



Arroyo Seco

A photograph of a concrete-lined riverbank. The concrete surface is light gray and shows some wear and debris. In the background, there are trees with green and yellow leaves, suggesting an autumn setting. The sky is bright and overcast.

CHAPTER 2: THE PROCESS AND OUTREACH

California Assembly Bill 466 (AB 466) required the creation of a Working Group to develop the Upper Los Angeles And Tributaries (ULART) Revitalization Plan (*The Plan*) to be administered by the SMMC. CA Senate Bill 1126 (SB1126) added one additional tributary to the plan and extended the timeline of the working group. *The Plan* is intended to be watershed-based and include outreach and community engagement to address the diverse needs of the ULART and its communities.

LEGISLATION

California Assembly Bill 466 (AB 466), was signed into law on September 28, 2017. The legislation establishes the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group (Working Group) and required them

“to develop, through watershed-based planning methods and community engagement, 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 necessary¹.”

Using watershed-based planning methods and community engagement, the Plan must address the diverse needs of the Upper Los Angeles River, Pacoima Wash, Tujunga Wash, Verdugo Wash, and the surrounding communities, and propose watershed education programs. Funding from Proposition 1, Proposition 68, and Proposition 84 will aid the planning and development of the Plan.

Exactly one year after the approval of the AB 466, California Senate Bill 1126 (SB 1126) was signed into law. SB 1126 specified the Arroyo Seco as a tributary for the Working Group to include in



the Plan, and authorized the Working Group to include representatives from the Cities of La Cañada Flintridge, Pasadena, and South Pasadena. SB 1126 extended the initial Plan deadline of March 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

WORKING GROUP PROCESS

The Working Group convened for a period of 20 months through 23 publicly held working group and committee meetings to gather feedback and design a truly collaborative and inclusive planning process. To ensure that revitalization efforts included in *The Plan* were selected and designed to serve to the needs of the river communities and improve their quality of life, the Working Group developed and refined a planning process, also

¹ https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180AB466 - cite as a bill

referred to as the technical framework—to carefully provide steps and check in points to establish a robust plan with iterative input (Volume 2, Chapter 1). This framework intentionally mirrors the process used for its sister document *The Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan*² so that both documents can be incorporated into the larger LA River Master Plan Update currently being undertaken by Los Angeles County Public Works for the entire 51 miles of the LA River “mainstem.”

The Working Group was chaired by Los Angeles City Council Woman Monica Rodriguez of the 7th district. The Working Group meetings consisted of time for public comment, presentation of progress, items for discussion, and in some cases workshops or small group activities to gather feedback.

Two committees were identified by the working group—**People and Recreation** and **Water and the Environment** (originally Hydrology and the Environment) to examine and provide feedback throughout the process using viewpoints and lenses associated with the two categories.

Working Group Members were encouraged to join one or both committees depending on their area of expertise.

² LACDPW, 2018

PROCESS TIMELINE

August 2018 WG – Introduction to the planning effort and determining the role of the Working Group in developing the Plan.

—Marvin Braude Building, Van Nuys

October 2018 WG – Inclusion of Aliso Canyon and Burbank Western

—Buena Vista Branch Library, Burbank

December 2018 CM – Workshop to identify opportunity areas

—Pacific Park Community Center, Glendale

February 2019 WG – Potential improvements workshop prioritization by tributary and land use

—L.A. Sanitation Media Center, Glassell Park

April 2019 CM – Review of Design Elements and Opportunity Areas Identified to date

—Donald C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant and Japanese Garden, Van Nuys

June 2019 CM – Site selection and prioritization

—Balboa Sports Center, Encino

August 2019 CM – Plan and additional concept development.

—Pacoima City Hall, Pacoima

November 2019 WG – Next Steps; Governance and Implementation

—Location TBD

2018

September 2018 CM – Creation of goals, objective, and mission statement

—Marvin Braude Building, Van Nuys

November 2018 CM – Tributary background information

—Pacoima City Hall, Pacoima

2019

January 2019 WG – Presentation and Review of Opportunity Areas

—Marvin Braude Building, Van Nuys

March 2019 WG – Typology Discussion

—L.A. Sanitation Media Center, Glassell Park

May 2019 WG – Approval of scored method and presentation of list of sites identified

—Buena Vista Branch Library, Burbank

July 2019 WG – Concept Development

—Studio-MLA, Downtown Los Angeles

September 2019 WG – Draft Plan section release and discussion of selected design area concepts

—Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Downtown Los Angeles

2020

February 2020 WG – Plan Adoption Celebration

—Location TBD

WG Working Group **CM** Committee Meeting

MISSION

Statement, Goals & Objectives

The purpose of developing a mission, goals, and objectives is two-fold: 1) to provide agreed upon guidelines of the values of *The Plan*; and 2) to provide a way to measure and evaluate progress of *The Plan*. Both current and future projects can be compared to these adopted guidelines, which are flexible enough to be applied across different types of projects and physical locations.

During the November 2018, December 2018, and January 2019 committee and Working Group meetings, the Mission Statement, and Goals and Objectives were discussed, amended, and ultimately adopted by the Working Group. These statements help guide the framework, process, and analysis for *the Plan* going forward.

REVITALIZATION PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Upper LA River & Tributaries Revitalization Plan is to develop prioritized opportunities with the following components:

- ▶ Nature based and watershed management
- ▶ Open space
- ▶ Multiple benefits
- ▶ Safe access

- ▶ Alignment with community needs and feedback
- ▶ Alignment with funding sources
- ▶ Reduction and management of existing flood risks to communities
- ▶ Culture, arts, and education
- ▶ Reconciliation with previous efforts

REVITALIZATION PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of the Upper LA River & Tributaries Revitalization Plan are to foster the creation of prioritized opportunities to:

- ▶ Focus on community engagement especially in underserved communities with an emphasis on environmental justice
- ▶ Focus on Tributary areas where there is not already planning or project building efforts; especially those that are neglected shall be prioritized—although all tributaries in study area shall be accounted for
- ▶ Refer to previous planning efforts whenever possible and fill in gaps, identify and resolve inconsistencies

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The purpose of the Water and Environment committee is to identify and prioritize the opportunities that focus on the community need for safety and responsibility for a sustainable environment for the Upper Los Angeles River and its Tributaries using an integrated approach (water resources/conservation/quality/recreation source)



WATER AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Create equitable opportunities to enhance the ecosystem, watershed health, water supply, improve water quality, habitat, and biodiversity
- ▶ Maintain or enhance flood management
- ▶ Balance the utilization of available space and resources for both the environment and the community
- ▶ Assess all opportunities for resiliency to climate change

PEOPLE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE PURPOSE

The purpose of the People and Recreation Committee is to identify and prioritize opportunities that focus on the community need for public space and recreation within and along the Upper Los Angeles River and its tributaries. Opportunities should include special consideration for:

- ▶ Culture and arts
- ▶ The special needs community
- ▶ Economic and workforce development opportunities

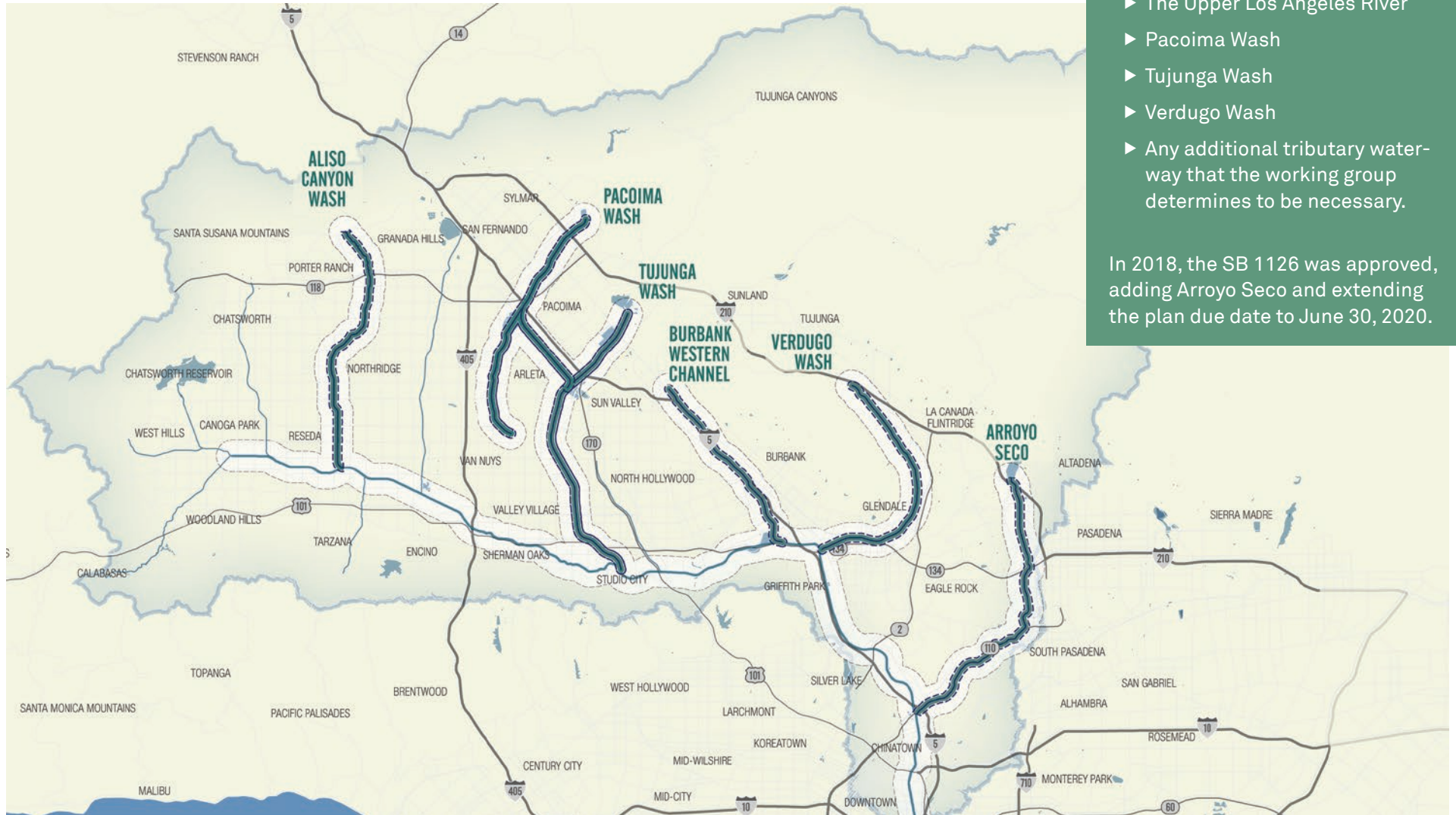
- ▶ Recreation and equitable access for all
- ▶ Integration of the water and environment.
- ▶ Safety and access

PEOPLE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- ▶ Feature and promote the importance of the community and local culture
- ▶ Identify and create improved, inspirational, inclusive access and connectivity to public space, the river and tributaries for all users
- ▶ Incorporate and Identify opportunities for education, recreation, ecosystem and habitat restoration, passive recreation, and examine their relationship with baseflows
- ▶ Provide connectivity to safe parks, open spaces, trails
- ▶ Focus on social equity and environmental justice during the planning process
- ▶ Strengthen local business and vendors to foster job creation and economic growth



TRIBUTARY SELECTION PROCESS



In 2017, the AB 466 was approved, and included:

- ▶ The Upper Los Angeles River
- ▶ Pacoima Wash
- ▶ Tujunga Wash
- ▶ Verdugo Wash
- ▶ Any additional tributary waterway that the working group determines to be necessary.

In 2018, the SB 1126 was approved, adding Arroyo Seco and extending the plan due date to June 30, 2020.

TRIBUTARY EVALUATION AND INCLUSION

The Working Group voted to include Aliso Canyon, and eventually Burbank Western Channel in the study area. A 0.5-mile buffer was created around each of the urbanized portions of the tributaries to represent the people and conditions within walking distance of the river.

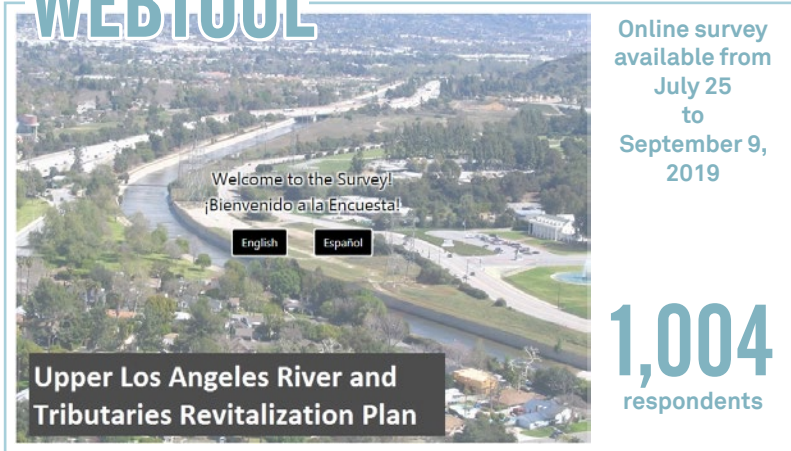
Key reasons the Burbank Western Channel was included are the high CalEnviroScreen (CES) score (69), and high imperviousness (57%). Aliso Canyon Wash Was included primarily because of its low park provision (1.91) and high amount of Significant Ecological Area (13,900 acres)

	Tujunga Wash	Pacoima Wash	Burbank Western Channel	Aliso Canyon Wash	Browns Canyon Wash	Arroyo Seco	Verdugo Wash	Caballero Creek	Arroyo Calabasas	Bull Creek	Central Branch Tujunga	Bell Creek	Chatsworth Creek
PEOPLE & RECREATION	A. Park Accessibility* %People within 1/2 mile of a park Source: 2010 Census Data/LA County Park Assessment												
	5 (80%)	5 (80%)	4 (85%)	8 (70%)	10 (54%)	2 (91%)	1 (97%)	12 (50%)	7 (75%)	10 (54%)	9 (65%)	13 (40%)	3 (87%)
	B. Park Provision* acres of park space per 1,000 people Source: 2010 Census Data/LA County Park Assessment												
	11 (1.65)	12 (1.45)	6 (3.76)	9 (1.91)	1 (13)	3 (9.36)	5 (5.24)	10 (1.87)	13 (1.44)	4 (5.63)	8 (3.01)	7 (3.53)	2 (11.5)
BOTH	C. Population Density* people per acre Source: 2010 US Census												
	13 (38)	4 (18)	10 (26)	6 (19)	9 (25)	8 (23)	11 (29)	12 (36)	2 (17)	1 (15)	2 (17)	7 (21)	4 (18)
	D. Vacant Land* % of total Source: LA County GIS Portal												
	9 (6.1%)	8 (5.9%)	4 (3.5%)	7 (5.7%)	6 (5.6%)	10 (6.5%)	11 (9.1%)	12 (14.2%)	13 (16.9)	3 (1.4%)	2 (1.3%)	5 (3.7%)	1 (1%)
WATER & ENVIRONMENT	E. Household Income* \$ Source: 2010 US Census												
	10 (\$51K)	12 (\$46K)	10 (\$51K)	6 (\$58K)	5 (\$60K)	12 (\$46K)	8 (\$55K)	6 (\$58K)	3 (\$80K)	4 (\$74K)	9 (\$52K)	2 (\$81K)	1 (82K)
Version 2	F. Community Burden (CES 3.0)* State percentile range Source: State of California, CES 3.0												
	12 (70)	13 (76)	11 (69)	8 (60)	7 (59)	9 (62)	5 (51)	3 (47)	4 (48)	6 (58)	10 (66)	1 (41)	2 (42)
	G. Impervious Land Cover % total land cover Source: National Landcover Data Base, Model												
	9 (49%)	11 (53%)	12 (57%)	8 (42%)	10 (52%)	2 (34%)	5 (39%)	4 (38%)	2 (34%)	6 (40%)	12 (57%)	7 (41%)	1 (33%)
Version 2	H. Tributary Length miles Source: USGS National Hydrography Dataset												
	12 (9.8)	13 (11)	6 (6.3)	9 (8.5)	5 (5.9)	11 (9.7)	8 (8.3)	2 (3.3)	6 (6.3)	10 (9.3)	4 (4.2)	3 (3.7)	1 (2.3)
	I. Tributary Drainage Area acres Source: LA County GIS Portal												
Version 2	13 (111K)	12 (38.7K)	9 (18.5K)	7 (13.6K)	8 (14K)	11 (30.2K)	10 (19.4K)	1 (2.4K)	5 (9.2K)	6 (12.8K)	2 (5.3K)	4 (8K)	3 (6.3K)
	J. Significant Ecological Area acres Source: LA County GIS Portal												
	8 (13.9K)	5 (8.4K)	8 (13.9K)	11 (26K)	12 (26.9K)	4 (8.2K)	7 (11.3K)	6 (11K)	10 (19.5K)	13 (35K)	1 (0)	2 (1.3K)	3 (3.6K)
TOTAL SCORE													
102 95 80 79 73 72 71 68 65 63 59 51 21													

* within 0.5 miles of the tributary

Note: The primary flows in the Burbank Western Channel are reclaimed imported water to be programmed for use.

WEBTOOL



www.upperlariver.org

24 PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE WORKING GROUP AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN AND RESULTS

The Working Group also solicited ideas and inspiration from the community through eight extensive outreach and input events.

- ▶ During the **first phase**, the Working Group listened to the people talk about their vision for the river. These stories and recommendations were used to develop the list of building blocks—or improvements—that could be used for sites throughout the watershed.
- ▶ In the **second phase**, the Working Group shared the technical framework, scoring method, and draft design areas for each tributary. The input collected in Phase II was used to determine where improvements would go in each of the design areas.
- ▶ During the **third phase**, the Working Group solicited feedback on the draft *Plan* and shared how the communities' visions were captured in *the Plan* through the development of specific goals and objectives. The input collected during the phase was incorporated into the final draft of *the Plan* to clarify the language, update suggested project level improvements, and address unanswered questions.

8 COMMUNITY MEETINGS SUPPORTED BY 9 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

PHASE 1

MORE
THAN

200

ATTENDEES
AT 4 MEETINGS

Discovery Cube, Sylmar, CA
March 13, 2019
LA Zoo, Los Angeles, CA
March 20, 2019
Kidspace, Pasadena, CA
April 4, 2019
Rose Goldwater Community
Center, Canoga Park, CA
April 9, 2019

PHASE 2

MORE
THAN

325

ATTENDEES
AT 2 MEETINGS

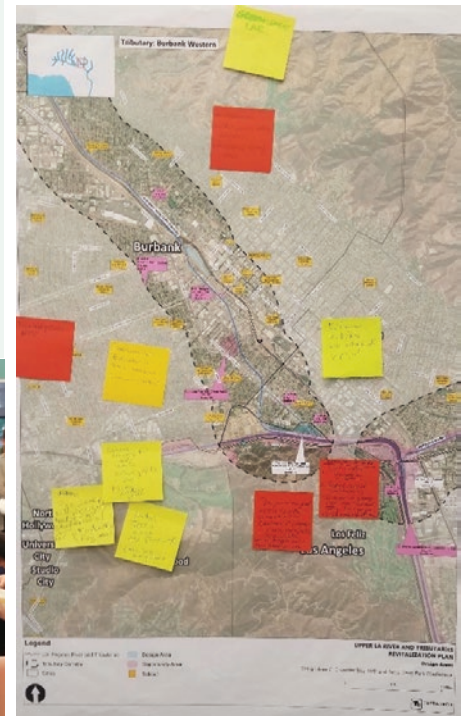
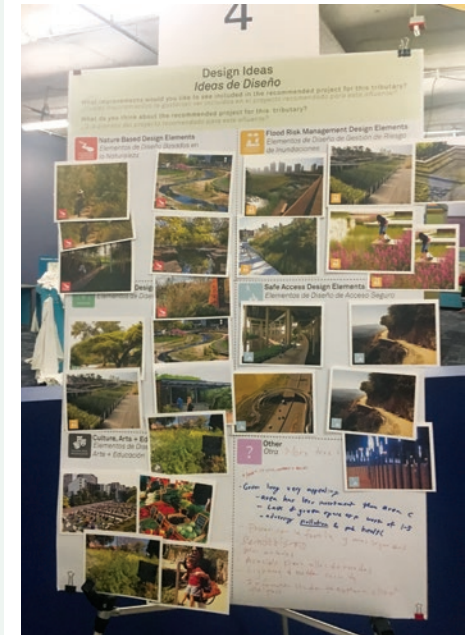
Discovery Cube, Sylmar, CA
July 9, 2019
DreamWorks Animation Campus,
Glendale, CA
July 11, 2019

PHASE 3

#

ATTENDEES
AT 2 MEETINGS

Event, October 10, 2019
Event, October 15, 2019



PHASE 1: PLAN INFORMATION VISION INPUT

The purpose of the Phase 1 outreach was 3-fold:

- ▶ Educate about what makes the plan different from other similar plans
- ▶ Present how input will be used
- ▶ Ask for big picture visions from the community

During the community outreach, the attendees were asked to put a dot on the Upper LA River map indicating where they lived. Participants responded to a series of questions related to the tributaries and sections of the LA river that are being studied. Community members viewed visionary examples of opportunities for the tributaries. Then the community members were asked to share a memorable experience along/in the river. The following is a synopsis of the responses. All of the materials presented and feedback collected during this phase can be found in Volume 2 Chapter C.

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

- ▶ 63 people said they use the river or tributaries to walk or run
- ▶ 43 people said they biked along the river
- ▶ 15 people visit parks
- ▶ 9 people enjoy bird watching
- ▶ 8 people kayak

SAFETY AND ACCESS CONCERNS (REASONS PEOPLE DIDN'T VISIT THE RIVER)

- ▶ Homelessness
- ▶ Unsafe spaces and locations
- ▶ Crime/personal safety
- ▶ Access

NATURALIZED ENVIRONMENTS

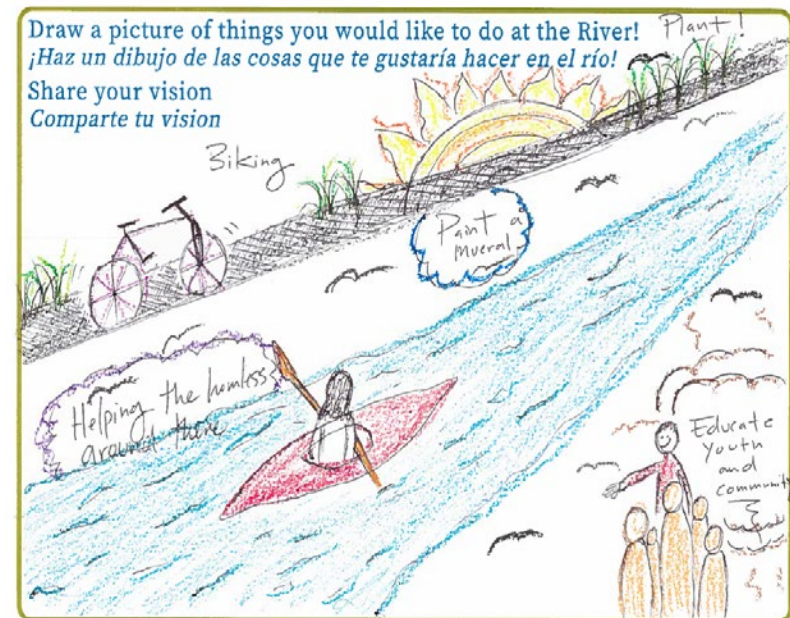
- ▶ Resource conservation
- ▶ Native habitat restoration
- ▶ Wildlife
- ▶ Improved air quality

INVITING AND ENGAGING ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Recreation: active and passive
- ▶ Activation of spaces
- ▶ Landscaping and greenery
- ▶ Interaction with nature

PUBLIC ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

- ▶ Lighting
- ▶ Defined pathways
- ▶ Wayfinding
- ▶ Multi-modal
- ▶ Security



River Dreams

I have river dreams.

I dream of a river that is wide and narrow and deep and shallow—a river that can be whatever it wants and needs and was born to be.

A river clean and fresh, born of waters from the sky, carried down the mountains and spreads itself out and replenishes the lands as it share its life giving soul as it makes its way to the sea.

I have river dreams and I know the river does too.

Amen

LOCAL CULTURE AND HISTORY

- ▶ Indigenous peoples
- ▶ Native American tribes
- ▶ Ecology: land and habitat

COMPREHENSIVE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

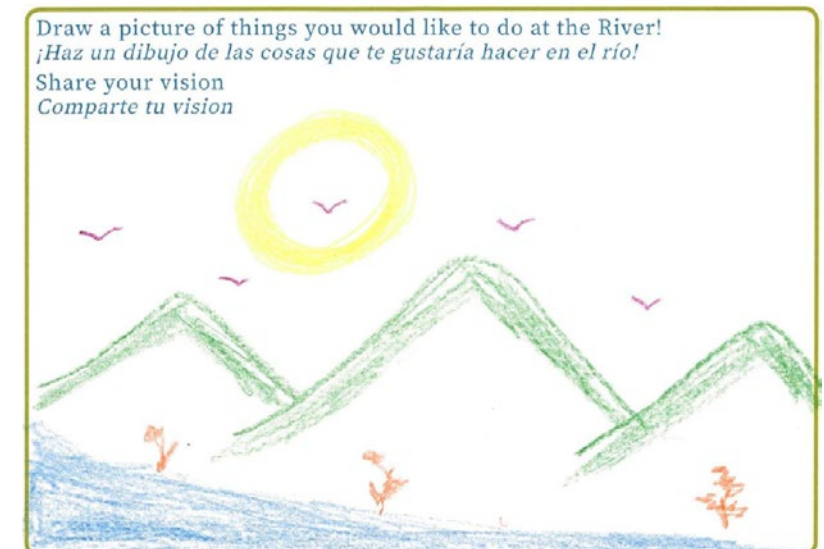
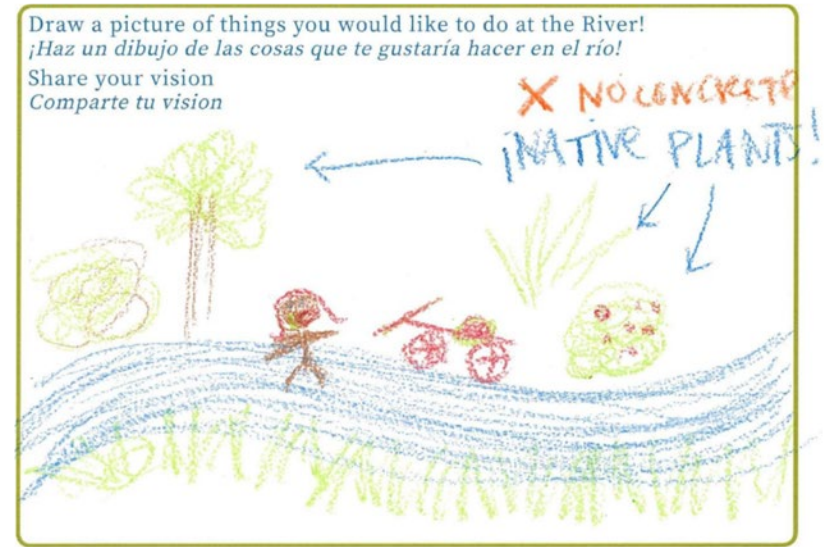
- ▶ Water quality
- ▶ Drainage
- ▶ Flooding
- ▶ Infiltration
- ▶ Groundwater

COMMUNITY FOCUSED

- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ Avoid gentrification
- ▶ Community involvement

EDUCATION

- ▶ Programming
- ▶ Inclusive
- ▶ Stewardship



PHASE 2: SUMMARY OF DESIGN AREA FEEDBACK

The purpose of the Phase 2 community outreach workshops was to solicit input on the design areas (bundled opportunity areas) for each tributary. Participants were asked two questions: what improvements would you like to see included in the recommended project for this tributary; and what do you think about the recommended

project for this tributary? The following is a synopsis of the responses. All of the materials presented and feedback collected during this phase can be found in Volume 2 Chapter C.

OVERARCHING THEMES

- ▶ Improved connectivity
- ▶ Naturalized river
- ▶ Educational opportunities
- ▶ Safe environment
- ▶ Greening
- ▶ Connectivity for horse-friendly trails

ALISO CANYON WASH

- ▶ Create a Natural Space where people can do things
- ▶ Link the community and the tributaries
- ▶ Make it a place where the community can grow, gather, and sell

PACOIMA WASH

- ▶ Ensure more natural parks and open space
- ▶ Create ways for us to move around the city safely
- ▶ Celebrate OUR community
- ▶ Create Flood Protection that is beautiful

TUJUNGA WASH

- ▶ Make the park safer and easier to get to
- ▶ Educate people about the story of our community
- ▶ Create pockets for recreation and places for nature
- ▶ Enhance the opportunity for ecological habitat

BURBANK-WESTERN CHANNEL

- ▶ Make Connections to other parks and schools
- ▶ Create a place where people can learn about nature and our community
- ▶ Create places to rest along the path
- ▶ Mitigate the pollution from the highway

VERDUGO WASH

- ▶ Ensure design and features that create safe access
- ▶ Create areas that provide small gathering spaces
- ▶ Incorporate trails and pathways

ARROYO SECO

- ▶ Create more greening opportunities
- ▶ Incorporate educational components
- ▶ Include design elements that make it more inviting and safe



PHASE 3:

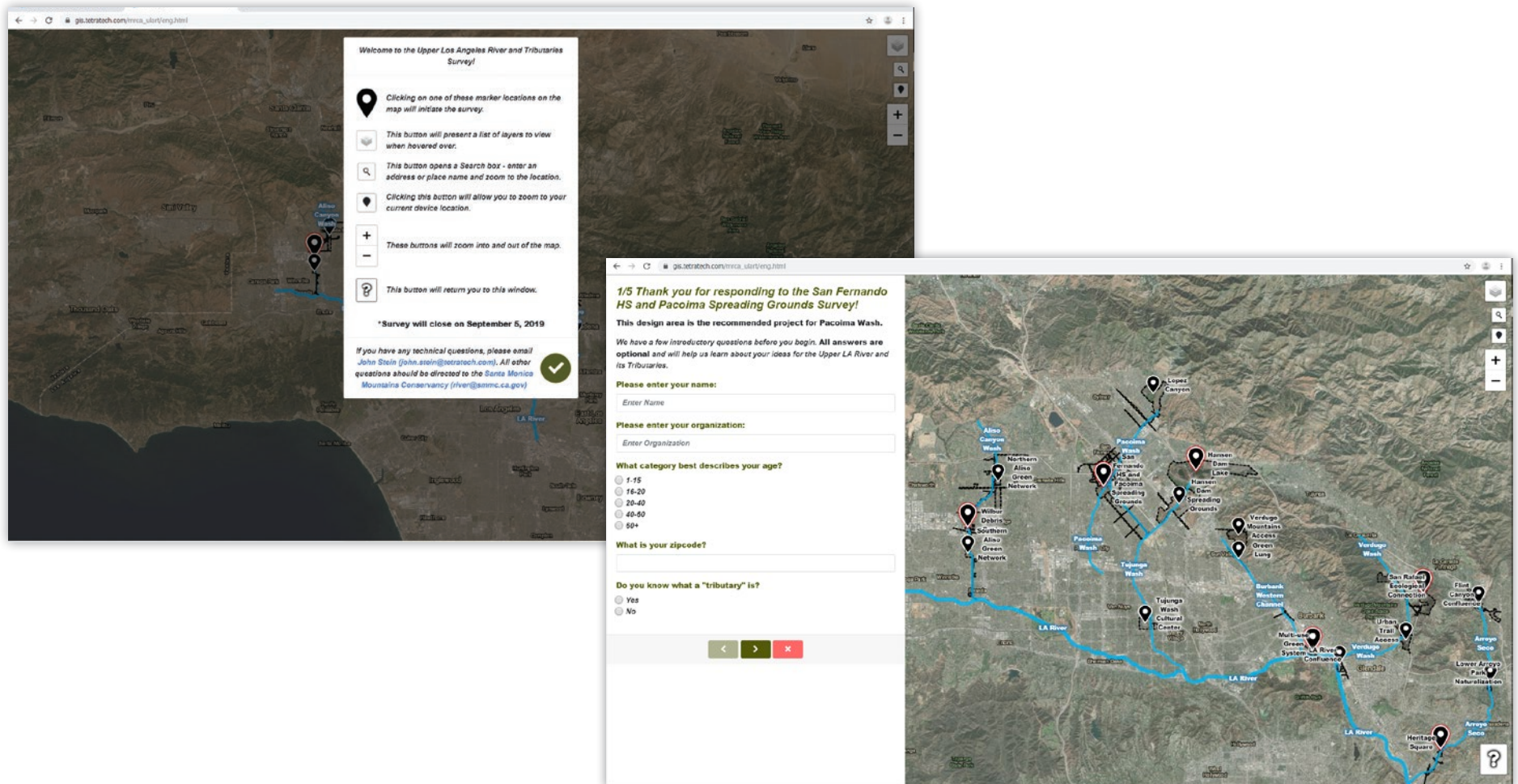
YOUR INPUT HERE...

SUMMARY OF PHASE 3 FEEDBACK AND DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

TO BE ADDED AFTER PLAN COMMENTING PERIOD

WEBTOOL FEEDBACK

Placeholder



PROJECT *Selection Process*

The planning team compiled and selected projects in line with the legislation, Working Group desires, community input, and recommendations for gaps in projects by typology. The following steps were used to create the list:

1. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Before developing the project list for the plan, the Working Group and committees defined the overall goals they wanted to achieve with the improvement projects. Defining the goals and objectives provided a framework for the types of projects and suggestions the plan is looking to compile and solicit from the public.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

All plans and reports for the Upper LA River watershed were reviewed to identify existing and planned improvement projects. Literature reviewed included the Tujunga-Pacoima Watershed Plan, Arroyo Seco Watershed Restoration Feasibility Study, LA River Urban Wildlife Refuge Report etc. The purpose of this step was to create a baseline condition of the watershed and develop a comprehensive list of projects. The

literature review identified any duplicity in public suggestions and allowed the public and Working Group to focus on areas where there were not already projects taking place.

3. TYPOLOGY ANALYSIS

A desktop typology analysis was conducted to identify suitable opportunity areas (OAs) based on land use type. This analysis highlighted areas that would be ideal opportunities for improvement projects, such as publicly owned, vacant, open, easements, or park areas.

4. PUBLIC AND WORKING GROUP SUGGESTIONS (MULTIPLE ROUNDS)

Multiple public and Working Group meetings were held to solicit suggestions and input from the communities. Through this process, local and on the ground knowledge of the needs of the neighborhoods were aggregated to identify and develop over one hundred OAs. During the meetings, attendees were given the opportunity to identify areas for improvement and development that aligned with the plan's goals and objectives.

5. PUBLIC OUTREACH WEBTOOL

Public outreach was conducted using an online webtool and cell phone application to ensure all members of the community had the opportunity to provide input similar to the public meetings. The webtool allowed the user to identify areas and potential projects. The online public outreach tool has recorded over 50 project suggestions. The webtool was available in both English and Spanish. Approximately 1,000 responses were received via the webtool, which included 50 new OA suggestions.

6. MRCA AND WG MEMBER INPUT

The planning team continuously fielded and incorporated suggestions provided by MRCA and working group members. These suggestions typically came through personal correspondence or email.

The OAs were compiled into a project list, then each OA was assigned a unique and descriptive name, analyzed based on existing conditions, and paired with any comments specific to it. Chapter 3 discusses how each project was scored and how to find projects within this document.