



Upper Los Angeles River & Tributaries Community Engagement Plan

DRAFT – December 4, 2018

I. Introduction

Established by Assembly Bill 466 (AB 466), within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries (ULART) Working Group is charged with developing a revitalization plan for the Upper Los Angeles River, the tributaries of the Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, and Verdugo Wash and any additional tributary waterway that the Working Group determines to be necessary.

In accordance with AB 466, outreach and engagement with disadvantaged communities is a key focus of the Working Group's charge. The planning process will aim to prioritize projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, while addressing the unique and diverse needs of the waterways and the communities through which they pass.

In order to ensure local communities are meaningfully engaged throughout the process, the Project Team, consisting of SMMC staff and consultants, developed this Community Engagement Program (CEP). This robust community outreach program will be implemented by the Outreach Team, a collaboration of local community partners that will be under contract with SMMC. The Outreach Team will have strong networks and experience with disadvantaged communities, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). The CEP outlines the objectives, methods, tools, key audiences and success metrics that the Outreach Team will undertake to engage a diverse cross-section of the project area and meaningfully engage disadvantaged communities to participate in the development of the Revitalization Plan.

II. Outreach Objectives

The CEP will offer opportunities for local residents, community-based organizations, environmental advocates, and other community and civic leaders to be involved in the development of the Revitalization Plan. In particular, outreach will target the involvement of disadvantaged communities, including but not limited to: low- and moderate-income residents, communities of color, people with disabilities, youth, seniors, and other hard-to-reach groups. The objectives of the CEP include the following:

- **Reach diverse communities in the planning area that have traditionally not been engaged in environmental planning processes.** Engagement activities will be designed to ensure broad and meaningful participation from disadvantaged communities throughout the planning area. The team will proactively reach out to and engage a broad spectrum of communities, stakeholder groups, low-income residents, non-English speaking and limited English proficiency (LEP) populations.

- **Encourage community members to become long-term stewards of the environment and the ULART outcomes.** The outreach and involvement efforts will aim to create new stewards of the environment by encouraging community members to stay engaged in the long-term. The idea is to build residents’ investment in the ULART by demonstrating the positive impacts of long-term environmental stewardship.
- **Create authentic community dialogue by leveraging local networks.** Authentic community dialogue will provide valuable input to inform the Revitalization Plan. Authenticity will come from tapping into the existing networks of local community leaders and organizations to collect input from a wide range of community members. These leaders, organizations and networks will have strong and credible relationships with disadvantaged communities. Equity across the planning area will also be a focus of the outreach efforts.
- **Deliver an inclusive, flexible, and tailored approach to engagement.** The outreach process will facilitate engagement in a variety of settings that are relevant to local and cultural preferences to the greatest extent possible. This flexible approach is designed to be adaptable to the practices and strengths of the Outreach Team, which will lead many of the outreach activities.
- **Provide opportunities for “high touch” engagement.** A key component of the outreach process will be personal, face-to-face interactions, or “high touch” approaches. Outreach methods such as workshops and informal activities with tailored outreach tools will enable community members to engage in meaningful, easy-to-understand, and interesting ways that build community commitment to the Revitalization Plan over time.

III. Methods and Tools

The CEP encompasses a range of methods and tools to reach diverse audiences and collect valuable input for the Revitalization Plan. Overall, it’s important to make it easy and convenient for people to participate, while giving them the tools to stay engaged in the long-term.

- **Outreach Toolkit:** The Project Team will create an outreach toolkit in coordination with and to be used by the Outreach Team to raise public awareness and interest, and collect input from local and disadvantaged communities and throughout the ULART planning area. The toolkit will support three sets of community meetings to be led by community partners under contract with SMMC. The toolkit will also be flexible enough to support additional outreach activities and events that may target specific communities. The toolkit will include the following materials in both English and Spanish:
 - Factsheet
 - Presentation slides
 - Input tools: comment card, posters
 - Project maps (11x17 watershed maps)
 - Uniform messaging and identity
- **Partner Training:** One or two training sessions will be organized to introduce the outreach objectives, methods and toolkit to the Outreach Team. The training sessions will be designed to help the Outreach Team to be successful in their outreach efforts and help them become local

ambassadors of the Revitalization Plan. Through these sessions the Outreach Team may also provide input for refining the toolkit.

- **Survey Instrument:** A highly visual and interactive survey will be created to collect input from community members on their vision and ideas for their communities and the Revitalization Plan. The survey instrument will be available in digital format through a map-based survey tool, as well as in paper format to distribute during community events and workshops. The survey will be designed to encourage community members to think big about the possibilities offered by revitalizing the ULART in their community. The survey will also ask community members to identify any challenges they experience today, such as access barriers or security concerns.

IV. Target Audiences

The project will engage community leaders, the general public and a range of communities of interest across the planning area to collect their input on the Revitalization Plan. Each member of the Outreach Team will be tasked with targeting specific audiences based on their respective community networks and constituencies. The following audiences will be targeted through the outreach efforts:

1. Local residents
2. Community organizations
3. Environmental groups and advocates
4. Faith-based organizations
5. Educational institutions and young people
6. Social service agencies
7. Local business organizations
8. Older adults
9. Youth
10. People with disabilities

V. Metrics of Success

The success of the CEP will be assessed according to its ability to reach the target audiences and conduct meaningful engagement. Specific metrics include the following:

Accessibility

- Engagement activities will be held in a variety of locations and formats to accommodate hard-to-reach groups such as youth, seniors, minorities, low-income families, and people with disabilities.
- Bi-lingual staff and toolkit materials will be assigned to locations and activities that are likely to engage Spanish speaking residents.
- All formal meetings will be held in ADA accessible locations with access to public transit.

- Engagement activities will be available at varying times to accommodate the needs of area workers in the 24-hour economy.

Extent, or reach, of the process

- Targeted communications and activities will reach disadvantaged communities and those who traditionally do not participate in environmental planning processes.
- Participation activities will be publicized broadly using an array of communication methods, particularly through established channels and networks that have a proven reach to target audiences.
- Participants will be aware of multiple options for engaging in the process.
- Outreach activities will routinely collect participant data to track the reach of the process.

Diversity of participants

- Participants in the planning process will be reflective of the demographics of the planning area, with a strong emphasis on disadvantaged communities.
- Participants will also represent the cross-section of diverse interests in the planning area.