

PUBLIC NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY AND PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Public Notice and Comment Period

August 6 to August 25, 2014

Proposed Implementation Date

Spring 2015

Proposed Federal Action

This public notice is issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to inform the general public that the Los Angeles District of the Corps is preparing an Environmental Assessment associated with Metabolic Studio's request for a Section 408 Permit to modify the Los Angeles River. The portion of the proposed project that falls under the jurisdiction of the Corps includes an inflatable rubber dam across the river channel, intake and outfall structures through the channel wall, and modification to the channel bottom to support the rubber dam. The proposed modification would support a project that reintegrates the City of Los Angeles with its historic source of water. Under the proposed project, a water wheel, with both recreational and utilitarian functions would be installed near the site of the former Zanja Madre (Mother Ditch), the original aqueduct that brought water to the Pueblo de Los Angeles from the Los Angeles River and a former water wheel that delivered water to the Pueblo de Los Angeles in the 1850s.

Pursuant to 33 USC Section 408, Section 14 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, requests by private, public, tribal, or other Federal entities to make alterations or temporarily or permanently occupy or use any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Federally authorized civil works project must not be injurious to the public interest or affect the projects ability to meet its authorized purpose. Section 408 authorizes the Secretary of the Army (or his designee) to grant permission for the alteration or occupation of the project.

The Corps, as the lead Federal agency as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will prepare an Environmental Assessment to analyze the environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives.

Location

The proposed project would be located at 1796 N. Baker Street, Los Angeles. The property, currently owned by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), is located approximately 0.4 mile west of the Golden State Freeway and approximately 0.8 mile east of Dodger Stadium. The project area is approximately 2 miles north of downtown Los Angeles. It is also adjacent to an Amtrak / Metrolink railroad right-of-way and immediately south of the North Broadway Bridge, which is a designated City Historic-Cultural Monument (No. 907). It is within the Central City North Community Plan, Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan, and

Cornfield/Arroyo Seco Specific Plan areas. Figure 1 shows the location of the proposed project.

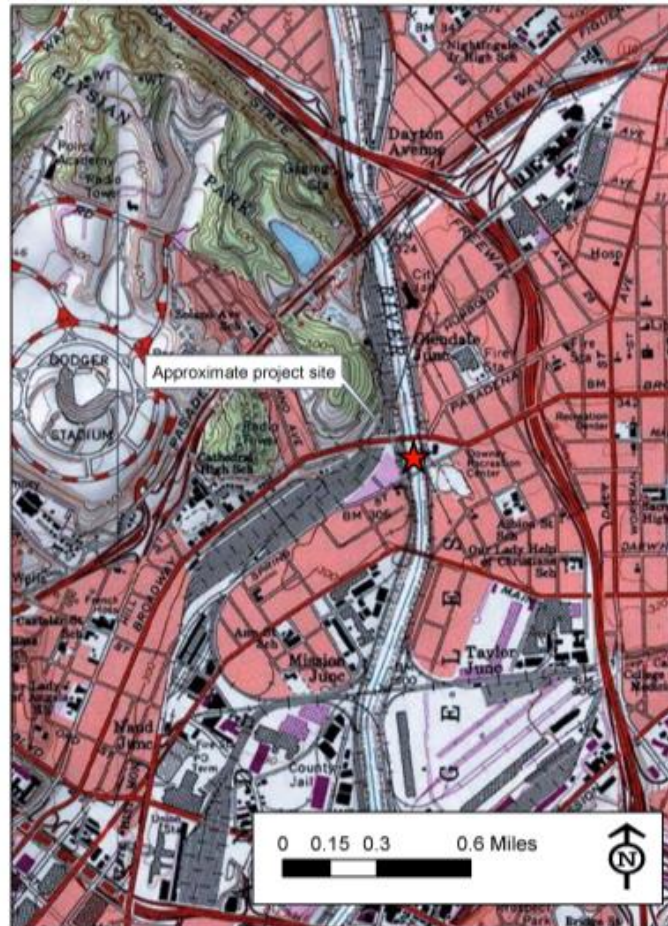


Figure 1 Proposed Location

Alternatives

The reasonable alternatives currently identified for inclusion in the Environmental Assessment include:

No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative the proposed water wheel, including the side channels, inflatable dam, and other supporting features would not be constructed. Low flows would not be diverted from the Los Angeles River for irrigating the Los Angeles State Historic Park, the Downey Recreation Center, and the proposed Albion Dairy Park. The opportunity to create an aesthetic/educational statement and enhance connections between the surrounding community and the Los Angeles River would not be achieved.

The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need of the Section 408 Proposal, although it was carried forward in EA for comparison purposes.

Preferred Alternative

The proposed project would involve construction and operation of a water wheel, loosely modeled after the historic wheel that existed near the project location and would include a 1,300-cubic-yard excavation for installation of the water wheel and a maintenance area. Under the Proposed Action, the Corps would grant a 408 permit for modification of the Los Angeles River channel to install a 7.2-foot-high inflatable dam across the channel, creating a water impoundment area upstream of the proposed inflatable dam and modification for intake and outfall structures through the channel wall for the water wheel.

Water from the Los Angeles River would be diverted to a 72-foot diameter water wheel to supply non-potable irrigation water for adjacent open space areas including the Los Angeles State Historic Park, the Downey Recreation Center, and the proposed Albion Dairy Park. The water wheel would be embedded 36 feet below the ground surface (one half below/one half above), hydraulically connected to a side pipe constructed as part of this project.

The inflatable dam would be inflated during non-storm periods to impound non-storm water flows approximately 1,400 feet upstream and contain up to about 16 acre feet of water. Impounded water would be diverted into the side channel toward the water wheel at a rate of 30 cubic feet per second (cfs), powering the water wheel, while approximately 1% (about 80-acre-feet per year) of the diverted flows would be lifted by the wheel, emptied into a collection trough and gravity flow to the ground surface for storage and treatment by filtration and ultra-violet disinfection prior to distribution for irrigation use. The remaining diverted flows would be re-directed back to the Los Angeles River downstream of the dam by a return side channel (pipe). About 50 to 60 cfs would also sheet flow over the top of the inflated dam.

The dam would be automatically deflated prior to forecast storm events, allowing storm water flows to pass unimpeded. A redundant system would be installed to trigger dam deflation. The inflatable dam will take about one hour to deflate and inflate under normal circumstances. It will take approximately 3 hours for non-storm water flows to reach the top of dam after inflation. Manual gates would be installed across the inlet and outlets of the side channels that would be closed during storm events.



Figure 3
Site Plan
Bending the River Back into the City Project

Public Involvement

The Corps invites the general public to submit comments on potential environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the proposed action and alternatives. The public comment period on preparation of an EA for the proposed alternatives described above will extend from August 11 through August 25, 2014. All comments must be received by 5 p.m. August 25. Please direct your comments to Deborah Lamb, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, at Deborah.L.Lamb@usace.army.mil or by mail at USACE

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If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Deborah Lamb, Landscape Architect at (213) 452-3798.