## Pacoima Spreading Grounds Basin Enhancement Project Community Meeting

Virtual Zoom Meeting Wednesday, July 28, 2021 6:00 PM to 7:15 PM

- 1) Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda
  - a) On July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) held a virtual preconstruction community meeting for the upcoming Pacoima Spreading Grounds Basin Enhancement Project. There was a total of 39 attendees, not including panelists.
  - b) Jillian Neary of Psomas (co-facilitator) opened the meeting, and provided instructions on English and Spanish audio channels available to participants on the Zoom platform. Simultaneous Spanish interpretation was provided throughout the meeting.
  - c) Ms. Neary informed all participants were muted and video turned off, and that there would be a Q&A session at the end of the presentation and encouraged participants to type any comments or questions they may have during the meeting via Zoom's Q&A feature. She informed the participants that Q&A could also be in Spanish and that they would be translated for the panelists.
  - d) Ms. Neary went over the meeting agenda. Main topics included the background of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, LA's water supply, and the Pacoima Spreading Grounds (PSG) facility; an overview of the planned Project, including environmental measures; and how the community can stay connected to the Project.
  - e) Prior to introductions, Ms. Neary announced representatives from several elected officials that were in attendance including:
    - i) Maria Chong-Castillo, Public Works Deputy for LA County 3rd Supervisorial District (Supervisor Sheila Kuehl),
    - ii) Brenda Yanez, Field Deputy for LA County 3rd Supervisorial District (Supervisor Sheila Kuehl),
    - iii) Jonathan Coto, Legislative Deputy for City of Los Angeles Office of Councilmember John Lee (Council District 12),
    - iv) Lorena Bernal Area Director/Arleta Field Deputy for City of Los Angeles Office of Councilmember Nury Martinez (Council District 6), and
    - v) Paola Bassignana, Planning Director for City of Los Angeles Office of Councilmember Monica Rodriquez (Council District 7).

Ms. Neary then introduced the meeting's panelists.

- 2) Los Angeles Flood Control District (LACFCD) Overview
  - a) Paul Shadmani, Project Manager from LA County Public Works, provided a brief history of the LACFCD. LACFCD was established in 1915 after a destructive regional flood event and provides the backbone of the County's flood protection infrastructure. Since 1984, operation and planning of the LACFCD has been carried out by Public Works.
  - b) LACFCD encompasses over 3,000 square miles and 88 cities. The LACFCD owns and operates a vast flood control and water conservation system, including dams, spreading grounds, storm drains, debris basins, seawater barrier systems, and open channels.

- 3) Los Angeles Water Supply Overview
  - a) Mr. Shadmani provided a brief background of regional water supply. The Los Angeles region heavily relies on two water sources: imported water (57 percent) and groundwater (34 percent). Of the groundwater supply, currently 11 percent comes from stormwater capture such as the Project.
  - b) Mr. Shadmani described the graphical depiction of a typical water conservation system, from initial collection of stormwater in reservoirs to infiltration to groundwater pumping.
- 4) Pacoima Spreading Grounds Overview
  - a) Mr. Shadmani described the location of the PSG facility and noted that it includes areas of both City of Los Angeles Council Districts 6 and 7, and that one sediment disposal location (Cal-Mat Pit) in the Sun Valley area, Council District 6, and the other location (Sunshine Canyon Landfill) is located in Sylmar, Council District 12. Mr. Shadmani also pointed out the location of Pacoima Reservoir, about six miles upstream. Flows from this dam are sometimes released into the Pacoima Diversion Channel and diverted into the spreading grounds.
  - b) Mr. Shadmani summarized some facts about the PSG facility: approximately 169 acres and is owned and operated by the LACFCD, it was first used in the 1930s for water conservation and recharges the San Fernando Valley Groundwater Basin, and, in an average year, PSG can converse about 5,200 acre-feet of water. It was described that one acre-foot of water covers an area of one acre of land, which is about the size of a football field, up to one foot. Another way to look at it is that one acre-foot equals roughly 326,000 gallons of water. Mr. Shadmani described there is currently low storage capacity at the PSG facility and the infiltration rate is low because of some clay materials within the soil.
  - c) Mr. Shadmani presented a closer look at the intake structure within Pacoima Diversion Channel. There is a gate that is lowered when there is a storm or when there is significant water in the channel. By lowering the gate, water will rise and can be diverted into the intake canal. The water is sent from the intake area, through pipes under Arleta Avenue, to the desilting basins and then the spreading grounds.
- 5) Basin Enhancement Project Overview
  - a) Mr. Shadmani discussed the existing features of the PSG facility, that there are currently 12 shallow basins approximately 10 feet deep. One of the goals of the Project is to combine these into larger basins and deepen them by approximately 10 to 15 feet to maximize the capacity of the site.
  - b) Mr. Shadmani reviewed the reasons why the Project is proposed. Because of climate change we may experience less frequent storms but with higher intensity, creating less opportunity to capture stormwater. To address this issue, we need to increase the capacity of our spreading basins to be able to conserve more water during the storm season and capture it for groundwater recharge. The Project scope includes deepening and combining the spreading basins from 12 shallow basins to 8 deeper and larger basins, removing the underlying clay layers to improve the infiltration rate, improving the intake canal to simplify operation and maintenance, and improve the aesthetics of the site by replacing the chain link fence with a more durable and secure tubular fencing and constructing a new multi-use path along Pacoima Diversion Channel between Devonshire Street and Filmore Street.

- c) The benefits of the Project include increasing the storage capacity and infiltration rate by more than 100 percent, and thereby capturing an additional 10,500 acre-feet of water a year. One acre-foot of water can serve the needs of eight people for one year, so the Project could potentially serve 125,000 residents or roughly 31,000 families of four for one year. As you can imagine, this is a critical Project for our region to become more resilient in the face of increased drought periods.
- d) Mr. Shadmani showed a picture of the post-construction configuration of the PSG facility. There will be two desilting basins and six larger, deeper basins for water conservation.
- e) Mr. Shadmani showed a before and after rendering of the future path connecting Devonshire and Filmore streets, which also shows a portion of the proposed fencing. The addition of the path provides roughly a 1.75-mile loop around the southern portion of the PSG facility and greatly improves neighborhood connectivity and support community wellness.
- 6) Project Construction Overview
  - a) Mr. Shadmani discussed the planned haul routes two routes to the Cal-Mat Pit sediment disposal location and one route to the Sunshine Canyon Landfill sediment disposal location. Step by step directions for departure and return routes are included in the contractor specifications to follow. It was highlighted that the haul routes to Cal-Mat Pit were modified based on community input and the comment letters received during the environmental process. On average, one truck every two minutes leaving the site is expected and it was emphasized that access to residents will not be impacted during construction.
  - b) Mr. Shadmani discussed the proactive approach to mitigate construction-related impacts to the community by different measures. For noise, a sound barrier will be installed along the shared property boundary, such as the one shown in the slideshow presented. For air quality, Public Works is requiring low emission off-road equipment and on-road trucks. Specifically, model 2013 or newer haul trucks will be required which are cleaner as far as emissions standards. An extensive air quality monitoring program will be implemented to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. For dust control, the access roads will be paved, the site will routinely be sprayed with water, and tire wash stations will be installed for use by all vehicles exiting the site.
  - c) Mr. Shadmani reviewed a slide illustrating the location of the proposed eight-foot-high sound barrier and the paved access roads within the PSG facility.
- 7) Project Schedule and History
  - a) Mr. Shadmani reviewed the Project schedule, starting with the first community meeting in January 2016. It was noted that Public Works received a lot of community feedback regarding traffic and hours of construction. The Project was revised to reflect community feedback as much as possible and a Recirculated Mitigated Negative Declaration in 2018 was released for public review. A follow up community meeting was held in November 2018. Public Works gave a presentation on the Project to the Sylmar Neighborhood Council in August 2020 as part of the community meeting. It is expected that some of the preconstruction activities will begin on August 16, 2021. These activities include items such as installation of the temporary sound wall, construction fencing, and tire wash stations; and paving the access roads. As of now, the hauling operation is expected to start in mid-September. It was highlighted that the construction hours were modified based on

community input. Construction will occur Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, with Project completion expected in May 2024.

- 8) Project Funding Overview
  - a) Mr. Shadmani discussed that the Project is fully funded, and the construction contract was awarded to Ames Construction, Inc. in the amount of 54.5 million dollars. The LACFCD is funding 35.5 million, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power is contributing 15 million, and a Proposition 84 grant from the California Department of Water Resources contributes 4 million towards construction.
- 9) How to Stay Connected
  - a) Ms. Neary then resumed by discussing how to stay connected to the Project during construction. The dedicated Proiect website is https://www.dpw.lacounty.gov/wrd/Projects/PaciomaSG. Ms. Neary informed there will be signage installed around the site that also provides contact information for various persons/agencies, including the County's construction inspector, the South Coast Air Quality Management District for dust complaints, and a number for noise complaints. The best email and phone to contact before construction starts is SpreadingGrounds@dpw.lacounty.gov and Mr. Shadmani's telephone at (626) 458-4388. Once construction starts the website will be updated with contact information from the construction team.

### 10) Questions/Answers

- a) Ms. Neary reviewed the Q&A protocol and encouraged participants to type any questions in the Q&A feature. It was indicated that the questions will be answered on a first come first served basis. It was noted that all participants are muted and that the presentation is being recorded and will be posted on the Project's website. At this juncture, Public Works began to answer questions.
- b) There was a total 49 questions and comments from 25 individuals (of these, 5 were identified as anonymous). This summary does not include repeats of identical questions, and obscene or otherwise inappropriate questions and comments. Table 1, beginning on the following page, presents the questions and comments raised. Most questions were related to either 1) management of effects on the surrounding community during construction or 2) post-construction benefits for the community, such as recreation facilities, landscaping, fencing, lighting, and sidewalk improvements. Based on the questions received, the following is a summary of answers that involved discussion of commitments, decisions, or other actions related to Project implementation that have not been previously provided to the community either in a document or verbally:
  - Discussed tentative plans for air quality monitoring station locations; there will be four stations, dependent on construction activity, and could be moved on a day-to-day. Generally, they will be located in four corners of spreading basins facility.
  - Discussed that there is a County of Los Angeles protocol to address encampments of people experiencing homelessness on a County facility if it occurs.
  - As of now, no road closures are expected. Conduit installation on Arleta Avenue is currently planned to be done with directional drilling; however, if any road closures become necessary, the Project website will be updated with relevant information.

- Discussed plan to plant 21 native trees along the site perimeter near Woodman Avenue.
- Discussed phasing 1) implementing mitigation measures and best management practices, such as construction fencing, sound barrier, and paving access roads; 2) tentative plan to have the contractor start in the lower basins south of Devonshire Street; 3) then move to the basins north of Devonshire Street; 4) then move to the headworks area.
- Discussed that water that bypasses Pacoima Spreading Grounds while offline will be captured by the downstream Tujunga Spreading Grounds.
- Discussed that educational signage may be part of future projects that involve greening, pocket parks, etc. on the County's property.
- Discussed partnerships with community organizations to install artwork on County fences.

The table beginning on the following page presents all questions and comments received during the meeting followed by Public Works' response indicated by "PW:".

# COMMUNITY QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS AND PUBLIC WORKS' RESPONSE

#### **Question/Comment**

Question: Approximately how long is the overall project planned to take?

PW: Currently the schedule is 32 months to complete the Project. The project website will be updated as the construction progresses.

Question: What is a flood?

PW: When there is an intense storm (rainfall event) that cannot be contained within the system and overflows onto dry land. LACFCD handles the stormwater flows very effectively. For the purpose of this Project, stormwater will be diverted into the spreading basins for water conservation.

Question: How do you plan to hold the construction company accountable for any violations to these accommodations. What incentives are in place, to finish the project on time and in a way that won't be at the expense of the health of the community?

PW: The way the contractor is kept responsible is through our [Public Works'] inspection team. There will be an inspection team and a construction management team that would actively monitor construction activities. When the contractor is awarded a contract, they do have to comply with the specifications prepared for the Project. If there is any delay that is not substantiated by unexpected events or findings at the site there would be a penalty on the contractor.

Question: Why are you not giving the same accommodations that were used for by Devil's Gate project, also moving 1.7 million cubic yards of sediment and dumping it, by driving through communities. Accommodations such as require 2010 model trucks, alt. Fuel report, incentive payment for clean air trucks, or implement phase II truck emission program.

PW: The Project will require 2013 model year trucks, above and beyond the 2010 model required at the Devil's Gate project; we will implement the same extensive air quality monitoring by a consultant during construction period and, if there are any exceedances, Public Works would be informed to address the issue in the field as soon as possible. As far as programs and incentives on using clean equipment – PSG Project is requesting Tier 4 off-road equipment – going above and beyond requirements of CEQA or any regulatory requirements. On the CEQA side, quantitative modeling of air quality emissions didn't include all of the measures that the County is specifying in the contract, these are above and beyond the mitigation in the CEQA document.

Question: Why are you counting the partial fencing as a positive, leaving old fencing on one side of the street is a blight.

PW: To clarify, the entire perimeter fencing will be upgraded with tubular steel fence. Commentor was encouraged to follow up if this did not answer the question. It was noted that there are financial limitations as aesthetic features of the Project had to be accommodated in the fixed budget. The fencing is not needed based on the CEQA analysis but it will make the site more secure and responds to security-related concerns of the community.

Question: Where are the monitoring stations going to be? What are you going to monitor?

PW: Assuming this is regarding air quality monitoring stations, they are tentatively planned to be at four different locations depending on where construction is happening and could change to better serve the monitoring program. However, for the most part, they will be located on each corner of the facility depending on where contractor is working. For instance, if construction is occurring in the southern basins, the monitoring stations would be located in the north, east, south, and west of the site to provide a good representation of the site. The stations could be moved to get better data. The monitoring will include PM10, PM2.5, Ozone, Black Carbon, and NOx.

Question: I know there is a considerable amount of coyotes living in the spreading grounds area. What actions are you taking to have the coyotes not wander into the neighborhoods?

PW: Coyotes are known to be very urban adapted and are in the spreading grounds now because, like any other animal, they go where their prey is – there's not necessarily as much prey in the surrounding neighborhoods. They would be expected to stick to the channels that are vegetated like next to the LA River and the Pacoima Wash. Once they've been disturbed from the spreading grounds early in the construction period, urban-adapted wildlife finds another area more to their liking. It would not necessarily be into the neighborhoods, it would have to be somewhere with a substantial or at least the same amount of prey for them to subsist on.

Question: Will LADWP invest into increasing opportunities for recreation similar to what we see now at the Tujunga Spreading Grounds?

PW: Since this is directed at LADWP, Public Works will pass this along to see if they will consider future investments.

Question: Will there be parking for those using the bike path? If not, I believe it will impact my area. I live on Filmore St.

PW: There is not set aside parking. It is meant to connect where people currently walk around on sidewalks and connect for either pedestrian or bicycle use. It is anticipated the path would be used primarily by the local community and would not be driven to. The intent is to improve connectivity within the neighborhood. The path is only about 600 feet long and we do not anticipate people coming from other areas just to use this path. With addition of the 600-foot segment, we create an approximate 1.75-mile loop around the lower basins.

Question: Is there going to be any upgrades on Filmore St. sidewalk?

PW: No upgrades on City jurisdictional properties outside of County property. The Project site is County-owned up to the site boundaries up to the City right-of-way. It was again noted that there are City representatives on the call and this can be passed along. Commentor was encourages to reach out to City staff/representatives if damage or other issues with sidewalks are present.

Question: Will there be recovery of good soil from the clay matter?

PW: Yes, our [Public Works'] geotechnical team will be present at the site during excavation and are planning to use some of the soil to fill other locations based on the construction need. Some of the soil with the clay matter will be transported to Cal-Mat and Sunshine Canyon Landfill as part of the Project.

Question: Will it be locked at night so we do have people loitering?

PW: Yes, the gates to the spreading basins will remain locked because the main purpose of the facility is water conservation. There is no gate on the bike path, and Public Works will be responsible for maintenance.

Question: Will the bike path have any amenities besides the pathway? Where will the entrances be?

PW: It will be just a path connecting Devonshire and Filmore; the right-of-way is limited in that area. There would be no other amenities. The entrance would be from the corner of our site on Devonshire which end further south on Filmore.

Question: Will the homeless persons be relocated?

PW: Public Works has a policy for persons experiencing homelessness; we have a protocol to follow if there is an encampment within our facility. If there is any issue with people experiencing homelessness outside of our jurisdiction or facility, it is suggested to work with your local law enforcement to address the issue.

Question: Will there be street lighting on the new bike path and the current walkway on Devonshire?

PW: No, street lighting is not included in this Project because anything beyond the fence line is in the City's jurisdiction, so that's something the City can consider in the future.

Question: Are vicinity residents are going to be affected by this project?

PW: Public Works' first priority is to put community first and this has been communicated to the contractor – that we want to minimize any construction activities or disturbance to the level possible. This is one of the reasons we have shifted our construction hours to start later in the day – 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM – to hopefully lessen some of that impact. But with any construction activity there is going to be some action at the site but hopefully we can work with the community and the contractor to minimize any disruption.

Question: Will the Devonshire, Arleta and Filmore roads be closed and if so, how often?

PW: No closure will happen on Devonshire or Filmore. Our design plans did have an excavation on Arleta for a small conduit installation, but currently contractor is trying to do directional drilling that is going under the surface of the road from the headworks to the basin. If this is done there would be no closures on Arleta. If there is a need for a closure, the Project website will be updated so the community can be aware ahead of time.

Question: Will the water spray? if so, how far and how wide?

PW: Assumed to be associated with dust suppression. There will be water trucks routinely spraying the site to control dust.

Question: Where can I find the recording for this after the meeting?

PW: The recording and slides will be on the Project's website.

Question: Is the city supervising the project to make sure the project is complete the way is expected?

PW: This is a County (LACFCD funded) project, so Los Angeles County Public Works will be overseeing the construction to ensure it is carried out per the plans and specifications.

Question: You did not say that the whole outside would be fenced just one side of Devonshire Ave.

PW: It will be a perimeter fencing around the entire site.

Question: Having access to nature is beneficial for the communities mental and physical health. being that this project is in a high park need community- according to LA County's park need assessment- this is an opportunity to create open space opportunities for this community. One low hanging fruit that I can see if adding shade and benches so folks can bird watch (obvious tons of bird species in this area thanks to the water). How can these types of recreation opportunities be added to the project plan?

PW: We know there is some interest from the community and the City to have some future improvements at the site. We are a few years out to complete this Project, but we would be more than happy to work with the community groups, the Board office, and the City Council Districts to consider future improvements at the site.

Question: Interested in knowing the mapping project and what is going to be on there

PW: It was noted that the presentation will be posted online at the Project's website, so you can go back and view. We aren't sure what is meant by the question. The site will remain a spreading grounds.

Question: Will there be more trees planted on this land? We need more shade. It is so hot.

PW: Yes, we are planning to plant 21 native trees closer to Woodman Avenue.

Question: What impact will be for the senior who stay home?

PW: The intent to minimize the effect of construction on the community, and that includes all segments of that community at any age and whether they are at home. The air quality analysis assumed that people were present at home and in all age segments as a worst-case/conservative approach. As long as all required measures are met there should not be a significant impact. If anyone knows of a senior living nearby and they are bothered by any aspect of the construction, there will be multiple ways to reach out to the County and get more information.

Question: I am concerned about the speed of folks driving on Devonshire Street. I have ridden my bike but those drivers drive more than 50 mph - makes it quite harrowing experience!

PW: That is something that falls within City jurisdiction, it is suggested to work with law enforcement to make sure the speed limit is enforced on Devonshire.

Question: Where can I find the full project report with all the details?

PW: The CEQA/environmental documents are all uploaded on the Project's website. If you are interested in something more specific, please send an email to SpreadingGrounds@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Question: I've seen in affluent cities where there have been bike paths and they do have lights why aren't we being provided with them!?

PW: The segment of the path under this project is only about 600 feet. If at some point there will be an extension to the north or the south we could work with the City and see if that's an option at that time.

Question: What is the schedule of the phases of the project and what are the details of each phase?

PW: As of right now, the first order of construction would be to implement mitigation measures and best management practices such as installing the sound barrier and paving access roads. The tentative plan is to start construction in the southern basins, then move to the northern basins, and finally work in the intake area. However, if Public Works realizes the job can be done quicker or more efficiently, this is subject to change. Any substantial change in the Project's will be posted on the website.

Question: Do you know if the city or the council persons are planning a landscaping of the area adjacent to the streets and sidewalks? I know that one side of Devonshire has been beautified by the local Neighborhood council using city funds.

PW: We are aware there has been talk by community organizations and City Councils that there is an interest in beautifying and adding some green along the site. As completion of the Project is some years out, there is time to have those communications and see what kind of plans we can consider at the site.

Question: Who will be maintaining the project after completion?

PW: Los Angeles County Public Work and LACFCD will maintain the Project. The crews that currently maintain the site will continue to do so after the Project is completed.

Question: Can we add speed bumps to roads on Devonshire so that if they speed they will suffer dire consequences?

PW: For these recommendations, it is suggested that you work with the respective Council District's offices to see if they can add the speed bumps.

Question: Will streetlights and sidewalk repairs be included in the project scope?

PW: These are not because anything beyond the fence line is outside of County jurisdiction. The sidewalk would be under the City's jurisdiction for any improvements.

Question: Is there a traffic control for that area? How do you plan to minimize traffic for the residents that live close by?

PW: Assuming this is asking about during the construction period. The contractor will have to follow the specifications – there is a limited number of trucks broken down by hours that can travel from the site to the disposal locations.

Question: Will the northern basins be used for water catching during construction of the southern basins, or will the spreading grounds be out of commission for the duration of the project?

PW: The facility will be offline during the course of the construction. There is another facility downstream – Tujunga Spreading Ground. Some of the water bypassing PSG can be captured downstream at Tujunga Spreading Grounds.

Question: Can DPW partner with Other county department to use grants to get the streetlights and sidewalks?

PW: Suggested to send question in and Public Works will pass along. It was reiterated that sidewalks are under the City's jurisdiction.

Question: Will there be any info posted in terms of signage to educate visitors about the spreading grounds?

PW: As part of this phase of the Project, there will not be signage since the facility will be closed to the public. But if there are future improvements, such as greening or pocket parks, we would consider signage.

Question: The county controls the sidewalks

PW: The only maintenance jurisdiction County has is within the fenced area. Commentor was encouraged again to reach out to their Council District.

Question: If the site is offline till 2024, what happens when there is a heavy rain season for 2023 or 2024? Will water collection happen at another site? Will flooding occur at Pacoima Spreading Grounds?

PW: Flooding would not occur at Pacoima Spreading Grounds because the gates at the intake will remain closed. If there is a rain, the water could be captured downstream at Tujunga Spreading Grounds.

Question: LAMC code states that the property owner is responsible for the maintenance of the right of way next to your property.

PW: Public Works is aware of that code, we believe there is a different interpretation of the code and would not apply to another public agency such as Public Works.

Question: There is a lot of blight in the area. I strongly recommend adding signs to educate the community. Educating community should be part of this project.

PW: We will make a note, and if there is an opportunity to include educational signs near the facility, we will do that.

Question: Thank you! If I'm an NGO, interested in a partnership to work on those recreation opportunities - as well as signs, benches, streetlights, etc.- would we reach out to Paul or who at LADWP? I think it's important to start planning and get these going during your construction phase to be cost efficient.

PW: You can reach out to Paul and have a conversation to determine the right person to put you in touch with.

Question: How will art be incorporated into the project?

PW: For this phase of the Project, as it's solely improving the water conservation side of the facility it is not anticipated to incorporate art into the Project. We partner with some of the community organizations to install artwork on our fencing. For those purposes, contact Public Works and apply for a permit that is issued to install the artwork.

Question: will you be repaving Devonshire, Arleta and Paxton near the jobsite when the project is over?

PW: One of the mitigations is to do a pre- and post-assessment of the haul routes. The pre-construction assessment is being performed now. If there is a significant change in the condition of the road post-construction that is deemed to be due to the Project, we will work with the City to address it.

Question: Will the public be informed on an ongoing basis about the progression of the project by the construction company?

PW: Yes, the community will be updated and informed about the construction through the Project's website, with a section to cover construction updates as we move through the project.

Question: Thank you for the information. We would like another meeting.

PW: If necessary, we can provide updates via e-mail blast; if you would like these updates, please send an email to be added to the distribution list and we will do our best to keep the community informed during construction.