



# Public Notice

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

Los Angeles District

September 24, 2018

**Project:** Los Angeles River Reach 5C and 6A Sediment Removal Project

## Location

The Proposed Project Area is located within a 2000 foot long section of the Los Angeles River (LAR) in Reaches 5C and 6A of the Los Angeles County Drainage Area (LACDA) flood risk management project, extending downstream of the Fletcher Drive bridge to approximately 900 feet downstream of the Glendale Freeway, in the city of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California. The Proposed Project Area occurs within an area referred to as the Glendale Narrows, which is an approximately 6.2-mile-long, soft bottom section of the LAR between Griffith Park and downtown Los Angeles starts. (See Figure 1)

## Activity

Approximately 40,000 cubic yards (cy) of accumulated material from the proposed project area would be removed to the design elevation of the channel invert across the entire width of the channel. The design elevation for the channel invert is the top of the toe. The depth of sediment to be removed ranges from 2 to 8 feet. Clean excavated material would be transported and disposed at a Corps-owned sediment placement site downstream of Lopez Dam. Lopez Dam is located near the city of San Fernando, on the Pacoima Wash, in the north-central part of San Fernando Valley, Los Angeles County, California. There would be no structural alterations or modifications of structural element of the engineered channel.

Figure 1. Project Area



## **Background**

The Los Angeles District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) conducted an engineering review of the Glendale Narrows section of the LAR in 2016 to assess the flood conveyance capacity in anticipation of large rainfall associated with the predicted El Nino season. The evaluation identified Reach 5A, 5B, 5C and 6A of the Glendale Narrows which extends from Los Feliz Blvd to 900 feet south of the Glendale 2 Freeway as critical areas for restoring conveyance capacity. The design capacity in these critical areas is a 51-year storm event or 78,000 cubic foot per second (cfs). The existing channel capacity due to vegetation and accumulated material is approximately a 7-year storm event (43,500 cfs). Of the three reaches, Reach 5C and the upper section of Reach 6A has the largest deposit of accumulated material due to a bend in the river which causes sandbars to form against the left bank. In total, the sandbars contain approximately 40,000 cy of material. The material consists of approximately 65% cobbles and boulders (rock sizes greater than 3 inches in diameter) and 33% sub-cobbles and fines. Removal of this sediment would increase conveyance to approximately a 15-year storm event capacity (54,000 cfs) within this section of the LAR.

## **Purpose and Need**

The LAR channel is a flood risk minimization structure. The accumulated material reduces the flood risk minimization benefits of the LAR through Reaches 5C and 6A. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to partially restore lost conveyance capacity and restore flood risk minimization benefits.

## **Alternatives**

**No Action Alternative:** Under the No Action Alternative, accumulated material from the Proposed Project Area would not be removed. The accumulated material would continue to remain within the channel and the design conveyance capacity would not be partially restored.

**Proposed Alternative:** Under the Proposed Alternative, approximately 40,000 cy of accumulated material from Reach 5C and a portion of Reach 6A would be removed to the design elevation of the channel invert to partially restore diminished flood conveyance capacity through this section of the LAR. The depth of sediment to be removed ranges from 2 to 8 feet. Clean excavated material would be disposed at a Corps-owned sediment placement site downstream of Lopez Dam. There would be no structural alterations or modifications of structural elements of the engineered channel.

## **Coordination**

### **California Regional Water Quality Control Board**

In the interest of mutual cooperation, the Regional Water Board and the District has developed a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinate the respective regulatory processes associated with the District's Los Angeles County Drainage Area Operations, Maintenance, Repair, Rehabilitation, and Replacement activities in waters of the United States.

### **City of Los Angeles**

Request for right-of-entry permit, Taylor Yard G2 Parcel

### **City of Los Angeles, Department of Water and Power**

Request for right-of-entry permit, Parcel (5442002903)

### **State of California, Department of Parks and Recreation**

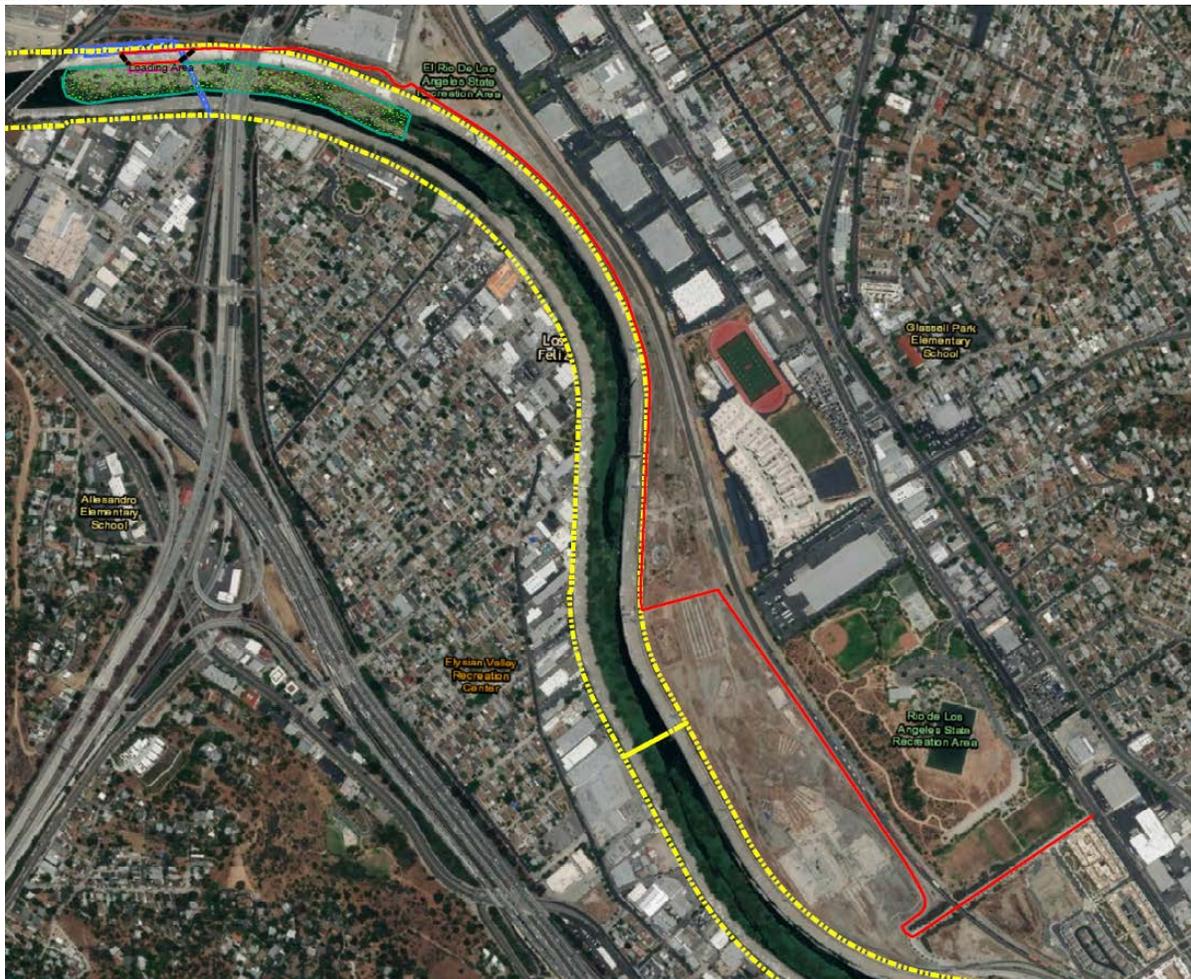
Request for right-of-entry permit, Bowtie Parcel

**Public Notices:** Environmental Assessment for this project was posted for a 30 day period from 04 May - 04 Jun. A second public notice was also posted on the USACE website for a 15 day period for a second round of comments from 15 Aug - 30 Aug.

**Trucking Routes:** From San Fernando Road, trucks would proceed in a southwesterly direction via Metrolink road into Taylor Yard. Once past the railway trestle bridge, vehicles would proceed in a northwesterly direction along a paved access road that is parallel to the railway track heading towards the Bowtie Parcel. From the Bowtie Parcel, trucks would transition onto the existing access road atop the left embankment then enter the channel via temporary access ramp. Loaded trucks would exit the channel using a second temporary access ramp and turn around in an open space area near the onramp to the

Glendale Freeway off Fletcher Drive. Exiting trucks would proceed in the opposite direction via the same route through Bowtie Parcel and Taylor Yard onto San Fernando Road. Trucks would proceed northbound on San Fernando Road and proceed onto the Glendale Freeway. See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Haul Route



**Dewatering:** Dewatering structures such as k-rails or rubber dams would be temporarily placed on the existing concrete sill at the upstream terminus just below Fletcher Drive crossing to redirect flows along the right embankment. Fill material required to seal dewatering structures would be either a grout material or visquin and sand bags.

**Non-native Vegetation:** Non-native, invasive vegetation would be removed. A biological monitor will be on-site during all construction activities to insure vegetation removal proceeds accordingly. Species of non-native vegetation that are not considered invasive according to the California Invasive Plant Council (but potentially provide important on-site benefits) will be retained as appropriate.

**Riparian Zone Preservation Area:** Approximately 1.5 acres of contiguous native vegetation with complex vertical structure (i.e., a matrix of mature trees with understory of differing heights and densities) along the right bank would be excluded from the construction footprint. The vegetation would be protected by a 10-foot radius buffer. The outer edge of the earthen buffer would be stabilized with a 2:1 (horizontal:vertical) slope. See Figure 1.

**Native Species Preservation Area:** In-channel, native vegetation located adjacent to the left bank would be excluded from the construction footprint. See Figure 1.

**Upland Native Species Preservation Area:** Native vegetation atop the left embankment would be excluded from the construction footprint. See Figure 1.

**Endangered Species:** Preliminary determinations indicate the proposed activity has a no effect to a federally-listed endangered or threatened species, specifically the endangered least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*). Observation was documented in Reach 6 near Taylor Yard during a one-day nesting bird survey of the area, however, this area is located outside of the proposed project area. However, protocol level surveys from 2017 did not detect presence of vireo on-site. No critical habitat is present on-site and no critical habitat would be affected.

### **Cultural Resources**

The proposed activity entails excavation of accumulated alluvial deposits from the channel to partially restore the original design capacity. However, no material would be excavated below the top of the cobblestone invert repaired in 1956. Two temporary access ramps would be constructed of crushed base to provide access to the channel invert. These ramps would be removed at the end of the project, so there would be no permanent alteration of the channel wall. Thus, no alterations or modifications will be made to any surviving portions of the historic constructed channel. Further, no alteration would be made to Fletcher Drive Bridge by the proposed project. The access road is an existing road with a built up DG roadbed constructed to provide access along the channel. Vehicular use of this road is a regular and routine activity and would be restricted to the existing constructed roadbed. All ground disturbing activities would be limited to recent alluvium or imported and disturbed soils. No native soil would be disturbed. No actions are proposed that would alter the historic channel or Fletcher Bridge. Thus, the project would have no potential to result in changes to the character or use of an historic property, nor diminish the integrity of the location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, or association.

### **Additional Project Information**

Flood events that occurred between 1914 and 1934 were some of the most economically devastating floods the Los Angeles area historically experienced. These flood events prompted the Federal Government to allocate funds in the Flood Control Act of 1936 to assist Los Angeles County in developing and expanding flood control infrastructure, including channelizing 52 miles of the LAR. Construction of the channel occurred between 1936 and 1959. The flood control channel is owned by Los Angeles County, City of Los Angeles, and private land owners. In 1940, the Corps entered into an agreement with Los Angeles County to operate and maintain the portion of the channel from Lankershim Boulevard to Stuart and Grey Road which equates to 22.5 miles of the LAR channel. The Corps' maintenance area consists of two different channel styles: rectangular or trapezoidal concrete/grouted stone with a low flow channel, and a trapezoidal soft bottom channel with grouted stone/concrete levees. The soft bottom portion of the channel is locally known as the Glendale Narrows, starting 1,400 feet North of Riverside Drive Bridge and ending at Idell Street. Within the area known as Glendale Narrows, there are 6.43 miles or 124.50 +/- acres of stabilized soft bottom structure.

Originally devoid of vegetation and sediment subsequent to completion of construction in 1959, the project reach was periodically cleared of vegetation and sediment by the Corps until the 1980s. Once vegetation management and sediment removal activities stopped, the Glendale Narrows area built up sediment shoaling which gradually became vegetated. Vegetation within the river channel can inhibit the channel's capacity to convey floodwaters. The channel is designed to be maintained free of vegetation to avoid impacts to flood conveyance and channel structures. However, lack of funds for maintenance has resulted in substantial vegetation growing within the channel. Due to limited funds available to maintain vegetation in the channel, the Corps has focused on removing non-native vegetation using both herbicide and mechanical means. Non-native plants often out-compete natives, degrading the ecological vitality and productivity of native habitats. The most prevalent non-native invasive plant is giant reed (*Arundo donax*). It spreads quickly, has little habitat value, and contributes to fire hazards through fuel loading. Dominant native vegetation includes mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) and willow species (*Salix* sp.).