

November 06, 2024

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

Acquisition to Expand Parks and Trails along the Lower LA River Corridor

The Lower Los Angeles River is the southernmost 19 miles of the 51 mile LA River that runs through and/or is adjacent to the cities of Bell, Bell Gardens, Carson, Commerce, Compton, Cudahy, Downey, Huntington Park, Long Beach, Lynwood, Maywood, Paramount, South Gate and Vernon. Residents living within the Lower LA River corridor are communities with High or Very High Park Need as defined by the 2016 Countywide Park Needs Assessment. In addition to having a deficit in local parkland, Southeast Los Angeles (SELA) is the only region in LA County without a national, state and/or County regional park; with many areas along the corridor identified as priorities for increasing access to regional recreation and for environmental restoration in the 2022 LA County Parks Needs Assessment Plus. Lower LA River communities also suffer from high social vulnerability to climate hazards according to the 2021 Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment, due to many variables such as poverty, asthma and cardiovascular disease.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has been actively engaged in advancing park equity and environmental justice priorities. This includes nature-based programs and education to improve the quality of life for LA County residents living in impacted communities like those along the Lower LA River.

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DPR's park system and trail network is vital County infrastructure along the Lower LA River that includes a natural surface, multi-use trail spanning 9 miles between Imperial Hwy in the City of South Gate to Willow Street in Long Beach; as well as 72nd Street Equestrian Park, a 3-acre special use facility that serves a sizeable equestrian community living adjacent to and near the Lower LA River. While these regional facilities are available to the Lower LA River communities, much improvement is needed to leverage and expand upon these existing resources to maximize community benefits and to achieve the dynamic greenway corridor envisioned along the Lower LA River. In recent years, the County has invested in major initiatives to reimagine and improve the environmental and recreational opportunities along the LA River through the 2017 Lower LA River Revitalization Plan (LLARRP) and the 2022 LA River Master Plan (LARMP). Both Plans set forth a vision for flourishing communities that includes a revitalized river corridor that supports healthy, equitable and sustainable communities.

Since the adoption of the LLARP and the LARMP, DPR is leading implementation efforts and was awarded grant funding to plan and design improvements along a 1.3-mile segment of the Lower LA River to create stronger connections and a more prominent gateway access point to the river from 72nd Street Equestrian Park. The design concept has been shaped by diverse community input and this project is an essential component towards activating the greenway corridor. Key partners in this effort include the Department of Public Works staff, as the implementation lead for the LLARRP and the LARMP, coordinating as part of the project team on the proposed improvements such as lighting, stormwater capture opportunities, and landscaping,

and associated permitting requirements; as well as the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to create social enterprise opportunities along the Lower LA River. This collaboration is part of nationwide movement to develop multi-benefit park projects in underserved communities that provide critical open space as well as create opportunities for work force development and economic opportunity.

DPR has also been awarded grant funding from the San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC) to acquire a 1.16-acre parcel situated in a prime location along the east bank of the Lower LA River that connects directly to 72nd Street Equestrian Park and will provide a critical access point to the 1.3-mile linear park. The RMC grant award approval is limited to the property acquisition and related due diligence. Once due diligence is complete, DPR will return to the Board of Supervisors for authority to purchase and acquire the property. DPR is requesting \$350,000 to initiate community engagement, develop design concepts and obtain a cost estimate, which are key steps towards the developing this property and delivering tangible benefits to the community in the near term. DPR's acquisition of this property is essential to expanding access to recreation and programming opportunities to a High Park Need Community; and will provide an opportunity to restore a degraded site in a community that is environmentally burdened, and which has been identified as a priority area for environmental restoration through the 2022 PNA+. Acquisition of the Property also presents a rare opportunity to acquire a property for sale that directly connects to the LA River and has the potential to be an anchor park facility that will catalyze the vision the 1.3-mile linear park.

Furthermore, creating opportunities for social enterprise zones along the river corridor, expanding access to recreation, and establishing a safe, beautiful, shaded community asset that is treasured by visitor and resident alike are key to delivering on the aspirational goals of the LA River Plans.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the proposed actions are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) according to sections 15262 of the State of CEQA Guidelines and 21102 of the California Public Resources Code, because they relate to planning and feasibility studies for possible future actions that the Board has not adopted, approved, or funded;
2. Direct the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and her staff to conduct due diligence tasks necessary to acquire a 1.16-acre parcel along the east bank of the Lower LA River that connects directly to 72nd Street Equestrian Park;
3. Direct the Director of DPR and her staff to work with the Director of the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and her staff to develop opportunities for social enterprises along the Los Angeles River in collaboration with local, SELA based community organizations; and
4. Direct the Director of DPR and her staff to work with the Director of the Department of Public Works and his staff to streamline the review process for all permitting and develop an operations and maintenance funding strategy for lighting, stormwater capture opportunities, landscaping etc.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Board of Supervisors, acting as the Governing Body of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District:

1. Find that the proposed actions are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because they are activities that are excluded from the definition of a project by section 21065 of the California Public Resources Code and Section 15378 (b)(4) and (5) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The actions involve the creation of government funding mechanisms or other government fiscal activities that do not involve any commitment to any specific project that may result in potentially significant physical impact on the environment and are administrative activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment;
2. Allocate an amount not to exceed \$350,000 to the County, through its Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), for the proposed project, comprised of \$350,000 of Excess Funds available to the Fourth Supervisorial District; and
3. Authorize the Director of DPR, or her designee, in her capacity as Director of the Los Angeles County Regional Park and Open Space District, to award grants when applicable conditions have been met, and to administer the grants as of the date of award and pursuant to guidelines in the Proposition A Grants Administration Manual for Excess Funds and Competitive Funds; otherwise funds shall remain in the Excess Funds account.

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**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION:
ATLANTIC AVENUE PLANNING PROJECT**

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PLAN

BACKGROUND

The Atlantic Avenue Planning Project (Project) will allow the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) to initiate the planning work needed to acquire and develop a 1.16-acre parcel situated in a prime location of the Lower LA River that connects directly to the 72nd Street Equestrian Park and will provide a critical access point to the 1.3-mile linear park. The scope of work includes community engagement, design development and developing a cost estimate for the acquisition of the parcel.

DPR's acquisition of this property is essential to expanding access to recreation and programming opportunities to a High Park Need Community and will provide an opportunity to restore a degraded site in a community that is environmentally burdened, and which has been identified as a priority area for environmental restoration through the 2022 Parks Needs Assessment Plus. The Project will be funded by the Regional Parks and Open Space District's 1996 Safe Neighborhood Parks Proposition (Prop A) funds in the amount of \$350,000.

Tasks that may be performed by At-Risk Youth

Due to the specialized nature of the work required, there is no work that youth can perform.

Estimated Cost of Youth Employment

Not applicable

Estimated Cost of Youth Employment

Not applicable

Youth Employment Goal:

The Youth Employment Goal (YEG) established for the County of Los Angeles was \$15,739,750. The County has exceeded this goal.