

The Los Angeles River is the primary flood conveyance system for conveying storm flows from a 1,459 square-mile watershed area, including the Los Angeles Basin which is home to over 9 million people, and outlets into the Pacific Ocean. As authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1936, the Los Angeles River, Rio Hondo, and San Gabriel River were identified as the primary means of providing flood protection to residents of the Los Angeles Basin. Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a comprehensive flood control plan for the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) pursuant to the Flood Control Act of 1938. In 1941 Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct the major flood control features (Hansen, Sepulveda, Santa Fe, Whittier Narrows, and Lopez Dams, debris basins in tributary canyons, channel improvements, and bridges) that were constructed over a twenty year period to form the backbone of LACDA flood protection system. In 1969, Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to evaluate the need for improvements to the LACDA system. In 1977, the Los Angeles River/Rio Hondo Channel (LARIO) trail was opened, providing over 20 miles of bike and equestrian trails. In 1992, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers published the LACDA Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) with their recommendations for flood control improvements to the LACDA system. In 1994, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works published a Master Environmental Impact Report addressing proposed flood control improvements analyzed in the LACDA Feasibility Report and EIS. In 1995, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved the LACDA flood control project developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works.

While the primary purpose of the Los Angeles River is to provide flood protection for existing and anticipated land uses in the Los Angeles Basin, decreasing open space resources has led to renewed interest by the Citizens of Los Angeles County in exploring opportunities for the Los Angeles River to support compatible and multiple uses. The City of Los Angeles has relatively less area of dedicated open space (approximately 4%) when compared to other major metropolitan centers such as Boston (9%) and New York City (17%) (Los Angeles County Department of Public Works 1995a).

2.1 STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

In 1991, in response to growing public sentiment regarding the desire for aesthetic, economic, environmental, and recreational enhancements in conjunction with the Los Angeles River and the Tujunga Wash tributary, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion and directed the preparation of an analysis of opportunities to support compatible multi-uses. The Board of Supervisors directed the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works to prepare an analysis with the assistance of the Los Angeles County Departments of Parks and Recreation and Regional Planning. In addition, the National Park Service's River, Trails, and Conservations Assistance Program was invited to provide technical assistance in the preparation of the Master Plan. These parties will be collectively referred to as the Planning Team. The Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee was established in 1992 to also assist in the development of a Master Plan.

Development of the Master Plan has been undertaken in the context of existing adopted regional and local plans that provide planning guidelines for the region as follow:

- The *Federal Water Project Recreation Act, as amended* encourages: (1) full consideration during the planning of Federal water projects of opportunities afforded by the project for outdoor recreation and fish and wildlife enhancement; (2) planning of proposed recreation development projects should be undertaken in coordination with other existing and planned Federal, state, and local public recreation projects; and (3) encourage non-Federal administration of project lands and water areas (other than National Recreation Areas, National Forests, Wildlife Conservation Areas, etc.) for recreation and fish and wildlife.
- The Open Space and Conservation Element of the *Regional Comprehensive Plan* (SCAG 1995) states that urban-type land uses and facilities are needed to support future additional population growth which will consume a large portion of the remaining privately-held land in the region. The *Regional Comprehensive Plan* emphasizes the conservation of open space areas that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation which is considered important for providing a good quality of life for residents who live in highly urbanized areas of the region.
- The Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash are designated Major Channelized Flood Facilities on the Flood Protection Policy Map of the County of Los Angeles *General Plan* (Los Angeles Department of Regional Planning 1990 and 1983). This designation acknowledges that the primary purpose of the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash is to provide flood protection. In addition, the Open Space and Conservation Element of the *General Plan* recognizes the importance of Open Space areas such as the Los Angeles River in providing scenic resources that contribute to tourism and the intellectual and emotional development of local inhabitants.
- The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation prepared *A Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan for 2010* (Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation 1992a) which identifies goals for strategic planning efforts related to parks and recreation including: provide a system of park and recreation facilities that meet the diversified needs of residents, provide leadership and support for issues of environmental concern, and provide opportunities for revenue generation through community and user-based programs, festival and events.
- The 51-mile reach of the Los Angeles River and 9-mile reach of Tujunga Wash pass through a total of 13 local jurisdictions and unincorporated Los Angeles County with adopted land use elements that encourage the preservation and enhancement of open space resources associated with the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash.

The Los Angeles County Departments of Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Regional Planning and the Los Angeles River Advisory Committee's purpose for developing the Los Angeles River Master Plan is to identify ways to revitalize the publicly owned rights of way along the Los Angeles River and the Tujunga Wash to provide opportunities for recreational and environmental enhancement, regional

aesthetic improvements, enrich the quality of life for local residents, and provide opportunities for economic development in a manner that is consistent with the primary purpose of the Los Angeles River as a flood protection facility. The need for proposed Master Plan improvements was documented in a survey sponsored by Rebuild LA where the majority of respondents in the areas most affected by the civil unrest of 1992 describes parks, recreation, and adults programs as “absolutely critical” or “important” needs in their communities. The proposed Master Plan is intended to accomplish several specific objectives:

- Accomplish project improvements in existing River rights of way and adjacent or nearby public lands.
- Provide economic development opportunities.
- Increase recreation opportunities through the provision of close-to-home parks and open-space for millions of Los Angeles Basin residents that live in Regional Planning Areas designated as being at a deficit for parks and recreation facilities and opportunities by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (1992a).
- Provide opportunities for stress-reducing exercise, which contributes to better health and lower medical expenditures.
- Enhance property values through the development of parks, greenways, and open space enhancements.
- Contribute to partial remediation of regional air and water pollution through the development of trails and greenways that encourage people to ride bicycles, run, jog, or walk instead of driving cars.
- Restore, create, and protect habitats.
- Enhance opportunities for outdoor science classrooms and urban wildlife viewing.
- Provide physical access to the River consistent with the *American’s with Disabilities Act*

The Master Plan provides recommendations to accomplish the stated objectives. The Advisory Committee does not have the power set policies for other jurisdictions; therefore the proposed project elements are recommendations, not mandates, based on input provided by members responsible for eventual implementation and approval.

Six major categories of activities were identified as a result of public outreach and coordination efforts to achieve the proposed Master Plan objectives:

- Aesthetic Improvements
- Economic Development
- Environmental Enhancements

- Flood Management and Water Conservation
- Jurisdiction and Public Involvement
- Recreation

Site specific activities consistent with the six major categories were identified by local jurisdictions and other interested parties. As indicated in the following section, many of the site specific improvements are categorically exempt pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act and are not considered in the environmental evaluation in Section 5 of this Environmental Assessment/Negative Declaration. Assumptions that were used in Table 2.2.1 to evaluate the potential for proposed project activities to result in significant impacts on the environment are described in Section 2 and Section 5.

2.2 PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

Specific project improvements identified in the Master Plan are the result of the first three phases of Master Plan development undertaken by the Planning Team: (1) Outreach; (2) Master Plan Analysis; and (3) Master Plan Formulation. During the Outreach Phase, coordination was undertaken with all federal, state, and local agencies, as well as, private organizations and individuals that have jurisdiction over or interest in the study area. The Outreach Phase resulted in the development of the Los Angeles River Master Plan Advisory Committee that has been meeting since September of 1992. The interjurisdictional Advisory Committee comprised of thirty-five members and an additional thirty-four participants representing community groups, cities adjacent to the River, and federal, state, and local government agencies. Information related to existing resources, current uses, key issues and goals, and objectives was compiled and developed by the Advisory Committee during the Master Plan Analysis Phase. Eighty-one individuals representing a variety of agencies and interest groups participated on six specialized subcommittees that provided technical information and review of issues including aesthetics, economic development, environmental quality, flood management/water conservation, jurisdiction and public involvement, and recreation. Public input provided to the Advisory Committee served as the basis for defining specific projects and programs to enhance the River's right of way and adjacent lands within the study area to be incorporated in the Master Plan. In October and November of 1993, over 200 people attended community meetings to discuss opportunities for recreation, environmental enhancement, aesthetic improvements, economic development, flood management and water conservation.

The Master Plan provides recommendations for the development of six categories of project improvements: Environmental Enhancements; Aesthetic Improvements; Economic Development; Flood Management and Water Conservation; Jurisdiction and Public Involvement; and Recreation. The *Uniform Building Code* (UBC [CBO, 1994 or latest revision]) is the minimum standard implemented by the State and the County to insure that a building is located, designed and constructed to perform in a manner that it will be no particular threat to the occupants or the general public. The UBC, as revised for use by the County of Los Angeles, establishes project design, project review and performance standards, site specific investigation requirements and County department review responsibilities. Compliance with the UBC will be mandatory for project construction activities. Compliance with local ordinances will be required where the proposed activities lies outside the River's right of way and within one of the thirteen local jurisdictions.

Construction of site-specific projects recommended in the proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* which involve ground-disturbing activities will be required to comply with the provisions of the *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit*. In addition, the proposed construction activities will be undertaken consistent with the provision of the State Water Resources Control Board "Water Discharge Requirements for Discharge of Storm Water Runoff Associated with Construction Activity" (General Permit No. CAS000002). Completion of construction activities, especially earth moving activities, during the non-rainy season would serve to minimize risk for impacts due to storm water. Where construction activities must extend into the rainy season, incorporation of Best Management Practices consistent with the guidelines provided in the California Storm Water Best Management Practice Handbooks Construction Activities should be sufficient to avoid substantial flooding, erosion, or siltation. Supplemental erosion control measures that could be implemented during the rainy season include:

- Mulching
- Geotextiles and mats
- Earth dikes
- Temporary drains and gullies
- Silt fence
- Straw bale barriers
- Sand bag barriers
- Brush and rock filters
- Sediment trays
- Sediment basins

Areas adjacent to the Los Angeles River have a high potential for the presence of historic archeological resources to be present beneath the exposed soil surface. Due to the high level of potential sensitivity, several precautions will be undertaken during the design and implementation of site-specific projects recommended in the proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan*. Specifically, an archeological records search at the Archeological Information Center must be completed for the Area of Potential Effect for all projects involving ground-disturbing activities in Reach Nos. 3, 4, 5, and 6. Based on existing available information and supplemental data obtained from the records search, project design shall be undertaken in a manner to avoid impacts on potentially significant cultural resources. Subsurface excavation shall be avoided in areas with buried, known or expected cultural resources with the potential to be determined to be significant. Where the results of the record search indicate the potential for subsurface cultural resources to be present, an archeological monitor will be required to be present during all ground-disturbing activities.

Aesthetic Improvements

Recommendations for aesthetic improvements were developed to promote a sense of pride and to improve the appearance of the River, and programs that enrich public perception of the River through an awareness of the River's role in the history of the region and in the development of the Los Angeles Basin.

Two specific projects served as prototypes for the development of proposed aesthetic improvements: a mural created on a portion of the Tujunga Wash, and a community sponsored artwork that was developed as part of the Rillito River Park (Tucson, Arizona).

The Master Plan identifies three major types of aesthetic improvements:

Mapping and Signage System consists of creating a recognizable River logo to be placed at major trail entrances and interpretation sites. The mapping and sign system is intended to facilitate connections between communities and recreational facilities. No additional construction or ground-disturbing activity is required in support of implementing this recommendation, signs have been proposed at locations where they can be mounted to existing fences or upright poles. The placement of signs is an improvement to an existing facility which is Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15311 of the California Environmental Quality Act which describes Class II Categorical Exemptions to include construction or placement of minor structures accessory to existing commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities including on-premises signs and small parking lots.

Tree Plantings and Aesthetic Enhancement Programs have been recommended in conjunction with existing and proposed entrances to the River. Trees will be planted outside of existing earthen berms and levees in a manner that ensures that there will be no adverse impact on flood control structures or water conservation functions. All tree planting programs shall include tree species that are consistent with the specifications of local jurisdictions. Plant materials used in tree plantings and aesthetic enhancement programs will be comprised of drought-tolerant species adapted to a Mediterranean climate. The use of plant species that are native to the habitats that historically occurred in the project area will be encouraged. Native plant communities that set the context for native plantings are described in Appendix A. Plants that occur on the California Exotic Pest Plant Council *List of Exotic Pest Plants of Greatest Ecological Concern in California* (1994) shall not be allowed in tree plantings or aesthetic enhancement programs. Soils will be analyzed prior to the selection and installation of plant materials. Soil amendment will be undertaken as necessary to remediate local soil conditions. The installation of plant material during the optimal planting season (normally two weeks following the first winter rain (October 15 to April 15)). The use of temporary irrigation to establish new plant material should be encouraged. Tree planting and environmental enhancement projects will be undertaken in locations where irrigation water can be obtained from existing service connectors or grey water supplies. Where existing water connections are not available alternative measures would be undertaken to provide irrigation water. Performance criteria to assess the success of tree plantings and aesthetic enhancement programs should be developed. Parties responsible and schedule for maintenance of tree plantings and aesthetic enhancement programs will be defined in a Memorandum of Agreement between the local jurisdiction and the project proponent.

The use of non-native ornamental plant (other than those on the California Exotic Pest Plant Council *List of Exotic Pest Plants of Greatest Ecological Concern in California* (1994) shall be allowed in individual locations where such plants are consistent with the surrounding landscape or existing local land use.

River Art has been recommended for a number of locations along the Los Angeles River, including ten potential murals. A variety of media have been considered for the development of murals including painting on existing walls and structures, painting on the banks or channel walls of the River, textured concrete murals on River channel walls, and the use of tiles to create visual relief. All murals within the floodplain would be implemented during the non-rainy season (April 16 to October 14). Daily coordination with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works would be undertaken to verify that there are no known flood warnings nor dam releases prior to doing any work within the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash right of way. All materials used in areas subject to flood inundation would be consistent with the requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Implementation of proposed mural locations is subject to consent with local property owners. All mural projects must comply with art standards of the local jurisdiction.

In addition, the confluence of Tujunga Wash and the Los Angeles River has been identified as a potential location for water feature.

There are no designated scenic corridors or viewsheds within the Master Plan area. Proposed river art projects resulted from community input related to the desirability of aesthetic enhancements at specific highly visible locations. The proposed River Art activities provide aesthetic enhancement through minor alterations of existing public structures which is Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15301 of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Graffiti Abatement Programs (GAP) have been recommended for selected stretches of the Los Angeles River. The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works has worked with the County of Los Angeles Department of Education to develop multi-media materials that city councils through the Master Plan area can use in the development of anti-graffiti programs. Programs such as the County's "trail rangers" with youth groups, neighborhood sponsored clean-up days, education and mentor programs for river topics could be implemented in conjunction with schools, libraries, and local agencies. The implementation of Graffiti Abatement Programs is a Ministerial Project which is Categorically Exempt pursuant to Section 15268 of the California Environmental Quality Act.

Economic Development

Recommendations related to economic development were developed to promote the River as an economic asset to adjacent communities. As envisioned, economic development goals could be accomplished through: provision of education, training, jobs, and business opportunities to benefit communities; establishment of long- and short-term funding sources; promoting responsible development; preservation and enhancement of real estate values; ensuring maximum citizen involvement in all phases of economic development planning, and balancing of local and regional benefits.

Opportunities for economic development along the Los Angeles River were largely modeled after the Los Gatos Creek Trail Project in Los Gatos, California that included trail development between businesses and the river. An ancillary benefit of the Los Gatos project was increased use of the trails by employees from nearby businesses during lunch breaks. Opportunities to establish or expand

concessionaire programs were based on existing programs that service local communities and neighborhoods such as those located along the LARIO Trail at Long Beach.

Enhancement of River Frontage Property. Eight distinct geographic areas that have the potential for enhancing river frontage property to create attractive frontage for new garden office, residential, and other uses are identified in the *Los Angeles River Master Plan*: (1) area near Tampa Avenue in the San Fernando Valley damaged in the 1994 Northridge earthquake; (2) area below Sepulveda Dam and the 405 Freeway which is currently vacant; (3) area at the Studio City Golf Course; (4) vacant area along the Tujunga Wash; (5) area at Victory Boulevard where it crosses the Tujunga Wash; (6) vacant area at Taylor Yard; (7) abandoned railroad spurs in downtown Los Angeles near the intersection of Santa Fe Avenue and 4th Street; and (8) DeForest Park and 7th Street area in Long Beach.

Major Gateways. The *Los Angeles River Master Plan* identifies six locations to establish major gateways along the Los Angeles River: (1) a trail of sculptures beginning at the confluence of Bell Creek and Calabasas Creek and continuing on the south bank easement to connect to outdoor markets in the existing adjacent retail area; (2) development of a "River Walk" to connect the existing "City Walk" at Universal and Warner Brothers Studios; (3) Redevelopment Project Area for the Media District in the City of Burbank; (4) "Historic Riverfront" could be developed in downtown Los Angeles between Hollywood (101) Freeway and Taylor Yard; (5) Rio Hondo/Los Angeles River Confluence; and (6) areas adjacent to Queensway Bay Plan project area in Long Beach approved by the California Coastal Commission in May 1995.

Minor Gateways. The *Los Angeles River Master Plan* identifies three opportunities to develop minor gateways in conjunction with redevelopment projects proposed by local jurisdictions or as a connection between compatible land uses in neighboring jurisdictions: (1) Grand Central River Park is a potential redevelopment area in the City of Glendale; (2) proposed redevelopment project to provide an active recreational based center in the City of Vernon; and (3) Garden Gateway to bridge the River between the Cities of Cudahy and Bell Gardens.

Major and minor gateway projects appear to consist of new landscaping (hardscape and softscape) which is defined as a Minor Alteration of Land pursuant to Section 15304 of the California Environmental Quality Act and is Categorically Exempt from the procedural provisions of the Act.

Concessionaire Programs. The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* identifies 13 potential locations where the County and individual Cities could establish or expand concessionaire programs to provide for the sale of food and/or the rental of bicycles and skates. Concessionaire programs would normally operate on weekends between 9:00am and 4:00pm. Concessionaire programs as envisioned by the proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* are intended to serve local communities and neighborhoods. The establishment or expansion of concessionaire programs is subject to issuance of a business license by the local public agency with jurisdiction over the site. The issuance of a business license is a Ministerial Action which is Categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act as defined in Section 15268 of the Act.

It has been assumed that adequate ingress and egress (consistent with the requirements of the local jurisdiction) would need to be provided to the proposed locations for economic development. Supplemental environmental documentation would be required should the proposed economic development project exceed established thresholds for assessing significant impacts on traffic and circulation. Local jurisdictions would be responsible for providing protective services support to patrol economic development projects. Economic development projects will utilize existing infrastructures for electricity, natural gas, potable water, sewer, and telephone. The proposed locations for economic development projects identified in the *Los Angeles River Master Plan* are largely in existing parks, parking areas, or vacant lots. The proposed economic development projects would encourage aesthetic enhancements and concessionaire activities that would be appurtenant to the existing and adjacent land uses.

Environmental Enhancements

Recommendations for environmental enhancement consist of site-specific projects to preserve, enhance, and restore environmental resources in and along the River were identified. Such projects include recommendations to: enhance and create natural plant and animal habitats, increase water conservation efforts and provide for the most beneficial use of River water, improve water quality and cleanliness of the River, and promote air quality. The plant communities appropriate for restoration and the native plant species appropriate for planting in each area depends heavily upon what the former plant communities were in that area. In some places, changes in hydrology or other conditions may mean that creation of native plant communities other than those that originally occurred are more feasible. Historic plant communities of the Master Plan area that set the context for restoration and enhancement are described in Appendix A.

Prototypes for environmental enhancement projects include: Ernie's Walk, part of the Adopt-A-Reach Program, and the Los Angeles River/Arroyo Seco tree planting sponsored by North East Trees and implemented by citizen volunteers.

Planting. The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* encourages the establishment of a nearly continuous greenway of trees in areas adjacent to the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash. Planting of vegetation is proposed in flat areas adjacent to levees. Plants could be installed on levee slopes with some restrictions. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will develop planting guidelines that will address: limitations on size to ensure adequate access for flood control; limitation on placement of trees with large root mass near earthen levees; categorization of trees based on water demand; height of trees (particularly for consistency with overhead utility lines); type of vegetation (should discourage activity by burrowing rodents); and the ability of recommended plant material to provide suitable wildlife habitat.

Habitat Restoration. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will review proposals based on recommendations in the California Department of Fish and Game's *Biota of the Los Angeles River: An Overview of the Historical and Present Plant and Animal Life of the Los Angeles River Drainage* (1993) which identifies appropriate sites for habitat restoration and/or preservation. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, in cooperation with other interested parties, identified high potential opportunities for habitat restoration during the

formulation of the *Los Angeles River Master Plan*, including: Dominguez Gap, Sepulveda Basin, Taylor Yard, and the estuary. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, in cooperation with other interested parties, may conduct additional studies of the River bird life as recommended in the *Biota of the Los Angeles River*: monitor sensitive bird species; identify opportunities for reestablishing former breeding bird species; identify opportunities for enhancing shore bird habitat of the lower river consistent with the primary purpose of flood control; and implement programs to reduce the numbers of pest wildlife species, particularly brown-headed cowbird and red fox. The implementation of all measures to control pest wildlife species will be coordinated with the California Department of Fish and Game and the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Habitat Protection. The Corps and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works will continue to conduct operations and maintenance on the Los Angeles River in a manner consistent with the primary purpose of flood protection. Consideration will be given to additional measures that can be implemented to protect wildlife in the urban environment from negative impacts.

Water Quality and Environmental Education. The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* recommends initiating water quality and environmental education programs by developing interpretative sites at Hansen Dam, Dominguez Gap, Pacoima and Tujunga Washes, and other appropriate facilities in urban areas.

Flood Management and Water Conservation

Recommendations for flood management and water conservation are intended to ensure flood control and public safety needs are met and consider stormwater management alternatives. Specific measures identified to achieve these goals rely on the establishment of multi-use flood control facilities to: allow for increased storm water detention/retention; provide additional recreational facilities; and create wildlife and native riparian habitats.

Several multi-use flood control facilities served as prototypes during the planning process including: Pan Pacific Park in Los Angeles, Hamilton Bowl and Del Amo Park in Long Beach, and Avalon Pump Station in Carson; All American Park in Paramount; and Hansen Dam, Whittier Narrows Dam, Santa Fe Dam, Sepulveda Dam and Puddingstone Dam. A project in the southwestern United States was evaluated as a potential prototype for the multi-use of flood control facilities: detention basins as part of the Little Dry Creek (Inglewood, Colorado) project also provide athletic fields.

Jurisdiction and Public Involvement

Recommendations related to jurisdiction and public involvement are expected to ensure public involvement and coordinate Master Plan development and implementation among jurisdictions, specifically through: development of comprehensive planning goals; integration of input resulting from public involvement; coordination of Master Plan management; and clear definition of Master Plan objectives.

Prototypes for jurisdiction and public involvement that were examined during the planning process include: assistance in the provision of maintenance and patrolling by the South Platte River Greenway Foundation on the South Platte River (Denver, Colorado), and interagency agreement for management of the Contra Costa Canal Trail (Contra Costa County, California).

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works initiated coordination of local jurisdictions and public involvement pursuant to a motion by the County Board of Supervisors. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works has coordinated with local jurisdictions throughout development of the proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan*. The overall and site-specific goals and objectives from the six categories of projects were defined as a result of input received from regulatory agencies, local jurisdictions, organizations, and individuals. The public provided input related to site-specific projects in a series of community workshops undertaken between 1992 and 1995. Specific goals accomplished by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works during the early planning phases of the project include designation of a project manager, formation of an Implementation Subcommittee, establishment of a Citizen's Advisory Committee, and continuance of the Los Angeles River Advisory Committee. It is anticipated that local jurisdictions will incorporate the *Los Angeles River Master Plan* as a General Plan Amendment to guide land use planning and development decisions along the Los Angeles River and Tujunga Wash.

Recreation

Recommendations related to recreation are intended to provide a variety of recreational opportunities along the River in a safe environment, and ensure safe access to and compatibility between the River and other activity centers. Specific measures considered to achieve these goals include: identification of potential funding sources to support land acquisition, construction, and maintenance of additional recreation facilities; provision of a network of multi-use trails through connection of existing trail systems and development of supplemental trail facilities; provide access to the River to promote linkages to other existing and approved activity centers; encourage a variety of active and passive recreation uses; ensure public safety and security along the River; and expand open space resources. Specific recreation improvements identified in the Master Plan to achieve goals defined as a result of the Outreach Phase include:

Regional Trail System Improvements

Proposed trail improvements were modeled after several existing local trail amenities: Tujunga Wash greenway and mural, LARIO and San Gabriel River Trails, and the Ballona Creek Trail. The Little Dry Creek (Inglewood, Colorado), Rillito River Park (Tucson, Arizona), and Los Gatos Creek Trail (Los Gatos, California) also served as prototypes for trail planning efforts.

The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* provides recommendations to create a regional trail system that will join existing trails and enhance potential trail opportunities. As envisioned the trails would connect the San Gabriel Mountains north of Hansen Dam to the ocean at Long Beach. In addition, opportunities to develop on-street bike lanes to connect other nearby recreation and public facilities to the existing LARIO Trail and proposed improvements have been identified throughout the Master Plan study area. Proposed bridge, railroad, and street crossings will coincide with existing service road crossings. Wherever possible an at-grade

crossing will be developed where an existing under crossing is not available. All future trails must be designed to the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) standards, in compliance with Sections 2374 and 2376 of the Street and Highway Code. Whenever possible, a separation will be maintained between bicycle and equestrian trails. Separate walkways will be provided adjacent to the bike trail (where sufficient space is available) to accommodate areas of heavy pedestrian use. The creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights-of-way which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees is defined as a Minor Alteration to Land pursuant to Section 15304 of the California Environmental Quality Act and are not subject to the procedural provisions of the Act. The construction of underpasses may be required in some locations. The construction of underpasses is not categorically exempt from the procedural provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. All recommendations resulting from site-specific geotechnical investigations will be incorporated into project design for bike trail undercrossings at bridges and streets. The County of Los Angeles and local jurisdictions must enter into a Memorandum of Agreement for the provision of protective services prior to the incorporation of additional sections of the existing service road into the LARIO Trail. Local jurisdictions are responsible for providing protective services support for the extensions of connections to LARIO Trail that lie outside the River's rights of way and the Tujunga Wash.

Interpretative Sites

The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* recommends the development of a series of twenty-seven interpretive sites, each offering a unique experience related to topics such as history, culture, environment, river engineering, water conservation, or industrial development.

Vista Points at Bridges

The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* recommends the provision of pedestrian vista points at many bridges over the Los Angeles River. The mapping and sign system program will be integrated with Vista Points at bridges on the Los Angeles River wherever feasible.

Development of Recreation Facilities in Areas Adjacent to Public Rights of Way

Four local parks were evaluated as prototypes for development of parks adjacent to the River: Buena Vista Park in Burbank, Eisenhower Park adjacent to Santa Anita Wash in Arcadia, Hollydale Park in South Gate, and Dills Park in Paramount.

The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* identifies eight opportunities for development of parks to serve local neighborhoods in association with the following locations that are near or adjacent to the River: Dominguez Gap Urban Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project, north of Artesia Boulevard and east of the Los Angeles River; expansion of the Downey Playground; Corn Fields area on Broadway Street near downtown Los Angeles; Laurel Grove Avenue and Laurel Canyon Boulevard; between Hazeltine Avenue and Murietta Avenue; and a potential mini-park between Tujunga Wash and an existing strip mall.

Some of the recommended locations may lie within areas that have been identified by the Corps as being subject to flood inundation during infrequent high magnitude storm events. The Corps and the County have identified and approved flood protection measures for the LACDA study area. Construction of the proposed park improvements is subject to coordination with the Corps, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works and local jurisdictions. Where proposed park improvements are located in areas currently subject to flooding, project design will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Corps' *Minimum Criteria for Reservoir Land Use Projects, South Pacific Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* to ensure the flood ability of proposed structures. All recommendations from site-specific geotechnical investigations and Phase I Site Assessments will be incorporated into the project design for parks and appurtenant structures. Proposed parks will be designed to balance cut and fill activities. Grading will be phased to reduce peak period construction emissions below the South Coast Air Quality Management District threshold for requiring mitigation. Should more extensive grading be anticipated at the time of construction, a detailed air quality analysis would need to be undertaken and appropriate mitigation measures designed to reduce impacts below the level of significance. Local jurisdictions would be responsible for providing protective services support for proposed park facilities. Proposed park development projects will utilize existing infrastructure for electricity, natural gas, potable water, sewer, and telephone.

Demonstration Projects

The proposed *Los Angeles River Master Plan* provides recommendations for the development of four site-specific demonstration projects: Tujunga Wash/Hansen Dam Interpretive Sign; Los Feliz Riverwalk; Dominguez Gap Environmental Enhancement; and Wrigley Greenbelt Trail Enhancements. The Tujunga Wash/Hansen Dam Interpretive Sign project involves locating a series of interpretive signs at the crest of Hansen Dam (elevation 1087.0 feet above mean sea level). The dam, which is owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has a maximum vertical relief of 97.0 feet. The focus of the interpretive signs would be public education related to water resources. The Los Feliz Riverwalk consists of providing public access to the east bank of the Los Angeles River between Los Feliz Boulevard and Colorado Avenue, which is not currently available as a recreational pedestrian trail. The Dominguez Gap Environmental Enhancement Project has been proposed by the Advisory Committee and is intended to enhance bird habitat by removing existing non-native plants and replacing this material with native trees and shrubs that are compatible with ambient environmental conditions. This demonstration project includes the installation of interpretive signs visible to users of the LARIO bike and equestrian trails. Signs will interpret the bird life of the Dominguez Gap and Los Angeles River, as well as the role of the spreading grounds in flood protection and water conservation, concepts of watersheds and urban run-off, and water quality. The Wrigley Greenbelt Trail Enhancements addresses a two-mile stretch of the existing LARIO Trail. Specific amenities to be constructed include: trail head (large sign indicating trail entrance), a 12-foot-wide access trail connecting the LARIO trails, trail fencing, trail signage, and trail resurfacing. This project would utilize existing vacant land between DeForest Avenue and the LARIO Trail. The City of Long Beach has applied for Proposition A funds to implement a second phase of the Wrigley Greenbelt.

2.3 SITE-SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Team has identified site specific project improvements under consideration as part of the *Los Angeles River Master Plan* within the River's rights of way and other adjacent or nearby opportunities within the study area that lie on public lands within the 13 local jurisdictions. These site specific project improvements are mapped on 101 individual map sheets that cover the six study reaches defined for the *Los Angeles River Master Plan* and are repeated in this Environmental Assessment/ Negative Declaration as Project Detail Maps (Sheets No. 1-101). Table 2.2.1 provides a summary of the site specific project recommendations that are identified on each sheet within each study reach and the potential environmental issues associated with the proposed activities that have been evaluated in this Environmental Assessment/Negative Declaration. Assumptions that were considered in the environmental analysis are annotated in a series of footnotes to the table.