

**ASSEMBLY BILL 466**  
**UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN**  
**WORKING GROUP MEETING #2**

Thursday, October 25, 2018 ♦ 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm  
Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N Buena Vista Street, Burbank CA 91505

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**S U M M A R Y   R E P O R T**

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**INTRODUCTION**

On October 25, 2018, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) hosted the second meeting of the Working Group for the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Revitalization Plan (the Plan). The purpose of the meeting was to: receive reports from the Hydrology and Environment Committee and the People and Recreation Committee; consider a resolution for renaming the Hydrology and Environment Committee; consider a resolution to add additional tributary waterways to the Plan; receive a staff update; and receive a presentation on the County of Los Angeles' Update to the LA River Master Plan.

**Meeting Format and Agenda**

The second meeting of the Working Group occurred on October 25, 2018, from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Buena Vista Branch Library, 300 N Buena Vista Street, Burbank. Approximately **22 Working Group members and 20 community members** participated in the meeting.

Hon. Monica Rodriguez, Los Angeles City Councilmember, and Working Group Chair, called the meeting to order and introduced Hon. Emily Gabel-Luddy, Mayor, City of Burbank, who provided welcoming remarks. Following the administration of the oath of office to Working Group members and alternates who had not yet received the oath, Chair Rodriguez called for approval of the meeting minutes among the Working Group members and opened the public comment period. Chair Rodriguez then called for reports from the chairs of the Hydrology and Environment Committee and the People and Recreation Committee, and opened discussion and voting on the resolution to rename the Hydrology and Environment Committee, which was approved by the Working Group.

Chair Rodriguez then invited Oliver Galang of Tetra Tech, part of the technical team, to deliver a presentation of data regarding the tributary waterways within the study area, which informed the Working Group's discussion and voting on the resolution to add additional tributary waterways to the Plan. The Working Group then received additional staff updates including an overview of their responsibilities and training requirements for the Bagley Keene Act, a

presentation of an initial outline of the community engagement strategy for the planning process, and an update on the literature review and planning process steps and timeline. Carolina Hernandez of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and Mark Hanna of the project consultant team for the LA River Master Plan Update delivered an overview presentation of the planning process. Chair Rodriguez concluded the meeting with additional public comment, announcements from Working Group members, and a reminder about future meeting dates.

During Working Group discussions and public comment periods, Andy Pendoley of MIG recorded key outcomes and discussion points on a wall-sized piece of paper, or “wallgraphic.” A summary of the discussion points is provided in the following sections, and a copy of the wallgraphic is included at the end of this report. Meeting materials are available on the project website: [www.upperlariver.org](http://www.upperlariver.org).

## **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND RESOLUTIONS**

### **Public Comment**

Comments provided by members of the public in attendance included the following:

- Support improving the safety of bicycle and pedestrian pathways near Los Feliz and Figueroa to accommodate population growth, such as widening pathways and creating “express” bicycle lanes
- Address the security of communities through homelessness prevalent on the river and tributaries
- Address potential flood risks in the Atwater Village area that include rescues of homeless populations on the river and sediment removal in the section between State Routes 134 and 2
- Update flood maps from the 1980’s and incorporate into the LA River Master Plan Update to address new data on climate change impacts, up-and down-stream impacts, and the impacts of 100 and 500 year flood conditions

### **Committee Reports**

Matt Weiner of the Hydrology and Environment Committee reported that the committee is focused on engaging the community, prioritizing tributaries for study, and incorporating previous plans to inform the process. The committee also considers its focus to be primarily on public safety and integrated planning, with goals addressing flood management, ecosystem, water supply and quality, and balancing needs.

Miguel Luna of the People and Recreation Committee reported that the committee is focused on ensuring access for all community members, exploring economic development opportunities associated with river and tributary improvements, addressing climate change’s impacts on

water levels, and linking habitat preservation and restoration with passive recreation. The committee is working to define its purpose and goals.

### **Resolution: Renaming the Hydrology and Environment Committee**

Mr. Weiner briefly explained that the Hydrology and Environment Committee believes that “hydrology is not fully encompassing of all of the issues that are represented by this committee. As such the committee recommends renaming to the “Water and Environment Committee.” The Working Group passed the resolution unanimously.

### **Resolution: Adding Tributary Waterways to the ULART Revitalization Plan**

Sarah Rascon, Urban River Program Officer with MRCA, introduced the item and briefly reviewed the staff report on the item before introducing Mr. Galang, who presented a technical presentation on screening methodology and results to inform adding tributary waterways to the Plan. Mia Lehrer of Studio MLA and part of the technical team also contributed to the presentation, reviewing maps of the technical data within ½ mile of each tributary including household income, significant ecological areas, vacant lands, tributary draining areas, and character. They concluded their presentation with the recommendation of adding into the Plan the Burbank Western Channel and Aliso Canyon West tributaries with the originally-programmed Tujunga Wash, Pacoima Wash, Verdugo Wash, and Arroyo Seco.

Working Group members’ discussion points and questions, with project team responses noted in *italics*, included the following:

- How will reclaimed water be studied in this Plan? - *This is included in the LA River Master Plan Update process.*
- What is the cost to expand the analysis beyond six tributaries? – *This is not currently known, but can be determined by the project team, and additional funding may be sought by MRCA staff.*
- How will studying more than six tributaries impact the project timeline? – *The project schedule is fixed by the AB 466 legislation, thus additional tributaries will reduce the level and depth of analysis. The Working Group may make this determination.*
- Explore ways to provide all tributaries with a level of analysis, such as an opportunity-based approach, which could support pursuit of additional funding and/or future studies
- Clarify the scoring criteria of: “A. % People More than ½ Mile from Park.” – *The criteria and scoring will be revised to reflect % of people within ½ mile of a park.*
- In the scoring matrix, why is item “F. Community Burden” bolded? – *This criterion represents the emphasis of the legislation on addressing burdened communities.*
- How was the criteria developed? – *The criteria is informed by the legislation requirements and input of the committees.*
- How can we extend the analysis to the upper reaches of the tributaries? – *Additional, varied analysis at lesser levels through additional funding sources could strengthen positioning for further funding and grants to address these areas.*

- Ensure there is strong community participation in the planning process
- Why are the tributary lengths indicated in the analysis so short? – *The lengths identified in the screening represent the portions in the urbanized areas, which are the focus of the study.*
- Consider adding wildlife corridors as part of the screening and study
- Additional data regarding the City of Burbank should be included prior to including the Burbank Western Channel
- Additional considerations of specific tributaries and opportunities within each may be considered at the committee level

The Working Group defined the resolution to add Aliso Canyon as the fifth tributary, and it passed unanimously. MRCA staff indicated they would seek additional funds for analyzing additional tributaries, review and explain to the Working Group the trade-offs of adding more tributaries to the analysis, and support discussion of additional opportunities at upcoming committee meetings.

Chair Rodriguez then recognized a public speaker representing the Office of Paul Kerkorian, who briefly indicated that communities in the upper portion of the Burbank Western Channel have great need and great potential, and existing projects should be considered as part of the study.

## **Staff Update Items**

### ***Bagley Keene Act***

Jeff Maloney, SMMC Counsel, explained to Working Group members their responsibilities under the Bagley Keene Act, which is a State act similar in scope to the Brown Act at the local levels. Mr. Maloney explained that members are required to participate in an online-based ethics training as part of their Working Group membership.

### ***Community Engagement Strategy***

Andy Pendoley of MIG, part of the project, briefly presented an initial outline of the community engagement strategy for the process, which the legislation indicates should prioritize disadvantaged communities. He explained that the goals for community engagement will focus on being inclusive, wide-reaching, equitable, accessible and community-driven. Specific activities are anticipated to include community meetings, tours, field trips, site visits, an interactive website, and a watershed education toolkit that is applied to all activities.

Ms. Rascon added that the community meetings will likely be organized across three phases to include project kickoff, data gathering, and concepts development. She also indicated that the project team will develop the engagement strategy in concert with non-governmental organizations from the local communities, who will be contracted through a request-for-proposals (RFP) process to deliver the engagement activities. Some Working Group members

indicated the importance of ensuring that community engagement resources for the study are not stretched too thin over additional tributaries/communities than originally programmed.

### ***Literature Review and Planning Process***

Mr. Galang explained that the literature review is under development and will be distributed to the Working Group for review. He also reviewed the planning process timeline including the objectives for each Working Group meeting date and the phasing of the analysis steps.

### **Presentation: LA River Master Plan Update**

Ms. Hernandez and Mr. Hanna provided a presentation on purpose and status of the LA River Master Plan Update (LARMPU). Following are . Working Group members' discussion points and questions, with project team responses noted in *italics*, included the following:

- How is the work conducted by Frank Gehry on portions of the LA River included in the LARMPU process? - *Mr. Gehry's data is being incorporated into the study, and he is also part of the project team.*
- What is the completion date for the LARMPU? – *Currently, the schedule calls for completion by November 2019.*
- Ensure that the LARMPU and ULART are well-coordinated to develop a comprehensive and integrated analysis and outcome
- Coordinate community engagement activities between the two processes to minimize community members' confusion

### **Additional Public Comment**

Chair Rodriguez opened an additional public comment period, with comments as follows:

- Address the full watershed's and all tributaries, including flood risk and climate change impacts, focusing on identifying the needs, opportunities and required resources
- Conduct a holistic study focused on filling gaps and defining the river's value to the watershed, as well as supporting long-term care of restoration efforts

### **NEXT STEPS AND CLOSE**

The project team briefly recapped the upcoming meeting dates, including January 224, 2019 for the Working Group, and November 15, 2018 and December 20, 2018 for the committees. Chair Rodriguez then closed the meeting by thanking Working Group members and members of the public for their participation and attendance.

WALLGRAPHIC

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY  
AB466 UPPER LOS ANGELES RIVER & TRIBUTARIES REVITALIZATION PLAN

# Working Group MEETING #2

RESOLUTION: RENAMING  
WATER & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

## ADDITIONAL TRIBUTARIES

- STUDY CHANNELS: RECLAIMED WATER? → LA RIVER PROCESS
- COST TO EXPAND ANALYSIS? → UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME.
- TIMELINE IMPACTS? → MORE TRIBUTARIES = ANALYSIS
- CONSIDER AN OPPORTUNITY-BASED APPROACH
- SCORING: PARK ACCESS/PROXIMITY → SHOULD BE "WEIGHTED" WITHIN
- COMMUNITY BURDEN-BUILD? → LEGISLATION EMPHASIS → SLOANS RESIST → COMMITTEES WRIT
- CRITERIA? → SLOANS RESIST
- HOW CAN WE EXPAND STUDY TO UPPER AREAS? → CONSIDER VARIED ANALYSIS FOR POSITIONING/GRANTS
- ENSURE STRONG COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION
- TRIBUTARY LENGTHS "SHORT!" → STOPPED URBAN AREAS → ADD WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
- RECOMMENDATION:
  - TUJUNGA WASH
  - PACINA WASH
  - VERDUO WASH
  - ARROYO SECO
  - MUSO CANYON WASH
- SEEK ADDITIONAL FUNDS
- EXPLAIN POTENTIAL TRADE-OFFS: MORE TRIBUTARIES
- PUBLIC COMMENT: CONSIDER EXISTING BURBANK CHANNEL WORK IN L.A.
- TABLE: BURBANK WESTERN
- DEVELOP CRITERIA WITH THE OPPORTUNITY COMMITTEE IN COMMITTEE

LA RIVER MASTER PLAN UPDATE

- GENUINE STUDY? → DATA IS INCORPORATED
- SCHEDULE TO COMPLETE? → TARGET: NOV. 2019
- NEED TO MESH: WHAT WILL STAY ENGAGED?
- AVOID COMMUNITY CONFUSION BETWEEN EFFORTS BE CAREFUL!

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### HYDROLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- PRIORITIZE TRIBUTARIES
- INCORPORATE PREVIOUS PLANS
- PURPOSE:
  - PUBLIC SAFETY
  - INTEGRATED
- GOALS:
  - FLOOD MGMT
  - ECOSYSTEM
  - SUPPLY & QUALITY
  - BALANCE

### PEOPLE & RECREATION

- SUCCESS FOR ALL
- ECONOMIC DEV. OPPORTUNITIES
- CLIMATE CHANGE: WATER LEVELS
- HABITAT & RECREATION
- PURPOSE: IN PROCESS

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ENSURE ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES ARE NOT STRETCHED THIN

### PUBLIC COMMENT

- SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS: BIKE & PED PATHWAYS
  - WIDENED
  - 'EXPRESS' BIKE LANE
  - POPULATION GROWTH
- SECURITY: HOMELESSNESS
- AT WATER: FLOODING & SEDIMENT, HOMELESS & RESCUES
- FLOOD MAPS DATED: 1980'S
  - PLAN FOR 100 & 500 YEAR FLOODS
  - ADDRESS UP/TOWN STREAM IMPACTS
  - INCORPORATE INTO LARMAP
- CLIMATE CHANGE

### ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT

- FOCUS ON ENTIRE WATERSHED & INCLUDED COMMUNITIES AND REDUCING SCORE!
- PEOPLE USE THE RIVER IN MANY WAYS
- LEARN FROM PAST RESTORATION EFFECTS

1. SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS

2. ADDITIONAL: SCRAMBLER - NEW BIKEWAY

