



Notice of Availability of the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2020 LA River Master Plan



Date: February 1, 2021
To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, and Interested Individuals and Organizations
Subject: Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the *2020 LA River Master Plan*
Lead Agency: County of Los Angeles
Review Period: February 1, 2021 through March 18, 2021

The County of Los Angeles (County), through the Department of Public Works (Public Works), is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has completed the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (Draft PEIR) for the proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* (Project). The Draft PEIR is available for a 45-day public review and comment period starting on February 1, 2021 and ending on March 18, 2021.

The Draft PEIR and all related documents are available on the County's website: <https://pw.lacounty.gov/swq/peir/>.

The Draft *2020 LA River Master Plan* is available at the following website: <http://www.larivermasterplan.org/>.

Project Location

The proposed Project is located along a 51-mile-long, 2-mile-wide corridor (i.e., 1 mile on each side) of the LA River in Los Angeles County and spans through 17 cities and unincorporated Los Angeles County areas (18 total jurisdictions). The river encompasses an 834-square-mile watershed and flows from its headwaters at river mile 51 in Canoga Park in the City of Los Angeles to river mile zero in the City of Long Beach, where the river meets the Pacific Ocean (Figure 1). The LA River was channelized during the late 19th and mid-20th centuries to protect lives and property from flooding as the LA region rapidly grew and transformed to a largely urbanized area. Today, approximately 1 million people live within 1 mile of the river.

Proposed 2020 LA River Master Plan

The proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* is intended to be a visionary and practical document for all 18 local jurisdictions (17 cities and unincorporated County) within the study area. The *2020 LA River Master Plan's* framework begins with community needs and aims to provide guidance and resources for jurisdictions to implement subsequent projects in the study area. Rather than requiring one set of fixed solutions for all 51 miles, the proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* allows for a consistent approach throughout the study area but with frame-specific identity within the greater whole. The proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* builds on the adopted 1996 *Los Angeles River Master Plan* and other regional planning studies prepared since then. The proposed *2020 LA River Master*

Plan is intended as a blueprint to improve 51 miles of connected open space along the LA River to promote health, equity, access, mobility, and economic opportunity for the diverse communities of Los Angeles County while still providing flood risk management. The *2020 LA River Master Plan* has the following nine objectives:

1. Reduce flood risk and improve resiliency.
2. Provide equitable, inclusive, and safe parks, open space, and trails.
3. Support healthy connected ecosystems.
4. Enhance opportunities for equitable access to the river corridor.
5. Embrace and enhance opportunities for arts and culture.
6. Address potential adverse impacts on housing affordability and people experiencing homelessness.
7. Foster opportunities for continued community engagement, development, and education.
8. Improve local water supply reliability.
9. Promote healthy, safe, clean water.

The aim of the *2020 LA River Master Plan* objective number 6, "Address potential adverse impacts on housing affordability and people experiencing homelessness," is to maintain strategies for supporting continuing housing affordability in LA River adjacent communities. Therefore, the use of "impacts" in this objective is distinct from the use of "impacts" under CEQA where, per CEQA Guidelines Section 15358 (b), impacts analyzed under CEQA must be related to a physical change in the environment.

The *2020 LA River Master Plan* proposes six categories of project improvements, or "kit of parts" (KOP), consisting of infrastructure and urban river design typologies that illustrate the range of possible strategies that the proponents of subsequent projects, including the County, can use along the river. The six KOP categories are:

- KOP Category 1: Trails and Access Gateways
- KOP Category 2: Channel Modifications
- KOP Category 3: Crossings and Platforms
- KOP Category 4: Diversions
- KOP Category 5: Floodplain Reclamation
- KOP Category 6: Off-Channel Land Assets

Each of these six KOP categories includes a recommended collection of design components and can be implemented individually or in any combination as subsequent projects, as driven by the local jurisdiction's needs, funding, and policy decisions.

In addition to the KOP categories with related design components, the *2020 LA River Master Plan* includes a series of smaller common elements that include site furnishings, amenities, and facilities. These include consistent lighting, drinking fountains, places to sit along the river, river pavilions, and cafés that are intended to contribute to habitability of the river environs; promote safety, accessibility, and legibility; and build a cohesive identity of the river corridor. The proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* also includes Design Guidelines that have been developed as a framework to support the development of specific design and technical solutions for subsequent projects to be implemented under the *2020 LA River Master Plan* while presenting a unified, cohesive identity along the 51-mile connected open space corridor and promoting best practices and resiliency.

Table 1 shows the six KOP categories and their respective multi-benefit design components included in the *2020 LA River Master Plan*. It also notes the applicability of the smaller common elements and Design Guidelines across the multi-benefit design components, as needed under future subsequent projects.

Table 1. Proposed Project: 2020 LA River Master Plan—Six Categories of the Kit of Parts with Design Components

Kit of Parts	KOP Category 1: Trails and Access Gateways	KOP Category 2: Channel Modifications	KOP Category 3: Crossings and Platforms	KOP Category 4: Diversions	KOP Category 5: Floodplain Reclamation	KOP Category 6: Off-Channel Land Assets
Multi-Benefit Design Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River gateway • Pedestrian trail • Bike trail • Equestrian trail • Equestrian facility • Multi-use trail • Light tower/ water tower • Lookout • Boardwalk • Channel access • Vehicular access • Underpass and overpass • Vegetated buffer • Habitat corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terraced bank • Check dam • Levee • Armored channel • Storm drain daylighting • Vertical wall • Channel smoothing • Texturizing or grooving • Concrete bottom • Soft bottom/ concrete removal • Sediment removal • Bridge pier modification • Access ramp • Reshape low flow • Deployable barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian bridge • Bike bridge • Equestrian bridge • Multi-use bridge • Cantilever • Platform • Habitat/ wildlife bridge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion pipe • Side channel • Pump • Diversion channel • Diversion tunnel • Overflow weir • Underground gallery • Storm drain interceptors • Wetland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Side channel • Wetland • Naturalized bank • Braided channel • Field • Recreation field • Storage (surface) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban agriculture • Solar power • Composting • Natural treatment system • Wetland • Recreation field • Surface storage • Subsurface storage • Injection well • Water treatment facility • Purple pipe connection • Dry well • Spreading ground • Storm drain daylighting • Affordable housing • Art and culture facility
Common elements and Design Guidelines, including best management practices						

Note: The multi-benefit design components can be implemented individually or in combination with others as subsequent projects under the *2020 LA River Master Plan*. Subsequent projects could be sited in the LA River channel (bank to bank), between the top of the levee to the fenceline, or beyond the fenceline (i.e., outside of the river right-of-way) but within the *2020 LA River Master Plan* 2-mile-wide study area along the 51-mile LA River.

Proposed 2020 LA River Master Plan Elements and Their Organization in the PEIR

To inform decision-making in a comprehensive manner, the Draft PEIR includes the analysis of the potential environmental impacts from implementation of the proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* based on the following groupings:

- Two “typical projects” that have been identified based on the availability of construction and operations scenario assumptions from Public Works, along with relatively detailed design concepts for these projects, which are described in the

2020 LA River Master Plan:

- Common Elements Typical Project
- Multi-Use trails and Access Gateways Typical Project
- KOP categories
- Overall implementation, which examines the entirety of the *2020 LA River Master Plan* that would be implemented over a 25-year horizon period

The two Typical Projects listed above are analyzed in greater detail than the other elements in the Draft PEIR. The six KOP categories and related design components—as well as the *2020 LA River Master Plan* in its entirety—are analyzed qualitatively at a program level. It is anticipated that the County or other agencies may use the PEIR as the first-tier analysis when considering subsequent discretionary actions.

Construction of subsequent projects under the *2020 LA River Master Plan* would occur over a 25-year horizon period—2020 through 2045—and possibly further into the future. The precise timing for later activities (i.e., subsequent proposed projects) over the 25-year horizon period is not known because they are dependent on several factors, such as funding, project proponent, community needs, approval from the applicable jurisdiction, and detailed design considerations.

Significant Environmental Effects

The Draft PEIR identifies the potential for significant environmental effects as a result of the Project in the following environmental areas: Aesthetics; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Geology, Soils, and Paleontological Resources; Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Hazards and Hazardous Materials; Hydrology and Water Quality; Land Use; Noise; Public Services; Recreation; Transportation; Tribal Cultural Resources; Utilities; and Wildfire. Table ES-2 in the PEIR identifies the specific environmental impacts anticipated as a result of the project.

Comments and Responses

The County is soliciting the views of interested persons and agencies on the content of this Draft PEIR. In accordance with CEQA, the Draft PEIR will be available for public review and comment for a 45-day period. All written comments on environmental issues will be responded to and included in the Final PEIR. The PEIR will be used by the County's governing Board, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, when considering approval of the proposed *2020 LA River Master Plan* as well as for any related discretionary approvals.

All comments on the Draft PEIR are due no later than March 18, 2021. Please send your written comments to the address shown below. Include a return address or email address and a contact name with your comments.

Grace Komjakraphan-Tek
Los Angeles County Public Works, Stormwater Quality Division
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803
833-993-1739
LARiverCEQA@pw.lacounty.gov

During the public review period, copies of the Draft PEIR and all related documents will be available at the following location for review: <http://pw.lacounty.gov/go/larmpceqa>.

Draft PEIR Public Meeting

As a result of the expanding outbreak of COVID-19 and resulting restrictions placed on in-person gatherings throughout California as a result of the COVID-19 emergency, the County will host one online public meeting to discuss the Draft PEIR and solicit comments from interested parties on the Draft PEIR's analysis, rather than holding in-person events. The online public meeting will be hosted on Wednesday, March 3, 2021 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The public meeting will include a brief presentation providing an overview of the Draft PEIR analysis, followed by submission of verbal comments.

Information about how to participate in the public meeting can be found here:
<http://pw.lacounty.gov/go/larmpceqa>.

If you have questions regarding this Notice of Availability (NOA), would like to request accommodation for the public meetings, or would like to request a USB/flash drive of the Draft PEIR and/or its appendices, please contact Grace Komjakraphan-Tek at LARiverCEQA@pw.lacounty.gov or 833-993-1739.

Hazardous Materials/Waste On Site

Section 15087(c)(6) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that this NOA identify whether any hazardous waste facilities, land designated as hazardous waste property, hazardous waste disposal sites, and other sites enumerated pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code are located in the project site (referred to as "study area" in the DEIR). Based on the information gathered from these databases, these sites located within the *2020 LA River Master Plan* study area are identified in and geographically displayed on Hazmat Cleanup Sites Figures 3.8-1 through 3.8-9 in the PEIR.

If you would like more information or need the notice translated into another language, please call 833-993-1739.



Upon 72 hours' notice, Public Works can provide program information and publications in alternate formats or make other accommodations for people with disabilities. In addition, program documents are available at our main office in Alhambra (900 S. Fremont Ave.), which is accessible to individuals with disabilities. To request accommodations ONLY or for more Americans with Disabilities Act information, please contact our departmental Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator at (626) 458-4081 or by TDD (626) 282-7829, Monday through Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

