



HEADWATERS AREA PROJECT (HAP) COMMUNITY MEETING #1
Engagement Report
LA County Public Works
18 August 2021

MEETING #1: Virtual Meeting / Zoom

Wednesday, August 18, 2021, 6-8pm

Purpose

The goal of the community meeting was to introduce the Concept design site and scope to the local community, answer their questions, and solicit input into potential programming needs. This is the first of two meetings scheduled to engage the community on this phase of the Headwaters Area Project.

Meeting Summary and Findings

A virtual community meeting for the Headwaters Area Project was held on August 18, 2021. Fifty-two individuals registered for the event, and thirty-two community members attended the event. The meeting was translated in real time to Spanish, and all presentation materials were in English and Spanish.

The team introduced themselves to the community as well as relevant previous planning efforts in the area. An update on what LA County Public Works is currently working on was also provided. After these introductions, the team reviewed the planning process, previous engagement feedback, and the themes of this current project: people, environment, and water, along with a summary of key data derived during the Feasibility analysis. Throughout the presentation, poll questions were conducted to engage the participants on these different themes along with quick informational statistics called out on the slide presentation. Results of the poll questions were displayed immediately to all participants. Attendees were encouraged to submit questions for the second half of the meeting during the Q+A and follow the project on social media channels or email Public Works with any follow up questions. The team received fifty questions/comments in the Q+A box during the event and was able to answer all but a few live. The poll responses from participants and a list of questions from participants could be found at the end of this report.

Outreach Methods - Turnout

Several methods were used to generate interest and solicit attendance for the event from community members within the Canoga Park and Winnetka neighborhoods as well as from relevant stakeholder organizations. Social media blasts and emails were employed in English and Spanish on project-specific channels as well as other relevant channels. Elected Officials and community organizations notified their constituents through email and social media. A digital flyer and personal outreach contributed to meeting registrations. Flyers were also posted in local businesses and around the neighborhood.

Meeting Format



The meeting began with a welcome and introduction from Rebecca Klein, the meeting facilitator, followed by Welcoming Remarks by Sophie Freeman, Associate Deputy for the Environment and Arts for County Supervisor District 3. Public Works project manager, Genevieve Osmeña, Senior Civil Engineer with LA County Public Works also gave opening remarks. Following introductions, Jessica Henson of OLIN, Tensho Takemori of Gehry Partners, and Mark Hanna of Geosyntec gave a 30-minute presentation on the project scope and neighborhood data. During the presentation, poll questions were asked, and results were displayed immediately following each question. Participation in each poll question was optional, so all attendees did not answer all questions. The questions and results of the poll are in the section “Poll Data” below.

Following the presentation, Osmeña, Henson, Takemori, and Hanna answered questions for approximately one hour. Questions were read aloud by the meeting facilitator and included a range of topics from flood insurance to design proposals, and water quality to access. In addition to raising questions, several community members shared comments in the Q+A box, which were also read aloud by the meeting facilitator. Nearly all questions or comments were able to be read aloud during the allotted time. Attendees were invited to submit via email any questions that could not be answered in the meeting time. The full list of submitted questions is at the end of this summary. Osmeña, Henson, Takemori, and Hanna ended made closing remarks and the facilitator concluded the meeting.

Poll Data

Poll 1 How often do you visit the Headwaters of the LA River?

- 1 Everyday (1 response)
- 2 Several times per week (1 response)
- 3 Once or twice per week (3 responses)
- 4 Once or twice per month (5 responses)
- 5 Rarely / Never (8 responses)**

A total of 18 respondents participated:
Most respondents (44%) rarely or never visit the Headwaters; followed by 28% of respondents saying that they would visit the LA River once or twice per month.

Poll 2 Do you know which community asset sits at the confluence of the Arroyo Calabasas and Bell Creek?

- A Pierce College (1 response)
- B Quimby Park (2 responses)
- C Canoga Park High School (Correct answer) (17 responses)**
- D Los Angeles Public Library Canoga Park Branch (1 response)

A total of 21 respondents participated:
Most respondents (81%) knew that the confluence sits on Canoga Park High School.

Poll 3 Which parks play a part in your community?



- A Quimby Park (2 responses)
- B Runnymede Rec Center (1 response)
- C Shadow Ranch Park (7 responses)**
- D Sunrise Little League (3 responses)
- E. None of these (6 responses)

A total of 21 respondents participated:

Most respondents (33%) said that Shadow Ranch Park plays a part in their community; followed by 29% of respondents who said none of the selections play a part in their community.

**Poll 4 Would you like to learn more about the science and ecology of the LA River and its Watershed?
Please rate from 1 (low) to 5 (high).**

- 1 (low) (2 responses)
- 2 (0 responses)
- 3 (1 response)
- 4 (6 responses)
- 5 (high) (13 responses)**

A total of 22 respondents participated:

Most respondents (59%) indicated high interest in getting more information.

Poll 5 How many days of the year do you think it was over 90 degrees in your neighborhood last year?

- A 0-15 (0 responses)
- B 15-30 (13 responses)**
- C 30-45 (correct answer) (5 responses)
- D 45-60 (10 responses)

A total of 21 respondents participated:

Most respondents (62%) thought there were 15-30 days over 90 degrees last year; followed by 48% of respondents who thought there were 45-60 days.

**Poll 6 Are you concerned about flooding in your community?
Please rate from 1 (low) to 5 (high)**

- 1 (low) (8 responses)**
- 2 (4 responses)
- 3 (3 response)
- 4 (1 response)
- 5 (high) (2 responses)

A total of 18 respondents participated:

Most respondents (44%) reported a low concern for flooding.

Poll 7 Where would you like to see better access to the river trail?



A Near Canoga Park High School (7 responses)

B Near Hart Elementary School (2 responses)

C Near Browns Canyon Wash (2 responses)

D North Side of the LA River (1 response)

E South Side of the LA River (1 response)

A total of 13 respondents participated:

Most respondents (54%) would like to see better access to the river trail at Canoga Park High School; followed by 15% of respondents responding that they would like better access near Hart Elementary School or Browns Canyon Wash.

Full List of Questions Asked

Concrete Removal / Platform Parks

- Can we be channels running through Canoga Park High School be covered? The reality of living with them daily is not as pleasant as some might think.
 - Cover it and plant trees.
- Will a platform be proposed/explored for concept at the location?
- Are you planning to remove the lined channel anywhere between the headwaters and the Sepulveda Basin?

Ecology

- How are you balancing an ecologically-informed whole-of watershed approach with this hyper-localized decision input model?
- Will your concept(s) include nature and connecting users to the river, especially if platforming would be proposed?
- You should work with Pierce College to encourage the implementation of more pollinator plants and habitat / food for species like the Canadian geese.
- By creating parks in this area, are you putting in places that will attract coyotes and various cat / mountain lion species to this area?
 - We see the coyotes around this area now.
 - People mention seeing coyotes on NEXTDOOR.
 - FYI - There are a ton of coyotes in the Woodland Hills area, south of Victory around Calvert and Woodlake Ave.

Flood Risk / Water Supply / Water Quality

- More than a decade ago, I participated in the TMDLs for metals meetings for the river. The City / County? was looking for places for storm water capture. One place that was considered was at Pierce College. Are you involved in that aspect of that project, and have you talked to LA City Bureau of Sanitation regarding this proposed project?
- You said your flood risk graphic didn't account for climate change, so we should expect the risk to be much higher. You quantified how many might be displaced by widening the river to meet the challenges of climate change, but you haven't shared any estimates on how many



will be damaged or displaced by the extreme rain events scientists tell us are coming. Why not?

- Living along the river my concerns of flooding is not climate change but all the debris in the river which would clog up the catch basin causing flood to the houses along the river. Not excited about having to pay for flood insurance
- Most of this area is built up and could flood if we have a hundred-year storm.

General

- I believe that at a LA River CEQA review meeting, it said that if you widen the river along its length, it would displace 20,000 - 106,000 people?
- The stench on those 39 hot days is unbearable
- I am also a Canoga parent, all three are Hunters. The CPHS community (students, faculty, parents and alumni) are prepared to mobilize if the situation is not remedied. Aren't Canoga students and employees entitled to breathable air that is not filled with the aroma of rotting possums or algae blooms?
- Is this study ONLY looking at the narrow County easement or is it looking at improvements to the COMMUNITY that can create benefits to the river?
- When was the last time any panel members have been on the river?
 - I think the question of when was the last time the team was on the river. Was when was the last time you walked the river floor from Mason to Vanalden
- Will we be able to access the recording of this meeting?
- Very good webinar and presentation. Thank you.
- Thank you to you all. I really appreciated this meeting.
- Thank you
- How many participants were here?
- It would be good for us to know who else is on the meeting.

Homelessness

- What is the plan to keep encampments from forming?
- I believe that there are tributaries that have more homeless people encampments that may increase the pollution load in this area?

Housing

- The Warner Center Specific Plan has a public appeal period that closes I believe August 25th. The Warner Center Plan impacts what can and cannot be built in this area. I don't believe it has any plan for affordable housing. Maybe you can make the elected officials aware of this appeal date please?

Parks / Trails

- When will walking path be open from headwaters to Mason?
- Chair of the SFV Climate Reality Chapter. My question is - Who is taking into consideration what the river itself needs to thrive and prosper? What's being done to protect biodiversity along the river.
- Maybe you can connect the bike path along the Orange line to the river path at Canoga Ave?



- Do you know when the current construction at De Soto is due to be completed?
- Contractual completion date for bike path project is May 2023. In-channel construction should be completed this dry season.

Planning Process

- Please reach out to the Winnetka Neighborhood Council, as we have been engaged in this since the very first meetings at CPHS, to the Headwaters Groundbreaking, and on to LA River Bikeway projects.
 - I'm President, and longtime Chair of Public Works and Transportation Committee.
 - We work with Supervisor's Kuehl's office.
- The LARWW would like to invite the panel to our Zoom the third Saturday of each month, next meeting the 21st 9:30 AM We will see you get the invite info.

Pollution / Waste

- Is this an e coli / bacterial issue, or a trash / litter issue in this area?
- Are you still using Roundup along the river?
- I am not seeing street sweeping at all anymore.
- Copper was a big one during the TMDL for metal meetings.

Safety

- Aside from the transient problems along the wash, what security measures will be put in the plans (lighting, graffiti-resistant materials, police bike patrols, etc.)?
- [I'm] from the LA River Walkers and Watchers. The plan for the river is a beautiful one, but the reality is that even with the Rangers, who've been overseeing maintenance of a 3-mile stretch, for several months now, safety continues to be a HUGE challenge. How does your plan expect to address this beyond the Rangers? Because, this isn't really working.
 - We cannot use the bike path because of this reason. We clean up the area the last Saturday of each month, but sadly, can't use this wonderful resource.
- From the MRCA-Our work in this area has identified the importance of safely connecting the school and those westside of Owensmouth over it to the Headwaters Greenway on the east. Will you consider adding a safe crossing over Owensmouth?