

East LA Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project

Community Information Session via WebEx – June 24, 2020 (6 pm – 7 pm)

Summary

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works), along with team members from Supervisor Hilda Solis' office, hosted a community information session via WebEx to share updates with residents on the East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project. Public Works presented an update on the current project schedule and potential community impacts from construction operations. The residents were encouraged to visit the project's website where they can find the most up-to-date project contact information to express any questions or concerns. In addition, Public Works shared information regarding Public Works' other services, The Works App, Public Works website, and a phone number if residents need more information or have questions regarding the current maintenance of the medians. The community was generally in favor of the stormwater components, but there was some opposition expressed to a few of the recreational components (e.g. benches, picnic tables, exercise equipment). Public Works reassured the community that their concerns were noted and the project will be monitored after completion to assess the active-passive recreational amenities' effectiveness. Public Works thanks those that attended the Community Information Session and reaffirmed its commitment to work with the community to make the project a success.

Meeting Minutes

Questions:

1. How will noise mitigation be handled during construction?
 - a. The working hours are restricted to daytime so it would reduce the effects of noise to residents. Our project team will continue to keep lines of communication open so that residents are able to notify Public Works of particular disruptions.
2. When do you plan beginning work on Southside between Olympic and Garfield?
 - a. The contractor is finalizing the project schedule. Once the schedule is finalized, more details will be updated on the project website (<https://pw.lacounty.gov/wmd/stwq/eastla.aspx>). The community can find updated information and impacts through there.
3. What happens if there isn't much rainfall because of the drought? Will the storm drain system be affected by this project?
 - a. We understand there is a lack of rainfall in California and in this region, which is actually one of the driving forces for us constructing this project. We want to capture as much rain as possible when there is a storm.
4. Is walkway in the median still part of the scope? It was promised.
 - a. Yes, decomposed granite walkways are included to be installed in all medians of this phase.
5. Will benches be placed?
 - a. Yes, and in response to community input, we're installing ridges to deter people from sleeping on them.

- b. We will continue to monitor the project after completion to assess the recreational amenities' effectiveness. Once it is complete, Public Works will continue to monitor them and will remain in contact to see how the project is performing.
- 6. What about handicap ramps to access medians?
 - a. The ramps are ADA compliant for wheelchair access.
- 7. Will there be established trees or plants?
 - a. Yes
- 8. Comment: We would like more trees planted
 - a. There will be planting of over 300 trees as part of this project and new landscaping as well.
- 9. Has the team spoken with Police to help assist with the construction and post construction usage of the project? (i.e. Hours of operations, etc.) Will curfews be enacted?
 - a. During construction, the project site (medians) will be closed off for safety. As for post construction, LA County Sheriff has been involved in community engagement and is aware of the project. We welcome additional questions and input from the community.
 - b. We cannot speak to curfews and will defer to the Supervisor District office for that subject. Please get a hold of Joe Venzon or Louis Romero and we can direct you after this meeting.
- 10. Will the design in the pictures be constructed and who will be maintaining the landscaping?
 - a. Yes, the design elements in the picture will be incorporated, and maintenance will be performed by Public Works staff for below ground improvements. Maintenance of above ground improvements will be overseen by Public Works as well, but could be through a contractor that will be managed by Public Works.
- 11. When will work begin and when will it be completed?
 - a. Start of construction will be next month (July). Beginning of construction will start slowly (contractor set-up, utility identification, etc.) but the main project construction will begin end of July
 - b. Project duration: Through fall/winter of next year so approximate completion in December 2021
- 12. How many community members attended?
 - a. We've yet to take a count on the final attendee list. But we estimate about 18-20 attendees
- 13. Will extra lighting be installed in the medians?
 - a. Yes, low level lighting will be installed in response to most recent community engagement meetings.
- 14. Two years ago, we met at a school to see what we wanted. During the Last physical meeting the approach was "this is what you're getting". My concern is why benches are getting installed when we didn't want them.
 - a. The decision to include the benches was based on community input from previous community meetings. The current design is a common ground we found to incorporate all the community's needs and concerns.

15. We're in the middle of the pandemic, these type of meetings (virtual) are frustrating. Can we get a meeting at the park with Social Distancing in place?
 - a. We understand your concerns and appreciate you bearing through this. With that said, we can commit to hold future meetings but cannot commit to holding them in person until we consult with the County public health experts.
16. Is anyone on the panel involved on the roundabout project Northside and Montebello Parkway?
 - a. This panel just includes members of the Stormwater Team and the Supervisor Hilda Solis' office. No members of the Traffic Team are present. Please reach out to Bella Hernandez (BHernan@dpw.lacounty.gov) and she can point you to the appropriate team.
17. Exercise equipment is planned, if loitering, illegal activities, etc. problems arise, will benches, exercise equipment, etc. be removed?
 - a. In past projects, if stormwater components are not working, we maintain the option to remove them. This same mentality also holds true for secondary amenities such as benches, exercise equipment, etc., so removing them is certainly an option. We will continue our efforts after construction to ensure the communities needs are being met.
18. Hard time downloading app. Resident lives across the street. Who do you refer to when you say community? (greater neighborhood, local residents)? People are already hanging around doing illegal activities. This is a concern to us that live local. Are these medians being converted to parks?
 - a. When we did our community outreach, it included residents within the block radius and more. The medians are not parks, but rather enhanced medians.
19. The community seems to be against benches and picnic tables, so why can't we just remove them now? Wouldn't it be cheaper to remove them now?
 - a. We have taken note of such comments. Decision to include the features was based on community input. We are aware of current concerns and will work to finding a common ground.
20. Once construction is finalized, will a contact be provided so community can provide comments/questions/concerns?
 - a. Yes, the webpage will be updated with the most current contacts. As of now, its Joe (JVenzon@dpw.lacounty.gov) and Louis (LoRomero@dpw.lacounty.gov).
 - b. After construction is finalized is there a contact number to let you know any concerns about the area?
21. Previous 4-5 community events showed no interest in benches, can we get details from those meetings
 - a. Yes. We can Presentation Slides from 5 years ago that referenced survey data via uploads to the project website.
22. We feel that our community was not heard, if you ask now, close to 99% does not want these benches/tables. We understand the design and contract award process but would like to share our concerns
 - a. We appreciate the input. We'll be collecting all this input for us to discuss.
23. First time I've had the opportunity to join a community meeting. We live here and we did not get the opportunity to give input. As a homeowner, we were not

engaged, and we are worried of the negative impacts. As it is, people currently gather and conduct illegal activities.

- a. We noted your concerns and we'll be discussing internally after this meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to receive your feedback, and this is how we can work together.

24. Will meetings be posted somewhere where community members can post their comments and concerns?

- a. Yes, we can provide the meeting minutes and Q&As by uploading to our project webpage.

25. Why are we installing benches, tables, and exercise equipment when Saybrook Park (nearby) already has these features? Activity there is illegal and that will only spread to this block.

- a. We appreciate all recent community members who are providing input. Your comment on Saybrook Park proximity has been noted.

26. I had a meeting with Supervisor Hilda Solis' team (East LA Office) one year ago. I shared examples of a project where they added similar amenities and that resulted with homeless, illegal activities, and dumping. What's to say this won't occur at this median? Just wanted to share my comments for the meeting minutes purpose.

- a. We'll include your comments in the meeting minutes. Thank you for your comment.