READER’S GUIDE for the
LA River Ecosystem Restoration Project
A document by the Local Sponsor, the City of Los Angeles, California

Final Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR) which includes the
Final Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report
April 2016
Cover photo descriptions, clockwise from top left: LA River’s Glendale Narrows; LA River just south of the Verdugo Wash and State Route 134, and east of Interstate 5; LA River with Los Feliz Boulevard Bridge and Griffith Park in the background; Kayakers in the Sepulveda Basin section of the LA River; Rendering of the proposed Project at the G2 parcel of the Taylor Yard complex.
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1 Introduction

This Reader’s Guide is intended by the City to guide you through the local environmental review and project approval process for the proposed Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Project (Project), a project of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and locally sponsored by the City of Los Angeles (City). The proposed Project includes restoration of the aquatic riparian ecosystem native to the Los Angeles River along an approximately 11-mile stretch that would provide ecosystem benefits while maintaining existing levels of flood risk management. Recreation opportunities consistent with the restored ecosystem would also be provided.

The draft environmental review document, known as the Draft Integrated Feasibility Report (IFR), which included the Feasibility Study and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR), for this Project was released for public review and comment in 2013. The final environmental review document is called the Final IFR and includes the Final Feasibility Report and Final EIS/EIR. The Final EIS/EIR included in the Final IFR were prepared respectively in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a federal law, and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a state statute, and underwent its last round of public, State and Agency review in late 2015, as required under NEPA and the 1944 Flood Control Act (P.L. 78-534). Pursuant to CEQA, the Final IFR includes the Draft EIS/EIR updated with comments to those received and responses, and additional information added by the City and the USACE.

Alternative 20 is identified as the Recommended Plan for the Project in the Final IFR, which would require approval from the City, the USACE, and Congressional authorization before the project is eligible for Federal appropriations for Project construction.

This Reader’s Guide serves as a reference to facilitate understanding of the proposed Project and key local issues. It strives to accomplish this by:

- Providing a brief summary of the proposed Project, and potential environmental impacts as analyzed in the IFR;
- Presenting the public involvement process for shaping the proposed Project;
- Describing the Recommended Plan (Alternative 20) and its benefits and costs;
- Highlighting issues of local interest, along with other complementary planning efforts; and
- Discussing the local environmental review process and next steps for project approval.

Please note that the Reader’s Guide is not an official part of the legal IFR document. The views and opinions expressed in this Reader’s Guide are solely those of the City in order to summarize the key points of the IFR, highlight issues of local interest, and present the local environmental review process.

It is important to note that while this is primarily an ecosystem restoration project, it is being proposed in a highly urbanized environment that confronts local issues such as displacement, gentrification, industrial land conversion, flood risk management, eminent domain, and homelessness. Section 8 of this Reader’s Guide addresses these topics, many of which continue to be highlighted in various local media, along with Project funding approaches.
## Project Need

### Why is Ecosystem Restoration of the LA River Important?

The Los Angeles River (River) is **51 miles long** and has an approximately **870 square-mile watershed**\(^1\). The River runs from Canoga Park in the west San Fernando Valley to Long Beach where...

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\(^1\) A watershed is an area of land within which all water drains to a common location, such as a stream or river.
it flows into the Pacific Ocean via the San Pedro/Long Beach Harbor. The first 32 miles of the River flow through the City of Los Angeles and along the cities of Burbank and Glendale (see Figure A). The upper portion of the watershed (more than 300 square miles) is predominantly forest or open space including more than 100 square miles of the Angeles National Forest. The remainder of the watershed (more than 400 square miles) lies in the coastal plain and includes the City of Los Angeles. It is a highly developed area with commercial, industrial, and residential land uses.

Figure B is an artistic interpretation of the evolution of the River, showing how it has been affected by first agricultural and then industrial development. The River, which once served as the backbone of a vast system of riparian foothill, riverine, and freshwater marsh habitat that carried seasonal rains and subterranean flows to the coastal plain and ultimately the Pacific Ocean, has been degraded over time by a cycle of increasing urban development. The River typically appears nearly dry for much of the year, but can become a powerful torrent during the rainy seasons.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, very large storm flows in the River caused catastrophic flooding that resulted in the loss of lives and millions of dollars in property damage. As a result, City and LA County leaders initiated a formal flood risk management program (then known as “flood control”) to channelize the natural River system with the goal of moving flood flows to the ocean as efficiently as possible. In the 1930s, Congress tasked the
USACE with engineering the flood risk management system.

Channelization has degraded the remaining habitat values of the River by straightening the River’s course, diminishing its plant and wildlife diversity and quality, disconnecting it from its floodplain and significant ecological zones, and dramatically changing its appearance and function. Planning efforts for the proposed Project considered the significance of the ecological resources of the River, some of which are highlighted in Figure C.

**FIGURE C**  
**Why is the LA River Important Ecologically?**

**HABITAT SCARCITY**  
The Project area is within a globally scarce Mediterranean ecosystem, which **covers only 2% of the Earth’s land surface but accounts for 20% of all known plant species.**

**STATUS & TRENDS**  
Over 90% of Southern California’s riparian habitat has been lost along with 95% of California’s wetlands and 40% of its reptiles and amphibians.

**SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES**  
Approximately **140** federally protected bird species are supported by the LA River.

**LA RIVER QUICK FACTS**

- The Los Angeles River is protected by the Clean Water Act and is designated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a "Traditional Navigable Water" due to its historic and continuing importance. It is also protected as part of the Public Trust under the CA State Constitution.

- The 51 miles of the Los Angeles River drain an 870-acre watershed through the 2nd largest urban region in the US and into two of the world’s busiest ports and the world’s largest water body, the Pacific Ocean.

- In 2015, existing and future Los Angeles River trails throughout the Project area were designated as part of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail increasing awareness of the River’s cultural resources.

- Many non-governmental organizations actively participate in the Urban Waters Federal Partnership and many have a Los Angeles River ecosystem restoration focus.

- In 2013 and 2014, a portion of the River within the Project area was opened for seasonal recreational activities, reflecting increased public interest for ecological education and passive recreational opportunities.
3 Project Purpose & Area

The Project area is known as the ARBOR (Area with Restoration Benefits and Opportunities for Revitalization) reach. It was selected because of its exceptional promise for restoration as it contains a large portion of “soft bottom” area (where concrete does not cover the bottom of the riverbed) that hosts existing native riparian habitat. The area also includes two major tributary confluences (the Arroyo Seco and the Verdugo Wash confluences) and connections to three large State Park sites. Figure D shows the 11-mile ARBOR reach, which includes eight reaches\(^2\), and the proposed Project’s location within the City of Los Angeles.

The primary purpose of the proposed Project is to reestablish riparian strand, freshwater marsh, and aquatic habitat communities and reconnect the River to major tributaries, its historic floodplain, and the significant ecological areas of the Santa Monica Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, Elysian Hills, and Verdugo Mountains. Figure E shows the potential for regional habitat and wildlife connectivity by improving connections between the River and these significant ecological areas. The River’s channelization in concrete poses the biggest challenge to restoring this connectivity.

Considering the importance and potential of the River and the challenges that it faces, the primary objectives of the proposed Project, as identified in the Final IFR, include:

- **Restore Valley Foothill Riparian Strand and Freshwater Marsh Habitat.**
- **Increase Habitat Connectivity between the River and the historic floodplain, between habitat patches and nearby significant ecological zones, such as the Santa Monica Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, Elysian Hills, and San Gabriel Mountains.**
- **Increase Passive Recreation that is consistent with the restored ecosystem.**

The City’s plan for the River, the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP), which was adopted by the City Council in 2007, includes ecosystem restoration as one its key recommendations. The LARRMP applies to the first 32 miles of the River—the portion that flows through the City of LA and along the cities of Burbank and Glendale, and includes the approximately 11-mile ARBOR reach.

\(^2\) A reach is a general term for the length of a river of which the beginning and ending points may be selected for geographic, historical, topographical or other reasons. Eight of these were identified by the planning team to help understand the LA River and help communicate their findings.
**Project Area**

The Project area extends from the northern edge of Griffith Park to Downtown Los Angeles near First Street and includes the soft bottom Glendale Narrows. The Glendale Narrows contains considerable riparian habitat within the soft bottom channel that has potential for connection to adjacent habitat areas. However, its survival is threatened by infestation from non-native invasive species. The Audubon Society has documented that there are already meaningful habitat connections for avian (bird) species between the LA River in the Glendale Narrows and nearby large habitat areas.

The IFR describes eight reaches within the Project area based upon their different geomorphic and channel configurations. See Figure F for their locations and summary descriptions.

**IFR** Please see Section 2.3 Description of Project Reaches of the Final IFR for a detailed description of the eight reaches.
FIGURE F  Descriptions of the Eight Reaches Within the 11-Mile Project Area

**REACH 1**  Pollywog Park / Headworks to Midpoint of Bette Davis Park

Reach 1 is approximately 1.5 miles in length and connects the Pollywog Park area of Griffith Park, the USACE Headworks Ecosystem Restoration Study site, and the City of Burbank at Disney Studios. The River in this reach is concrete-lined.

**REACH 2**  Midpoint of Bette Davis Park to Upstream End of Ferraro Fields

Reach 2 is approximately 0.75 mile in length and extends from the midpoint of Bette Davis Park area of Griffith Park, where the riverbed transitions from concrete-lined to a soft bottom bed, and then transitions back to concrete around the upstream edge of Ferraro Fields. This reach currently supports vegetation in the soft bottom channel.

**REACH 3**  Ferraro Fields to Brazil Street

Reach 3 is approximately 1 mile in length and begins at the upstream edge of the Ferraro Fields where the riverbed transitions from soft bottom to concrete-lined and makes an approximately 90-degree curve to the south around Griffith Park and transitions back to soft-bottom around Brazil Street. State Route (SR)-134 (Ventura Freeway) crosses the River at the Verdugo Wash confluence in this area.

**REACH 4**  Brazil Street to Los Feliz Blvd.

Reach 4 is approximately 1.75 miles long and extends from Brazil Street to the Los Feliz Boulevard Bridge. The riverbed transitions from concrete-lined to cobblestone and, where the reach ends at Los Feliz Boulevard, localized concrete lining of the bed is present. This reach currently supports vegetation in the soft bottom channel.
### FIGURE F
**Descriptions of the Eight Reaches Within the 11-Mile Project Area**

**Reach 5: Los Feliz Blvd. to SR-2**
Reach 5 is approximately 1.55 miles long and extends from Los Feliz Boulevard Bridge, under the Sunnynook Drive Footbridge and the Hyperion Avenue Bridge, downstream to the Fletcher Drive Bridge, and ends at the SR-2 Bridge (Glendale Freeway) as the River approaches Taylor Yard. The channel bed is concrete under each of the large bridges and cobblestone between the bridges. This reach currently supports vegetation in the soft bottom channel.

**Reach 6: SR-2 to I-5**
Reach 6 is approximately 2.34 miles long and extends from the SR-2 Bridge to the downstream crossing of Interstate 5 (I-5), where the riverbed transitions from cobblestone to concrete-lined. This reach currently supports vegetation in the soft bottom channel.

**Reach 7: I-5 to Main Street**
Reach 7 is approximately 1 mile long and begins at the I-5 Bridge and extends to the Main Street Bridge. This reach has a concrete-lined channel. The Arroyo Seco confluence is located in this reach, and three bridges cross the River in this reach, including a railroad bridge, the North Broadway Bridge, and the Spring Street Bridge. Rail lines run adjacent to the channel on both banks.

**Reach 8: Main Street to First Street**
Reach 8 is approximately 1 mile long and begins at Main Street Bridge extending downstream to First Street Bridge. The channel is concrete-lined in this reach. Rail lines run adjacent to the channel on both banks, and two railroad bridges cross the River. This reach includes the Union Pacific LA Trailer and Container Intermodal Facility (LATC also known as Piggyback Yard). US Highway 101 crosses the River between César E. Chávez Avenue and First Street.
The proposed Project would result in ecosystem restoration along approximately 11-miles of the Los Angeles River from Griffith Park to Downtown Los Angeles by 1) reestablishing habitat communities, and 2) reconnecting the River to its major tributaries, historic floodplain, and the significant ecological areas of the Santa Monica Mountains, San Gabriel Mountains, Verdugo Mountains, and Elysian Hills. The proposed Project would maintain existing levels of flood risk management and include recreational opportunities consistent with the restored ecosystem.

Project Alternatives

Six Project alternatives were analyzed in the IFR (numbered 10, 13, 13v, 16, 20, and No Action (hereafter assumed to be equivalent to the No Project alternative under CEQA)) to assess which alternative would best achieve the Project objectives. Figure G highlights the comparable key restoration features of each of the five action alternatives, including the total number of acres restored under each. Under the No Project alternative, no proposed construction or restoration activities would occur and future development in the ARBOR reach would occur in accordance with currently-adopted plans.

Constraints in the Development of Project Alternatives for Restoration

Planning constraints represent significant barriers or restrictions that limit the physical or policy-related aspects of formulated plans. The location of the Project area resulted in several constraints that required consideration during the development of alternatives for restoration of the River. The following key issues were encountered in the Project area and represent the constraints that apply to the Project:

High Costs of Real Estate. Real estate costs for all plans identified exceeded the USACE policy limitation that real estate costs not exceed 25 percent of total ecosystem restoration cost. To allow the consideration and recommendation of any of the plans identified, the City offered to waive reimbursement for real estate costs exceeding the typical statutory share (consistent with a peer USACE case in Chicago).

Presence of Sites Contaminated with Hazardous Substances. Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste (HTRW) is present or suspected to be present in parcels key to the Project. Because the USACE policy is to avoid HTRW contaminated lands when practicable, the USACE confirmed that where contaminated lands were included in alternatives, they were necessary to meet Project objectives. As Local Sponsor, the City must ensure lands with soil contamination are remediated prior to any construction by the USACE.

Levee Policies that Restrict Planting on Levees. There are five levees within the ARBOR reach. Management and planting of vegetation on these levee systems must be compatible with USACE vegetation management guidelines.

Maintenance of Existing Levels of Flood Risk Management. The ARBOR reach overlaps with the existing Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) flood risk management project. All alternatives were designed to maintain the flood risk management function or level of protection provided by LACDA, and thus, modifications that could be made to the River channel were limited.

3 Alternative 13 variation (v) was added by the USACE following the public review period of the Draft IFR after a detailed cost analysis identified Alternative 13v as more efficient than Alternative 13.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Project Action Alternatives — Highlights of Restoration Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. 10</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides restoration in all reaches, restores a historic wash at the LATC site, widens the River at Taylor Yard, restores a side channel and a seasonal flow area in Griffith Park, restores several daylighted streams, and provides transitions or connections between existing riparian corridors and concrete-lined River reaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides <strong>some restoration in all reaches</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increases habitat connectivity through restoration and creation of riparian corridors and increases hydrologic connectivity through daylighted streams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Minimally meets objectives</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACRES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. 13</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes most of the features in Alternative 10, and it restores an additional side channel, increases widening of the River at Taylor Yard, and restores the Arroyo Seco confluence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Same restoration features as Alt. 10 in Reaches 1, 2, 4, 5, and 8 and <strong>additional restoration in Reaches 3, 6 and 7</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Meets objectives in all reaches</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACRES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. 13v</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alternative 13v is a variation of Alternative 13 with a change in Reach 7, where the Reach 7 plan from Alternative 20 is used. In addition to restoring the lower Arroyo Seco, it restores freshwater marsh at the Los Angeles State Historic Park, creates a terraced bank connection to the River, and daylight three streams rather than including a restructured bank with overhanging vines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All restoration features of Alt. 13 except in Reach 7, where it includes the reach restoration plan included in Alt. 20 thereby <strong>providing greater benefits than Alt. 13 at lower cost</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Meets objectives in all reaches</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACRES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. 16</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes most of the features in Alternative 13, and in addition, in Reach 5, it widens the River channel bottom and terraces the bank, and in Reach 8, it reconnects the River to the historic floodplain in LATC by removing the channel wall, restores the historic wash and freshwater marsh within the LATC site, removes concrete and restores wetlands within the riverbed, and terraces channel banks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Same restoration features as Alt. 13 in Reaches 1-4 and 6-7 and <strong>greater restoration in Reaches 5 and 8</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Meets all objectives in all reaches</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACRES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. 20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes all the features of Alternative 16 except that in Reach 7 in addition to restoring the lower Arroyo Seco, it daylight three streams, restores freshwater marsh at the Los Angeles State Historic Park, and creates a terraced bank connection to the River. In addition, it widens the channel in Reach 2 and restores the confluence with Verdugo Wash in Reach 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Same features as Alt. 16 in Reaches 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8 and <strong>greater restoration in Reaches 2, 3 and 7</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Most fully meets planning objectives</strong>, with some degree of channel naturalization and restoration in nearly all reaches, restoration of two major confluences, and of a connection between the River and the Los Angeles State Historic Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ACRES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Restoration Benefits Among Alternatives

All five action alternatives include substantial ecosystem benefits as shown in Figure G. Alternatives 16 and 20 provide more benefits, but as seen in Figure H, they do so at a higher relative increase in cost. As seen in Figure H, for each action alternative, additional habitat nodes and/or corridors are restored, progressively increasing the level of “connectedness” in the Project alternatives, thereby facilitating greater opportunities for wildlife movement.

Due to the support given by the City and local community, and the associated ecosystem restoration benefits, the City identified Alternative 20 as the Locally Preferred Plan (LPP).

As part of the federal environmental planning process, the USACE had to identify an NER Plan, the National Ecosystem Restoration Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE H</th>
<th>Proposed Project Action Alternatives — Comparison of Cost and Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRITERIA</td>
<td>Alt. 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Project Costs (October 2014 Price Levels)</td>
<td>$591 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Average Annual Habitat Units7</td>
<td>5,321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Increase in Habitat over Existing Conditions</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONNECTIVITY BENEFITS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodal Connectivity8</td>
<td>Minor improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Regional Connections to Significant Ecological Areas</td>
<td>Santa Monica Mountains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Acres Restored</td>
<td>528</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Remaining fragments of habitat in the urban landscape are referred to as habitat nodes. Restoration of large nodes that are close together, connected by natural habitat and wildlife corridors increase the level of “connectedness.”

5 The NER Plan is the alternative with the maximum monetary and non-monetary beneficial effects over monetary and non-monetary costs and is developed to determine the level of Federal interest in restoration projects.

6 The Total Project Costs for Alt. 13v is $704 million and Alt. 20 is $1.357 billion per October 2015 Price Levels (pages 7-21 and 7-22 of the Final IFR). The costs shown here are for comparison’s sake. The NER and LPP costs were subsequently refined, but not the other alternatives.

7 A Habitat Unit is a measure of habitat quality and is used to quantify restoration benefits.

8 Nodal connectivity was measured based on the sizes of habitat nodes in the Project area and the minimum distance of vegetated corridors between nodes.
In the Final IFR, the USACE identified Alternative 13v as the National Ecosystem Restoration (NER) Plan. The NER Plan is not always the plan recommended for authorization by Congress, as the local sponsor can decide to take on the additional costs of implementing the LPP. Either an NER plan or an LPP can be the Recommended Plan. The Final IFR identified the LPP, Alternative 20, as the Recommended Plan for restoration. The LPP, Alternative 20, includes additional restoration benefits above those identified for the NER plan, Alternative 13v, although at an increased cost. These are presented in detail in Section 7.

5 Summary of Environmental Impacts

CEQA and NEPA Impacts Analysis

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (pursuant to NEPA) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (pursuant to CEQA) was prepared to analyze and compare the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project alternatives. An EIS/EIR is both a public disclosure document and a decision-making tool. The purpose of the environmental analysis included in the EIS/EIR is to:

• Identify impacts of a proposed project on the environment;
• Identify potential alternatives to the project to reduce impacts; and
• Indicate ways to avoid or mitigate, if possible, significant impacts.

Under CEQA, when significant impacts cannot be avoided or mitigated, the project could still be approved if there are economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits that outweigh unavoidable significant environmental effects (referred to as overriding considerations).

In EIRs, environmental impacts are determined in a step-wise process:

1. Analyze the environmental conditions when the analysis began (called baseline conditions).
2. Analyze the environmental conditions over the life of a project.
3. Compare baseline and project conditions. The difference between baseline and project conditions is compared to thresholds established by the City of Los Angeles and State CEQA guidelines.
4. If the change in conditions exceeds the threshold, the impact is considered significant. If the change does not exceed the threshold, the impact is considered less than significant. If the analysis finds that there are significant impacts, mitigation measures are applied to reduce the impacts. If feasible mitigation measures are not available or are not able to reduce impacts below the threshold, impacts remain significant and unavoidable.

The IFR analyzed a range of potential environmental impacts that could result during construction and operation of the proposed Project across the five action alternatives and the No Project alternative. The environmental resource areas analyzed include the following: Geology, Soils, Seismic Hazards, or Mineral Resources; Air Quality; Land Use; Water Resources; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Traffic and Circulation; Noise; Recreation and Public Access; Aesthetics; Public Health and Safety, including Hazardous, Toxic and Radioactive Waste; Utilities and Public Services; Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice; and Cumulative Impacts.

Except for impacts related to air quality and land use, all other impacts were found to be less than significant or no impacts were
identified. Impacts related to aesthetics are expected to be less than significant; impacts to all other resource areas would be less than significant with the incorporation of mitigation measures or best management practices. See Figure I for details of the significant adverse unavoidable impacts across all action alternatives.

Please see Table 5-1 Comparison of Potential Impacts in the Final IFR for a summary of potential environmental impacts under all Project alternatives.

Please see Appendix H, Part 3, of the Final IFR for details on the mitigation measures and best management practices that the City and USACE have identified to reduce potential significant environmental impacts to less than significant levels.

No impacts from construction and operation of the proposed Project would occur under the no Project alternative. Further, if the proposed Project is not implemented, certain beneficial impacts would also not occur, such as improved land use conditions adjacent to the River, improved water quality and quantity, development of new riparian, marsh, and other habitats, locating, cataloging, and identifying potential cultural resources, pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian (horse-riding) traffic related benefits through the Project area, recreational and aesthetics benefits, and benefits to the well-being of local residents, including historically-disadvantaged people and those living at or below the poverty level, through the improvement of existing recreational access, aesthetic improvement, biological restoration and associated ecosystem services.

When considering the CEQA analysis and the significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality and land use, the City of Los Angeles could decide to adopt Findings and Overriding Considerations, which discuss why the benefits of the Project outweigh these impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCE</th>
<th>Alt. 10</th>
<th>Alt. 13</th>
<th>Alt. 13v</th>
<th>Alt. 16</th>
<th>Alt. 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIR QUALITY</td>
<td>Equipment used during construction of the proposed project is expected to exceed the CEQA localized significance thresholds for nitrogen oxides. This results in a significant unavoidable impact under CEQA. Impacts under NEPA would be less than significant.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
<td>Impacts under all air quality significance criteria would be less than significant.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAND USE</td>
<td>Restoration in Reach 8 would conflict with the Industrial and Light Industrial land use designation. This results in a significant adverse impact under NEPA and a significant and unavoidable impact under CEQA for both construction and operations.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10.</td>
<td>Same as Alt. 10, additional conflict with Industrial designation in Reach 3, resulting in a significant adverse impact under NEPA, and significant and unavoidable impact under CEQA for both construction and operations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure I summarizes the significant adverse impacts under NEPA and significant and unavoidable impacts under CEQA for each Project alternative related to air quality and land use. For air quality, six mitigation measures and best management practices during construction shall be required to reduce impacts.
**Public Involvement**

Public involvement has been critical in restoration planning efforts for the Los Angeles River. Beginning with the development of the LA River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP) in 2005, the public has been invited to engage in the decision-making process at each step, including review of the Programmatic EIS/EIR for the LARRMP and development and review of this Final IFR. Public involvement activities specifically for the IFR began in December 2009 when a 3-day planning charrette was held to introduce the proposed Project and solicit feedback on the Project area’s problems and opportunities, objectives to address them, and measures that could be used to meet the objectives. Participants included staff from the USACE, Los Angeles County, City, resource and municipal agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and local community members and consultants. Meetings with agencies on the Habitat Evaluation Team, the Urban Waters Federal Partnership, transportation authorities, and other agencies were also held to solicit input. In addition, seven public workshops called River Update Meetings were held to share information and solicit public input on the LARRMP as well as discuss development of the IFR.

**Public Review of the IFR**

The public review of the Draft IFR included opportunities for the public to provide input on the proposed Project, including the alternative plans and their development. The Draft IFR was circulated for a 60-day public review period that started on September 20, 2013 and ended on November 18, 2013. During the public review period, a public hearing was held on October 17, 2013. The Arroyo Seco Foundation organized a community rally in support of Alternative 20 on September 28, 2013 during the public review period. At the close of the review period, nearly 500 comments were submitted from agencies, organizations, and individuals. Key commenters included Federal agencies, U.S. Senators, members of Congress, California state legislators, six state agencies, 13 local agencies, the LA City Council, 17 key stakeholder organizations, eight neighborhood councils, and numerous individuals. All comments and responses are included in Appendix L of the Final IFR.

Comments from federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and the general public demonstrated overwhelming support for Alternative 20. At the Draft IFR public meeting, close to unanimous support for Alternative 20 was expressed by over 300 attendees. Eighty-four percent of the public comments received supported a large-scale restoration project and the USACE received petitions with over 8,000 signatures in support of Alternative 20.

The nature of the comments submitted during the public comment period of the Draft IFR ranged from technical comments and questions to general support of the overall Project. Comments submitted included the issues presented below:

- Connectivity benefits and their consideration in the decision making process;
- Environmental benefits, including water quality and air quality improvements, increased groundwater recharge, and value of biodiversity and habitat in an urban setting;
- Public support for a large-scale restoration project as expressed in the comments, including over 8,000 petition signatures in support of Alternative 20;
- Collaborative perspective related to the proposed Project aligning with Federal

All comments and responses are included in Appendix L of the Final IFR.
investment into other aspects of the LA River and River-related community revitalization, Alternative 20 providing opportunities to achieve goals and support missions of other Federal, State, and local agencies;

- Reasonableness of cost in light of Project location, options for more significant restoration within the already reduced Project area (from 32 miles to 11 miles), thereby making restoration even more valuable, and use of additional outputs in calculating habitat restoration;

- Regional economic development and its consideration in the selection of the Recommended Plan, including regional income and employment benefits created by the proposed Project with significantly greater regional economic development benefits for larger scale alternatives from construction expenditures and area redevelopment;

- Other social effects and environmental justice issues and their consideration in selection of the Recommended Plan, presence of a large historically-disadvantaged population in the area, and larger scale alternatives creating greater benefits to this local population through public access, enhanced recreation opportunities, local job creation by the Project's construction and redevelopment, and enhanced local area aesthetics, public safety, public health benefits, and community cohesion;

- Recreation benefits, providing more opportunities for development of compatible passive recreation features, and better connectivity to recreation features maintained by other agencies to help serve historically-disadvantaged communities, which have a disproportionate lack of access to natural open space and recreation facilities, and opportunity to achieve public health benefits generated from recreation facilities.

Please see Table 8-2 Public Comment Summary of the Final IFR for additional details on the public comments summary and specific commenters, and Appendix L Public Comments and Responses to Comments for all the public comments received and responses to comments on the Draft IFR.

After the release of the Draft IFR in September, 2013, more than ten public and key stakeholder focus group meetings were held to discuss the draft document to receive input on the alternatives and Final IFR. In addition, the LA City Council's Ad Hoc River Committee and successor Arts, Parks, and River Committee held at least seven public meetings during the formulation of alternatives and Draft IFR public review period, plus more than twenty meetings during the feasibility and scoping stage of the proposed Project.

Please see Chapter 8 Public Involvement and Collaboration of the Final IFR for a detailed description of public outreach activities, general collaboration and outreach efforts, and agency and stakeholder collaboration conducted for the proposed Project.

In the fall of 2015, the public commented on the Final IFR during the State and Agency NEPA review and final public review of the IFR. The nature of these comments and responses are detailed in Section 10 of this document.
7 The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20

The Final IFR identified Alternative 20, which is the LPP, as the Recommended Plan for restoration of the Los Angeles River.

Alternative 20 meets all three planning objectives for the Project: Restoration of Valley Foothill Riparian Strand and Freshwater Marsh Habitat, Increased Habitat Connectivity, and Increased Passive Recreation.

Alternative 20 includes the most restoration benefits among all the alternatives. Specifically, Alternative 20 would include restoration of 719 acres and provide 6,782 habitat units (HU) of restoration benefits. It would expand and restore the area where the River meets with the Verdugo Wash in Reach 3, expand the River’s soft bottom in Reaches 2 and 5, provide restoration of the lower Arroyo Seco tributary, and restore the River’s bed in Reach 8 while connecting it to an extensively restored LATC site. Restoration benefits would also include opportunities for a direct connection to the significant habitat areas of the Verdugo Mountains, the Elysian Hills, the Santa Monica Mountains, and the San Gabriel Mountains. Figure J presents the number of acres restored by reach under Alternative 20.

The following Figures M, N, and O provide additional information about Alternative 20. Figure M highlights the key proposed restoration features for each reach. Figure N shows the potential regional connections to significant habitat areas. Lastly, Figure O describes the restoration proposed in each reach and shows renderings of key areas.

Cost estimates for Alternative 20 were further updated and refined after the release of the Draft IFR. The total Project construction costs (not including operation and maintenance costs) for Alternative 20 are estimated to be $1.357 billion. Figures K and L show a detailed breakdown of Project costs. Ecosystem restoration and recreation costs are included in the capital costs of construction. Maintenance and remediation costs are not included in these numbers.

The City, as Non-Federal sponsor of the Project, would be responsible for remediation of any preexisting contamination associated with real estate that is necessary to achieve the Project’s objectives. Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) to characterize the expected contamination in the Project area

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**Key Reasons for Selection of Alternative 20**

- Habitat Value
- Significant Benefits
- Substantial Federal, State, and Local Interest
- Strong Agency, Stakeholder and Public Support

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### FIGURE J

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REACH</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th><strong>Total Acres Restored:</strong> 719</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acres Restored</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
would be performed to inform real estate transactions, cleanup planning, and cost estimating. Costs for cleanup are conservatively estimated to be as much as $200 million or more based upon a preliminary analysis of zoning, known site uses, and peer cases of remediation.

On December 18, 2015, the Chief of Engineers of the USACE submitted for transmission to Congress his report, called a “Chief’s Report,” on the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Project. The Chief’s Report recommended authorization of Alternative 20 with Federal cost sharing. Under the cost share recommended in the Chief’s Report the City’s estimated portion of the Project costs would be $980.8 million, and the Federal government would contribute $375.8 million.

![FIGURE K](image)

### Cost Summary Table of the Recommended Plan: Alternative 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT ITEM</th>
<th>TOTAL COST ($1,000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lands and Damages (P.L. 91-646 Included)</td>
<td>$526,285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility/Facility Relocations</td>
<td>$228,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and Wildlife Facilities</td>
<td>$462,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Facilities</td>
<td>$14,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-construction Engineering and Design (PED)</td>
<td>$85,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction Management (S&amp;A)</td>
<td>$39,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total First Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,356,608</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![FIGURE L](image)

### Cost Share Summary for the Recommended Plan: Alternative 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT ITEM</th>
<th>FEDERAL COST</th>
<th>NON-FEDERAL COST</th>
<th>TOTAL COST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lands, Easements, Rights-of-way, Relocations and Disposals (LERRD)</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$771,025,000</td>
<td>$771,025,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystem Restoration (Design and Construction)</td>
<td>$366,746,000</td>
<td>$200,783,000</td>
<td>$567,529,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation (Design and Construction)</td>
<td>$9,027,000</td>
<td>$9,027,000</td>
<td>$18,054,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total First Cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>$375,773,000 (28%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$980,835,000 (72%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,356,608,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 Total First Cost excludes the expense of remediating lands to prepare them for ecosystem restoration. The City, as Non-Federal or Local Sponsor, would pay for these remediation costs.

10 LERRD costs include Lands and Damages, Utility/Facility Relocations, PED and S&A cited in Figure K.

11 Ecosystem Restoration costs combine the soft and hard costs from the following Project Items listed in Figure K: Fish and Wildlife Facilities, PED and S&A.

12 Recreation costs total soft and hard costs from the following Project Items listed in Figure K: Recreation Facilities, PED and S&A.
Figure O shows the potential regional connections to significant habitat areas that could be made with implementation of the Recommended Plan. Under the Recommended Plan, opportunities for connectivity to the Elysian Hills, Santa Monica Mountains, Verdugo Mountains and San Gabriel Mountains would be added.
Areas of restoration in this reach include the overbanks of both sides of the River. This includes the east overbank across the River from the USACE Headworks Ecosystem Restoration Study site, the Pollywog Park area of Griffith Park, the open area directly downstream of Headworks on the right overbank, and the left overbank of Burbank Western Channel (a tributary from the north/west). It includes irrigation and water harvesting features to sustain plants, including micro-grading and/or swales to create depressions in the land to capture and infiltrate water. Where stormwater or street runoff is excessive during storm events, a connection to the River allows overflow into the channel. There would be no substantial channel modifications within this reach. Planting in this area would comply with all levee regulations.

This reach includes riparian habitat corridors along the overbanks of both sides of the River as described for Reach 1. This includes restoration of riparian habitat in the Bette Davis Park area of Griffith Park on the left bank and the area between Zoo Drive and SR-134 with connections under the highway to a restored linear riparian planting along the River extending into Reach 3. This reach has a soft bottom and includes removal of invasives (non-native plants that impair restoration efforts). Unlike the other alternatives, the Recommended Plan also includes additional modification in Reach 2, increasing habitat by another 20 acres. The right bank would be modified to create 80 feet of additional soft bottom width in the riverbed with overhanging vines.
FIGURE O The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20

Renderings of Proposed Restored Reaches

REACH 3 Verdugo Wash Tributary Confluence Restoration

This reach includes a side channel, a daylighted stream, and the restoration of the Verdugo Wash confluence. The side channel is established on the right bank at Ferraro Fields with water diverted from the River to support a riparian fringe. The stream that is currently confined in a large culvert just downstream of Ferraro Fields in the Zoo Drive area would be daylighted. The daylighted stream would include a riparian fringe with freshwater marsh at the confluence. Riparian areas are located on the right bank along Zoo Drive and on the River’s edge at Ferraro Fields. In the Verdugo Wash confluence, the channel mouth would be widened and the south bank would be sloped back to the existing overbank elevation.

REACH 4 Side Channel and Daylighted Streams

A riparian corridor will be established on the east bank of the River. Wetland habitat would be restored in eight daylighted storm drain streams, as well as in a side channel of diverted River flows along Griffith Park’s Harding Golf Course, and another side channel connecting Los Feliz Golf Course to the River to allow seasonal flooding within the course grounds. A riparian fringe of trees and marsh vegetation would line the new side channels. The daylighted streams would be planted with riparian vegetation and include freshwater marshlands at their confluences with the River.
The right bank would be modified from a trapezoidal bank to a vertical bank. This increases the width of the soft bottom riverbed by more than 100 feet. The top of the bank would be notched and planted with overhanging vines. The left bank would be modified with terraces planted with herbaceous (leafy, non-woody) vegetation and necessary erosion measures, which would consist of concrete-lined beds. The inland bank would be planted with riparian vegetation. At the downstream end of this reach, the River would also be widened on the left bank with appropriate erosion control measures in place. This would further increase the soft bottom area of the River.

In this reach, the River would be widened and sloped back to the east to restore freshwater marsh habitat, expanding the soft bottom. At the upstream end of the reach, a backwater wetland would be created within the "Bowtie" parcel. These measures would help restore some of the River's natural floodplain, restoring aquatic riparian habitat. This reach includes the G2 parcel of the Taylor Yard complex, which has long been identified as a cornerstone site for LA River restoration.
FIGURE O  The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20  Renderings of Proposed Restored Reaches

Reach 7  Arroyo Seco Tributary Confluence Restoration, Marsh Restoration and Terracing

The Arroyo Seco would have the banks and bed softened by removing concrete for approximately one-half mile upstream from the confluence and stabilized with erosion control elements to maintain the existing flood protection. At the confluence, on the upstream edge of the River, a backwater riparian wetland and marsh would be established. This reach would also involve daylighting three streams currently confined in storm drains.

Within the River channel itself, the banks would be restructured to support vegetation. Downstream, a freshwater marsh would be restored and connected under a railroad bridge with water flowing back into the River from the freshwater marsh, connecting the main channel of the River with the Los Angeles State Historic Park via terraces.

Reach 8  Floodplain Restoration, Widening, Naturalization, and Terracing

This section would be modified with terracing on the right bank upstream of Union Pacific LA Trailer and Container Intermodal Facility (LATC) and on the left bank downstream of LATC. This terracing would be planted with riparian vegetation. The riverbed would be changed from concrete-lined to soft bottom to support aquatic habitat including freshwater marsh, and the reach would be widened. The marsh would extend into the LATC site by 500 feet, with the riparian area extending another 1,000 feet into the LATC site, gradually sloping up to existing bank elevations. The historical wash would be restored through the property with a riparian fringe as well as other side channels, and river flows would be diverted out of the River into the LATC site creating a large wetland area. A railroad bridge would be included with this alternative to allow River flows from the riverbed to exchange with the restored areas to the east.
The City has identified Project-related local issues that were either raised during the project planning process or have been highlighted in various local media. These issues are discussed below.

Displacement & Gentrification

As higher-income people become interested in living and working in urban areas, gentrification has affected cities across the nation and neighborhoods across Los Angeles. Many factors contribute to the character and economy of a neighborhood, including its demographics, businesses, local land use regulations, and the built and natural environments. The City’s investments in better infrastructure, open spaces, and other public amenities, such as revitalization of the Los Angeles River, also play a role in improving or preserving local economies and quality of life.

Land and building values adjust to changing demographics, preferences, and levels of investment, with increasing values leading to economic benefits for landowners, but potential displacement of existing renters. Residential tenants can face pressure to vacate leased properties. City regulations do not currently offer protections for renters residing in single-family homes, but many residents in multi-family housing are protected by the Rent Stabilization Ordinance (RSO).

The RSO applies to any property with two or more units built before 1978, representing approximately 80% of the City’s multi-family rental housing. The ordinance limits annual rent increases to approximately 3%, prohibits evictions without just cause, provides for significant relocation payments under some circumstances, and offers a number of other protections to tenants.

In the short-term, the City is focused on ensuring that landlords and tenants are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the RSO and that the ordinance is being adequately enforced. In the long-term, the City is actively building its Affordable Housing Trust Fund, evaluating land use tools that can help create and preserve affordable housing, and expediting the processing of projects that include at least 20% affordable housing.


Industrial Land Conversion

Job-producing land is a critical component of a healthy and prosperous city, and the City’s adopted policy is to retain industrial land for job-producing uses, as established in the General Plan Framework Element and Community Plans. Land uses in the Project area are governed by several community plans: Northeast Los Angeles, Boyle Heights, Central City North, and Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley.

The Framework Element and Community Plans represent comprehensive and long-term goals and policies for development of the City. Specific planning areas, such as the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, indicate where public and private investment is currently being directed, and where new types and mixes of uses may be encouraged. Updates to the Community Plans and the development of Specific Plans, such as the Cornfield/Arroyo Seco Specific Plan (CASP), allow for a reevaluation of land uses to align them with current needs. Updates to the Boyle Heights and Central City North Community Plans are currently underway; the Northeast Los Angeles Community Plan and Silver Lake-Echo Park-Elysian Valley Community Plan are not currently slated for updates.

Since the Los Angeles River has historically played a role in the industrial economy, there...
is a concentration of industrial land and businesses along its banks in each community plan area. Some parcels required for ecosystem restoration are currently zoned for industrial uses.

Restoration in Reach 3 (Ferraro Fields to Brazil Street) and Reach 8 (Main Street to First Street) would affect the Industrial and Light Industrial land use designations on some properties planned for open space. This results in a significant adverse impact under NEPA and a significant and unavoidable impact under CEQA for both construction and operations. Despite this, the conversion of these properties to open space provides increased habitat units due to their ecological significance and their potential to increase hydrological connectivity needed for aquatic riparian restoration. The acquisition and conversion of these properties for open space is also supported by policies adopted in the Mobility Plan 2035 and the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles (see ‘Other Planning Efforts’).

More information about the City’s industrial land can be found at http://planning.lacity.org/Code_Studies/LanduseProj/TOC_IndustrialLUProj.htm. The City’s general framework for economic development can be found at http://planning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/chapters/07/07.htm, refer to Goal 7B, Objective 7.2 and Policies 7.2.8 through 7.2.14.

Flood Risk Management

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, storm flows in the River caused catastrophic flooding that resulted in the loss of lives and millions of dollars in property damage to areas in the River’s floodplain. As a result, City and County leaders initiated a formal flood risk management program (then known as “flood control”) to channelize the River and tributary system with the goal of moving flood flows to the ocean as efficiently as possible.

As mandated by the USACE, the restoration implemented as part of the proposed Project would continue to provide, at minimum, the current protection against flooding of surrounding and downstream areas. The Recommended Plan facilitates restoration and recreation where compatible with flood risk management.


Land Acquisition

As the Non-Federal Sponsor of the proposed Project, the City must provide project-ready lands for restoration. Land and easement rights will be acquired at the specific future direction from the City Council. However, it may not always be possible to reach acceptable terms with property owners. In those cases, it is possible that acquisition by eminent domain could be utilized to transfer the title of a property from a private owner to the government. Eminent domain can be controversial and is generally a last resort to acquire private land. Preferably, the City would work cooperatively with private landowners to acquire the lands needed over time to implement the proposed Project.

The selection of the areas of land in the Project area where ecosystem restoration alternatives might reasonably and appropriately be implemented was accomplished through an iterative process by the project team composed of USACE personnel, representatives of the City of Los Angeles, and their respective technical specialists and consultants. The team considered the recommendations of the LA City Council-adopted LA River Revitalization Master Plan, advice of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with an interest in River restoration, City Council representatives, and agencies, including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the State Water Resources Control Board. The Project’s footprint was delineated using the following tools: Geographic Information System mapping resources, recent aerial photographs, field inspections, the local knowledge base and professional opinion.
Homelessness

The City of Los Angeles has one of the largest populations of homeless people in the country with about 26,000 people who are homeless on any given night. Two-thirds of those are unsheltered, meaning they sleep in places not intended for human habitation, such as cars, sidewalks, alleys, hillsides and the River.

While the homeless count is tragically large, the City has initiated a system to permanently house homeless people. From January 1, 2014 through May 31, 2015, the City has housed 3,960 veterans and 2,015 chronically homeless people. This housing is a result of the Coordinated Entry System (CES), developed under the collaboration Home for Good, which seeks to know and assess every homeless person in the City and County and then matches them to affordable housing paired with supportive services like case management, health, mental health and drug treatment services. In conjunction with CES, the Homeless Family Solutions System has helped to rapidly rehouse homeless families.

These housing achievements are in part a result of substantial housing and service resources committed from a wide range of sources, including the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles, the Housing and Community Development Department of the City of Los Angeles, the County Department of Health Services, the US Veterans Administration, the United Way, Hilton Foundation, the private sector and dozens of housing and service providing nonprofits and faith-based institutions. However, many more resources need to be dedicated in order to substantially decrease homelessness.

While the past few years have proven that the City can house homeless veterans and chronically homeless people, the demand has not been met. Every day in the City of Los Angeles 4 to 5 veterans become newly homeless. This inflow is in large part a consequence of having the least affordable housing in the country (based upon resident income). Any solutions to homelessness must not only house homeless people, but also prevent more people from becoming homeless. To help make housing more affordable, the City recently increased the minimum wage. Another focus area for the City is to substantially increase its supply of affordable housing. In addition to housing, the City’s comprehensive homelessness strategy aims to balance health and safety concerns with the rights and needs of homeless people. The City Council Homelessness and Poverty Committee has regular meetings, which the public can attend to learn more about what the City is doing to address homelessness and poverty.

Cost Sharing and Funding

As the Non-Federal Sponsor of the proposed Project, the City must share in the cost to implement the Project. Typically the Federal government pays for 65% of the total project cost, comprised mostly of the design and construction costs; while the Non-Federal Sponsor pays for 35%, primarily in the provision of Project-ready lands. The City offered to waive reimbursement of real estate costs exceeding 35% due to the Project site’s land costs, which are among the highest in the nation. Given the Project’s unique potential to offer nationally-significant ecosystem restoration benefits in a highly urbanized area that exists within a habitat type of not only national, but global significance, USACE has allowed an alternate cost share in which the Federal government pays 28% ($375.8 million) and the City pays 72% ($980.8 million) of the total Project cost of $1.357 billion. (Costs for the recreation plan (included in the total Project cost) would be shared equally between the Federal government and the Non-Federal Sponsor. The City would also be responsible for all costs to clean up contaminated project sites.)

Please see Section 7.5 Plan Implementation of the Final IFR for additional details on the two cost-sharing options that were considered.
Project construction and project-specific cost sharing is subject to Congressional authorization. Because the cost sharing recommended by the Chief of Engineers differs from statutory cost sharing under Section 103 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, express statutory authorization of an alternate cost sharing would be required. Thus, the US Congress must approve by authorization the alternate cost share scenario and could, if it so chooses, authorize a different one. The Final IFR describes Project implementation and costs over a 15-year horizon per USACE policy, although it is reasonable for the public to expect that the Project would be implemented over a longer period of time given the unpredictability of future Congressional appropriations cycles.

On February 23, 2015 the City's Chief Administrative Officer submitted for Council consideration a proposed funding framework for the proposed Project (CAO File No. 0220-05133-0000, Council File No. 14-1158-S1). As existing sources of funding would likely only cover a portion of the City's total obligation, the Project funding framework would necessitate establishment of new funding sources that may require voter approval. Successful implementation of the funding framework would require extensive efforts by the City to coordinate with various parties to seek and obtain existing funding resources and to develop new sources of funding.

Other Planning Efforts

**Mobility Plan 2035**

Mobility Plan 2035, an update to the City’s General Plan Transportation Element adopted in 2015, provides the policy foundation for achieving a transportation system that balances the needs of all road users. Mobility Plan 2035 incorporates “complete streets” principles and lays the policy foundation for how future generations of Angelenos interact with their streets.

The Plan acknowledges that the Los Angeles River plays a significant role in Los Angeles's environmental, non-motorized transportation and recreational identity, and that the 2007 Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (LARRMP) calls for the continued “development of non-motorized transportation and recreation elements including bicycle and pedestrian paths and multi-use trails in the River and tributary rights-of-way.”

To that end, it contains the objective of completing the Bicycle Path segments along the Los Angeles River by 2025.

More information about Mobility Plan 2035 can be found at [http://la2b.org/](http://la2b.org/)

**Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles**

The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles, a new Health and Wellness Element of the General Plan adopted in March 2015, also supports River revitalization with an objective to increase the miles of the Los Angeles River that are converted to natural open space encouraging physical activity, particularly in historically disadvantaged areas. The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles supports a recommendation of the LARRMP which is to create a continuous greenway along the River comprised of interconnected parks, open space and recreation opportunities. It proposes to pursue grant funding to build out the bicycle and greenway trail system identified in the LARRMP.

More information about the Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles can be found at [http://healthyplan.la/](http://healthyplan.la/)

**The RRC and the Gehry Planning Effort**

The LA River Revitalization Corporation (RRC), soon to be rebranded as “River LA,” was initially established by the City of Los Angeles in 2009 per a recommendation of the LARRMP. The RRC was founded to function independently and entrepreneurially in the non-profit sector to help implement the LARRMP. The RRC recently engaged architect Frank Gehry and his firm, Gehry Partners, in work to develop a design framework for the LA River’s 51 mile total length. As presented by the RRC, this framework would build upon prior decades of analysis and planning to offer an integrated decision and
In April 2014, the City requested that the USACE identify Alternative 20 as the Recommended Plan for the proposed Project. The Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) issued approval in May 2014 for Alternative 20 to be the Recommended and Locally Preferred Plan and in July 2014 provided further guidance directing that the Final IFR should present the LPP (Alternative 20) as the Recommended Plan instead of the NER Plan (Alternative 13v). Therefore, the Final IFR identifies Alternative 20, the City’s LPP, as the Recommended Plan. On July 16, 2015, the USACE Civil Works Review Board approved release of the Final IFR for State and Agency NEPA review.

Figure P provides a summary of how Alternative 20 meets the stated objectives and Figure Q provides depictions of existing conditions and of what restored reaches may look like after implementing Alternative 20.

### Key Decisions

#### FIGURE P  The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20 and Project Objectives

**Significantly Increase Nationally - Critical Riparian Habitat**
- Restoration of rare southwestern riparian and aquatic habitats
- Potential to support two (2) federally threatened and endangered species
- Significant benefits to local and migratory species

**Increase Connectivity**
- Restoration of natural hydrologic connectivity
- Restoration of floodplain connections
- Restoration of habitat nodes and movement corridors
- Opportunities for regional habitat connections
- Increased connection to the Pacific Flyway

**Increase Recreation**
- Increased public education and awareness
- Increased linkage with regional recreational trails
- Improved overall recreation experience compatible with restored environment

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13 The Pacific Flyway is a north south avian highway stretching from the Bering Strait to South America. Millions of birds representing over 350 species follow the Pacific Flyway in search of food stops, resting areas and warmer climates for wintering. In the US, the Pacific Flyway includes California, Alaska, Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington and parts of Colorado, Montana, New Mexico and Wyoming.
FIGURE Q  The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20  Renderings of Key Reaches

REACH 3 — Verdugo Wash

EXISTING CONDITIONS  AFTER PROJECT

REACH 7 — Arroyo Seco

EXISTING CONDITIONS  AFTER PROJECT
FIGURE Q The Recommended Plan: Alternative 20 Renderings of Key Reaches

REACH 6 — Taylor Yard

EXISTING CONDITIONS

AFTER PROJECT

REACH 8 — LATC

EXISTING CONDITIONS

AFTER PROJECT
2015 Activities

The USACE and the City issued the Final IFR for a State and Agency review and a final public review under NEPA and CEQA, starting October 2, 2015. The USACE Los Angeles District also filed the Final IFR and the Draft Chief’s Report with the US Environmental Protection Agency as part of the USACE NEPA process.

The State and Agency and final public review period ended on November 2, 2015. As part of the State and Agency NEPA review, six agencies, including two state and four federal agencies, submitted comments on the Final IFR and Draft Chief of Engineers’ Report; three of them provided letters of general support for the Project and the remaining expressed that they had no comment and/or that their comments on the Draft IFR had been adequately addressed.

Comments received from the public as part of the 30-day final public review under NEPA included one letter of general opposition to the Project, three letters of general support, eight letters of technical or substantive content, and 18 letters of general support that also expressed support for sharing the costs of the Recommended Plan as 50 percent Federal and 50 percent Non-Federal. A form comment letter expressing support for a 50 percent Federal and 50 percent Non-Federal cost share was sent by approximately 1,400 people. As part of this effort, responses were prepared by the USACE with input from the City to substantive comments received on the Final IFR.

Next Steps

The proposed Project would require approval from both the City and USACE, along with authorization by US Congress. Certification of the Final EIR and EIS (as part of the Final IFR) and the City’s and USACE’s approval processes for the proposed Project involve the following steps.

City Approval Process

The Final IFR certification and Project approval process will include consideration, as applicable, by City Boards, Commissions, City Council Committees, and the full City Council. The Board of Public Works would consider the CEQA analysis and decide whether to recommend approval of the Final IFR and the Recommended Plan and then forward the recommendation to the relevant City Council Committees and the City Council for consideration. If the City Council certifies the Final IFR, adopts the proposed mitigation measures, and approves the Recommended Plan, a Notice of Determination for the Project will be filed with the County Clerk.

The Board of Public Works, City Council Committees and City Council meetings to consider the Final IFR and Project approval are expected to be held during the first quarter of 2016. Please note that these meetings have not yet been scheduled and are subject to change. Updates to the meeting schedules would be posted on the following City websites:

City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Engineering (BOE):
http://eng.lacity.org/techdocs/emg/lariver.htm

City of Los Angeles, LARiverWorks:
http://www.lariver.org/Partners/LARiverArmyCorpsStudy/index.htm

In addition, the official schedule and agendas for the Board of Public Works, City Council and Council Committees meetings are available at the City websites below and public notification of agenda items for these meetings is posted online 72 hours prior to the public meeting.
Board of Public Works:  
http://bpw.lacity.org/Agendas.html

City Council:  

The USACE Approval Process

After State and Agency NEPA review, the Chief of Engineers signed the Chief’s Report on December 18, 2015, recommending authorization of the Recommended Plan and transmitted it, the Final IFR, the unsigned Record of Decision, and other documents to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) (ASA (CW)). The ASA (CW) reviewed the documents to determine the level of administration support for the Chief of Engineers recommendation and then formally submitted the Chief’s Report and other documents to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) shortly thereafter. The OMB is reviewing and will clear the release of the report to the US Congress. If OMB has no objections, the ASA (CW) will sign a Record of Decision (ROD) for NEPA purposes and transmit the Chief’s Report, ROD, Final IFR, and other documents to the US Congress. Project design and construction funding will require Federal appropriations.

Prior to Congressional authorization, Federal funds could be provided for pre-construction engineering and design (PED) activities upon issuance of a public notice from the USACE announcing the completion of the final report. Surveys, model studies, and detailed engineering and design for PED studies would be accomplished followed by completion of plans and specifications upon receipt of Federal and non-Federal funds.

Construction would be performed using Federal and non-Federal funds, after authorization by the US Congress and after construction for the Project is publicly bid.

Project Implementation

Eight reaches comprise the Project’s 11-mile length. Generally, the sequence of work in each reach is expected to be: land or easement acquisition, utility or other relocations, site cleanup (if necessary), restoration and recreation design, restoration and recreation construction, and operation (including monitoring, adaptive management, and maintenance). These Project elements would be executed over several years in each reach and are expected to overlap in time across reaches. Construction sequencing would aim to minimize simultaneous construction activity as much as feasible.

Phasing of construction is expected to occur in the following order:

1. Reach 6, from the Glendale Freeway (SR-2) to Interstate 5
2. Reach 5, from Los Feliz Boulevard to the Glendale Freeway (SR-2)
3. Reach 4, from Brazil Street to Los Feliz Boulevard
4. Reach 7, from Interstate 5 to Main Street
5. Reach 3, from Ferraro Fields to Brazil Street
6. Reaches 1 and 2 together, from the Pollywog Park area of Griffith Park to the upstream edge of Ferraro Fields
7. Reach 8, from Main Street to First Street
Contact Information


Environmental Review For additional information about the City's environmental review process, please contact Dr. Jan Green Rebstock, Environmental Supervisor II, City of Los Angeles, Public Works Bureau of Engineering (BOE), at Jan.Green.Rebstock@lacity.org. Updates to the CEQA process can be viewed on the BOE website at http://eng.lacity.org/techdocs/emg/lariver.htm.

USACE For questions regarding the Corps' procedures and review process, please contact Eileen K. Takata, RLA, Watershed Program Manager, Lead Planner, Public Involvement Specialist, USACE, LA District at Eileen.K.Takata@usace.army.mil.

Acknowledgements The Bureau of Engineering, under the direction of City Engineer Gary Lee Moore and the Chief Deputy City Engineer Deborah Weintraub, has provided the oversight for this collaboration with the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). LARiverWorks in the Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, under the leadership of Dr. Carol Armstrong and Michael Affeldt, is the City's lead office for the Project.