

IV. MASTER PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This section discusses ways in which cities, agencies and groups can support and encourage the implementation of the Master Plan recommendations. Sample language is provided which the cities can adapt for their local planning documents. Some cities may wish to amend their General Plans to incorporate the Master Plan.

Sample Resolutions of Support are also included at the end of the section.

It is proposed that an Implementation Team and a Citizens' Advisory Committee, along with a project manager from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works work together to implement Master Plan recommendations. The Los Angeles River Advisory Committee would continue to function in a review and information-sharing capacity. Full implementation of the Master Plan recommendations will entail many years of coordination among agencies, cities and community groups. The Advisory Committee recognizes that there will be a need to modify and update parts of the document over time. The Master Plan's greatest value is in providing a vision for the river's future.

This section also suggests ways of addressing issues raised during the planning process; describes successful methods for interagency coordination; and summarizes the selection of four demonstration projects proposed by the Advisory Committee to illustrate their vision for the river.





RESOLVING ISSUES

The following list of suggested measures for managing various issues has been created by drawing on information gathered in Advisory Committee meetings and public workshops, as well as the experiences of those working on other river projects.


ISSUE: SAFETY

The safety of people using facilities along the river is a primary concern for those involved in the Master Plan. Following is a list of specific recommendations to help ensure public safety.

TRAIL CONDITIONS

- In all new facilities, include safety conscious design features such as: non-slip surfacing, speed controls, lighting where necessary, caution signs and others as needed.
- Provide for a basic standard of maintenance and care: sweeping, pavement repair, weed control and drainage structures.
- Train trail users to be alert to potential hazards. Provide demonstration training areas next to the river.
- Additional aesthetic and recreational uses provided in utility easements will require strict public safety programs and must be constructed so as not to compromise the easement holder's rules and regulations.

FLOOD WATERS

- Organize public education and training on river safety to correspond to allowable recreational activities.
 - Post warning signs on all bridges and access points.
 - Install safety fencing and railings where public use areas are near the river.
 - Continue to close the river trail during storms. Patrol the trail during storms to enforce closures.
 - Develop an appropriate warning system, such as sirens and lights, to alert users to rising water. Publicize planned water releases (e.g. along with the weather forecasts on the nightly local television news).
 - Develop rescue systems.
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WATER QUALITY

- Post warning signs at each river access point.
- Involve the public in monitoring water quality and publicize the results.
- Develop coordinated NPDES programs to improve quality of water reaching the river.

ISSUE: SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

Concerns have been expressed about the need to protect trail users from attack, prevent trespass into adjacent private property and to protect facilities against vandalism. The following list details some measures that have been effective in other cities:

PATROLS

- Many cities include urban trails in their regular police patrols.
- Some communities enlist citizen patrols, often among organized cycling and equestrian groups.
- Youth employment programs could organize River Rangers to ride the trail and monitor activities while doing maintenance.


CRIME WATCH PROGRAM

- Organize “Los Angeles River Crime Watch” programs in neighborhoods with concerns about law enforcement.

DESIGN OF FACILITIES

- Build trails and trail heads that allow access and passage by patrol vehicles.
- Landscape with trees and low ground-cover plants that make the trail visible from surrounding areas without creating places where people can hide.
- Where the width of easement permits, leave a buffer zone between trails and private property. Install thorny plants as barriers which will keep people on the trails and which comply with the rules and regulations of easement holders.

TELEPHONES AND LIGHTING

- Provide emergency telephones at regular intervals along the trail.
 - Install lighting where necessary, such as in bridge underpasses.
 - Consider the use of video monitoring systems in isolated locations.
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PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Publicize the river to increase use of the recreation facilities.
- Hold special events to encourage trail use. (High-volume use of trails and facilities will reduce security concerns.)

ISSUE: MAINTAINING FLOOD PROTECTION

Another primary concern for many Advisory Committee members, especially those below the confluence of the Rio Hondo, is the clear need to maintain the flood protection capability of the river. All project proposals should be reviewed for potential positive or negative affects on the river's flood capacity. (Increasing this capacity is also a key issue and is being addressed in separate studies. The County Department of Public Works and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are addressing this issue, see appendix H for a listing of other studies.

ISSUE: WILDLIFE HABITAT

The potential exists for enhancing the remnant habitats along the river through the restoration of historic wetlands and the use of native plants wherever possible. All project proposals should be reviewed for potential positive or negative impacts on the wildlife habitat along the river.

ISSUE: MAINTENANCE

Interagency agreements for the sharing of maintenance responsibilities along the river may be necessary. Other measures to promote adequate maintenance of facilities along the river could include expansion of the Adopt-a-Reach program and organization of a program similar to the River Rangers youth program.


ISSUE: PROPERTY OWNERSHIP AND ACQUISITION

Private property rights will be respected as the Master Plan is implemented.

ISSUE: FUNDING

Implementation of the Master Plan will entail costs for construction, maintenance, patrolling, and educational and safety programs.

Sources of funding for these activities are listed in Appendix E. Other sources of funding could include landscape and lighting assessment districts, development agreements, Quimby funds, Community



Development Block Grants, etc. Revenue-generating uses of the riverfront, such as special events, commercial recreation development, bicycle rentals and other businesses, might also be considered.

Also for consideration is the concept of sharing costs among agencies and jurisdictions. Cost sharing would even out the responsibility beyond just those cities directly adjacent to the river.

Multi-purpose projects would enable funding to be combined from various sources including water quality, transportation, flood control, wetlands restoration, redevelopment, housing and private development projects (development agreements, conditional use permits, mitigation and mitigation banking).

COORDINATION AMONG JURISDICTIONS

Implementation of many of the Master Plan's recommendations will require coordination between multiple jurisdictions. At the same time, the developers of the plan are aware of, and sympathetic to, the need of the individual communities to maintain local control over land use and redevelopment decisions.

The Master Plan will not propose any measures that supersede the autonomy of local jurisdictions. But


many of the recommendations in the plan, if the cities choose to implement them, will require coordination between two or more jurisdictions.



SITUATIONS THAT WILL REQUIRE COORDINATION

RIVER TRAIL ACCESS

A community would like to build a trail access from their city street or park across a utility easement to a trail on county land. Agency contacts and requirements must be developed for such projects.



MULTIPLE USE FACILITY

A city would like to develop a multiple-use facility, such as an urban runoff detention basin and park adjacent to county land. Questions regarding water quality, facility design, financing and maintenance must be addressed.

UTILITY EASEMENT

The county or a city would like to develop a project (detention basin, multiple use facility, park, commercial recreation center or landscape improvements) on a utility easement next to the river.

A contact person must be identified, constraints analyzed and the project must be reviewed in terms of its consistency with other plans.

MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS


A volunteer group wants to donate their time to plant trees along ten miles of river front. This stretch includes seven jurisdictions: the county and six cities. The project will require coordination of interagency agreements for maintenance and other issues.

RIVERFRONT SECURITY

A community redevelopment housing project next to the river includes a riverfront recreation facility and the city wants to work with the county to develop a security system that will prevent non-residents from entering the project from the river trail.

SHARED COSTS

In the future, the river trail will get heavy use by residents from cities all over the county. On weekends, people in Bell Gardens and Cudahy could ride down to Long Beach or up to Griffith Park; people in Studio City could ride down to the Pueblo State Historic Park in downtown Los Angeles. During the week, workers in Vernon could ride home to Lynwood or downtown Los Angeles. All cities will benefit from the trail, but all need to share in the cost of maintenance.





OTHER COORDINATION ISSUES

There are also a number of other issues which will require coordination between jurisdictions. These include: the use and design requirements of the landowner or easement holder; design compatibility between jurisdictions; funding; construction contract management; operations and maintenance; and the determination of who has responsibility for liability, security and law enforcement on and around various sites.

TOOLS TO FACILITATE COORDINATION

Several entities on the Advisory Committee are already working in partnership with other agencies and groups to accomplish shared goals. Similar cooperative partnerships could be formed to undertake other river-related projects and programs. Some of the mechanisms available for cooperative efforts include:

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

A clearly defined, written arrangement between two or more parties that allows some specific action to be taken. A cooperative agreement is not binding and can be terminated by either party at any time with proper notification.

JOINT POWERS AGREEMENT


An agreement between two or more public agencies which enables them to combine their resources (whether from the general fund or special grants) to accomplish a common goal.


LAND DONATION

Donation of all or partial interest in a property to an agency for a specific use. Possible tax benefits to the donor. This permits public use or protection of a property without the cost of acquisition.

LAND TRUST

A nonprofit organization established to preserve land by acquiring and holding it for later sale or transfer to a public agency. As private entities, land trusts have some advantages over public agencies: they may be able to establish more cooperative relationships with private landowners and they can





respond more quickly to land acquisition opportunities. The Trust for Public Land is an example of a land trust active in Los Angeles River projects.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Expresses an agency's intent to participate in and contribute resources to a project.

MANAGEMENT OR OPERATING AGREEMENTS

A temporary binding agreement between an agency and landowner (private or public) that specifies how a particular parcel of land will be managed for the duration of the agreement.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

An agreement between two or more public agencies which involves a transfer of funds for a specific purpose.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

An agreement between two or more public agencies which does not involve the transfer of funds, but which specifies roles and responsibilities in carrying out an agreed upon project or program.

MITIGATION BANKING

Allows the environmental impacts of a development project to be mitigated at another location.

NPDES PERMITTING

The Regional Water Quality Control Board has recently revised the NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permitting process. Instead of issuing permits by jurisdiction, they will be issued on a watershed basis. The Advisory Committee discussed the idea that cities could accomplish more by combining water quality improvement projects with other site improvements along the river. It was also suggested that perhaps these efforts (including funding) could be coordinated by some type of watershed management entity.





TASK FORCE

A group convened, usually by an overseeing entity or entities, for a limited time to address a specific need.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

UTILITIES

Acquisition, development and management of a proposed trail or greenway may be facilitated through a joint venture with utility companies. Project advocates will need to consider the private company's concerns regarding liability, security of facilities and access for maintenance. Utility companies may gain public relations benefits for their involvement.


RAILROADS


Each year approximately 4,000 miles of railroad line are abandoned. As of 1993, over 6,000 miles of rail corridors had been converted to multi-purpose trails for public enjoyment. A 1983 amendment to the National Trails Act allows for "rail banking," whereby railroad companies can retain rights-of-way for future transportation use, while transferring the corridor to a local government or nonprofit organization for use as a trail.

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Four demonstration projects were proposed by the Advisory Committee for immediate implementation.

Constructing any or all of these projects will contribute to implementation of the overall Master Plan by:

- Taking a first step toward improving the river environment, and showing that it is possible.
 - Revealing potential problems that may be encountered in future projects, and providing an opportunity to begin developing solutions.
 - Reinforcing the contributions of those who have spent time developing the project ideas and the Master Plan, and encouraging them to continue working to implement additional projects.
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The Advisory Committee began the selection process by developing a list of potential projects. These were then ranked by the following criteria:

- Site availability
- Availability of funding
- Community support
- How many of the Master Plan goals the project would meet
- Whether or not the project could be implemented within two years
- Whether the jurisdiction was willing to maintain the project after completion

The following demonstration projects were selected:

- Tujunga Wash/Hansen Dam Interpretive site.
- Los Feliz River Walk
- Dominguez Gap Environmental Enhancement
- Wrigley Greenbelt Trail Enhancement

The entire selection process and list of preliminary project ideas are described in Appendix D, Demonstration Projects.

GENERAL PLAN LANGUAGE

A city may choose to move toward implementation of the master plan recommendations by revising their General Plan. This can be done in several ways:

1. INCLUDE THE ENTIRE MASTER PLAN BY REFERENCE


Suggested objective or policy to be incorporated into the city's general plan:


The City encourages the implementation of the goals and recommendations of the Los Angeles River Master Plan as adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on _____ (date).

2. AS SPECIFIC POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

EXAMPLE FROM THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK:

The City's open space policies seek to resolve the following issues:





3. *The Los Angeles River presents numerous opportunities for enhancing the City's open space network.*

Since the Los Angeles River and its tributaries pass through much of the City, they could become the "spine" of the Citywide Greenways Network. Where appropriate, these waterways could be developed as places for outdoor recreation and become amenities in the communities through which they pass.

Policy 6.2.1: Establish where feasible, the linear open space system represented in the Citywide Greenways Network map, to provide additional open space for active and passive recreational uses and to connect adjoining neighborhoods to one another and to regional open space resources.

a. The regional component of the network is composed of the beaches, the mountains and the Los Angeles River system - the three most continuous natural features of the urban region and thus the primary elements of the network; river tributaries, arroyos and washes that take storm water to the ocean; rail lines and utility corridors, as appropriate and without compromising public safety or facility security, that may serve multiple purposes to become connectors to the beaches and the river and link adjacent districts to each other through the network; and all regional parks made accessible from the network. While considering open space improvement of the River and drainages, their primary purpose for flood control shall be considered.


EXAMPLE FROM THE CITY OF CUDAHY GENERAL PLAN, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION ELEMENT:

Goal 2: Parks and recreational facilities provide areas for leisure, enjoyment and well-being. Cudahy's resident population provides a challenge in meeting the different needs of various age groups and interests. Continued provision of parks and recreational opportunities will enhance the quality of life for residents and create a better living environment.

Policy 2.3 Participate with the County of Los Angeles in the planning of regional parks and recreation facilities to serve City residents.

Policy 2.9 Promote the use of hiking and bicycle trails along the Los Angeles River.





THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE FROM THE CITY OF SAN BERNARDINO GENERAL PLAN RELATES TO THE SANTA ANA RIVER, BUT MANY OF THE ISSUES THERE ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE ALONG THE LOS ANGELES RIVER:

Work with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, County Flood Control and the City's Public Works Department to provide for the recreational use of the Santa Ana River, Cajon Creek, Lytle Creek, canyon drainages, and/or storm water detention channels. These should provide for low intensity use, such as hiking and equestrian trails, nature observation, and picnicking. Other more intensive uses, such as golf courses and athletic fields, shall be considered for the appropriateness according to public safety and environmental habitat preservation. Recreational uses in these areas shall be designed to provide for flood control needs as their primary purpose and be capable for easy restoration subsequent to drainage and floods.

3. COMMUNITY PLANS

Recognizing the river's potential, some communities have already included the river in their Community Plans sections calling for recreational development. The following are examples from several districts within the City of Los Angeles.


NORTH-EAST LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PLAN:


Recreation, Parks and Open Space: ...The City should provide facilities for specialized recreational needs within the District, with consideration given to using existing public lands such as flood control channels, utility easements, Department of Water and Power property, etc. These recreational needs include equestrian facilities, hiking trails, bicycle trails and others.

Specifically, equestrian trails should be provided to link equestrian facilities in the Griffith Park area with the park system along the Arroyo Seco....A program of phased right-of-way acquisition should be started, utilizing Federal funds, if available. Maximum use should be made of vacated railroad rights-of-way and the banks of the Arroyo Seco flood control channel.

RESEDA-WEST VAN NUYS DISTRICT PLAN:

Recreation: ...In addition, the Plan proposes utilization of flood control channels and power line rights-of-way for recreational or open space purposes. The Plan map indicates a linear park and open space corridor as a connecting link between Cleveland High School, Reseda Park, and the Sepulveda Recreation Basin. This might be an excellent location for a bicycle trail. Equestrian trails should be developed along flood control channels where feasible.





HOLLYWOOD COMMUNITY PLAN:

Recreation, Parks and Open Space: ...The plan encourages creation of the Los Angeles River Greenbelt corridor which would be integrated with existing and proposed parks, bicycle paths, equestrian trails, and scenic routes.

SUN VALLEY PLAN:

Parks and Recreation: ...Power line and flood control rights-of-way are proposed for recreational facilities and/or open space purposes....The Los Angeles County-owned spreading grounds should also be utilized for recreational purposes.

VAN NUYS-NORTH SHERMAN OAKS PLAN:

Local Parks and Recreation: ...The utilization of flood control and railroad rights-of-way for open space purposes and/or hiking, bicycle and equestrian trails, is proposed where appropriate. The Tujunga Wash and the Pacoima Wash Flood Control Channels are designated as "Other Open Space — Publicly Controlled Rights-of-Way," consistent with the adopted Open Space Plan.

Public Improvements/Recreation, Parks and Open Space: Consideration should be given to:
2. Improvement of land adjoining the Tujunga Wash Flood Control Channel for recreational uses.

Other Public Facilities: ...Existing flood control improvement programs should be continued, especially in the Pacoima Wash area. Where possible, flood control rights-of-way should be landscaped and used for bicycle, hiking and equestrian trails.

RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT

Organizations, cities and other agencies can support the Master Plan by enacting resolutions similar to the ones at the end of this section.

IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS

The Advisory Committee has proposed the following measures to help ensure interagency coordination while implementing elements of the Master Plan.





1. DESIGNATE A PROJECT MANAGER

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works would designate a Project Manager on staff to coordinate river projects both within the department and with outside agencies and citizen groups.


The Project Manager will:


- Coordinate the activities of the Implementation Team, the Citizens' Advisory Committee and the Los Angeles River Advisory Committee.
- Track projects within the department.
- Represent the department in joint projects with other jurisdictions.
- Ensure that all future or proposed commercial and industrial projects that might potentially discharge to the Los Angeles River be subject to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) review and clearance for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- Ensure that all future project proposals are reviewed from the point of view of the Master Plan goals and make recommendations to enhance the realization of those goals.

2. FORM AN IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

The Project Manager will be assisted by an Implementation Team (currently the Implementation Subcommittee) which would coordinate among jurisdictions to implement the recommended projects.

Representatives of the following entities have participated in planning meetings of the Implementation Team:

- City of Bell Gardens
 - City of Burbank
 - City of Glendale
 - City of Long Beach
 - City of Los Angeles
Bureau of Engineering
Department of Recreation and Parks
 - City of Paramount
 - California Department of Transportation
 - Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
(Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy)
 - UnPAVE L.A.
 - Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - Southern California Edison
 - Metropolitan Water District
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The team is open to any entity interested in implementing the Master Plan.

The team will:


- Schedule and facilitate project planning meetings.
- Secure public support and involvement in project development through workshops and other means.
- Resolve planning and design issues.
- Draft interagency agreements.
- Obtain funding.

3. ESTABLISH A CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Project Manager and the Implementation Team will organize a Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to assist with project development at the community level. The CAC will also contribute to building public support for river enhancement; assist with safety education; and, during the development of river projects, work on issues such as maintenance, safety and security.

4. CONTINUE THE LOS ANGELES RIVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Each jurisdiction would maintain a designated contact person for participation on the Los Angeles River Advisory Committee. The committee would meet twice a year to review the implementation progress and to share information on funding cycles. The committee will serve as a mechanism for the exchange of ideas among jurisdictions and other interested groups. The committee would also provide support for project implementation.



SAMPLE RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF _____ RELATING TO THE AMENDMENT OF THE GENERAL PLAN

WHEREAS, Article 6, of Chapter 3 of Division 1 of Title 7 of the Government Code of the State of California (commencing with Section 65350) provides for amendments to City General Plans; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles River Master Plan is a result of renewed citizen interest in the River as a natural asset for the entire Los Angeles basin; and

WHEREAS, development and implementation of the Los Angeles River Master Plan will ensure the continued maintenance of the channel for flood protection and, at the same time, encourage opportunities for aesthetic, recreational and environmental enhancements adjacent to the channel; and

WHEREAS, the adopted Master Plan is consistent with and furthers the goals and policies of the City's General Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee was formed and assisted in the formulation of the Los Angeles River Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the development of the Los Angeles River Master Plan and the recommendations contained therein were subjected to extensive City and public review and comment, including several community meetings; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of _____:

Adopt an amendment to the General Plan reflecting the Los Angeles River Master Plan findings and recommendations pertaining to the City of _____.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was adopted by a majority of the voting members of the City Council of the City of _____ on _____, 1996.



SAMPLE RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL
OF THE CITY OF _____
(NAME OF AGENCY OR GROUP)
DECLARING ITS SUPPORT FOR
THE LOS ANGELES RIVER MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors requested the preparation of the Los Angeles River Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Los Angeles River Master Plan facilitates the enhancement of the River and brings together the various community interests and governmental agencies to coordinate the planning, financing, and implementation efforts; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Los Angeles River Master Plan will encourage opportunities for aesthetic, recreational and environmental enhancements adjacent to the channel and, at the same time, ensure the continued maintenance of the channel for flood protection; and

WHEREAS, the (City, agency or group) has participated on the Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee and assisted in the formulation of the various recommendations contained in the Master Plan; and

WHEREAS, the development of the Los Angeles River Master Plan was subjected to extensive City and public review and comment, including several community meetings; and

WHEREAS, there is a need in the (City or region) for quality open space and recreational facilities for the City's residents; and

WHEREAS, the adopted (City's General Plan) contains goals and policies intended to improve opportunities for a variety of outdoor recreational experiences including parks, bikeways, riding and hiking trails, access to coastal recreation areas, etc.; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of the Los Angeles River Master Plan will enable the County of Los Angeles to better address the recreational needs of county residents on a comprehensive, regional basis.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of _____:

1. Declares its support for Los Angeles County's Los Angeles River Master Plan; and
2. Urges the County Board of Supervisors to adopt the Los Angeles River Master Plan.

The foregoing resolution was adopted on _____ by the City Council of the City of _____, State of California.

