

Notice of Preparation

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report in Compliance with Title 14, (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, and 15375 of the California Code of Regulations

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (DPW) will be the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the San Gabriel River Master Plan.

Agencies: We request the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is relevant to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the project. Your agency will need to use the EIR prepared by the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

Organizations and Interested Parties: Comments and concerns regarding the environmental issues associated with construction and operation of this project are requested from organizations and individuals.

Project Title:	San Gabriel River Master Plan
Lead Agency Contact Information:	Mr. Marty Moreno County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Watershed Management Division P.O. Box 1460 Alhambra, CA 91802-1460 Phone: (626) 458-4119 Fax: (626) 457-1526 E-mail: MMORENO@ladpw.org
Lead Agency Project Role:	<p>On September 7, 1999, the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a motion to instruct the Department of Public Works (DPW) to prepare a San Gabriel River Master Plan for Board approval, with the assistance of the Departments of Regional Planning and Parks and Recreation, and the National Park Service. DPW established a Steering Committee composed of cities along the river; water and regulatory agencies; interested community, business, and environmental groups; and other stakeholders. Steering Committee members have met about 35 times over three years.</p> <p>DPW and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) formed a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that will seek to fund projects of mutual interest. The JPA also contemplates acquisition and protection of lands for watershed protection, conservation, natural open space, and recreational purposes. DPW will also pursue projects on its properties along the San Gabriel River, focusing on those related to flood management, water quality and conservation, and groundwater recharge.</p>

<p>Lead Agency Project Role (Continued):</p>	<p>The Master Plan will include projects along the San Gabriel River initiated by cities and other stakeholder organizations. DPW will support projects that are planned and implemented along the river corridor in a manner that is consistent with the San Gabriel River Master Plan.</p>
<p>Project Location:</p>	<p>The Master Plan will focus on the 58-mile long San Gabriel River (from Cogswell Dam in the San Gabriel Mountains to the Pacific Ocean, Figure 1). While the corridor is defined as the Los Angeles County Flood Control District right-of-way, the Master Plan also addresses connections between the river and significant resources and opportunities that lie adjacent to or near the river such as relevant and significant biological, hydrologic, community, historic, and cultural resources. The corridor is primarily located within Los Angeles County; the mouth of the river is bordered by land within both Los Angeles and Orange counties.</p> <p>Cities within the San Gabriel River corridor include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arcadia • Azusa • Baldwin Park • Bellflower • Cerritos • City of Industry • Downey • Duarte • El Monte • Irwindale • Lakewood • Long Beach • Los Alamitos • Norwalk • Pico Rivera • Santa Fe Springs • Seal Beach • South El Monte • Whittier
<p>Project Description:</p>	<p>Engineered improvements currently present along the San Gabriel River provide flood protection for surrounding urban development. These improvements have also allowed development almost to the river’s edge, decreasing open space and altering natural habitats. The San Gabriel River Master Plan will be a consensus-based document that will recognize and address a renewed interest in recreation, open space, and habitat, while also seeking to enhance and maintain flood protection, water conservation benefits, along with existing water rights. The Master Plan is expected to be ready for Board approval in early 2004.</p> <p>As defined by the Steering Committee, the vision for the project is:</p> <p align="center"><i>The San Gabriel River will be the corridor of an integrated watershed system while providing protection, benefit and enjoyment to the public.</i></p> <p>Project goals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve and enhance habitat systems through public education, connectivity, and balance with other uses • Encourage and enhance safe and diverse recreation systems, while providing for expansion, equitable and sufficient access, balance, and multi-purposes uses • Enhance and protect open space systems through conservation, aesthetics, connectivity, stewardship, and multi-purpose uses • Maintain flood protection and existing water and other rights while enhancing flood management activities through the integration with recreation, open space, and habitat systems • Maintain existing water and other rights while enhancing water quality, water supply, groundwater recharge, and water conservation through the integration with recreation, open space, and habitat systems

<p>Project Description (Continued):</p>	<p>Nine categories of river enhancement projects embody the goals of the Master Plan and serve as a framework to guide future projects by cities, agencies, and other stakeholders. Categories include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Trail Enhancements</u> – elements include: signage, fencing, landscaping with native plants and trees, trail surfacing appropriate to the river, lighting, site amenities, and gateways at river entrances and crossings 2. <u>Educational Centers</u> – educational centers to inform and educate visitors about the river and its environs 3. <u>Bridges, Gateways and Connections</u> – elements to reconnect the river with residential areas and commercial districts 4. <u>Multiple Uses on Corridor Rights-of-Way</u> – potential use of utility corridors for gardens, parks and trails and/or planting with native vegetation 5. <u>Bio-Engineered Wetlands</u> – stormwater-fed wetland areas; may also include groundwater infiltration 6. <u>Flood Channel Enhancements</u> – natural-looking terraces built over engineered levees or earthen levees set back from the river channel in less developed areas along the river 7. <u>Land Reclamation</u> - gravel pits, old parking lots, exhausted mines and unused land reclaimed as parks, residential and commercial development, restored habitat areas, “green” golf courses and river frontage 8. <u>Recreational Activities</u> - new and improved recreational and park facilities along the river (sports fields, playgrounds, and passive recreation) 9. <u>Development Standards and Guidelines</u> – Such as, model ordinance to outline landscape design, vegetation, surfacing, drainage engineering, roofing, building materials and other sustainable land use practices
<p>Demonstration Projects:</p>	<p>To date, stakeholders have identified over 160 individual projects that could be included in the Master Plan. The Steering Committee will select five of these projects to demonstrate how project planning can simultaneously address the Master Plan goals of habitat, recreation, and open space. A schematic plan and site design, preliminary cost estimates, and likely funding sources will be identified for each of the demonstration projects. Selection as one of the five demonstration projects will not guarantee future funding or implementation.</p>
<p>Potentially Significant Environmental Effects:</p>	<p>At a programmatic level, the EIR will address: air quality, noise, traffic, and disturbance of cultural resources during project construction; water quality for elements with groundwater infiltration; impacts to existing recreational and biological resources; and health and safety.</p>

Future Environmental Documentation:	In the future, as individual elements of the Master Plan are proposed for implementation, project proponents would review the Program EIR and determine whether or not the Program document sufficiently analyzes the environmental effects of the individual project. If the subsequent activity would have effects not covered by the Program EIR, a second-tier CEQA document (a Negative Declaration or an EIR) would then be prepared.
Related Documents:	Documents related to the proposed project are available for review at County of Los Angeles DPW headquarters in Alhambra (see contact information above).
NOP Review Period:	<p>The County invites your written comments on the scope of the Program EIR. The public review period is scheduled to begin on April 29, 2003 and end on May 28, 2003. Due to the time limits mandated by CEQA, your response must be received no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please indicate a contact person in your response and send your response to:</p> <p align="center">Mr. Marty Moreno County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Watershed Management Division P.O. Box 1460 Alhambra, CA 91802-1460</p>
Public Scoping Meeting:	<p>Date: A public scoping meeting will be held on Monday, May 12, 2003, as part of the regularly scheduled San Gabriel River Master Plan Steering Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Time: The Steering Committee Meeting will be held from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.; the EIR will be discussed starting at approximately 4:00 p.m.</p> <p>Location: County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Conference Rooms A & B 900 S. Fremont Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803</p> <p>All parties are welcome to attend and present environmental information that they believe should be addressed in the Program EIR.</p>

Martin Moreno
 Signature

April 24, 2003
 Date

Martin Moreno
 Printed Name

Sr Civil Engineer
 Title

Figure 1
Project Area

