasts and website posts were employed in English and Spanish. Elected Officials and community organizations notified their constituents through email and social media. A multi-week targeted digital ad campaign and personal outreach contributed to increased outreach. Steering Committee and Internal County Team members were notified personally and given a digital media kit to increase outreach on the public draft. Parallel English and Spanish outreach through local newspapers, text messages, and literature drops in neighborhoods with less internet access are intended to reach individuals near the river that may not be able to join the digital meeting.



4. Meeting Format

The meeting began with a welcome from Dana McKinney, the meeting facilitator, and then from public officials. Dan Lafferty from LA County Public Works emphasized the importance of community involvement and highlighted that this meeting was an extension of the engagement process that began in 2018. Lafferty acknowledged the contributions of Elected Officials, Communities, and Steering Committee members. Lafferty concluded with the expected long-lasting and extensive impact this plan will have. Rudy Ortega, the Vice-Chair of the City of LA and LA County Native American Indian Commission, gave a welcome on behalf of the Steering Committee and Native Communities. He spoke about the background of Native Communities and the deep connection to the river. He concluded that the LA River Master Plan is one of the first times the Native Community has had their voices at the table.

Genevieve Osmeña introduced the Consultant team and gave a brief explanation of the Master Plan and the CEQA Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which is being completed by a separate team. The LARMP Consultant Team represented by Mark Hanna from Geosyntec, Jessica Henson from OLIN, and Tensho Takemori from Gehry Partners provided a 30-minute presentation covering various topics of the LARMP. Hanna and Henson introduced the range of channel conditions and overall watershed FAQs speaking to common questions related to hydrology and hydraulics about concrete and stormwater management. Hanna and Henson summarized the LARMP timeline, planning process, data methodology, engagement, and design components. Hanna and Henson provided an overview of outreach materials and overall feedback heard from public input followed by how it influenced the latest draft of the Master Plan. Hanna, Henson, and Takemori detailed where to find the following specific topics in the Master Plan: soft bottom areas; climate change; affordable housing; homelessness; crossings and platforms; development and property; and operations/maintenance and funding. The overview concluded with a reminder of the CEQA process and the different forums for comments for the distinct processes for the Master Plan and CEQA. McKinney walked through the simple process of making a comment on the website and proceeded to facilitate the comments and questions for the next hour. A recording of the meeting will be posted online so anyone can review topics of interest or view content if they missed this meeting.

One hundred and seven comments and questions were submitted through the Q/A function in English and Spanish and covered several topics with the most to least ranked as follows:

1. General Broad or Logistical;
2. Pollution and Litter;
3. Implementation;



4. Homelessness;
5. Concrete Removal and Platform Parks
6. Flood Risk and Water Supply;
7. Planning Process;
8. Parks and Trails;
9. Ecology;
10. Housing;
11. Indigenous Communities;
12. Gentrification;
13. Art

While 30 or so distinctive questions were answered by the team, many questions shared similar content and themes, and were answered as part of the 30 responses given. All attendees were reminded and strongly encouraged to submit these questions and other additional comments, both what they like and do not like about the plan, through the website during the comment period as well, which lasts until May 13, 2021. Osmeña concluded with a repeated thanks to all who joined and the timeline and methods for comments. The full list of questions is included at the end of this summary.

5. Full List of Questions Asked

General

- There has been very few measurable capital improvement projects over the past 60 years. Stop talking about the master plan and get some boots and shovels in the ground.
- Don't forget about the interconnected pacoima wash the pacoima diversion channel and the tujung wash. The north east san fernando valley has never had its fair share.
- kuehl and solis have been supers since 2014. Its been 6+ years what improvements along the la river have these two supervisors made !!?
- Will slides be posted with recording of presentation on your web page...tomorrow?
- Will we be able to get a copy of these slides that show the maps? Do you have a link where we can access these slides?
- Do you realize that most people who would lack digital access are probably concerned about jobs, taking care of their families, housing, and they are being encouraged to be vaccinated at this time. Do you think they have the time at this time to think about the LA River now?
- What is you proposed process to engage small property owners that would like to participate in River revitalization and positive community impacts?



- Will the rulers be available for synthesis and analysis? Ideally in a dynamic environment we we can alter weighting?
- Thank you for having this public meeting tonight. Can you share how many are in attendance tonight?
- Do you have any opinion of the potential impact of Judge Carter's actions to potentially have the allocation of LA City and County owned land for sheltering the unhoused to settle the current litigation?
- I'd like more information about cadence. The Plan suggests a Shade Pavilion every 0.4 - 0.6 miles, a Rest Pavilion every 0.8 - 1.2 miles, and a Gathering Pavillion every 2 -3 miles for the river's 51 mile length. Back of the envelope math, that could mean 144 pavillions on each bank of the river. Is that right? The Design Guidelines say every half mile on both banks should have at least some built amenities, and that restrooms should be built on every single river mile...am I reading this right?
- What about LB and LA Port Mitigation being done along the River? This was not idetified in the document. Often port expansion is done far away from the area such as Bolsa Chica. Let mitigation help the River communities!
- Lots of planning and studies but nothing really getting done.
- Will the LA RIO requirements be in place that were created more than a decade ago that required residences backed to the river to make specific upgrades to their properties and access to the river?
- will there also be rocks/boulders etc allowed in the middle of the river in some sections to provide a nice visual element as well as ambient sound (like the water passing through the rocks sound)?
- Please submit my question to the document comments. [address]
- Hi, I'm from the Los Angeles Conservancy and interested in how Historic Preservation fits within the Master Plan. Preservation, while generally associated with architecture also encompasses the preservation of public art, cultural sites, and sites associated with significant events. With 51miles of river and 17 cities bordering the river there are a large number of historic sites that reflect diverse histories within the County. Additionally, how will the master plan be impacted by the proposed high speed rail prjct? Presently the the HSR project will adversley impact the historic LA River Bridges.
- how significant is this project compared to other statewide public works projects?
- How are safety and security along the river addressed in the plan?
- What evaluation process/es occurred to understand the success and learnings from the previous Master Plan?
- You explained that the PEIR provides a streamlined process for future implementation, they can build off of the programmatic EIR. What does this look like in practice? Will the existence of a PEIR waive the requirement for specific EIRs for future projects?



- What is stopping vacant urban areas surrounding the LA river from being repurposed into spaces of greenery, community, and living experience?
- Are you aware that there are people cleaning up the area along the river including at Balboa Park right now - under the umbrella of Maxwell? I donated to his non-profit for these people who are volunteering to cleanup the West San Fernando Valley as well as doing beach cleanups. They are doing these cleanups daily.
- How will it be ensured that there is equity within the north and south part of the LA river, given that wealthier and more white people live up north? Underserved and predominantly people of color live along the south part of the river.
- Hello, Is there a portion in the Environmental Document that discusses Mosquito Abatement?
- Just a comment; It's really important that communities decide the improvements go into their neighborhoods (pocket parks, platform parks, etc). It would be a shame to remove an option because a small faction of people do not like them.
- In general, I'm impressed with the level of effort that's gone into this plan. It's impractical to assume any master plan will encompass every angle and accommodate all stakeholder desires so I think this is a good approach and provides a framework for improving the River for those who will be most impacted. Thanks
- There would be all kinds of potential vectors including roaches and other insects, as well as rodents affiliated with the river and storm drains, etc.
- will there be a way where different jurisdictions can see the other jurisdictions plans once they finalize their sections of the river? like a large website/database that shows all the projects that are ongoing/proposed/finished along the river?
- Don't you have to have an archaeological study of any area that you disturb? Don't you require archaeologists and Native American monitors for all soil disturbances by Federal Law?
- where is the text for the LARMP_Appendix Volume I Design Guidelines_public DRAFT on the website?
- There's been very little opportunity to discuss the PEIR. Would it be possible to have one more public meeting on the PEIR before May 13th?
- thank you! really appreciate all of your efforts! <3

Pollution and Litter

- Don't forget about the enormous amounts of transient litter garbage and trash injected into the la river
- One of the problems with the river has to do with sediment and trash. We are not getting our streets swept anymore here in West Hills. Therefore, I see sediment



in my street that accumulates along the curbs. Why are they not regularly sweeping our streets?

- What are the plans and assets presently available to clean up the trash and graffiti along the river between Canoga and the Sepulveda Basin? Why aren't there trash bins on the pedestrian bridges that cross the river in Reseda, Canoga Park, Winnetka, and Encino? Why doesn't the City or County place trash booms in the river to extract trash?
- Are you aware that the public comment period is open for CalEnviroScreen 4.0 to April 30th?
- Have you considered that if you remove residential and other older structures, you may not only release lead from paint but asbestos to the environment?
- How does this plan contribute to state and county climate change related goals? What metrics does it attempt to achieve in terms of climate change/CO2 reduction goals?
- Any changes to the river itself will utilize energy. Will diesel emitting vehicles be used to make these changes? This will also cause the release of PM 10 and PM 2.5 dust which poses a risk to everyone in the vicinity.
- After water recedes, there are heavy metals left behind. These heavy metals can be blown by the wind into communities and can get on people enjoying the river. How is this going to be addressed?
- CEQA focuses on negative environmental impact of the project, it doesn't address the climate change mitigation opportunities that a project might be missing. By not including a realistic proposal to restore the river bed to its natural state, this sounds like a real opportunity to meet climate goals in terms of CO2 emissions. Do you have any comments on the missed opportunity to use LA river as a living CO2 sink?
- What percentage of our groundwater is not contaminated with chemicals like TCE, fertilizers, and other hazardous chemicals?
- The census tract at the top of the LA River in Canoga Park per CalEnviroScreen 4.0 (CES) has a total score of 92 I believe for a combined total of population and pollution burden. This means that this census tract has a greater pollution burden than 92% of all census tracts throughout California. You can see Canoga Park High School on that CES 4.0 tool.
- Can you please email those links to those who signed up for this meeting?

Implementation

- You've previously mentioned that you allow cities to be responsible for managing the land (that falls within their city limits) along the LA River. When this land has been identified as green space on the LA River Master Plan however, our city leaders choose to allow commercialization instead of the planned green space



thereby taking away public access to the River in areas already “Park Poor”, what can you do as the developers of this Plan to help us, those directly affected by these choices?

- The leaders of Long Beach do not prioritize the importance of the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan. What can be done to influence their decision making process? What motivates a city leader to build park/green space around the LA River instead of commercialization (especially if that property is privately owned)?
- What resources are available to cities to acquire the funds to purchase this land (if privately held) or to develop this land in to park space (especially in one of the most park poor areas). We’ve been told that previous efforts failed due to lack of available funding. What help can you offer cities to assist them in finding these funds? How do we make cities understand the importance of this Master Plan? It seems to be traditionally ignored in our community.
- How will this funding be impacted by the overall budget cuts that happened last year, and the new Budget outlined by the Mayor this past Monday in his State of the City address?
- More of a comment - kudos on the consideration of long term O&M
- Are there any cities that you are looking at that have done this? Even plans like Atlanta’s Beltway
- If there is no concrete project scoped, what leverage does county have in getting this plan to fruition? How will county make any progress on it?
- Who is responsible for placing, cleaning and replacing LA River signage? Who is responsible for repairing fences, and making sure gates are locked and secured?
- Will nonprofits be able to apply for funding to conduct outreach or other proposed activities?
- Why has 3 years been picked for maintenance requirements for new projects? We have constant maintenance issues along the LA River Bike path in part because it was built over 3 years ago. Realistically, maintenance needs to be for the life of any project.
- That is correct about Long Beach not prioritizing the LA River MP. Please let us know how we can get involved as citizens, volunteering and getting the word out to our organizations that we belong to in Long Beach. For example, the Peninsula Neighborhood Association gets all the river water and its waste on our beaches yet few here are aware of how important this is for Long Beach.

Homelessness

- How and when are we addressing the homelessness on the river and adjacent areas?



- Don't forget about the enormous amounts of transient litter garbage and trash injected into the la river
- There is a considerable difference regarding the river today v when I attended those meetings in 2019 in Canoga Park. We have a greater homeless problem in this area today.
- The unhoused community and many immigrants have lived and used the river for sustenance for over 130 years. The current draft includes zero housing units for the unhoused community of which nearly 9,000 individuals live along the river, and the EIR stated many encampments would be removed and patrolling would be increased on sections of the river. How many housing units will the final plan allocate for the unhoused community? Many experts have said the plan prioritizes economic revitalization over human rights, what is your response?
- We know that homeless and low income communities are using river resources as a supplemental food/protein source. How is this addressed?
- Do you have any opinion of the potential impact of Judge Carter's actions to potentially have the allocation of LA City and County owned land for sheltering the unhoused to settle the current litigation?
- Where do we have places to move people who live in or near the river? Why aren't we funding these shelters before thinking about the river changes? Yes, we need trained compassionate people to assist the unhoused.
- The Sepulveda Basin is a flood control basin. Yet there are a number of unhoused that live there? What will happen to these people if we have a 100 year event or even a 10 year event?
- If there is a canopy or tree area every half mile, what prevents the unhoused from using these areas for shelter?

Concrete Removal and Platform Parks

- Also would the concrete that would be removed, would it be incorporated into the material for future walls, rip raps etc to reduce the amount of material wasted?
- How are the platforms different from previous stream undergrounding/burying efforts that many are trying to reverse through daylighting? Where would water come from and where will runoff go from these platforms that are disconnected from river hydrology?
- has any community group proposed widening the entire length of the river channel? The proposals I'm familiar with are at much smaller scales. And haven't you acknowledged that smaller-scale removal is plausible? Given that acknowledgment, why is the farming around the concrete question so focused on the large-scale, implausible proposal instead of the small-scale, plausible ones?



- I read there are environmental concerns about placing platform parks over the river. Have there been research conducted of the potential ecological consequences they may create? If so what has been discovered?
- Thank you for acknowledging the importance of an iterative plan, what are some of the ways the master plan addresses this?
- Is the evidence in the report in regards to necessity for retaining concrete to avoid widening and displacement? Where is the data that we can use to understand and refute some of the critiques or concerns about that and the platform parks?
- What is your response to criticisms over the platform parks plan for the lower LA River? Is the team reconsidering this proposal?
- Could a platform cross the 710 also?
- Is the concrete being taken into account regarding its impact on climate change as it's a top producer of greenhouse gases?

Flood Risk/Water Supply

- What water capture projects are being planned along the la river now that we're paying measure m taxes? Still waiting to see a "concrete" plan pun intended.
- Have you publicly shared your models and research methodology? Who has reviewed your models? Any peer reviews?
- Why were tributaries and the watershed not utilized to redirect flow or revitalize ground water ?
- Does the Master Plan include the potential for widening the river and/or creating off-line detention at the former Taylor Yard RR site? In the early 1990's this was found to have a positive impact on reducing the flood peak . I understand much of the site was subsequently developed. Does the remaining property provide flood peak reduction, open space, and wetland creation? Has this been investigated for feasibility and if so, would utilizing the remaining open space provide adequate flood peak reduction?
- Is the watershed study that Mark mentioned available on the website?
- how does this fold into the Whittier Narrows emergency project that the Army Corps of Engineers is rushing to complete.
- Regarding Tujunga Wash: The existing rectangular channel occupies about half of the original right-of way. Would widening and naturalizing Tujunga wash to the full right of way width help to reduce flow velocities and peak flow, thereby benefiting and increasing the adequacy of the LA River channel through "the narrows"?
- can we address the actual feasibility of the tunnel from headworks?

Planning Process



- Why were city planners and engineers not involved in the production of this plan?
- Have you publicly shared your models and research methodology? Who has reviewed your models? Any peer reviews?
- Who participated from City of LA Brd Public Works and Depart. of City Planning were on the Committee
- This is so expansive that to cover it here is, at best, hopeful! I am curious as to any input by the Army Corp of Engineers?
- Thank you for acknowledging the importance of an iterative plan, what are some of the ways the master plan addresses this?
- Who were the members of the public that participated on the steering committee? / What community were they from?
- Can you please identify the 41? members of the reviewing team.
- Is there a governance structure proposed for implementation of the plan?

Parks/Trails

- Where are the equestrian, pedestrian, and bike paths, pocket parks and art in public space along the la county flood control channel ?!?
- You've previously mentioned that you allow cities to be responsible for managing the land (that falls within their city limits) along the LA River. When this land has been identified as green space on the LA River Master Plan however, our city leaders choose to allow commercialization instead of the planned green space thereby taking away public access to the River in areas already "Park Poor", what can you do as the developers of this Plan to help us, those directly affected by these choices?
- How is bike infrastructure envisioned as people use the River in their commutes — is there a 51 mile path being built ?
- which sections of the plan discuss mobility, access, and transportation for shared uses with horses, bicycles, and people?
- Was LADOT incorporated in this plan in order to add bike paths joining the LA River plan as there are currently no bike paths connecting to the river?
- Access to nature has been shown to have positive physical and socio-emotional health benefits, but in the plan it feels as though parks and habitat are treated separately. How can they be better integrated?
- Yaasssssss!! crossing points are the most hazardous for shared use

Ecology

- What's in the plan now for exotic species, particularly fish, that are utilized by communities?



- What would be the best category for in- channel habitat true river restoration, or at least some elements thereof? And where do River access and recreational opportunities fit into the county's plan?
- To what extent are you ensuring we capture, remediate and plan for habitat since we keep taking habitat away or concreting over it. Isn't this particularly critical for basic existence for numerous species?

Housing

- why are tenant protections or community benefits related to addressing potential gentrification not included in the kit of parts but design elements are? These can also be incorporated at the project level in tandem to a programmatic level
- If not, would the site be well-suited for affordable housing or homeless reintegration?

Indigenous Communities

- Will there be incentives for people in charge of different sites to hire a tribal affiliated land management crew to do their maintenance over their area compared to choosing a crew that may come from a large company? (people with traditional ecological knowledge important would be beneficial to the project.

Gentrification

- In what specific ways does the master plan direct or shape private development immediately adjacent to the river?

Art

- The LA River was a mecca for graffiti and street art for over half a century, the revitalization provides an opportunity to cultivate artists from local working class communities while celebrating an organic cultural element of the area. It can elevate starving artist into a successful career. On a pragmatic level it was an outlet for local artistic oriented youth. Will this medium be incorporated into the revitalization plans, as well as spaces for local kids to express themselves?