

# CITY OF LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA

JAN PERRY  
GENERAL MANAGER



ERIC GARCETTI  
MAYOR

Economic and Workforce  
Development Department

1200 W. 7TH STREET  
LOS ANGELES, CA 90017

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Council District Nos:  
Contact Person and Phone:  
Gerardo Ruvalcaba  
(213) 744-7233

Arts, Parks, Health, Aging and River Committee  
City Council  
c/o City Clerk  
Room 395, City Hall

## **COMMITTEE TRANSMITTAL: REPORT BACK ON THE NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES RIVERFRONT COLLABORATIVE (NELA-RC) SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE GRANT**

The General Manager of the Los Angeles Economic and Workforce Development Department (EWDD), respectfully requests that the City Council approve the recommendations below.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Council and Mayor:

1. NOTE AND FILE the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District Vision Plan and Economic Development Implementation Strategy (Attachment I).
2. AUTHORIZE the General Manager, EWDD, or designee to reallocate project savings in the amount of \$159,415 to implement an LA River Summer Youth Employment Program between June 1, 2014 and July 30, 2014.
3. AUTHORIZE the General Manager, EWDD, or designee to negotiate and execute an amendment to the agreement with Los Angeles Conservation Corps in an amount not to exceed \$431,107.

## 4. AUTHORIZE the Controller to:

- a. Transfer appropriations within the Communities Challenge Planning Grant Fund No. 53W as follows:

	<b>Acct #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Amount</b>
From	22K122	EWDD	\$ 94,290
	22K299	Related Costs	15,125
	22J624	Worker Education Resource Center	50,000
To	22K627	Los Angeles Conservation Corps	\$159,415

- b. Decrease appropriations within Fund 100/22 as follows:

<b>Acct #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Amount</b>
1010	Salaries	\$ 34,117
1070	Salaries-As Needed	53,082
2130	Travel	2,998
6030	Rent	4,093
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$ 94,290</b>

5. AUTHORIZE the General Manager of EWDD, or designee, to prepare Controller instructions for any necessary technical adjustments, subject to the approval of the City Administrative Officer, and instruct the Controller to implement the instructions.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Utilization of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Challenge Grant will not have an impact on the General Fund. To the extent that the EWDD and the Planning Department use a portion of the funds for administrative and program cost recovery, the General Fund will realize revenue from associated related cost contributions.

**BACKGROUND**

Six decades after the River was first channelized in concrete, the L.A. City Council adopted the Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan (Plan) in 2007, establishing a bold vision for transforming the River by reversing the past and re-envisioning the future. In 2012, EWDD signed an agreement with HUD to implement a \$2.25 million Community Challenge Planning Grant from the Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which includes HUD, the US Department of Transportation (DOT), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The grant funded an innovative, interdisciplinary partnership called the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Collaborative (NELA-RC), which sought to capture the energy of the Los Angeles River (River) as a catalyst for integrating planning efforts, coordinating strategic investments, and

implementing a comprehensive economic revitalization strategy that reflects sustainable development to help NELA communities to thrive.

The NELA-RC has three objectives:

- Engage the community in identifying a NELA Riverfront District.
- Create a comprehensive implementation strategy for community revitalization and reinvestment that links land use, economic development and workforce strategies.
- Create a model of engagement and public media to foster civic participation in the revitalization of communities.

Significant efforts are already underway in NELA to improve and expand upon the bicycle path along the River, to establish a network of parks, and to restore ecosystem values.

The benefits brought to NELA by the initial implementation of the Master Plan could be further complemented by a comprehensive land use plan around the River to enhance public access, identify and better connect community assets, and improve the area's infrastructure. The NELA-RC process sought to build upon the growing momentum of efforts already in place, and aims to remake the River into a focal point of community revitalization, recreational activities, environmental stewardship, sustainable civic engagement, and economic growth for the entire city.

The project created an interdisciplinary team of "place and people" professionals from the fields of planning, transportation, community engagement, environmental advocacy, academia, media, and community development. The NELA-RC team is led by the EWDD, and includes the Los Angeles Planning Department, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, the Los Angeles Workforce Investment Board, the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism's Metamorphosis Project, Occidental College's Urban Environmental Policy Institute, KCET Departures, the L.A. River Revitalization Corporation, Tierra West Advisors, and the L.A. Conservation Corps.

Attachment III provides a map of the study area selected for this project.

## **STATUS**

During the past 18-months, the NELA-RC project team engaged in an extensive community engagement and popular education campaign around five policy areas: 1) Land-use Planning; 2) Workforce Development; 3) Economic Development and Sustainable Financing; 4) Food Access and 5) Mobility / Transportation.

The outreach strategies that were deployed targeted marginalized communities in Elysian Valley, Cypress Park, Glassell Park, Lincoln Heights, and Atwater Village that typically do not participate in City Planning efforts. As a result of the teams innovative approach, nearly 1,000 community residents and small businesses participated in the planning process. This included field interviews conducted in the five riverfront communities in NELA as well as participation in a series of community meetings.

The result of the extensive planning efforts have been synthesized into the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District Vision Plan and Economic Development Strategy (Attachment I). The eight goals for the NELA Riverfront District developed through the community outreach process are summarized in Attachment II.

The NELA-RC will subsequently submit to City Council for review a detailed implementation strategy that will provide a "roadmap" for the implementation of the strategies contained in the vision plan.

## **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant provided the City an opportunity to develop a comprehensive place-based economic development strategy that links land-use planning, economic development and workforce development strategies. The resulting vision plan provides a series of strategies that will allow the City to leverage the significant momentum currently experienced by the proposed restoration of the Los Angeles River by the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to benefit low-to-moderate income residents in Northeast LA. Moving forward, it is critical that the City continue the work started by the Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Collaborative by dedicating City resources to implement the recommendations contained in this report.

The project team recommends the creation of a Los Angeles River Summer Youth Employment program to support community engagement activities related to the release of the Final Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District Vision Plan. Given the significant interest in this project generated through the community engagement process, the final community engagement work will be critical in continuing to build support for the project goals and strategies.

The NELA Collaborative is recommending transferring \$159,415 in savings identified by EWDD to employ 80 youth between June 1, 2014 and July 31, 2014. The summer employment program will be led by the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, currently a NELA partner as well as a summer youth employment contractor.



JAN PERRY  
General Manager

JP:RS:GR

Attachment I: Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront District Vision Plan

Attachment II: NELA Vision Plan Goals & Objectives

Attachment III: NELA-RC Study Area Map

## NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### 1. Create a sense of place

- Create placemaking destinations that are local, but have a regional draw
- Provide greater diversity in retail, food, and entertainment
- Create urban streetscapes that highlight neighborhood and connect to the River
- Promote cultural vibrancy through public art and special events

### 2. Enliven and improve the riverfront open-space experience

- Create more usable open space
- Program public spaces
- Build a continuous river-adjacent greenway

### 3. Re-connect adjacent communities to each other and to the River through multiple types of mobility

- Improve street and sidewalk infrastructure
- Enhance transit systems serving neighborhoods
- Create a NELA-specific parking strategy

### 4. Improve ecological health of the built environment

- Minimize hazardous and toxic waste contamination
- Improve surface water quality
- Build a network of green streets

### 5. Strengthen and support employment opportunities surrounding the River

- Expand the capacity of the industrial areas
- Attract businesses that will employ the local population
- Expand educational opportunities and job training programs
- Promote local hiring

### 6. Improve government regulation, coordination, and oversight of the River

- Improve predictability and efficiency of the permitting process
- Increase regional collaboration for river-related infrastructure
- Create new government positions to support NELA project

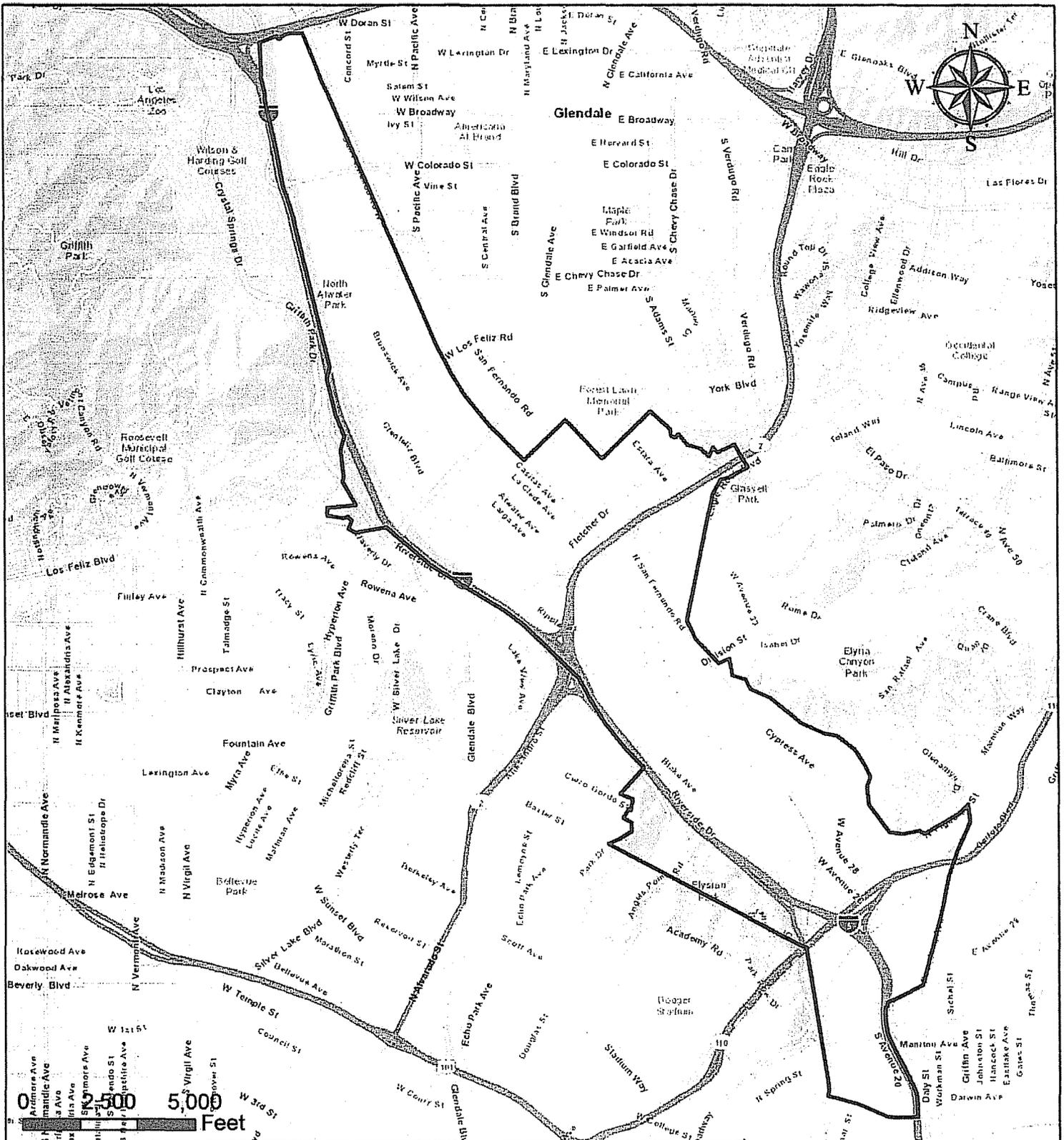
### 7. Make space for social equity

- Preserve and expand affordable housing
- Support small businesses and workforce development
- Create social infrastructure with an equity orientation

### 8. Promote sustainable economic development

- Leverage finance opportunities
- Develop public infrastructure
- Maximize development of underutilized properties

# The Northeast Los Angeles Riverfront Collaborative (NELA RC) Study Area



The City of Los Angeles  
Community Development Department  
funded through  
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Office of Sustainable Housing and Community Development

Created by: Tierra West Advisors, Inc

2616 East 3rd Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Analyst: A. Bassanetti

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