



MARK PESTRELLA, Director

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

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IN REPLY PLEASE  
REFER TO FILE

June 14, 2022

The Honorable Board of Supervisors  
County of Los Angeles  
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**WATER RESOURCES CORE SERVICE AREA**  
**CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND**  
**ADOPTION OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER MASTER PLAN**  
**(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)**  
**(3 VOTES)**

**SUBJECT**

Public Works is seeking Board approval to adopt the Los Angeles River Master Plan including all appendices and the Final Program Environmental Impact Report.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE COUNTY:**

1. Certify that the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles River Master Plan Update has been completed in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act and reflects the independent judgment and analysis of the County; find that the Board has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report; adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, finding that the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during program implementation; find that there are no further feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures within the Board's jurisdiction that would substantially lessen or avoid any significant effect that the program would have on the environment; and determine that the significant adverse effects of the program have either been reduced to an acceptable level or are outweighed by the specific considerations of the program, as outlined in the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, which findings and statement are adopted and incorporated herein by reference.
2. Adopt the Los Angeles River Master Plan including the Design Guidelines and Technical

Documents, which will supersede the 1996 Los Angeles River Master Plan and its Landscape Guidelines.

3. Find the delegation of authority to update the Design Guidelines is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 21065 of the Public Resource Code and Section 15378(b) of the State California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.
4. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Works or his designee to take the following actions to comply with California Environmental Quality Act in connection with the delegated authority to update and/or revise the Design Guidelines for the Los Angeles River Master Plan: (a) determine whether a proposed revision to the Design Guidelines is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act or within the scope of a previous finding of exemption; and/or (b) determine whether a proposed revision to the Design Guidelines is within the scope of the Los Angeles River Master Plan Program Environmental Impact Report.
5. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Works or his designee to update and/or revise the Design Guidelines for the Los Angeles River Master Plan, consistent with the purposes and goals of the Los Angeles River Master Plan, as the Director deems necessary or appropriate to advance the goals of the Los Angeles River Master Plan, subject to the delegation included above under the California Environmental Quality Act.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE BOARD ACTING AS THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT:

1. Consider the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles River Master Plan, prepared by the County of Los Angeles as lead agency for the project; certify that the Board has independently reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report and reached its own conclusions regarding the environmental effects of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District's approvals related to the project as shown in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report; adopt the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program within the District's jurisdiction, finding that the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during program implementation; find that there are no further feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures within the District's jurisdiction that would substantially lessen or avoid any significant effect that the program would have on the environment; and determine that the significant adverse effects of the project have either been reduced to an acceptable level or are outweighed by the specific considerations of the program, as outlined in the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, which findings and statement are adopted and incorporated herein by reference as applicable.
2. Authorize the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District or his designee to utilize the Los Angeles River Master Plan, including the Design Guidelines to the Los Angeles River Master Plan, to establish standards and conditions in connection with Flood Control District permits, leases, agreements, and other discretionary actions related to projects along the Los Angeles River within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, consistent with the objectives of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District.
3. Find the delegation of authority to utilize updated Design Guidelines for the Los Angeles River Master Plan is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Section 21065 of the Public Resource Code and Section 15378(b) of the State California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines.

4. Delegate authority to the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District or his designee to take the following actions to comply with California Environmental Quality Act in connection with the delegated authority to utilize Design Guidelines that have been updated by the County: (a) determine whether the updated Design Guidelines are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act or are within the scope of a previous finding of exemption; (b) determine whether the updated Design Guidelines for the Los Angeles River Master Plan are within the scope of the Los Angeles River Master Plan Program Environmental Impact Report.

5. Delegate authority to the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District or his designee to utilize the Design Guidelines for the Los Angeles River Master Plan as updated by the County, to establish standards and conditions in connection with Flood Control District permits, leases, agreements, and other discretionary actions related to projects along the Los Angeles River consistent with the objectives of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District.

### **PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION**

The Los Angeles River is a critical component of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District's flood control system for the Los Angeles County region and serves as a link between communities. The Los Angeles River also presents an opportunity for new open space and recreation and has the potential to become a more significant asset to surrounding cities and communities along the river's entire length of 51 miles.

In 1991, Los Angeles County Public Works convened a committee of over 50 local stakeholders to develop the 1996 Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP). Since then, many organizations and public agencies have led other planning efforts focusing on various river segments, inspired by the original LARMP, that promotes utilization of the river as an asset to adjacent communities.

Additionally, in recent years, many social, economic, and environmental issues have risen within our communities that require thoughtful consideration in the planning of future public amenities along the Los Angeles River. These critical issues include equity, workforce development, affordable housing, safety, access, environmental justice, water quality, and cultural identity among others. For these reasons, it became necessary to update the 1996 plan to address these modern-day issues as well as to link the various individual efforts along the 51 miles of the river system into a single, comprehensive plan through a transparent, data driven, and community-based process.

On October 18, 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved Motion No. 16-5168 and directed Public Works to work with both stakeholders and communities along the 51-miles of the river to update the LARMP. For nearly 3 years, from 2018 to 2021, Public Works committed significant resources towards this effort. A 41-member steering committee was formed, consisting of agencies, organizations, and leaders representing diverse perspectives of the community. This group of community leaders and technical experts met regularly (open to the public) to review, discuss, and provide input on the plan's development with respect to water, people, and environment.

An internal County team was formed to ensure the plan's goals and actions are aligned and consistent with many other County programs and initiatives including those related to parks and open space, art and culture, sustainability, and affordable housing. The internal County team was comprised of representatives from all five Supervisorial Districts, County departments, and agencies including: Arts and Culture; Chief Executive Office; Chief Sustainability Office; Health Services; Natural History Museum; Parks and Recreation; Public Works; and Regional Planning. Additionally,

as the plan evolved, we similarly engaged with Consumer and Business Affairs, Public Health, Public Social Services, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. Consequently, the master plan identifies actions in its implementation matrix to be implemented by each of these County departments and agencies.

Recognizing the importance of public participation, Public Works launched a robust and multi-faceted community engagement program in English and Spanish to provide opportunities, in traditional and non-traditional forms, for the public to express their visions and concerns toward the river. Highlights include 13 community meetings with 1,300 attendees; a Youth Summit with 800 high school students; a Native American Panel discussion; 1,650 digital surveys, and over 5,500 telephone town hall participants. A community partnership program was also established in which the County partnered with ten community-based organizations to incorporate the master plan's outreach efforts into various events such as community clean-up events, art exhibits, and workshops.

Community engagement also featured an extensive digital presence through the project's website, social media posts, e-mail blasts, and an eight-part River Story video series, all of which resulted in nearly 1 million digital impressions. The [larivermasterplan.org](http://larivermasterplan.org) website served as the main source for plan information including the public draft, fact sheets, activity books for children, presentations, community meeting summaries, technical data/analysis, and surveys. The scope and multi-layered approach for community engagement provided access and allowed the County to engage with a variety of demographics and generations throughout different phases of the plan's development.

On January 13, 2021, a virtual press conference was held to announce the release of the Draft Plan and to initiate the public review comment period. Following the press conference, the Draft Plan was posted online at [www.larivermasterplan.org](http://www.larivermasterplan.org) and was available for public comment for 120-days until the comment period closed on May 13, 2021. A virtual community meeting was held on April 21, 2021, to provide the public an overview of the Draft Plan and for Public Works to respond to questions and comments.

In January 2022, Public Works completed its review of all public comments, received and finalized the plan (in English and Spanish) and enclosed Appendix Volumes I and II. The final documents were posted online on May 18, 2022.

The purpose of the recommended actions related to the County is to approve the final LARMP Update including all appendices, certify the final Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) document, make necessary findings pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and to request delegated authority to approve appropriate updates and revisions to Appendix Volume I - Design Guidelines.

The purpose of the recommended actions related to the District is to authorize Public Works, on behalf of the District, to use the LARMP Update to develop and implement standards and conditions in connection with District permits, leases, agreements, and other discretionary actions related to projects along the Los Angeles River within the jurisdiction of the District, consistent with the objectives of the District.

### **Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals**

These recommendations support County Strategic Plan Goal II. Foster Vibrant and Resilient Communities: Strategy II.1 - Drive Economic and Workforce Development in the County and Strategy II.3 - Make Environmental Sustainability our Daily Reality by supporting strategies, programs, and infrastructure projects near and adjacent to the Los Angeles River that will support

the County's workforce development efforts, create resilient communities that can respond to environmental and natural hazards, expand access to recreational and cultural opportunities along the river, and promote active and healthy lifestyles for underserved communities in a built-out environment.

### **FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING**

The final plan will identify strategies, programs, and project opportunity sites to achieve effective and collaborative planning for multi-benefit improvements along the Los Angeles River over the next 25 years. The plan would also be used to set standards and conditions for future activities and projects within Los Angeles County Flood Control right-of-way and as guidance for planning and design of best management practices specific to improvements near and adjacent to the Los Angeles River.

The District's Flood Fund B07 may be considered for future projects along the Los Angeles River that further the objectives of the District during the annual budgeting process if sufficient funding is available. The County will further evaluate projects to determine its role and participation and will return to the Board for approval and to execute any necessary agreements for specific projects between the County and other parties.

### **FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

On October 18, 2016, a motion was passed by Chair Hilda Solis and Supervisor Sheila Kuehl to direct Public Works to establish a 41-member steering committee comprised of regional agencies, city leaders, nonprofit and community groups, and interested stakeholders to update the 1996 Los Angeles River Master Plan. In addition, Public Works was directed to establish a working group of County departments to coordinate County input on the LARMP Update.

On April 4, 2017, the Board delegated authority to Public Works to enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with interested organizations and agencies for information-sharing and collaboration in regard to the LARMP Update. Public Works entered into one MOU with the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority for collaboration with the Upper Los Angeles River and Tributaries Working Group.

On January 9, 2018, Public Works entered into a MOU with the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to utilize DPR's As-Needed Consultant Services Master Agreement to obtain the necessary consultant support to develop the LARMP Update.

Public Works provided quarterly progress updates to the Board as well as regular updates to both the Los Angeles River Cooperation Committee and the Implementation Advisory Group who convene regular stakeholder meetings for planning along the Upper Los Angeles River and Lower Los Angeles River reaches, respectively.

The preliminary cost for the County and other public, private, and non-profit agencies and organizations to implement all of the plan's site- and system-based improvements is estimated to range from \$19 billion to \$24 billion over the next 25 years. Additionally, ongoing operation and maintenance costs for both infrastructure and open space amenities is estimated to range from \$1.5 million to \$3 million per river mile annually. These costs will be further refined as project details become known based on future site-specific technical analyses, feasibility studies, and design.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION**

Delegation of authority to the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and the Director of Public Works to comply with CEQA, on behalf of the County and District, in connection with the delegated authority to adopt updated Design Guidelines, and to adopt Design Guidelines as updated by the County, and to utilize the updated Design Guidelines for the LARMP to establish standards and conditions in connection with District permits, leases, agreements, and other discretionary actions related to projects along the Los Angeles River consistent with the objectives of the District in the future is not considered a project under the CEQA pursuant to Section 21065 of the Public Resources Code and Section 15378(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines. Prior to approving any activity that would be considered a project under CEQA, appropriate findings will be made by the Director of Public Works for the County and the Chief Engineer of the District consistent with the delegations herein.

Public Works, acting on behalf of the County acknowledged that implementation of the LARMP Update could result in potentially significant environmental effects and therefore decided to prepare a PEIR to identify and examine likely environmental effects of the LARMP Update on a programmatic level to inform decision-making in a comprehensive manner. Acting on behalf of the County as lead agency, Public Works has prepared a Final PEIR for the LARMP Update in compliance with the CEQA, California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000, et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3) to evaluate and disclose the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of the proposed LARMP Update.

While the PEIR provides a program-level CEQA analysis for the LARMP Update, all subsequent projects proposed under the LARMP Update will be examined in light of this PEIR to determine whether subsequent or new CEQA documentation must be prepared (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 (c)(2)).

The proposed Project as described and analyzed in the PEIR includes two typical projects, six kit of part categories, and the overall implementation of the LARMP Update over a 25-year horizon period, including the LARMP Update Design Guidelines.

A Draft PEIR was completed and released for public review on February 1, 2021, and Public Works initiated a 45-day public comment period by filing a Notice of Completion and Notice of Availability with the State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2020070128). In response to requests from the public, the review period was extended to May 13, 2021, which resulted in a total review period of 101-days. Notification of the availability of the Draft PEIR was prepared pursuant to State CEQA Guideline Section 15087, and accordingly the notice was published in newspapers, including the Glendale Independent, Grunion Gazette, L.A. Watts Times, Long Beach Press Telegram, Paramount Journal, Los Angeles Times, Excelsior LA, The Canyon News, Monterey Park Press, The Downey Patriot, The Signal Tribune, South Bay Daily Breeze, and in Spanish publications including La Opinion, Los Angeles Times en Español (Hoy Los Angeles), Los Angeles Daily News; posted at libraries open to the public; directly mailed to owners and occupants of properties contiguous to the parcels on which the project is located; e-mailed to interested parties; and posted on social media. The Draft PEIR was also made available on the County's website at <https://pw.lacounty.gov/go/larmpceqa>.

In addition to receiving public comments, a public meeting to inform interested parties about the Draft PEIR's analysis of the project and to gather input from interested persons and agencies on the content of the Draft PEIR. Due to the ongoing restrictions under State of California Executive Order N-33-20, an online public meeting on the Draft PEIR was held on March 3, 2021, with over

400 participants.

One hundred and forty-five written comment letters were received during the public review period and 57 oral comments received during the public meeting also received a formal response. Common themes raised in the comments were related to gentrification and affordable housing, homelessness and displacement, safety, and general impacts to the river channel including biological resources (i.e., birds) and flood control. Responses to the written and oral comments are included in the Final PEIR. Responses to all comments received from public agencies were sent to those agencies pursuant to Section 21092.5. All interested stakeholders were notified of the Final PEIR via e-mail and through publication in newspapers.

All tribal cultural resources consultation requirements of CEQA have been met and documented. On May 20, 2020, the County sent letters via certified mail to five Native American tribal leaders traditionally affiliated with the geographical area of the project and have requested notification of County projects under Assembly Bill 52. The Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians and Gabrieleño Band of Mission Indians—Kizh Nation requested formal consultation. After separate consultations with each Tribe, consultation was concluded through agreement. A description of the consultation process is included in Chapter 3.17 Tribal Cultural Resources, Section 3.17.3.1 of the Draft PEIR.

The Final PEIR consists of the Draft PEIR, Response to Comments, Clarifications and Modifications, and Appendices. The Final PEIR, Findings of Fact, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program have been prepared in compliance with CEQA and are on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. A copy of the Final PEIR, Findings of Fact, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program are also available online at <https://pw.lacounty.gov/go/larmpceqa> or at Los Angeles County Public Works, at 900 South Fremont Avenue, 11th Floor, Alhambra, California 91803. As stated in the PEIR and Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, the project will result in unavoidable significant impacts in the areas of aesthetics, air quality, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions, land use and planning, noise, public services, recreation, transportation, tribal cultural resources, utilities/services systems, and wildfire (when carried out by the County) and aesthetics; air quality; biological resources; geology, soils, and paleontological resources; hazards and hazardous materials; hydrology and water quality; land use and planning; noise; public services; recreation; transportation; utilities/service systems; and wildfire (when not carried out by the County), but such impacts have been reduced to the extent feasible, and the benefits of the proposed project, some of which include but are not limited to increasing open space, reducing flood risk and adding flood resilience measures, water conservation and increasing local water resources, providing jobs and training, promoting species biodiversity and establishing habitat areas with native vegetation, providing support for persons experiencing homelessness and increase housing stability/affordable housing, promoting active transportation, improving water quality and helping cities and other agencies achieve water quality compliance, enhance Los Angeles County's arts and cultural assets, providing equitable access to the Los Angeles River and other open space amenities, developing multi-benefit facilities, and increase community awareness and engagement for County river projects, outweigh these unavoidable adverse impacts.

The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program provided with the Final PEIR has been adequately designed to ensure compliance with the mitigation measures during project implementation for both the County and District. The impact determinations under CEQA for the LARMP Update are applicable to all 18 jurisdictions in the study area, including the County and non-County jurisdictions (17 cities). Significant environmental effects of the program that can be avoided or reduced to a less-than-significant level if the mitigation measures identified in the Final PEIR are implemented, except

for potential significant impacts that may be unavoidable for the environmental resource areas, which are described above. These mitigation measures will be implemented for subsequent projects that are carried out by the County, but because some later activities under the LARMP Update would not be carried out by the County, the County cannot enforce or guarantee that the mitigation measures would be incorporated. Therefore, where this PEIR concludes a less-than-significant with mitigation impact for later activities carried out by the County, the impact would be significant and unavoidable when these activities are not carried out by the County for the resource areas described above. However, such changes and alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency, and such changes can and should be adopted by such other agency. However, as explained in the Final PEIR, Findings of Fact, and Statement of Overriding Considerations, such unavoidable significant impacts for subsequent projects that are carried out by the County have been reduced to the extent feasible, and the benefits of the proposed program outweigh these unavoidable adverse impacts.

The location of documents and other materials constituting the record of the proceedings upon which the Board's decision on behalf of both the County and District is based in this matter, on behalf of the County and District, is the Los Angeles County Public Works at 900 South Fremont Avenue, 11th Floor, Alhambra, California 91803. The custodian of such documents and records is the Assistant Deputy Director of Stormwater Quality Division, Los Angeles County Public Works.

The Project is not exempt from payment by the County of a fee to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to defray the costs of fish and wildlife protection and management incurred by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Upon the Board's certification of the Final LARMP PEIR and approval of the other recommended actions, Public Works will file Notices of Determination (NODs) with the County Clerk for both the County and District in accordance with Section 21152 of the California Public Resources Code, post the NODs to its website in accordance with Section 21092.2 and the County and District will pay the required fees in the amount of \$3,614.25 and \$75.00, respectively. Public Works will also file NODs with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to California PRC Section 21092.2.

### **IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES (OR PROJECTS)**

There will be no negative impact on current services.

### **CONCLUSION**

Please return one adopted copy of this letter to Public Works, Stormwater Planning Division.



The Honorable Board of Supervisors

6/14/2022

Page 9

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Pestrella". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MARK PESTRELLA, PE

Director

MP:CTH:tr

c: Chief Executive Office (Chia-Ann Yen)  
County Counsel (Lauren Dods, Mark Yanai)  
Executive Office

**ENCLOSURES LARMP & CEQA DOCUMENTS**

June 14, 2022

**WATER RESOURCES CORE SERVICE AREA  
CERTIFICATION OF THE FINAL PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT  
AND ADOPTION OF THE LOS ANGELES RIVER MASTER PLAN  
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS)  
(3 VOTES)**

This Board letter has large enclosures.  
Click on the below link to access:

[06.14.2022 LARMP PIER Enc \(part 1\) \(Rev\)](#)  
[06.14.2022 LARMP PIER Enc 1 \(part 2\)](#)

[06.14.2022 LARMP PIER Enc 2](#)