

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS JANICE HAHN
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Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center Project

The Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center Project (SELA Cultural Center) is a proposed multi-arts facility with a series of buildings of various sizes designed to allow for artistic creations and performances. This community driven project is currently being led by the San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) but was first proposed by Assembly Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon, renowned architect Frank Gehry, and Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, who represented the Southeast Los Angeles cities before redistricting. The development of this site and the programming is a direct reflection of the SELA community who was heavily involved through a comprehensive community engagement effort. The project has received over \$124 million in State funding thus far and has philanthropic support. The LA Phil and the Southeast Arts and Cultural Foundation have also been partners in the community outreach and programming efforts. The project is proposed to be located on Los Angeles County Flood Control District property near the Confluence where the Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo meet in South Gate. The SELA Cultural Center will serve as a regionally significant destination enhancing arts, culture, and creativity for the entire County.

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Los Angeles County recognizes that arts and culture are vital to civic life and contribute to the human, community, and economic development of our people, communities, and region as whole. In a County as ethnically and culturally diverse, as well as, geographically sprawling as Los Angeles, it is our responsibility to ensure that all the benefits of, and opportunities provided by the arts are available and accessible to all residents, no matter who they are or where they live.

From school children to seniors, the arts have been proven to make individual lives better and strengthen communities. They improve health and well-being, youth development, and neighborhood vitality. It provides the opportunity for residents to see their communities and their cultures reflected in public performances, cultural activities, and exhibitions. Moreover, the arts are core to our creative economy, a major driver of the economic activity of the County and the state of California. This creative economy includes individual artists, organizations, and entities working across art forms--from music, dance, and theater to film, digital media, and visual arts, to design, arts education, and more.

The County has invested meaningfully in arts and culture for more than a century. In 2020, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Countywide Cultural Policy. The [Countywide Cultural Policy](#) provides direction for how LA County and its departments can ensure that every resident has meaningful access to arts and culture. It connects arts and culture to County plans, initiatives, and services to promote equity across policy areas. The Department of Arts and Culture's role is to lead programs and collaborate with County departments and agencies to implement the policy. The three main goals of the policy are to:

1. Invest in cultural infrastructure and access to arts and culture
2. Advance arts and culture in every sector of civic life

3. Promote cultural equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging

The SELA Cultural Center will support the goals of the Cultural Policy and begin to support Cultural Policy Strategic Plan Strategy 18: Create Access to County-Owned Creative Space and County-Owned Cultural Centers by creating County facilities for arts and culture. The plans for the center include a new multi-disciplinary arts campus designed by Frank Gehry to support the full spectrum of arts activity including youth arts and STEAM education; creative workspace for artists, training, and artmaking; and presentation, performances, and audience engagement. It will ensure the Southeast has access to cultural resources, infrastructure, and cultural activities while maintaining public access to the LA River and recreation.

The SELA Cultural Center was identified by the community during the development of the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP) and subsequently the County's updated Los Angeles River Master Plan (LARMP). Both the LLARRP and LARMP were developed with extensive community engagement. The LARMP, adopted by the Board on June 14, 2022, incorporates the SELA Center within the planning of 51 miles of connected public open space that provides opportunities not only for safe, clean water; flood resiliency; and healthy ecosystems; but also, job creation while fostering opportunities or arts, culture and community engagement. The LARMP identifies the Rio Hondo Confluence as one of five major project zones along the 51-mile river corridor. This site has complimentary opportunities for public education surrounding the LA River, such as, the understanding of potential flood risks and native ecosystems.

This SELA Cultural Center will showcase the Southeast Los Angeles community and provide a permanent place for the community to gather in creative expression. It is imperative that the County formally engages in carrying out this important project.

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors instruct the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the Departments of Public Works, Arts and Culture, and Parks and Recreation, and any other relevant departments to create a work plan outlining the necessary steps for the County to fulfill its intent to carry out the development and ongoing operations of the Southeast Los Angeles Cultural Center Project (SELA Cultural Center), and report back in writing in 90 days.

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