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MEETING NOTES

Date: 12 November 2008
Date Issued: 20 November 2008
Project: Whittier Narrows Recreation Area Master Plan Input
RE: Stakeholder Team Meeting #5
Present: See attached sign in sheet.

Meeting Agenda:

1. *Project objectives, process, products, schedule*
2. *Review of feedback from Public Meeting #1, October 23*
3. *A Vision for Whittier Narrows Recreation Area*
4. *Planning and design principles*
5. *Review of outreach strategy for remainder of 2008*
6. *Next steps and meeting dates/locations*

1. Review of feedback from Public Meeting #1:

A summary of the Oct. 23 meeting was distributed on November 3, and salient points were summarized for the group. Stakeholder comments included the following:

- Public Works has an adult soccer league that should be interviewed as part of the process.
- LA County Parks has already initiated a program to use recycled water at WNRA – specifics of the program should be provided and communicated to the public.
- Many area communities are working on programs to address TMDLs for water bodies in their jurisdictions. The specifics of these programs should be provided and coordinated with any proposals for the WNRA.
- Regarding the dry mitigation lakes, one in the natural area is mostly full. Others were allowed to run dry because of concerns about West Nile Virus/mosquitos. Proposals to re-fill the lakes should address this concern. Inexpensive solar-powered aeration systems are available that might help.
- The use of volunteer assistance in both maintenance and patrolling was discussed. An important consideration was liability as well as who would manage the volunteers. Precedent programs/approaches should be examined. General Relief workers are currently being used to perform some tasks (these need to be identified); there may be additional opportunities for Youth Conservation Corps, AmeriCorps, or other organizations to participate.
- There could be an opportunity for local communities and their elected officials to get involved in a “WNRA Community Day.” These are often organized by Council districts but a community-based approach could be taken here.
- Traffic along Rosemead was of concern; traffic moves too fast and calming would be a good idea. There is also increasing truck traffic which is of concern. While the property used by the

trucking operation is fee owned, the Corps holds a flowage easement on it that could be leveraged. It could be argued that the trucking operation is incompatible with park activities, and may also be contributing pollutants through oil and gas leaks or seepage.

- Even if Rosemead cannot be calmed to the extent that may be desired, there may be benefits associated with beautification, landscaping and signage to indicate that visitors have entered the WNRA.

Stakeholders were then asked if they agreed with the “Top 12” ranking of issues by the public, or if they would change the rankings in any way. The following comments were made:

- Safety and security should move up in importance.
- Trails should receive more priority than gardens.
- Maintenance and restrooms should be considered together as one group of items.
- History, interpretation, signage and branding should be considered together.
- Connections do not just need to be physical, but could also be programmatic, for example, connections to programming at South El Monte High School.

2. Draft Vision statement

A draft vision statement was presented to the group for review, and is included below:

Whittier Narrows Recreation Area is a unique regional resource, a natural gap in the hills that form the southern boundary of the San Gabriel Valley, where the San Gabriel and Rio Hondo intertwine, offering sustenance to generations and protection from hazards.

Our mandate is to **safeguard this special legacy**, to be **responsible stewards** of this resource, while providing for the **needs of future generations**.

Our mission is to enhance Whittier Narrows’ function as “**the green lungs of the City,**” preserving the natural Southern California landscape in an increasingly urban environment, providing for **green breathing space** where residents lack opportunities, **restoring habitat connectivity and ecosystem functions**, and providing natural **cleansing of storm runoff, aquifer recharge, and flood protection**.

To truly live “under one sky” means to celebrate and cultivate the diversity of uses and users.

A good vision statement should be inclusive and flexible. Some of the thoughts that were considered important are emphasized in bold. Team members are encouraged to send comments by November 30.

3. Draft framework

A draft planning framework was presented and discussed. The following comments were noted:

- Traffic calming and beautification along Rosemead and Durfee would be a good idea if feasible; CalTrans should be engaged in this discussion. The view from the top of the dam is especially inspiring. One thought was to propose to re-grade Rosemead to accentuate the view.
- Gateways were viewed as especially important.



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- Safe crossing locations should also be designated, especially for use during festivals.
- Pico Rivera is interested in a fixed bus route with a stop at the sports arena. Montebello has a bus line that runs south of the dam and near the Rio Hondo, and stops could be made at the WNRA, looping around and into the park.
- A regional shuttle system that could minimize the need for a car was viewed as useful.
- All County trails are nonmotorized – this should be the precedent for uses at the WNRA.
- “Community zones” are a good suggestion and could provide opportunities to increase “eyes on the park.”

The planning team will continue to refine the working framework and begin to identify specific concepts for the meeting in December.

Next Meetings

Dec. 10 – tentatively at the LA District Office, US Army Corps of Engineers

Jan. 14 – location TBD

We believe this report accurately reflects what transpired at this meeting. Please comment if you have a different understanding of what occurred. Unless we are notified within five working days of issuing this report, we will assume all parties agree that this report is accurate.