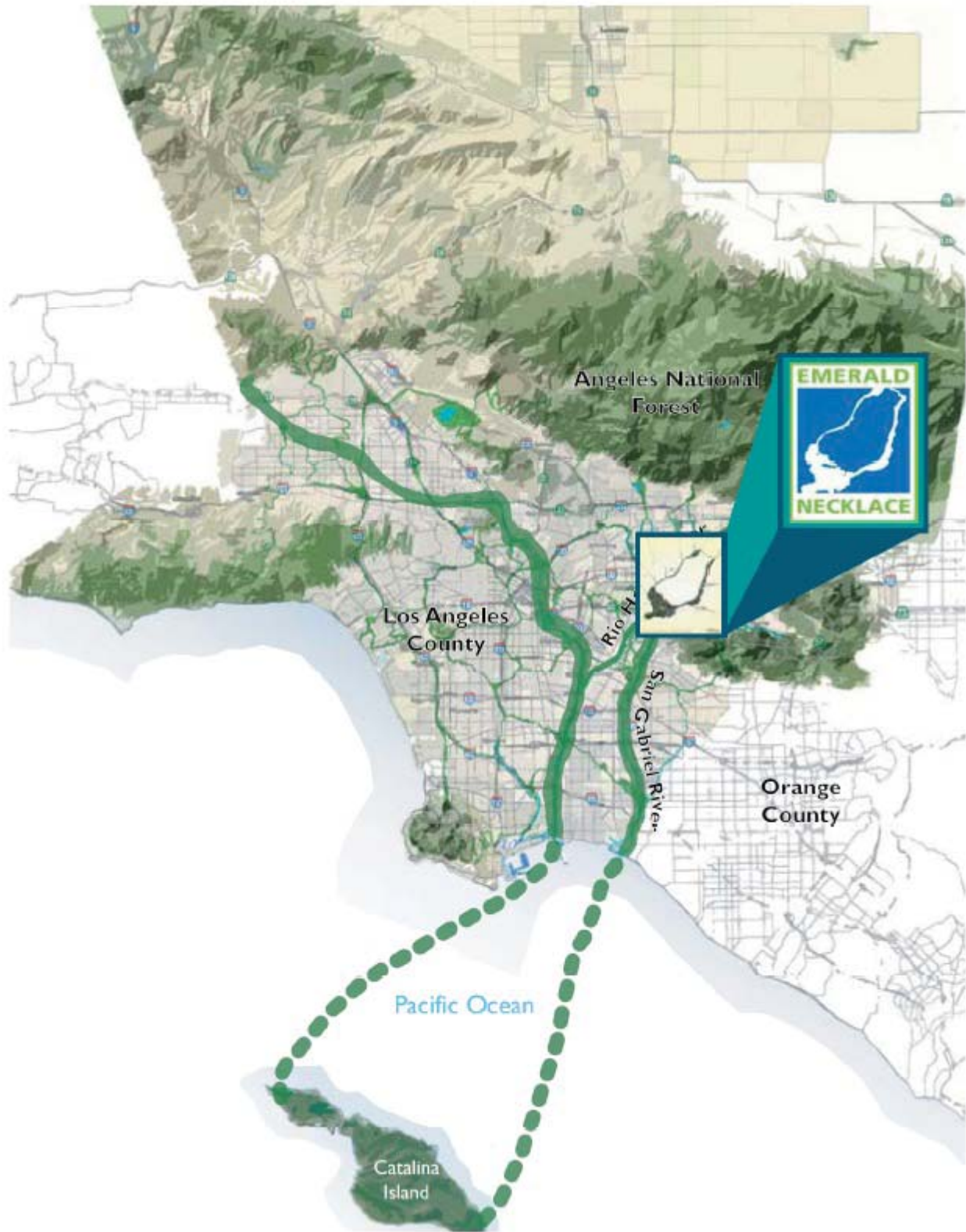


Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence Application - 2015
Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision
Los Angeles County, California
Amigos de los Rios



2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DATA



PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name _____ Location _____ City _____ State _____

Owner _____

Project Use(s) _____

Project Size _____ Total Development Cost _____

Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate) _____

Date Initiated _____ Percent Completed by December 1, 2014 _____

Project Completion Date (if appropriate) _____ Project Website (if appropriate) _____

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates _____

Application submitted by:

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Telephone () _____ Fax () _____

E-mail _____ Website (if appropriate) _____

Perspective Sheets:

Organization _____ Name _____ E-mail _____

Public Agencies _____

Architect/Designer _____

Developer _____

Professional Consultant _____

Community Group _____

Other _____

Please indicate how you learned of the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*. (Check all that apply).

- | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Direct Mailing | Direct Email | Previous Selection Committee member | Other (please specify) |
| Online Notice | Previous RBA entrant | Professional Organization | _____ |
| | Social Media | Bruner/Loeb Forum | |

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Signature _____

Claire Robinson

_____ Date _____

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT
AT-A-GLANCE



PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet, the Project Data sheet, and the representative photo will be sent to the Committee in advance as the *Project Overview*.

Project Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

1. Give a brief overview of the project. Approximately 500 words.

2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.) Approximately 500 words.

2015 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROJECT DESCRIPTION



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. Describe the underlying values and goals of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project? Approximately 500 words.

2. Briefly describe the project's urban context. How has the project impacted the local community? Who does the project serve? How many people are served by the project? Approximately 500 words.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate. Approximately 400 words.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable. Approximately 400 words.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings? Approximately 400 words.

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name Andre Quintero Title Mayor

Organization City of El Monte Telephone (626) 580-2001

Address 11333 Valley Blvd. City/State/ZIP El Monte, CA 91731

Fax () E-mail mayor.quintero@gmail.com

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Signature Andre Quintero Date 12/9/14

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

The City of El Monte was an early supporter of the Emerald Necklace Plan and Project. Our City Manager and City Attorney helped write the Emerald Necklace Accord which is the document that laid the foundation for regional collaboration on this Green Infrastructure Park Network. We provided seed funding for the initial vision plan and worked with Amigos de los Rios to implement the first multi objective project of Emerald Necklace Phase 1 along the Rio Hondo, Lashbrook Park. As a result of the success of this Vision Plan and the initial project, we included the Emerald Necklace in our City's Park and Recreation Plan Element and in our General Plan Update. Many of the subsequent parks completed within Phase 1 of the Emerald Necklace are demonstration projects located within or adjacent to the El Monte. In addition, the City of El Monte worked with Amigos de los Rios to obtain funding for and to develop the El Monte Urban and Community Forestry Management Plan. As a result of this work, El Monte has been designated as a "Tree City" by the Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters, drawing attention to the multiple benefits of careful and sensitive management of the urban forest, particularly in communities such as ours where the urban forest is lacking.

We required CEQA and permit review of all projects within our jurisdiction.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace project was intended to benefit the City of El Monte in myriad ways. Our city has a high percentage of youth and a tremendous deficit of parks. We have less than 1/3 an acre of parks per every 1000 residents. Thus our population suffers from a high proportion of chronic illness correlated with a lack of open space including but not limited to asthma, diabetes, and obesity. The cost of acquiring sufficient land and cost of converting vacant land to public benefit parks has often been prohibitive for the city. The Emerald Necklace Project was conceived as an innovative way for the city to improve the public benefit of existing underutilized land along the Urban River Corridors that border the city and transform these Los Angeles County and United States Army Corp of Engineers owned areas into multi-benefit Greenway, parks and trails. El Monte is also the location of multiple superfund sites and is in the midst of multiple major freeways, which present challenges related to air and water pollution. The ecosystem services provided by Emerald Necklace projects which range from air and water quality protection, heat island mitigation, natural resources preservation to celebration cultural heritage values of the Emerald Necklace are a vital addition to the city.

Certain challenges accompanied this change in paradigm in creating open space for El Monte residents. In order for us to work in this new optic, the Emerald Necklace project required the City to reorient our priorities in alignment with maintenance requirements of the project. We have limited resources and this project has challenged us to try and align our resources to effectively support the development of multi benefit green infrastructure that includes elements such as native vegetation, bio-remediation swales and permeable pavement. We believe, however, that the changes we have been compelled ultimately enhance the management of El Monte's built environment.

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace has increased our park space from 53 acres to 79 acres – or a net increase of 49 %. We have included the expanded Emerald Necklace in our City's Park and Recreation Plan Element and in our General Plan Update and become actively involved in related efforts. The City of El Monte has benefited in a number of ways from the work of Amigos de los Rios and the first phase of the development of the Emerald Necklace Park Network.

El Monte has benefited from the addition of green spaces, trees, and multi-benefit recreation areas, and have participated in educational and environmental stewardship events and contests put on by Amigos de los Rios.

El Monte residents have also benefited from Amigos' development of Emerald Necklace demonstration parks along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. These parks improve the local urban and natural environments by providing access to recreation and green open spaces and the regional active transportation network to El Monte resident while also enhancing the function of beneficial ecosystem services.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

This project has engendered a new model for public private partnerships resulting in an improved built environment that marries traditional grey infrastructure with green multi benefit infrastructure to the benefit of local residents. Amigos de los Rios has created an Emerald Necklace coalition of over 38 public agencies supporting this vision and this collaborative force has inspired participation from our local Sam's Club, REI outdoor sport, Ralphs Supermarket, Sempra Energy, and Southern California Edison, among other private sector partners and Foundations. As a part of this Coalition led by Amigos, we have partnered with myriad community businesses members to design, develop, implement, and maintain the Emerald Necklace projects. Some of these agencies include: local and regional government agencies, local school districts, elementary and middle schools, and non-profit organizations dedicated to conservation, environmental stewardship, or community engagement. The Emerald Necklace is a great example of a collaborative model for improving quality of life in urban areas of the country where resources are limited and support from citizens and private business can be leveraged to great effect. Amigos has shared the results of the San Gabriel Emerald Necklace initiative and demonstration projects at conferences across the country to provide examples to elected officials in other mega regions of how to execute Sustainable City Planning projects that are meaningful to the community. Amigos is using this innovative approach and proven success to advance the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision and broaden its positive impact via green infrastructure solutions. In sum, Amigos de los Rios work, and the City of El Monte's close involvement in it represents a shared belief that we all have an obligation to focus on American Cities and their quality of life, including the role of urban infrastructure, as we leave a legacy for future generations.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

As mentioned above, one of the most successful aspects of the Emerald Necklace project is vast network of people and organizations Amigos de los Rios has been able convene in support of the Emerald Necklace. Amigos has begun to bring the countywide Olmsted-Bartholomew open space vision, which serves as a direct inspiration to the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision, to life in El Monte within contemporary real estate constraints. The process has been invigorating for the city and its residents. We are excited and enthusiastic as Amigos replicates and expands this positive impact to other Los Angeles communities which stand to benefit from Amigos de los Rios' efforts. Repurposing residual multi function spaces into spaces of great benefit to the public is a major win for all agencies and residents concerned. However this multi-jurisdictional work is very challenging. Financing is complex, permitting is arduous, and ongoing stewardship is a hurdle in the face of multiple agencies with differing missions and jurisdictions. The first suite of Emerald Necklace projects have inspired a significant amount of support from all levels for the public health benefits of this project – this support is the source of inspiration necessary for success and expansion of the Emerald Necklace Vision despite the aforementioned challenges.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROFESSIONAL
CONSULTANT
PERSPECTIVE



PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name _____ Title _____

Organization _____ Telephone () _____

Address _____ City/State/ZIP _____

Fax () _____ E-mail _____

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Signature  _____ Date _____

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

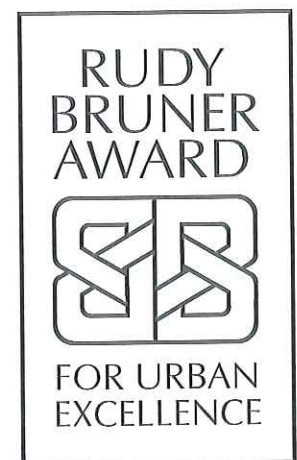
2. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession? Approximately 400 words.

4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY
REPRESENTATIVE
PERSPECTIVE



COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name	Danny Oaxaca	Title	Executive Director
Organization	San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps	Telephone	(626) 579-2484
Address	3629 Cypress Ave	City/State/ZIP	El Monte, CA 91731
Fax	(626) 579-2438	E-mail	doaxaca@sgvcorps.org

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Signature		Date	12/08/2014
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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play? Approximately 400 words.

Since 2005, the San Gabriel Valley Conservation Corps (SGVCC) has involved youth from ages 16-25 in local conservation efforts to improve the urban communities and natural environment within the San Gabriel Valley. SGVCC provides academic, vocational, and leadership development for these youth, most of whom are disengaged from school and work and have experienced significant obstacles in life. Many are also at risk of adjudication and have attained little success in traditional schooling and employment settings. SGVCC is an intensive program that helps these youth develop the motivation, self-confidence, work skills, and education necessary to take advantage of an opportunity to succeed in life. Guided by adult leaders, who serve as mentors, role models, technical trainers and supervisors, SGVCC participants work in crews of 5-10 to rebuild or revitalize blighted areas in their communities, usually areas of low-income.

SGVCC has partnered with Amigos de los Rios on a number of the Emerald Necklace Projects. Services rendered by the youth include tree planting and erosion control on projects such as: the Durfee-Thompson School Joint Use Trail, the Rio Vista Park and Trail, and Lashbrook Park and Trail. SGVCC youth have also participated in Amigos de los Rios' Green Collar Training program that equips youth with the skills and experience to fill meaningful positions in the new and emerging green economy. Training is provided in watershed management, urban planning, park design, public art, park construction, community outreach, park maintenance, and computer use. SGVCC will remain involved in Emerald Necklace projects located in our jurisdiction, collaborating with Amigos on a regular basis, and supports the organization's efforts to build upon the proven impact their work has made in the San Gabriel Valley and expand this impact to other river-adjacent communities in Los Angeles County.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project? Approximately 400 words.

The region in which the Emerald Necklace project is located and the SGVCC operates is characterized by densely developed urban infrastructure high population density, along with a lack of access to parks and recreation. As mentioned previously, many youth in these communities are disengaged from school and work and face major obstacles in their lives. Many are involved in gang-related activity.

Emerald Necklace projects and the involvement of youth through SGVCC seek to address not only some of the structural disparities involving lack of access to parks, recreation and related amenities, and regionally significant wild spaces, but also the disconnect between youth and education, employment, job training, positive adult mentorship, and a sense of connection to the physical and natural environment in the San Gabriel Valley. In providing ample opportunities for these youth to work in innovative parks and other open space amenities, our youth develop skills, obtain knowledge and gain familiarity with the region and its environment, enhancing their abilities to be successful later on in their lives.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how? Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace project has provided immense benefits for the local communities. These benefits have been structural, through the addition of green infrastructure and aesthetically-pleasing open spaces, as well as social, through community engagement, youth employment, and green collar job training that is a part of the design and ongoing maintenance of every Emerald Necklace project. We value the productive and positive working relationship the SGVCC has with Amigos de los Rios and look forward to remaining involved in Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision projects throughout the San Gabriel Valley.

4. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through? Approximately 400 words.

Looking back at the process, the major challenge encountered during project development was the lengthy permitting and bureaucratic processes necessary for the establishment of the park projects. However, this obstacle was minor and the park projects were well worth the wait for both the community and the youth involved in SGVCC. The parks have gone above and beyond our expectations and have enabled our youth to play significant and meaningful roles in the planning, design, execution, and maintenance of the projects. The youth can be proud of their work in the parks and their stewardship of the environment and have time after time expressed their desire for more Emerald Necklace implementation projects and environmental stewardship programs and events. There is always room for more park projects and the youth are eager to get involved!

2015
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PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE




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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Dr. Maribel Garcia	Title	Superintendent
Organization	El Monte City School District	Telephone	(626) 453-3700
Address	3540 Lexington Ave.	City/State/ZIP	El Monte, CA 91731
Fax	(626) 442-2558	E-mail	mgarcia@emcsd.org

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Signature		Date	12/9/2014
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1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

The El Monte City School District has been a key supporter of the Emerald Necklace project as a means of creating green infrastructure at Schools since inception of the Emerald Necklace Initiative in 2005. The first time we partnered with Amigos de los Rios was in 2008 to implement the first Emerald Necklace School Site at the Durfee & Bryon E. Thompson School along the San Gabriel River. The Emerald Necklace additions to the campus included a bioswale, nature trail with outdoor therapy stations, habitat area and outdoor classroom. We requested that Amigos de los Rios meet with school principal, teachers and students to develop the program for the nature trail and outdoor classroom areas that would complement existing occupational therapy, sports activities, and curriculum. In 2011, EMCSD worked with Amigos de los Rios to implement a nature trail and native plant palette at Columbia School. The School District required a CEQA filing and an MOU signed by School Board for both of these Emerald Necklace Implementation Projects.

In 2014, EMCSD partnered with Amigos de los Rios to submit an application to the California Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Program for a daily walking school bus program for Durfee-Thompson School as part of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision. Despite neither EMCSD nor Amigos ever having applied for funding for an active transportation program such as this one, the project was awarded funded, competing with projects across the state. EMCSD and Amigos de los Rios continue to work to implement this program, which will enhance student pedestrian safety, reduce vehicle emissions and supplement EMCSD's environmental education. Amigos de los Rios staff developed and finalized the funding application for the Durfee-Thompson Emerald Necklace Walking School Bus in partnership with EMCSD leadership, senior staff, teachers and students.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace was conceived as a way to improve school campuses in multiple ways – improving aesthetics and cultural heritage values of the campuses as well as air quality, ambient temperatures, and energy savings. Perhaps most importantly, implementing the Emerald Necklace urban school sites is an effective way of providing outdoor education opportunities to connect families living in dense urban environments to nature. We serve a disadvantaged student population with a majority of the students qualifying for Federal and State Free and Reduced Lunch programs. Our campuses are located in urban areas where a disproportionate infrastructure burden makes it hard to provide students with green settings at school campuses. We believed that increasing the tree canopy on campuses has the potential to provide significant and valuable benefits to sports programs and physical education by reducing heat island effect as well as providing shade and respite to players and their families during weekend events. Greening the schools and introducing landscaping that fosters biodiversity helps reconnect students to the medicinal, structural, and edible uses of plants is a benefit to urban children who spend on average nine minutes per day apart from school to play outdoors. Some of the trade-offs and compromises include the necessary adjustments to our facilities maintenance protocols that had to happen in order to care for this new type of habitat landscaping. However, throughout Amigos' work on the Emerald Necklace, we have been active participants in building the capacity of each school to provide stewardship long term to the green infrastructure improvements made by Amigos de los Rios.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace has been a tremendous benefit to the El Monte City School District Community on many levels. The success of pilot projects at Durfree-Thompson and Columbia Elementary Schools in El Monte inspired the School District to implement the similar green infrastructure plans at other school campuses throughout the District. At these schools we have seen an increase in the enjoyment of students during physical fitness activities and recreation periods. School community members have also greatly appreciated the sense of place created by the native trees, habitat plants, and decomposed granite trails. Increasing the tree canopy on campuses has been a benefit to sports programs and physical education by reducing heat island effect and ambient temperatures and exposure to UV, providing shade to players and their families on weekends as well as providing space to congregate and relax. Greening the schools and introducing landscaping that fosters biodiversity has sparked a new level of interest on the part of parents and students in environmental stewardship and urban conservation. The Emerald Necklace solidifies connections between the cultural and natural heritage of Latino families and has introduced urban families to some of the rich regional resources available along the trails. We have also seen the emergence of parent and family walking clubs and exercise activities – which is critical because many of our student and their families suffer from a high incidence of chronic illness correlated to lack of access to recreation.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

Amigos de los Rios' work in the El Monte City School District at schools along the San Gabriel River has resulted in many important and beneficial interagency partnerships. Many of these partnerships have involved new levels of collaboration between School Districts and the local Municipality and County Agencies. As a result of Amigos' work on the Emerald Necklace, there has been a proliferation of volunteer stewardship activities that in turn sparked partnerships with local businesses, corporations, and private-sector corporate funders and volunteers. We would recommend this collaborative type of Green Infrastructure project to peer school districts across the county, and are confident that Amigos de los Rios will find success in working with other school districts as part of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision Initiative. The diverse network of organizations that Amigos de los Rios has developed and nurtured through its work in the Emerald Necklace presents a good case study of a new and dynamic model of a partnership that has helped catalyze change in the built environment in ways that greatly benefit the health and well being of students, teachers, and members of the broader community.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

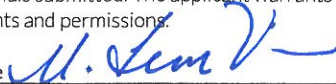
The San Gabriel Emerald Necklace project has been successful because of the expansive network that Amigos de los Rios has built and maintained since the project was established in 2004. It has also been successful because of its focus on specific local implementation projects particularly within the El Monte City School District, that exist as proof of concept of green infrastructure solutions to public health problems and others that stem from a poorly design built environment. Amigos also effectively leverages educational and outreach efforts to draw support and attention for the Emerald Necklace project, while at the same time encouraging knowledge acquisition, exploration, and environmental stewardship among the student population. Based on Amigos tremendous success in the area served by our district, we believe that the time is right for Amigos to broaden its impact via the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision Initiative and will support these efforts in every way that we can.

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Name	Teresa Villegas	Title	Legislative Deputy, Parks & Recreation
Organization	Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, First District	Telephone	(213) 974-411
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Signature		Date	12/9/14
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1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

The First Supervisorial District of Los Angeles County has played a leading role in the development of the Emerald Necklace Initiative. We requested and obtained support from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors who passed a motion in support of the Emerald Necklace. We orchestrated the development of an MOU between Amigos de los Rios and key County Agencies to expedite implementation of the critical projects. We have also provided planning grants and project implementation grants through the Proposition A Funded County Open Space District. We have also provided policy support, technical assistance, and hosted the Emerald Necklace Technical Committee for the past six years and continue to do so.

We consider this Los Angeles Basin scale vision that is the Emerald Necklace Expanded vision to be critical in serving the public health challenges faced by many residents of the First District to a lack of access to viable recreation spaces and ecosystems with the region's native vegetation. As a result of this project and the involvement of Amigos de los Rios as visioning group, catalyst and implementer, we have seen the first suite of projects completed and adjacent communities revitalized and empowered through the process. The result of the Emerald Necklace Phase 1 was that many significant positive changes have been made to the urban landscape throughout the first district. As the lens of this vision expands, Emerald Necklace work will continue to spur the addition of green spaces and trees to local schools and parks and the improvement of community infrastructure and engagement. I have supported and endorsed many of the projects, including Amigos de los Rios work at the Los Angeles County General Hospital Wellness Center, and activities of Amigos de los Rios along the Emerald Necklace and will continue to do so in an effort to broaden the impact this organization can make.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The Emerald Necklace project provides access to recreation, celebrates the region's diverse cultural heritage, and helps urban families reconnect to nature. The project as a whole serves a substantial portion of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors First District and has fostered collaboration between community residents, municipal, and county agencies. This positive impact will expand to other parts of the First District as part of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision. This collaboration has challenged our departments to find new and innovative ways of working in partnership with non-profit sector organizations like Amigos de los Rios to great effect.

Our Department of Public Works, Flood Control District, and Department of Parks and Recreation have been full participants in developing Emerald Necklace Plans and Projects. We believe it is essential to develop green infrastructure to provide public health benefits and ecosystem services to residents of the San Gabriel Valley and Gateway Cities of East County. These projects have enabled members of the communities in the first district to access opportunities for recreation, civic engagement, and environmental stewardship.

The major challenges encountered have been determining the most efficient way to phase the development of an aspirational and ambitious multi-benefit green infrastructure network the likes of which has not previously existed in this metropolitan region that will ultimately be a legacy of balanced green and grey infrastructure for the region in the face of a growing population and increased impacts from climate change.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE



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Name	Mark Stanley	Title	Executive Officer
Organization	San Gabriel & Lower Los Angeles Rivers & Mountains Conservancy		Telephone (626) 815-1019
Address	100 N. Old San Gabriel Canyon Road	City/State/ZIP	Azusa, CA 91702
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Signature  Date Dec. 9, 2014

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements). Approximately 400 words.

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, one of California's 10 State Conservancies, was created by the California legislature in 1999. Our mandate and mission is to preserve open space and habitat in order to provide for low-impact recreation and educational uses, wildlife habitat restoration and protection, and watershed improvements within our jurisdiction. As a State Agency with granting authority over Voter Supported Propositions, we provided seed planning funding to Amigos de los Rios to create an initial Rio Hondo Open Space Study. Between 2004 and 2006, Amigos de los Rios received funding through our grant program to conduct environmental studies of the Alhambra and Arcadia Washes, both of which are areas with the Emerald Necklace Park network. In 2011, Amigos de los Rios again received funding through the RMC grant program to conduct a feasibility study of the Emerald Necklace, which lead RMC to collaborate with the County of Los Angeles First District, Department of Watershed Management, Public Works and Parks and Recreation in order to institutionalize the Emerald Necklace in public agency work plans and accelerate the development of the next phase of projects. The study was completed in late 2011. For the feasibility study, RMC required that Amigos de los Rios: create access to regional recreational opportunities or natural areas, contain meaningful environmental education components, result in new wildlife habitat, and be accessible to the surrounding community. Amigos de los Rios is well on their way to successfully realizing these requirements through their completed park projects and future plans for the Emerald Necklace. 2015 will see the completion of the Emerald Necklace Implementation Plan, along with the completion of the necessary environmental clearance for the Emerald Necklace open space projects. In finalizing the Implementation Plan and environmental clearance, Amigos de los Rios and its public agency partners will more effectively be able to access competitive grant funding for the Emerald Necklace projects identified in the Implementation Plan.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

The San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy serves an area comprised of 68 cities, 20 unincorporated communities, and 2 counties with the East portion of the Los Angeles Basin. Our territory covers eastern Los Angeles County and western Orange County. This vast and varied area includes mountains, valleys, rivers, coastal plain, and coastline. The entire watershed of the San Gabriel River plus the lower Los Angeles River are in the RMC's territory. Although they're not mentioned in the conservancy's name, portions of two other rivers are also included in the RMC's area. They are the upper portion of the Santa Clara River and a short portion of the lower Santa Ana River. As a regional watershed scale vision, the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision project benefits Los Angeles County communities adjacent to the Rio Hondo, San Gabriel and Los Angeles Rivers corridors such as Azusa, Irwindale, El Monte, South El Monte, Baldwin Park, Rosemead, unincorporated county areas, Whittier, Pico Rivera and many more. The benefits include: increased access to recreation for members of disadvantaged communities, the protection of water and air resources and biodiversity, and the social and environmental advantages offered by the existence of green infrastructure in urban areas. Amigos de los Rios was also closely involved in the campaign to designate the San Gabriel Mountains as a National Monument, which took place earlier in 2014 and offers added protection to portions of the San Gabriel Mountains and Angeles National Forest that lie in our jurisdiction. Amigos maintained a focus on better connecting urban residents with this significant, wild open space resource. Increasing resources to the management of the San Gabriel Mountains will serve in collaboratively meeting this goal of better connecting disadvantaged urban youth to nature along with other goals of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision.

The project's major challenge is that, in its entirety, the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision is a long-term legacy project that demands sustained engagement and funding, even more so than the regional San Gabriel Emerald Necklace, where pilot projects have proven the benefits of Amigos de los Rios' work. The Rivers and Mountains Conservancy has partnered with Amigos de los Rios on a regular basis and made an effort to provide Amigos with access to our knowledge base, help enhance coordination between the multitude of public and community stakeholders involved in Emerald Necklace projects, along with other resources in order to aid Amigos de los Rios in the completion of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision network on a project by project basis.

PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on your city. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

The San Gabriel Emerald Necklace Park Network provides community access to recreation and improves the natural and urban environments along a 17 mile loop of parks and greenways connecting 10 cities and nearly 500,000 residents along the Río Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. Already significantly realized in many parts of the network, the park network improves community engagement, mitigates many problems associated with dense urban development, vastly improves the local riparian ecology, and serves to nurture the next generation of environmental stewards. It will continue to do so as Emerald Necklace Projects continue to be implemented. With the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision, which is already beginning to be implemented, this impact will spread to other parts of the county within our jurisdiction, and will benefit from being couched in a larger, Los Angeles Basin-wide vision that operates at a variety of scales.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities? Approximately 400 words.

Through its work in the Emerald Necklace, Amigos de los Rios has created a coalition of 38 public agencies and partnered with myriad community members to design and develop the project. Some of these agencies include: local and regional government agencies, local school districts, elementary and middle schools, and non-profit organizations dedicated to conservation, environmental stewardship, or community engagement. Amigos de los Rios has been the catalyst in defining and maintaining a viable model of public private partnerships through their work with local architects, engineers, and landscape designers in addition to corporations like REI, Ralphs Grocery, Sam's Club, and local businesses. The diverse and expansive network that Amigos de los Rios has fostered is one reason for the success thus far of Emerald Necklace Park Network project. The coalition-building and coalition-maintaining work Amigos has done in the Emerald Necklace will serve the organization well as it works to build new coalitions and attract new partners in its work as it broadens its impact beyond the Emerald Necklace case study area into surrounding Los Angeles County communities. Amigos de los Rios' dual focus, on both large-scale and ambitious visioning on the one hand, and on-the-ground implementation and stewardship on the other, will be instructive to agencies such as ours with other jurisdictions, along with other municipal agencies with which Amigos de los Rios works on a regular basis.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

As mentioned above, one of the most successful aspects of the Emerald Necklace project is vast network of people and organizations in support. Amigos de los Rios also makes a point of raising awareness local support through community engagement and regular volunteer events and has developed considerable momentum behind the Emerald Necklace concept and vision. In putting forth the wide-reaching Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision earlier this year, Amigos de los Rios has quickly garnered new allies and partners in buying into this Los Angeles Basin-wide vision, ultimately driving the organization's ability to both broaden and deepen its impact. Finally, the historical background and overarching vision for the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision encourages a significant amount of support from all levels of government and community and provides a source of inspiration necessary for a long-term project like this one.

The challenging aspects of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision its complex multi-jurisdictional nature along the fiscal challenges the state, counties and cities face as they work to implement multi-benefit Emerald Necklace projects and improve the quality of life in their jurisdictions.

2015
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
OTHER
PERSPECTIVE



Please answer questions in space provided. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

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Signature  Date 12/8/14

1. What role did you play in the development of this project? Approximately 400 words.

Placeworks, formerly known as The Planning Center I DC&E, was chosen by the City of El Monte to update the city's comprehensive General Plan. I was the responsible for leading that effort for El Monte. Having completed general plans for cities across California, we immediately recognized the bold vision and passion that Amigos de los Rios had for the El Monte community. We partnered with them to explicitly incorporate the Emerald Necklace vision and project into the City's General Plan community vision, author a new Parks and Recreation chapter for the General Plan, and incorporate the Emerald Necklace Vision into the general plan. Concurrently, we were retained by California Community Foundation's to write the strategic plan for the El Monte Community Building Initiative, a 10-year, \$10 million place-based initiative that was largest place-based initiative in California at that time. The Emerald Necklace was incorporated into that plan as well. By incorporating the Emerald Necklace Vision into these three strategic plans, it memorialized that plan for generations to come. Collectively, these plans were recognized with both a comprehensive plan and a grassroots initiative awards by the Los Angeles Section of the American Planning Association (APA) and California Chapter of the APA. From my perspective, and with over 20 years of professional planning experience, this project has been and will be one the greatest highlights of my career.

Throughout these efforts, the San Gabriel Emerald Necklace, which bounds the City of El Monte along with the City of South El Monte, it was always understood that they were part of a larger green infrastructure vision inspired by the 1929 Olmsted Bartholomew Los Angeles Basin Parks Plan. Having proven the benefits of green infrastructure solutions to urban quality of life issues including public health, Amigos has rightly begun to broaden the impact of its work, while maintaining a presence in San Gabriel Emerald Necklace communities via its environmental stewardship program.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on the your community. Please be as specific as possible. Approximately 400 words.

A project of this magnitude has many community impacts, short-term and long-term, tangible and more symbolic. In 2012 El Monte celebrated its 100 year anniversary, which provided civic leaders with a moment of pause, pride, and evidence that El Monte could set a new course, connect its past to a greater future, and lift itself from the daily grind and challenges it faces as a first-ring suburb of Los Angeles. For residents, the Emerald Necklace offers substantial parks and recreational opportunities and a glimpse of beauty in one of the poorest parked and visually blighted cities in southern California. The Emerald Necklace also represents a healing of the past; from the early Tongva and later segregated barrios that once occupied the river banks, the Emerald Necklace physically connects every El Monte neighborhood into a greater whole. Finally, the Emerald Necklace provides a source for neighbors to come together and advocate for a common cause, build and strengthen community identity around its river, and increase the level of social capital and cohesion. The Emerald Necklace will continue to offer 17 miles of trails, numerous park acres, cultural resources-all benefitting the lives of thousands of residents living along and within close proximity to the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel rivers.

At this juncture in the evolution of the Emerald Necklace, the time is now to follow this example to set a new course for the broader Los Angeles Basin. By building upon the Amigos de los Rios' proven successes in El Monte and elsewhere throughout the San Gabriel Emerald Necklace, Amigos stands to make an increasingly broad impact throughout river-adjacent communities in Los Angeles County using community-based green infrastructure strategies. Just as the organization put forth a vision for an improved quality of life in El Monte as a way to develop a coalition of partners, Amigos has put forth a countywide vision that has already garnered support from the Mayor of Los Angeles and environmental thought leaders such as Paul Hawken and Richard Louv. Implementation of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision has already begun, with the ultimate goal of connecting the San Gabriel Mountains to the north with the Pacific Ocean to the South via a network of river- and tributary-adjacent greenways parks and trails that connect East and West Los Angeles County. Placeworks will continue to strategically support this expanded vision.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? Did you participate in making them? Approximately 400 words.

Tradeoffs and compromises are typically part of any comprehensive planning process. In writing the El Monte General Plan, however, the compelling and bold vision of the Emerald Necklace project did not require compromise. We advocated with Amigos de los Rios and worked with City of El Monte civic leaders and staff to explicitly incorporate the Emerald Necklace into the General Plan and Community Building Strategic Plan. Similarly, the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision is a bold one that does not compromise in picturing a healthier and more sustainable future for Los Angeles County. Certainly, there will be tradeoffs for actual project design and implementation, as there have been in El Monte. There are so many decisions to consider in project implementation, including public safety, funding, interjurisdictional cooperation, property owner concerns, etc. But at the vision and strategic planning level, we aspired to be explicit, bold, and visionary. This spirit also embodies the Emerald Necklace expanded Vision Plan.

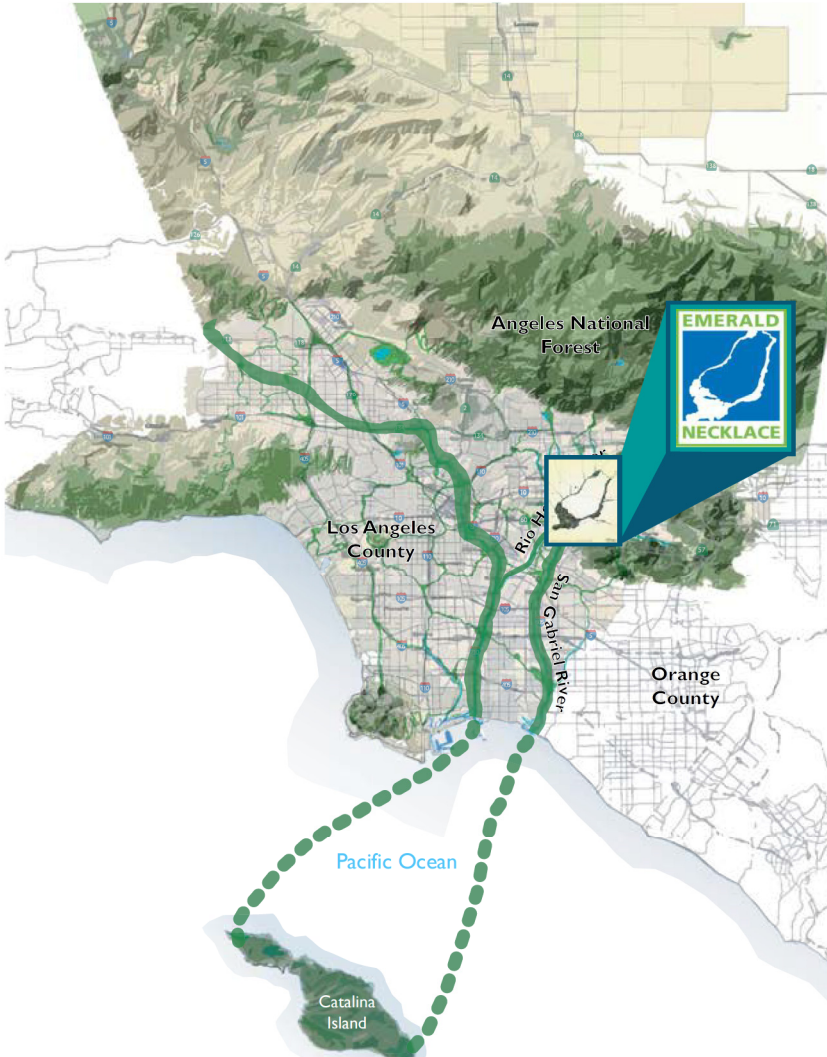
It was our intention to capture the imagination of the El Monte community, its civic leaders, and City staff. So when the hard tradeoffs and compromises inevitably come, the vision and social capital developed along the way could help span those differences and allow all participants to make any compromises. The same will apply to currently underway and future Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision Projects.

4. What do you consider to be the the most and least successful aspects of this project? Approximately 400 words.

The success of the San Gabriel Emerald Necklace and the Emerald Necklace Expanded Plan extends beyond a vision. As a professional planner, we aspire to create plans that ultimately make a difference by changing the physical and social landscape that furthers the community's vision. Often these plans take up to a generation to materialize. What makes the Emerald Necklace a model of success is its track record of successful implementation. In the last ten years, at least 12 demonstration projects have been completed including projects such as Peck Water Conservation Park (spent quarry conversion), Durfee Thompson joint use school/park, Lashbrook (bioswale park), Downtown Gateway (celebration of Veterans, Rio Vista- Tongva Gabriellino and Barrio Cultural Heritage), Gibson Mariposa (Brownfield to butterfly habitat), Sam's Club Stormwater best management practices for parking lot, Tree Power on the Boulevard, Clean Air Bus line, San Gabriel Canyon Gateway, and others. The same applies for current Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision projects such as the Wellness Center at the LA County-USC General Hospital and Emerald Necklace Tot Lots parks for youth aged 0-5 and their families in East Los Angeles. Along the way, the projects in the Emerald Necklace are inspiring community leadership, training of residents, best practices with respect to environmental stewardship, and so many other benefits.



2005 Emerald Necklace Vision Plan



Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Vision Plan with 2005 Vision Plan

Completed Projects



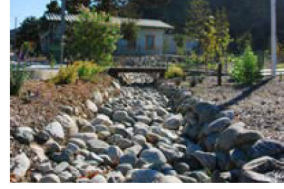
Lashbrook Park



Durfee



Rio Vista



San Gabriel Canyon



Gibson Mariposa



Columbia



Peck Trolley and Bus



Peck



Veterans Park

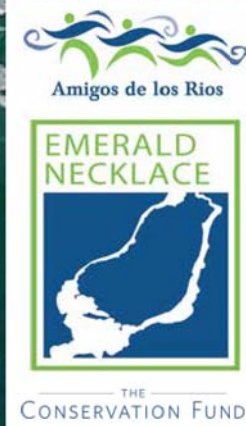


Madrid

EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION PLAN:

Towards a Common Vision

The Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Vision Plan: Towards a Common Vision
Funded by: The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal
Protection Bond Act of 2006 Proposition 84 and the State of California Strategic Growth Council



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EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION PLAN: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Plan for Los Angeles County outlines a set of strategies and action items to make Los Angeles County a better place to live. Produced by Amigos de los Rios and The Conservation Fund, with lead support from the California Strategic Growth Council, the new plan provides a pathway for residents to connect with park and recreation lands—improving the overall health of the people and the environment—from the mountains to the sea.

As one of the nation's largest metropolitan areas, the Los Angeles region should be leading the country in park and recreation opportunities. It is not. Our Expanded Vision can change that. It draws from the best practices of metropolitan regions across the country through the Metropolitan Greenspaces Alliance and outlines a common vision for Los Angeles County through a conceptual map, regional goals, and collaborative priorities and strategies.

In the late 1920s, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce commissioned two visionary landscape architecture firms—Olmsted Brothers, based in Brookline, Massachusetts, and led by the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, and Harland Bartholomew & Associates of St. Louis, Missouri—to create a vision for the Los Angeles region. At the time, community leaders were concerned that Los Angeles County had far fewer acres devoted to playgrounds and parks than other metropolitan areas its size. They wondered if traffic, air pollution, and swelling populations could have a negative impact on the county's future. They worried other cities might outpace them by attracting and retaining young talent. They worried their children might not have enough safe places to play.

Fast forward 80 years and many of those concerns have come to fruition. Los Angeles County spans 4,000 square miles and its 88 cities are home to more than 10 million people. There's no other place in the United States quite like it; Los Angeles County on its own would be the eighth most populous state in the U.S. and the 88th most populous county in the world. The valley holds nearly ¼ of California's population and is one of the most ethnically diverse places in the nation. Its geology is unusual too. Framed by mountains and forests to the north and east, and beaches and oceans to the west, its interior is dominated by grey. Large-scale infrastructure supports a vast population, resplendent with gridlocked freeways, bustling ports, paved riverbeds, and concrete irrigation channels.

To help unravel some of these challenges, Amigos de los Rios commissioned The Conservation Fund to take a fresh look at how we might use green infrastructure—and an interconnected network of parks, rivers, and lands—to help reconnect people and wildlife to the county's lands and waters. For 18 months, The Conservation Fund worked with Amigos to convene focus groups, synthesize existing plans, analyze mapping data, and evaluate potential implementation strategies across the county.

We found that despite the significant alteration of the natural landscape over the past century, many of the core recommendations of the Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan are as relevant today as they were in 1930. There is tremendous opportunity to align a broad coalition of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and local institutions to strive to make a world-class network of parks and public open spaces connected by river greenways for greater Los Angeles. We can adapt the original plan to modern times. We can create a network of walking and biking trails that connect the forest to the ocean. We can improve public health by getting more kids outside. And we can create green jobs that support conservation, restoration, and recreation.

The Expanded Vision also broadens the geographic scope of the 2005 and 2008 Emerald Necklace Vision Plans, produced by Amigos de los Rios, which outlined the development of a 17-mile loop of parks and greenways connecting 10 cities and nearly 500,000 residents along the Río Hondo and San Gabriel Rivers. Further efforts by Amigos linked more than 1,500 acres of parks and open space along an interconnected greenway around the Río Hondo, San Gabriel, and the lower Los Angeles Rivers. Today, Amigos de los Rios works with the Emerald Necklace Coalition, 38 partners committed to building stronger connections between parks and people in East Los Angeles County.

The coalition is an important start. But it's not enough. We hope the Expanded Vision will instill a fierce sense of urgency—a call for real and lasting results—across the entire county. We believe the Expanded Vision can serve as our roadmap to unite East and West, outlining how we can implement existing plans, rather than reinvent the wheel, and how we can promote best practices in design and access, link open spaces across boundaries and scales, and follow best practices case studies.

Here's our vision. We hope you will join us.

Claire Robinson, Amigos de los Rios *Will Allen,* The Conservation Fund

Photo Credits: Loretta Quach, Barbara Eisenstein, Ron Luxembourg, Whitney Flanagan, Claire Robinette, Claire Robinson

AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS

Amigos de los Rios, formed in 2003, is a nonprofit organization that creates vibrant communities by designing quality public environments. In collaboration with local governments, businesses and residents, Amigos de los Rios brings renewed life to urban neighborhoods within economically disadvantaged communities in Southern California. The mission of Amigos is to create sustainable open spaces, protect the environment, and strengthen community life in order to benefit current and future generations.

Ten years ago we began to bring the 1930 Olmsted-Bartholomew Plan for the Los Angeles Basin to life by working on a case study project in the City of El Monte. This project constitutes the original Emerald Necklace—the success of which opened the door to expansion of the vision to all of Los Angeles County. We selected The Conservation Fund as our partner because of its national expertise in green infrastructure planning and its work with peer metropolitan regions across the country.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CONSERVATION FUND

For nearly 30 years, The Conservation Fund has been saving special places across America. We have protected more than 7 million acres of land and water in all 50 states, from the park down the street to historic battlefields, wild areas, and favorite destinations of all kinds. Working with community, government and business partners, we strive to balance economic and environmental goals. The Conservation Fund ranks among the top 1% of charities nationwide.

We hope this plan will compel you to join Amigos de los Rios in improving the quality of life for every resident of Los Angeles County. Similar efforts have taken place in other metropolitan regions across the country, including Chicago, Houston, and Portland. It is time for Los Angeles to show the nation that this world-class community can also have a world-class open space system.

THE CONSERVATION FUND

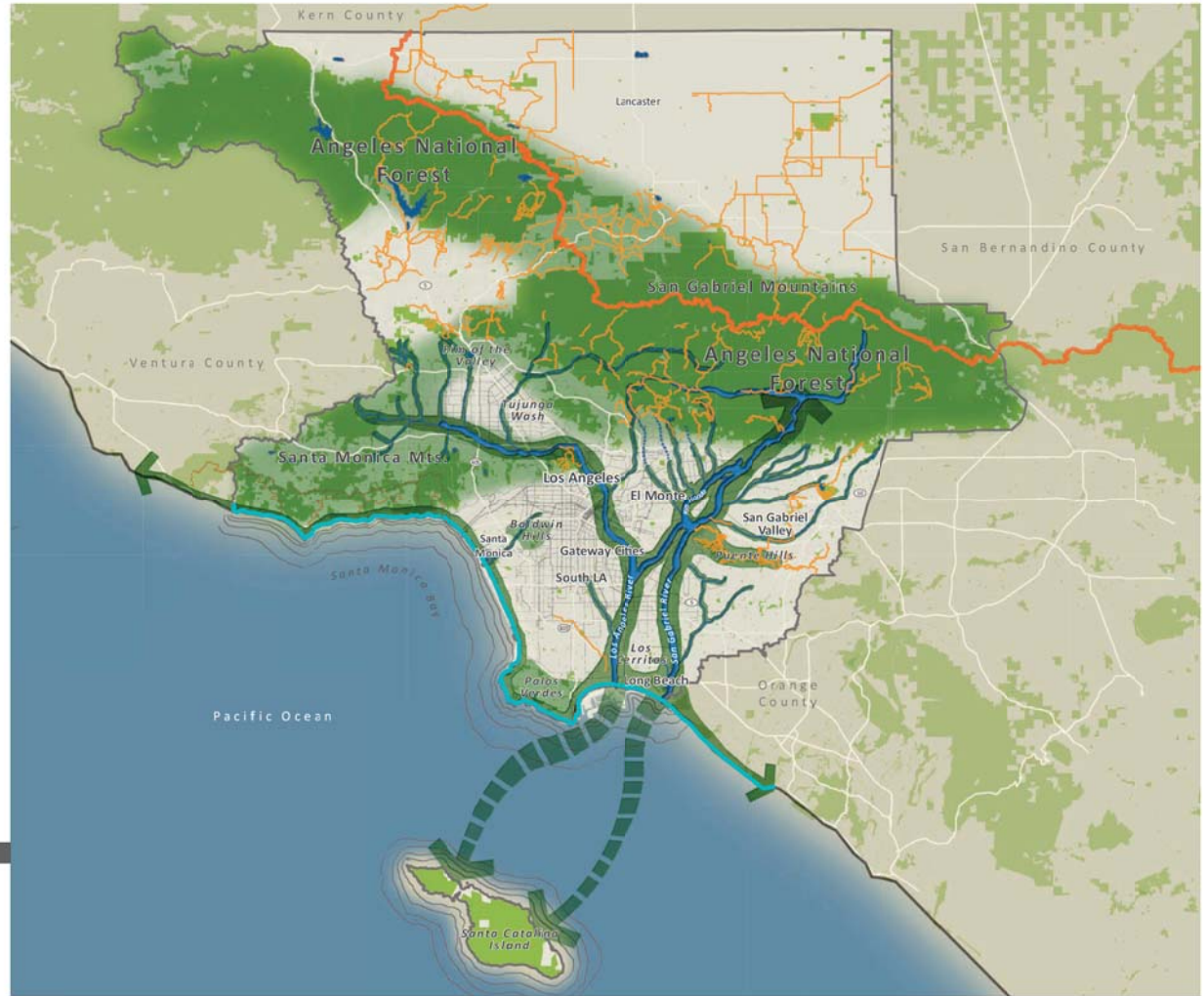
Will Allen *Claire Robinette*
Cl. Amundson *Whitney Flanagan*
Jazzia Varela *Reggie Hall*
Jana. Meredith *Will Math*
Brian Phelps *Hawkins Partners, Inc.*

AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS

EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION PLAN

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LEGEND

- Emerald Necklace Greenway
- Trails
- Rivers/Washes/Creeks
- Beach Trails
- Managed Lands
- Pacific Crest Trail

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

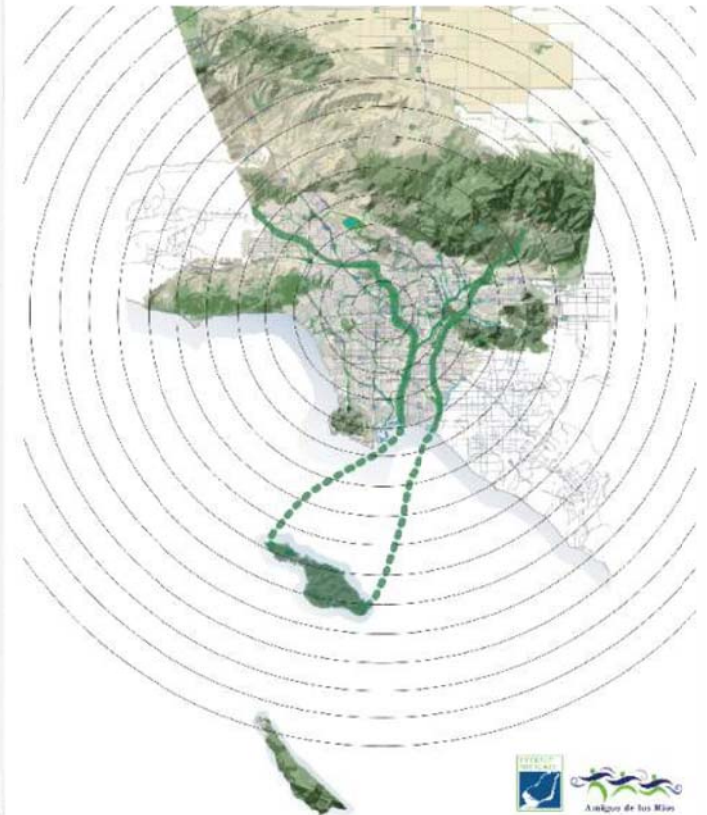
1930 OLMSTED-BARTHOLOMEW PLAN FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY



A REPRODUCTION OF THE 1930 OLMSTED-BARTHOLOMEW PLAN USING MODERN GIS AND MAPPING TECHNIQUES.
CREDIT: THE CITY PROJECT



A MAP FROM THE ORIGINAL 1930 OLMSTED-BARTHOLOMEW PLAN ALONGSIDE A MAP WITH THE EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION SUPERIMPOSED UPON THE 1930 MAP.



AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS



2005 Emerald Necklace Vision Plan



Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Vision Plan with 2005 Vision Plan



A CALL TO ACTION FROM AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS

We hope that you will find this Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Vision Plan for Los Angeles County an inspiration for your continued efforts to make Southern California a better place to live, work, and play. This plan simply would not have been possible without your support as one of the many partners throughout Los Angeles County striving to provide a higher quality of life in our metropolitan region for our children and future generations.

We started the Emerald Necklace Vision in 2005 with the Cities of El Monte, South El Monte, Baldwin Park, Whittier, and Irwindale as our case study area. With these efforts in a smaller region, we were able to successfully implement 10 multi-objective projects:

- Lashbrook Park
- Durfee Thompson Joint Use Trail
- Rio Vista Park
- San Gabriel Canyon Forest Gateway Park
- Gibson Mariposa Park
- Columbia School Joint Use
- Wilkerson School
- Peck Road Water Conservation Park
- Veterans Memorial Park
- Madrid School Nature and Exercise Trail

We hope that the common vision articulated in this Expanded Vision Plan will foster a “fierce urgency of collaboration” that will enhance and expand the great work already underway to invest in our region’s green infrastructure – the interconnected and strategically managed network of natural, cultural, and recreational resources that provide multiple benefits to nature, people, and the communities in which we live.

Green infrastructure not only provides places for children to play and valuable green space in our neighborhoods, but also helps provide clean air, clean water, and wildlife habitat. Investments in green infrastructure create a recreational network that serves as an alternative to automobile travel, restores natural water flow and groundwater infiltration, helps a community become more resilient to climate change, provides outdoor classrooms for youth, and preserves historic and cultural heritage.

Over 80% of Americans now live within urban megaregions such as Los Angeles County. We urgently need to develop green infrastructure to protect the quality of life for urban youth and families, and we need to engage these communities in green infrastructure development so as to give it a human face and engender a new generation of urban environmental stewards. The time horizon to realize this common vision is NOW.

Over the past ten years, we have demonstrated that multiple objective projects work and that we can solve many challenges simultaneously when we work together in partnership and collaboration. When we maintain a holistic approach – systematically focusing on each local project and weighing its role to improve the mega region – we maximize efficiencies and benefits.

We believe the Emerald Necklace Forest to Ocean Expanded Vision Plan for Los Angeles County provides an aspirational framework for recreation, restoration, watershed protection, and habitat conservation that will be in sync with the region’s ongoing transportation planning, air and water resource planning, climate change action planning, and historic and cultural heritage preservation and education efforts.



PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

REGIONAL GOALS

1 Promote Active Transportation – Walking, Biking, and Alternative Mobility Options

2 Create Functional and Multi-Purpose Natural (Green) and Built (Grey) Environment Networks

3 Improve Public Health by Expanding Access to Nature and Outdoor Recreation

4 Treat Water as a Precious Resource and as a Multi-Benefit Amenity

5 Design and Build Resilient Communities that Adapt to and Mitigate the Current and Projected Impacts of Climate Change

6 Enhance Regional Wildlife and Natural Area Anchors

7 Celebrate Culture and Foster Environmental Awareness Through Education, Outreach, and Workforce Training

8 Foster a Green Economy that Creates Jobs and Spurs Investment in Local Multi-Benefit Projects

1 A comprehensive network of walking, biking, and riding trails, from forest to ocean and from East to West

2 Interconnected and complementary green and grey infrastructure networks

3 A nature-based network of recreation facilities that promotes public health, social justice, and equity

4 A water network that helps manage municipal water supplies, infiltrates groundwater, and provides public health benefits.

5 Communities resilient to changing water supplies, climate extremes, and sea level rise

6 A linked network of open space treasures from the Mountains to the Sea

7 A network of culturally aware and civically involved communities that supports conservation, restoration, and recreation

8 A robust, inclusive, and sustainable local economy that produces new economic opportunities around green infrastructure

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION



REGIONAL GOAL

Promote Active Transportation – Walking, Biking, and Alternative Mobility Options

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Establish an integrated, county-wide bicycle and pedestrian system, including a comprehensive network of off-street multi-use trails that links the cities of the San Gabriel Valley, the Gateway Cities, the City of Los Angeles, and other municipalities and unincorporated areas.
- Expand existing Emerald Necklace Trails and connect missing linkages by adding trails and bridges along rivers and washes, under-crossings, and signalized crossings where necessary to connect residents of local cities to the regional trail network.
- Expand use of utility rights-of-way, vacant and under-utilized lands, low-use rail corridors, and existing transit corridors for bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian infrastructure.
- Improve access to key destinations such as business districts, employment centers, schools, parks, and community facilities through enhanced street crossings, expanded bicycle and pedestrian networks, and improved transit access.
- Provide ancillary infrastructure to support bicycling and walking, such as secure bike parking, bike detection at traffic signals, and improved signal timing for pedestrians.
- Develop a network of Complete Streets, crosswalks, and other amenities to create safe routes to school and implement walking school buses.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

A comprehensive network of walking, biking, and riding trails, from forest to ocean and from East to West

Los Angeles County is known for its considerable traffic and the related air quality impacts. At the same time, many in the region suffer from the unhealthy effects of a sedentary, car-oriented lifestyle. Further, low-income populations are at greater risk for cancer due to poor air quality and obesity, a result of limited access to park space and alternative transport opportunities (along with limited access to healthy food options). Promoting active transportation options in the context of the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision can counter many of these ills at once. Establishing an active transportation network around green infrastructure will increase access to clean air and recreation opportunities as it promotes physical activity and gets people out of their cars.



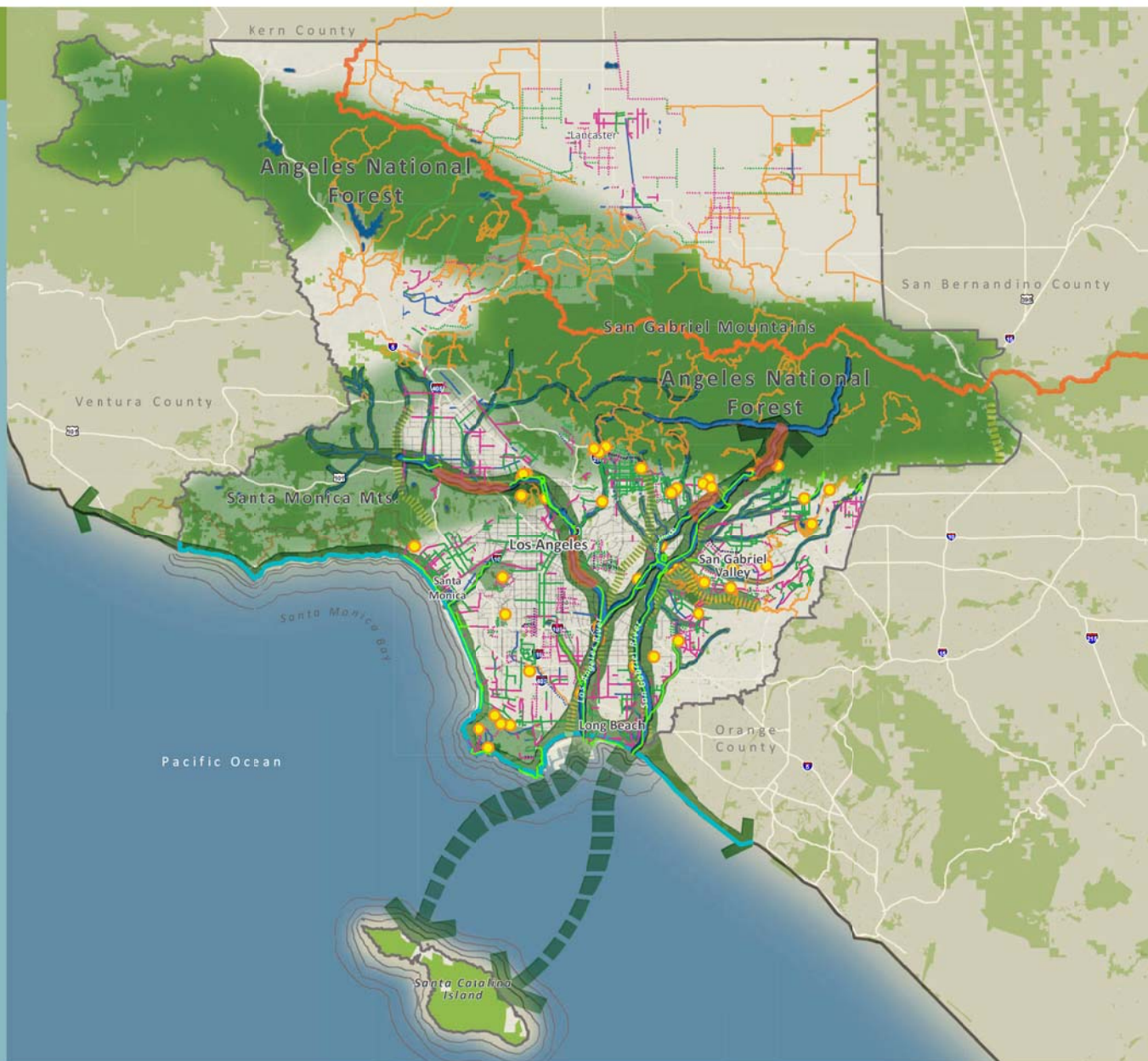
ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION MAP

This map depicts the areas of opportunity for improving and connecting existing infrastructure by expanding the use of utility rights-of-way, enhancing street crossings, bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian access, and transit connections.

These potential trail developments represent opportunities for alternative modes of transportation that will improve walkability and connect communities by greening rights-of-way and trails.

LEGEND

-  Emerald Necklace Greenway
-  Trails along Rivers/Washes/Creeks
-  Utility Rights of Way
-  Waterway Bike Trails
-  Proposed Waterway Bike Trail Connections
-  Class I Bikeway (path)
-  Class II Bikeway (lane)
-  Class III Bikeway (route)
-  Existing Trails
-  Beach Trails
-  Pacific Crest Trail
-  Equestrian Centers



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

1

EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION PLAN



BALANCE OF GREEN AND GREY

REGIONAL GOAL

Create Functional and Multi-Purpose Natural (Green) and Built (Grey) Environment Networks

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Implement 176 miles of the Emerald Necklace greenway to connect the cities of the San Gabriel Valley to the Gateway Cities, the City of Los Angeles, and other LA County municipalities and unincorporated areas.
- Partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in implementing multi-benefit projects that result in large scale restoration of functional natural systems in the Los Angeles and San Gabriel River watersheds.
- Revitalize communities in East and South Los Angeles County that lack a proportionate balance of green and grey infrastructure by the enhancing of schools and their surrounding neighborhoods.
- Create greenways and trails under and adjacent to existing utility and transportation corridors by working with rights-of-way owners, including the California Department of Transportation, Southern California Edison, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, the Los Angeles County Department of Water and Power, Union Pacific Railroad, and other area railroads.
- Complete a comprehensive urban forest and canopy coverage health assessment of the entire Los Angeles Basin.
- Employ best practice green design techniques along freeways and on- and off-ramps, especially when adjacent to schools and when bisecting neighborhoods.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

Interconnected and complementary green and grey infrastructure networks

High costs of land acquisition, murky ownership records, and a complex planning process are but three of the challenges facing the creation of green infrastructure in Los Angeles County. Along with an existing dearth of open space, these challenges underscore the need for green infrastructure projects delivering multiple benefits. Establishing a network of multi-purpose conservation, restoration, and recreation projects will link human and natural communities, resulting in benefits to health, wildlife habitat protection, water quality and supply, stormwater management, air quality, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions.

SCALE

- S STATE (AND FEDERAL)
- R REGION
- W WATERSHED
- C COUNTY
- M MUNICIPALITY
- P PROJECT

MGA METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES ALLIANCE

GREEN AND GREY INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

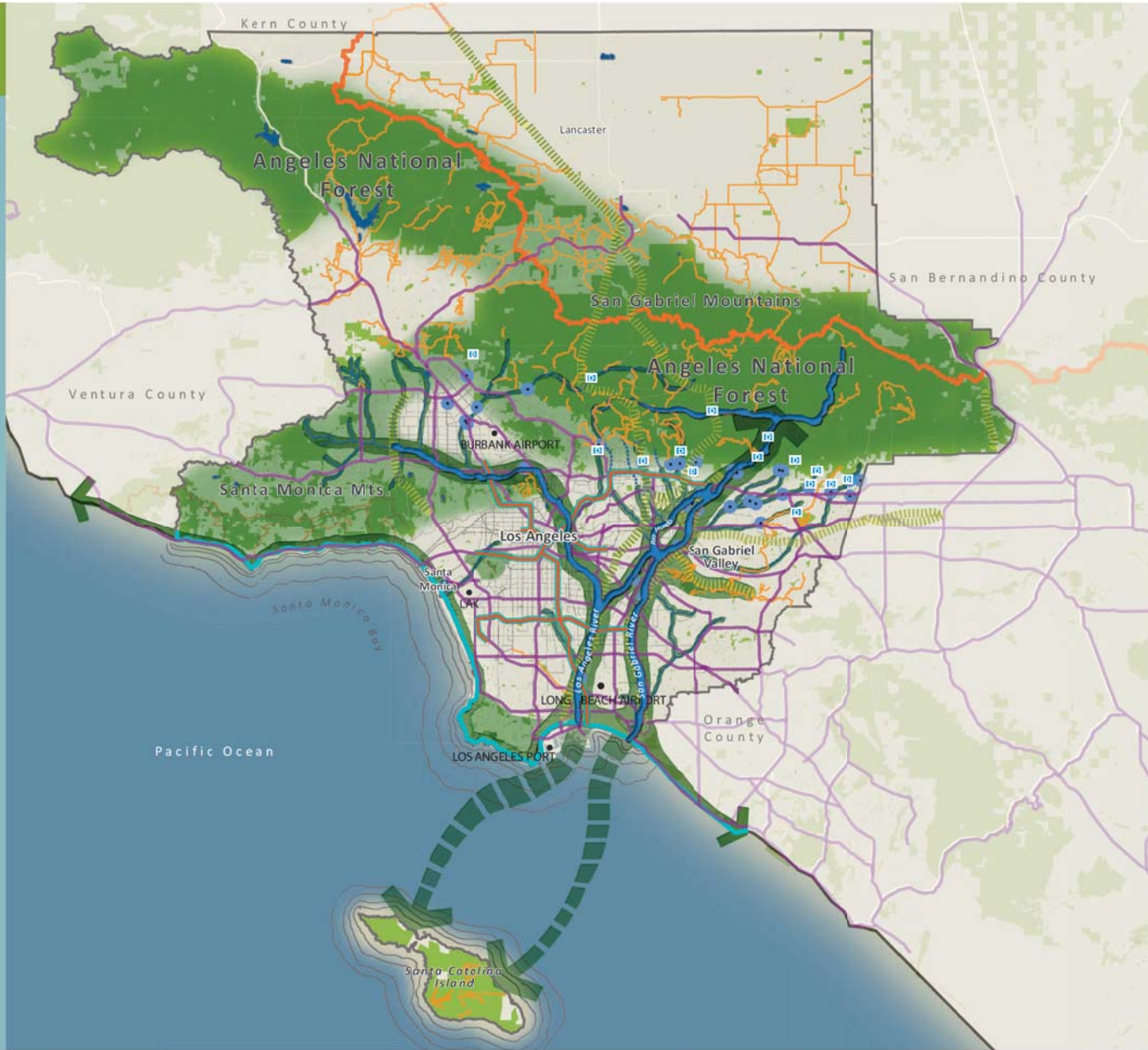
This map depicts existing grey infrastructure that we propose be greened and utilized.

We propose to use the residual spaces underneath the utility lines to create greenways and natural areas.

We can also improve the greening surrounding the freeways and public transit lines.

LEGEND

-  Emerald Necklace
-  Greenway along Rivers/Washes/Creeks
-  Greenways under utility lines
-  Improved greening within and adjacent to freeways
-  Improved greening along public transit
-  Spreading Basins
-  Dams



BALANCE OF GREEN AND GREY



REGIONAL GOAL

Improve Public Health by Expanding Access to Nature and Outdoor Recreation

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Ensure that protected natural areas, parks, and trails are distributed equitably throughout the region so that residents of all ages have access to nature and healthy living.
- Implement multi-benefit projects on school grounds including walking trails and nature discovery outdoor classrooms.
- Implement a county-wide, comprehensive and multi-benefit tree planting program for new and existing open space areas that results in urban wildlife habitat, increased biodiversity, stormwater management, and an ability to mitigate urban heat island effects from changes in temperature and precipitation from climate change.
- Improve access to recreational opportunities in park-poor neighborhoods.
- Perform a comprehensive regional tree canopy study and increase tree canopy in areas where it is currently lacking in order to increase the amount of pervious surface area and to help deter and reduce crime in recreational areas.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

A nature-based network of recreation facilities that promotes public health, social justice, and equity

The green infrastructure advocated for in Regional Goals 1 and 2 must be readily accessible to all of Los Angeles County's communities, especially those that are currently under served. In Los Angeles County, where only 36 percent of children live within one-quarter mile of a park (compared to 91% in New York and 85% in San Francisco), we must pursue all opportunities to expand access to healthy and safe outdoor recreation opportunities. An accessible network of transportation and recreation-oriented green infrastructure will result in better public health and positive social justice outcomes as more equitable access is achieved.

SCALE

- S** STATE (AND FEDERAL)
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MGA METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES ALLIANCE

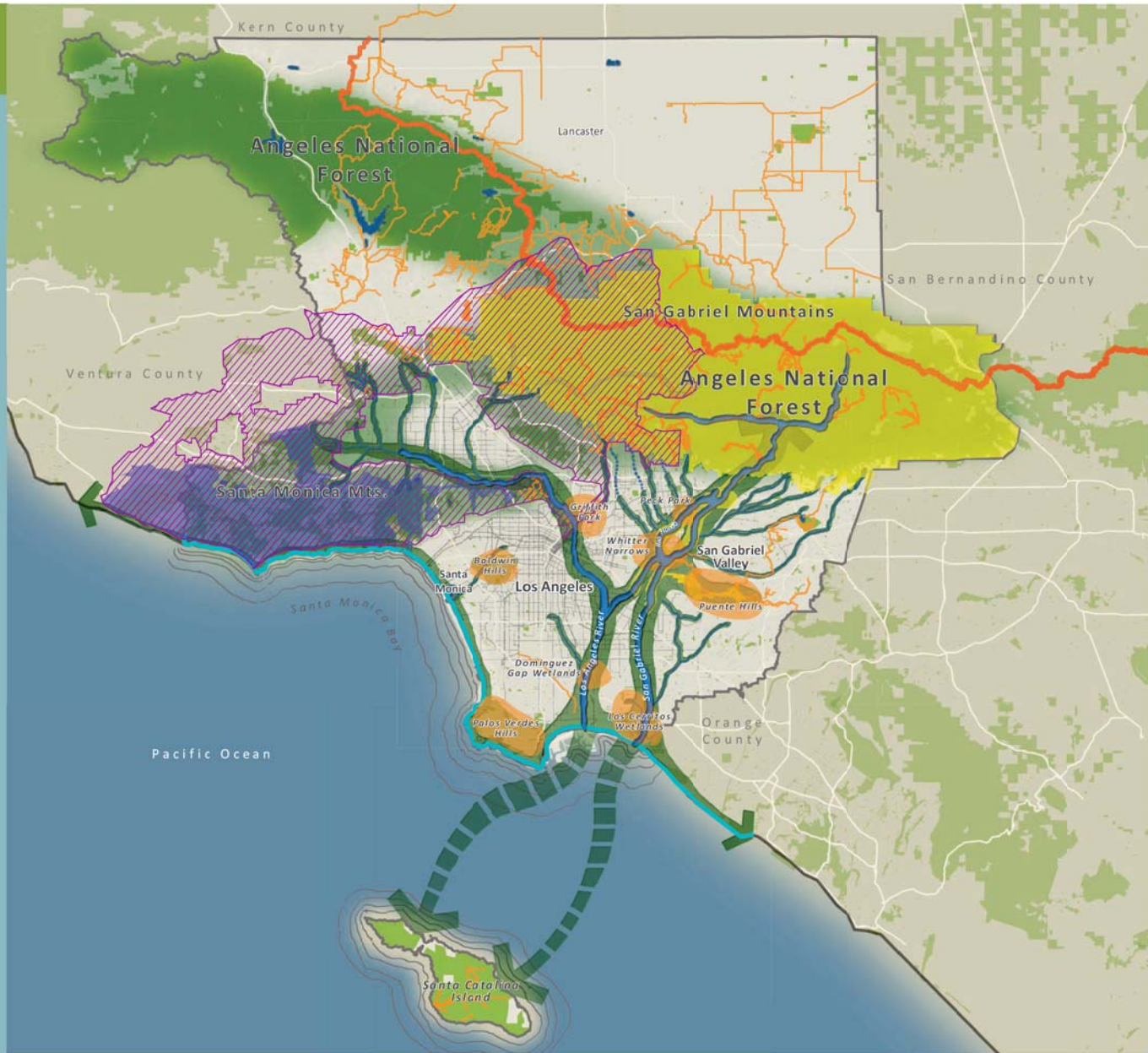
ACCESS TO NATURE MAP

This map depicts the existing natural areas within the Expanded Emerald Necklace. These valuable spaces are connected through the river network, linking the areas together.

Also depicted is the existing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA) as well as the Rim of the Valley and San Gabriel Watershed and Mountains study areas, which are currently under consideration for national designation and whose proposed borders are shown here, a status that would enhance the management of protected outdoor space in Los Angeles County.

LEGEND

-  Emerald Necklace Greenway along Rivers/Washes/Creeks
-  Proposed San Gabriel Watershed & Mountains Permanent Protections
-  Proposed Rim of the Valley Corridor
-  Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
-  Major Regional Anchors
-  Existing Trails
-  Beach Trails
-  Pacific Crest Trail










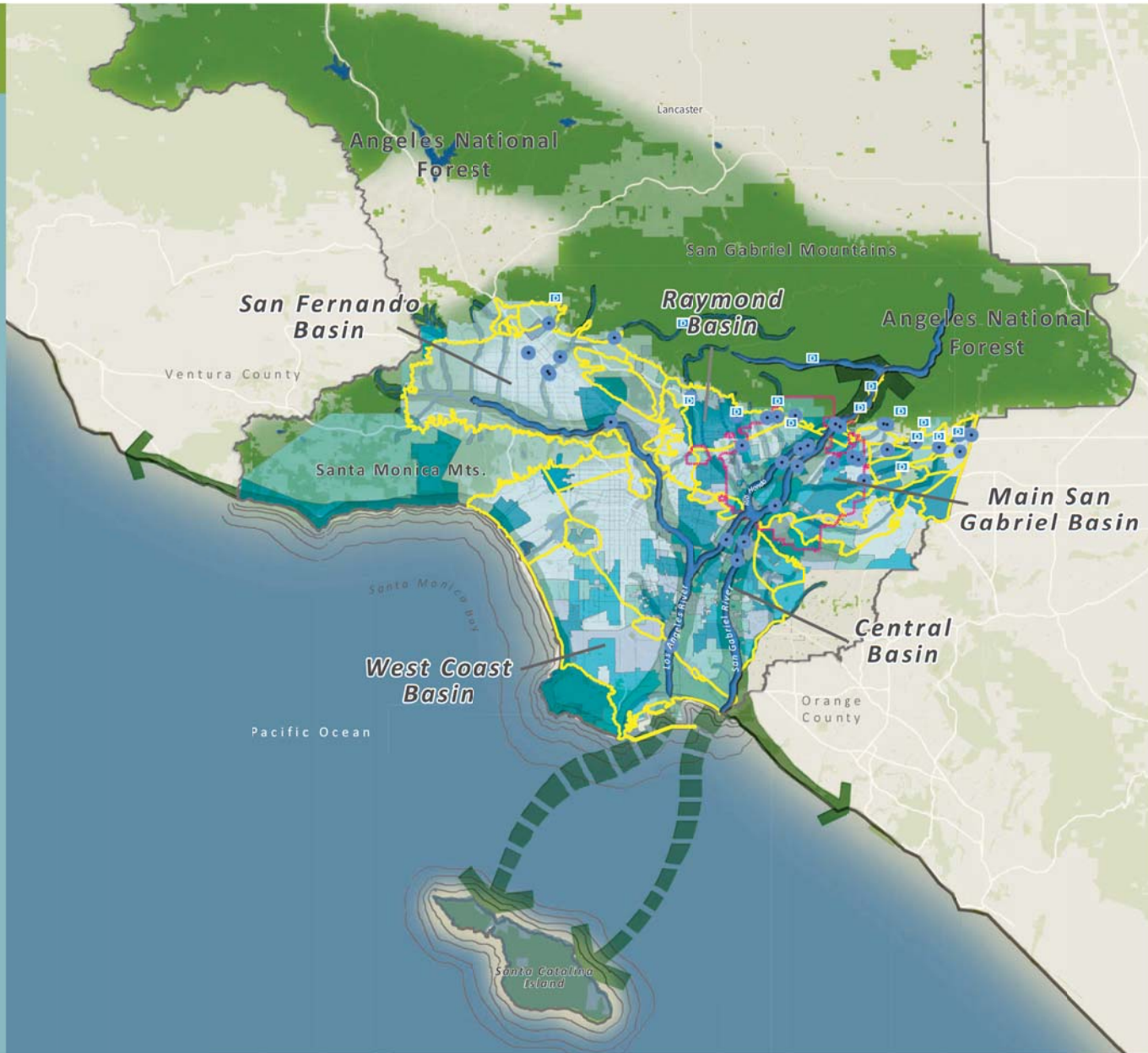
WATER BENEFITS MAP

Water resource management in Los Angeles County is rife with complexity, with a multitude of actors involved in the transportation and distribution of the region's water supply. Of the imported water that supports two-thirds of the county's demand, 40% comes from the Colorado River Aqueduct and 60% comes from the State Water Project.

Recognizing water as a multi-benefit amenity throughout the Expanded Emerald Necklace and implementing the recommendations of the plans captured in this document can result in many positive outcomes, including but not limited to: increased pervious surfaces, increased water recharge, and improved water quality and groundwater infiltration.

LEGEND

-  Emerald Necklace Greenway along Rivers/Washes/Creeks
-  Various Water Purveyors
-  Groundwater Basins
-  Upper San Gabriel Municipal Water District Divisions
-  Beach Trails
-  Spreading Basins
-  Dams



4 WATER AS A MULTI-BENEFIT AMENITY

4



KEY

- S STATE (AND FEDERAL)
- R REGION
- W WATERSHED
- C COUNTY
- M MUNICIPALITY
- P PROJECT

METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES ALLIANCE

REGIONAL GOAL

Enhance Regional Wildlife and Natural Area Anchors

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

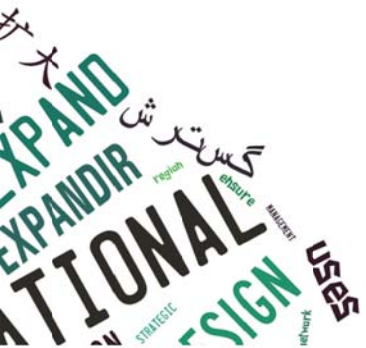
Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Expand regional open space anchors through ecological design, strategic mitigation, and public land management.
- Develop connections between the San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles Forest, the Rim of the Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, and the Expanded Emerald Necklace.
- Devote greater resources to ensure that the region’s natural resources are maintained at a high level for both recreational uses as well as for the sustainability of habitat and natural systems.
- Enhance current restoration efforts of the Santa Fe Dam, Peck Park, Puente Hills, the Los Cerritos Wetlands, Whittier Narrows, and spreading basins along the Rio Hondo and San Gabriel River Spreading Basins.
- Ensure that students in the Los Angeles Basin have opportunities to meaningfully engage with regional natural area anchors throughout elementary, middle and high school.
- Support Federal and State Designations that link the San Gabriel Mountains/Angeles Forest, the Rim of the Valley, and the Expanded Emerald Necklace, enhance recreational opportunities, and increase protections along with investments.
- Work with local universities to develop a regional atlas of biodiversity for the Los Angeles Basin and to enhance the level of science and best management practices employed to manage these areas for the benefit of habitat and ecosystem services.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

A linked network of open space treasures from the Mountains to the Sea

True to the concept of an “Emerald Necklace” that would link communities and ecosystems via a network of natural and built infrastructure, the Expanded Vision Plan places a focus on the “jewels” of this necklace, recommending that the region’s premiere environmental amenities, such as Whittier Narrows, Griffith Park, and the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge be protected and enhanced. Thoughtfully and strategically managing these existing key natural and recreational amenities, in addition to pursuing opportunities to link them with green and built infrastructure, supports Regional Goals 1 through 5 and would increase the multiple benefits and potential of the Expanded Emerald Necklace Vision.

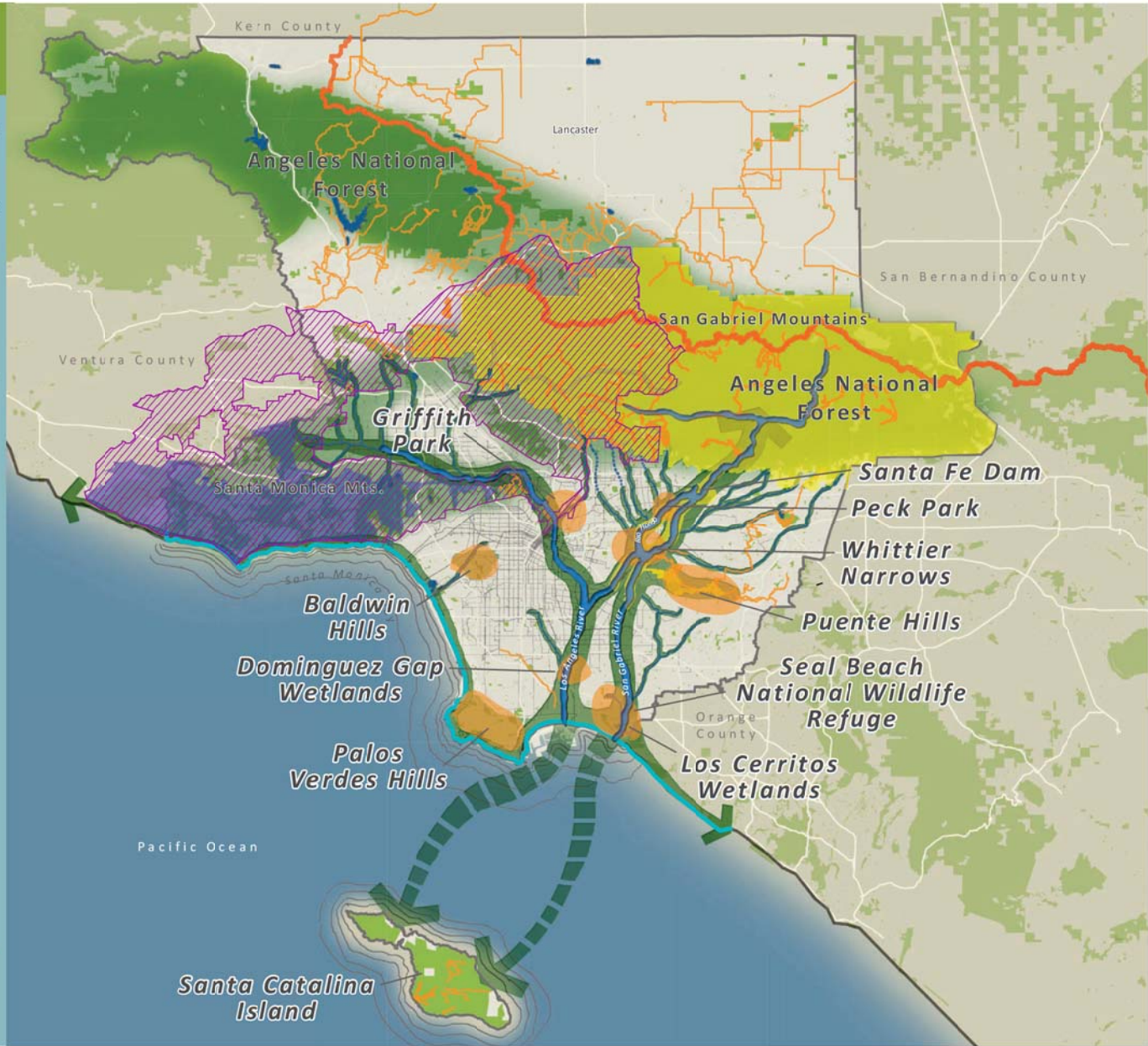


ENHANCE REGIONAL ANCHORS MAP

This map depicts the existing natural areas within the Expanded Emerald Necklace. These valuable spaces are connected through the river network, which links these open spaces together and allows wildlife habitat connectivity, making these resources invaluable to Los Angeles County.

LEGEND

-  Emerald Necklace
-  Greenway along Rivers/Washes/Creeks
-  Proposed San Gabriel Watershed & Mountains Permanent Protections
-  Proposed Rim of the Valley Corridor
-  Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
-  Major Regional Anchors
-  Beach Trails
-  Pacific Crest Trail



ENHANCE REGIONAL ANCHORS

6

SCALE

- S STATE (AND FEDERAL)
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- P PROJECT

MGA METROPOLITAN GREENSPACES ALLIANCE

REGIONAL GOAL

Celebrate Culture and Foster Environmental Awareness Through Education, Outreach, and Workforce Training

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Create a world-class network of public parks and open spaces of great meaning, beauty, and utility as an expression of the diverse citizenry of the entire Los Angeles Basin and our shared civic values.
- Implement programs to cultivate and promote a greater ethic of stewardship from area residents to enhance the region's natural areas and open space corridors and build local constituencies that take an active role in enhancing urban wildlife habitat and healthy forests.
- Build awareness among residents of the region regarding the impact of stormwater practices and discharge of pollutants on native plant systems, animal species, and the quality of habitat areas.
- Work with communities to design and build a network of meaningful interpretive trails and greenways that articulate each culture's special beliefs and relationship as a way to celebrate the Basin's diverse cultural heritage.
- Create partnerships with local museums and cultural institutions to develop innovative outdoor learning and research opportunities related to the Emerald Necklace.
- Promote intergenerational opportunities for exploring the natural world and for transferring knowledge and memories of natural and cultural landscapes between generations.
- Foster a civic culture where government agencies effectively collaborate with community stewards to protect and enhance to region's shares resources.
- Convene an annual meeting of organizations within the Expanded Emerald Necklace Vision area to leverage resources and foster collaboration.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

A network of culturally aware and civically involved communities that support conservation, restoration, and recreation.

Over the past ten years, Amigos de Los Rios has consistently stressed the crucial importance of community involvement as a means to not only produce better projects, but also to cultivate an appreciation of natural amenities and resources and to build local constituencies that can take active roles in promoting healthy human and natural communities. A vision as broad as the Expanded Emerald Necklace can only be achieved with community buy-in and a broadened recognition of the diverse ways natural amenities can improve the region's communities and economies.



EMERALD NECKLACE FOREST TO OCEAN EXPANDED VISION PLAN

REGIONAL GOAL

Foster a Green Economy that Creates Jobs and Spurs Investment in Local Multi-Benefit Projects

COLLABORATIVE PRIORITIES

Strategies to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision:

- Foster innovative, job-creating opportunities that directly support the social and natural functionality of the Emerald Necklace network.
- Ensure that economically disadvantaged communities have access to new green collar job opportunities by providing training and resources.
- Apply economic analyses that account for and value ecosystem services while factoring environmental externalities into investment decision-making.
- Develop local sources of funding for green infrastructure implementation related to parks and stormwater management.
- Support youth conservation corps involvement in urban forestry and green infrastructure development.
- Identify and pursue economic opportunities and public-private partnerships to develop recreational opportunities and improve access to open space throughout the region.
- Identify novel funding streams and mechanisms to promote the Emerald Necklace as an economic incubator for the next generation of social ventures, helping community-based groups and non-profit organizations build capacity and scale up urban greening solutions.

TOWARDS A COMMON VISION

A robust, inclusive, and sustainable local economy that produces new economic opportunities around green infrastructure

Implementing the vision outlined in the Expanded Vision Plan can not only produce environmental, social, and public health benefits, but also can stimulate the growth of the economic “pie,” as novel products and processes emerge from innovative approaches to some of Los Angeles County’s long-standing challenges. Economic analysis and financial practices that take into account the true environmental cost of landscape interventions and appeal to system based thinking are integral to engendering these novel opportunities in the green economy. Applying what has been termed the “Triple Bottom Line” approach, which combines economic growth, environmental health, and social equity to measure the region’s prosperity, can help identify external costs and encourage collaboration and creativity in developing new, locally sensitive, and regionally scalable solutions.

KEY

- S** STATE (AND FEDERAL)
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- W** WATERSHED
- C** COUNTY
- M** MUNICIPALITY
- P** PROJECT

MGA METROPOLITAN
GREENSPACES
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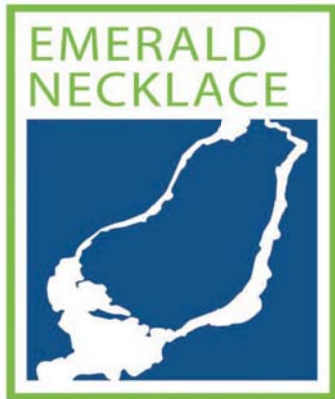


FOSTER A GREEN ECONOMY

8

EMERALD NECKLACE COALITION

Coalition Members



Coalition Member Agencies

Azusa
Baldwin Park
Duarte
El Monte
Irwindale
Montebello
South El Monte
Whittier
Monrovia
La Puente
Bell
South Gate
San Gabriel
Downey

Gateway Authority

Bell Gardens
Commerce
Compton
Cudahy
Huntington Park
Long Beach
Lynwood
Maywood
Paramount
Signal Hill
Pico Rivera

County Agencies

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

State Agencies

State Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

Unincorporated Areas

Hacienda Heights Homeowners Assoc.
Workman Mills Road Homeowners Assoc.
Park El Monte Improvement Assoc.

Environmental Organizations

Charro Equestrian Joint Council
Sierra Club

School Districts

Garvey School District
El Rancho Unified School District
Mountain View Unified School District
El Monte Union School District
El Monte City School District
West Covina Unified School District

The Emerald Necklace concept in the San Gabriel Valley was formalized with the **2005 Emerald Necklace Accord**, a legal document which has been signed by 38 member agencies, listed here, who have committed themselves to collaboration in planning for and implementing projects identified in the original Emerald Necklace case study area. The Emerald Necklace Accord encourages its signatories, cumulatively known as **The Emerald Necklace Coalition**, to work at the watershed scale, looking beyond political boundaries to acknowledge the multiple benefits of protecting and preserving the region's rivers and tributaries, providing greater access to open space and recreation opportunities, increased native habitat conservation and restoration, water quality protection and conservation, and educational initiatives around the original Emerald Necklace. It commits Coalition members to collaboration, resource-sharing, and consensus building without creating new financial obligations in working towards continuing to develop the original Emerald Necklace.

We hope that this innovative collaborative model will serve as a best practice example as agencies and organizations across Los Angeles County work to implement the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision throughout Los Angeles County and its waterways.



Top 10 Emerald Necklace Funders 2011-2014

- California Natural Resources Agency
- Los Angeles County Regional Parks & Open Space District - Prop A
- First 5 Los Angeles
- State of California Department of Recreation & Parks
- California Department of Transportation Environmental Enhancement & Mitigation Program
- La Plaza de Cultura y Artes
- Annenberg Foundation
- Wild Spaces
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI)

THE HUMAN FACE OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Cultural Symbols for water



Selection of plants indigenous to the Los Angeles region

Emerald Necklace Projects Completed to Date

- San Gabriel Canyon Gateway – Park and Interpretive Center Development
- Santa Fe Dam – Park Tree Planting
- Peck Water Conservation Park – Park Improvements
- Rio Hondo Park – Trail Improvements
- Rio Vista Park – Park and Trail Development
- Gibson Mariposa Park – Park Development
- Veterans Memorial Park – Park Development
- Valley Boulevard Tree Power Interpretive Project – Tree Planting Project
- Columbia School, Wilkerson School, & Willard Payne School – Trail Development and Tree Planting
- Lashbrook Park – Park Development
- El Bosque del Rio Hondo – Interpretive Signage Kiosk
- Durfee Thompson School Nature Park – Park Development
- La Primera School Greening – San Gabriel River Greenway
- Twin Lakes School Greening – San Gabriel River Greenway
- Madrid School Greening – Nature Exercise Trail Development
- Mountain View High School Greening – San Gabriel River Greenway
- Arrow Highway Bike Stop – Interpretive Signage
- Thienes Emerald Necklace – Tree Planting and Signage
- Hollydale Park – Nature Trail Development and Park Improvements
- Circle Park – Nature Trail Development
- Los Angeles County & USC Wellness Center – Park and Fitness Trail Development
- Pixley Park - Nature Trails for Tots
- Riverfront Park - Nature Trails for Tots
- Mini Center - Nature Trails for Tots
- Pasadena Unified School District – Tree Planting
- San Gabriel Valley Schools – Tree Planting
- Emerald Necklace Cities – Tree Planting

AMIGOS DE LOS RIOS



Lead support for the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision Plan was provided by the California Strategic Growth Council. The Strategic Growth Council's mission is to help make the state's communities more sustainable. In keeping with its broad membership, the Council defines sustainability holistically:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Improve air and water quality
- Improve protection of natural resources and agricultural lands
- Increase the availability of affordable housing
- Improve public health
- Improve transportation
- Encourage sustainable land use plans and greater infill development
- Revitalize urban and community centers in a sustainable manner

To accomplish this mission, the Council adopted four strategies that are closely based on its enabling statute:

1. Coordinate State Programs to Achieve Sustainability Objectives
2. Provide Local Assistance
3. Fund and Distribute Data & Information
4. Recommend Policies Advancing Sustainable Communities



TESTIMONIALS

Sense of Urgency

“We hope the Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision plan will instill a fierce sense of urgency - a call for real and lasting results to improve green infrastructure - across the entire county. The plan is a roadmap for uniting East and West, Mountains to Ocean, collaborating effectively across jurisdictions to put a human face to infrastructure and accelerate improvements for the benefit of children and public health. We need to promote best practices in sustainable city design and improve access to open spaces.”

-Claire Robinson, President, Amigos de los Rios

“As one of the nation’s largest metropolitan areas, the Los Angeles region should be leading the country in park and recreation opportunities, but it is not yet. Countywide, only 36 percent of children live within one-quarter mile of a park, compared to 85 percent in San Francisco. That’s not good news for those of us who care about clean air, healthy communities and a growing green economy. If we aspire to those goals, we will need to write a new chapter for the region and adapt the original plan to modern times.”

-William L. Allen, III, Director, Strategic Conservation Planning, The Conservation Fund

“The Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision plan is a visionary framework to link important LA area watersheds and the communities they touch. Much in the way that our vision for the LA River encompasses its entire 51 mile length, both inside and outside our city limits, the Expanded Vision takes a regional approach to providing much needed open space in some of our most park poor neighborhoods.”

-Eric Garcetti, 42nd Mayor of Los Angeles

“As of 2008, more people in the world live in cities than in the countryside. That means one of two things: either the human race will continue to lose its connection to the natural world, or it means a new kind of city - a nature-rich city. This plan moves urban Los Angeles county forwards toward that great goal.”

- Richard Louv, Founding chairman of Children & Nature Network, journalist and author of eight books about the connections between family, nature and community

“For thousands of years, the rivers of Los Angeles held a perennial flow of clean water, bounded upstream by willows and cottonwoods, and downstream going underground or panning out into the LA basin in the hot summer months. The restoration of the three rivers and their environs is central to a deeper need: the creation of a livable city in which all people can sustain their families and pursue their dreams. Amigos de los Rios understands that you cannot restore the life of a community without restoring the community of life. All great cities adhered closely to the rivers that sustained them. Rebuilding community and culture along these riparian corridors is a radically important act.”

- Paul Hawken, Founder of the Natural Capital Institute, author of The Ecology of Commerce and seven other books about ecological business practices, environmentalist, entrepreneur

Resilient Communities

“Creating connections is a major emphasis of this plan. While the overall theme is connecting the mountains to the sea, and all of the communities in between, the plan also will help connect people to nature and build a foundation for healthy, vibrant and resilient cities.”

- Dr. Jack Sahl, Associate Adjunct Professor, Epidemiology at UCLA Fielding School of Public Health

“Amigos de los Rios’ Emerald Necklace plan is visionary. Amigos sees Los Angeles as a unified whole, connecting East to West and North to South. The plan takes climate change into account, and yet works with nature to enhance resiliency particularly in poor communities where help is most needed.”

- Jonathan Parfrey, Executive Director, Climate Resolve

Heritage

“As the Co-Chair of the National Park System Latino Heritage Scholars Panel, I am particularly appreciative of Goal 7 in the Emerald Necklace Expanded Plan which seeks to develop “a network of culturally aware and civically involved communities that supports conservation, restoration, and recreation.” The nexus of recreation, cultural heritage and environmental education is critically important to this region, which has a deep history associated with Native American, Latino and now prominent Asian Pacific communities. Future generations must be able to celebrate and remember our shared history through education and interpretation of our natural and cultural resources.”

- Belinda Faustinos, Co-chair, San Gabriel Mountains Forever Coalition and Retired Executive Officer, San Gabriel Rivers and Mountains Conservancy

Engaging Business for Triple Bottom Line

"Amigos and The Conservation Fund have created one of the rare national examples of developing a vision for natural features in our urban landscapes that truly will engender social and economic benefits to communities who truly need them. The plan reflects an exemplary model of community engagement, led by Amigos, which provides all of us with the necessary blueprint to create an accessible network of parks and greenways that will be valued and will lead to critical positive impacts for communities vulnerable to global change.

"Earthwatch is very excited about the new opportunities laid out in the Expanded Vision for direct and meaningful participation by local communities, by corporate employees and by educators and students in the creation and stewardship of important green places. We have seen the power of engaging businesses and other key stakeholders, both at home and internationally in the kinds of programs envisioned by Amigos, where citizen scientists are involved in case examples where nature restoration really does lead to real economic development, jobs training, and a deeper understanding of the triple-bottom line of sustainable development."

- Mark Chandler, International Director of Research, Earthwatch

Education

"The Emerald Necklace Expanded Plan underscores the need for educators to support creation of our next generation of environmental stewards and the importance of integrating conservation values into urban education programs from pre-school through high school. That includes creating a green infrastructure network interlaced with the schools and fostering a culture of outdoor creation, as well as nature based learning where natural and cultural heritage can be celebrated. As we move forward in this era of the Common Core Standards, there are daily opportunities for teachers to integrate the themes of the Vision into students' instruction and experiences. With this vision, Amigos de los Rios will continue to work to provide opportunities and support for that to occur in classrooms and in the larger communities that they serve."

- Jeff Seymour, Former Superintendent, El Monte City School District

Water

"Improving the availability of ecosystem services within cities, especially in disadvantaged communities, is a critical need for a more sustainable region. The Emerald Necklace Expanded Vision plan provides a comprehensive framework for expanding green spaces that will provide these services throughout the region and importantly looks for solutions that minimize impacts on water resources."

- Darrel Jenerette, Urban Ecologist and Tenured Professor, University of California Riverside

Active Transportation

"The Los Angeles basin is beset with poor air and water quality, public health disparities, hostile streets for pedestrians and cyclists and a lack of recreational open space. Developing a robust network of attractive community greenways intrinsically addresses all these issues. By transforming local waterways - rivers, creeks, and washes - into viable, safe and easily accessible linear parks and trails, The Emerald Necklace Vision plan ultimately extends connectivity to the region's most desirable recreation destinations. The river corridors also provide a utilitarian purpose for commuter bicyclists seeking alternative access to employment hubs, transportation centers and entertainment or commercial districts. The Emerald Necklace Vision plan fosters the level of collaboration and consensus necessary to achieve a well-connected Los Angeles that is healthier, greener, and all around more dynamic!"

- Javier Hernandez, Program Manager at BikeSGV