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**Governor's Office of Planning & Research**

**Aug 04 2020**

## **STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

August 3, 2020

Ariana Villanueva  
LA County Public Works, Stormwater Quality Division  
900 South Fremont Avenue, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Alhambra, CA 91803

RE: 2020 LA River Master Plan – Notice of  
Preparation (NOP)  
SCH# 2020070128  
GTS# 07-LA-2020-03308  
Vic. LA Multiple

Dear Ariana Villanueva,

Thank you for including the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in the environmental review process for the above referenced project. The proposed 2020 LA River Master Plan builds on the adopted 1996 Master Plan and other regional planning studies prepared since then. It is intended to improve a two-mile wide corridor along 51 miles of the LA River to improve health, equity, access, mobility, and economic opportunity for the diverse communities of Los Angeles County while still providing flood risk management. The 2020 LA River Master Plan proposes six categories of project improvements, or "kit of parts" over the next 25 years:

1) Trails, Access Gateways, and Shelters; 2) Channel Modifications; 3) Crossings and Platforms; 4) Diversions; 5) Floodplain Reclamation; 6) Off Channel Land Assets.

After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

The size and scope of the proposed Master Plan provides a unique opportunity for the various communities along the LA River to identify their needs and provide feedback for the type of public realm they want when making their daily trips. Caltrans requests that the 2020 LA River Master Plan clearly identify all locations where improvements can be made for people walking, biking, rolling or taking transit along, across, or adjacent to State facilities within the Plan area. Please be specific on the locations within Caltrans right-of-way where improvements are desired and what type of infrastructure is preferred. Some examples include protected Class IV bikeways, wider sidewalks, curb extensions, pedestrian refuge islands, landscaping, street furniture, reduced crossing distances, roadway narrowing, pedestrian and bicycle signage, flashing beacons, and refreshed or new crosswalks. Plans that incorporate significant public engagement, like the one proposed, are used to identify and develop future State transportation projects.

Caltrans' Strategic Management Plan has set targets of tripling trips made by bicycle, doubling trips made by walking and public transit, as well as a 15% reduction in statewide, per capita, vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Similar goals are embedded in California Transportation Plan, the Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) Regional Transportation Plan, legislation such as AB 32 and SB 375, as well as Executive Orders S-3-05 and N-19-19. By helping to identify where the barriers to walking, biking, and taking transit exist, this Plan can make transportation mode shift easier for Californians and help the State meet its policy goals to reduce the number of trips made by driving, reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and encourage alternative modes of travel.

In addition, please consider the following when developing the Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR):

- Objective 2 and Elements 1 and 3, should consider accessibility for any and all users. At present, LA River Trail access points are primarily limited to major roads, which inhibits the neighborhood accessibility for residents and workers. Streets that run alongside the trail are good candidates for numerous access points at predetermined intervals, allowing users to walk, bicycle, scooter, skateboard or roll to and from their destination without taking a circuitous route to the nearest major roadway.
- The plan should consider lighting and other elements that create an environment where all users can feel safe to use the river path, in any neighborhood and at any time of day/night.
- The LA River Master Plan PEIR should consider and incorporate LA County transportation plans, including Vision Zero, the Bicycle Master Plan, Metro plans, and the 17 adjacent city transportation plans insure all jurisdictions have safe transportation routes to the LA River.
- Partner with adjacent cities and public bodies to adopt complete streets policies to better connect neighborhoods to the river and prioritize access to the river from schools, and other public gathering spaces.
- Implement signage along the river as markers of physical activity (such as ¼ mile or ½ mile markers). Signage should also be informational to highlight the rivers connectivity to nearby destinations, informing the community of its use as a viable route to certain locations.
- Include methods for raising awareness in the adjacent communities of the potential uses of the river for physical activity, arts, and culture. Infrastructure like benches, drinking water stations, bicycle parking, bathroom/reststops, and sufficient pedestrian level lighting should be included to encourage these uses.

- To assist people experiencing homelessness, identify sites within the plan area for development of supportive housing. These sites should be mixed-use to provide housing as well as other goods and services that benefit the community.
- When possible, reduce the Effective Impervious Area in the watershed. Limiting the possibility of constructing surface parking lots would be a highly effective way to reduce the heat-island effect and the amount of non-beneficial impervious area.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Anthony Higgins, at [anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov](mailto:anthony.higgins@dot.ca.gov) and refer to GTS# 07-LA-2020-03308.

Sincerely,



MIYA EDMONSON

IGR/CEQA Branch Chief

cc: Scott Morgan, State Clearinghouse