

## **LA's River Finally Gets Major Attention From City of Los Angeles**

By: Lupe M. Vela, Senior Staff for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River

On Monday, October 7, the Ad Hoc Committee met in a celebratory meeting to begin a citywide focus on the Los Angeles River. For years the Los Angeles River has been the concern of many communities, parks, and environmental groups. Finally, those tireless efforts are paying off. The Ad Hoc Committee members are Councilmembers Ed Reyes Council District 1, Eric Garcetti Council District 13, Wendy Greuel Council District 2, Tom LaBonge Council District 4 and Jan Perry Council District 9, all LALCV endorsed, are tasked with compelling current reports, studies, and projects, and developing a holistic approach to the river's revitalization. For its first action, the committee which has a time period of 18 months, for its first action, the committee adopted a set of nine guiding principles. The principles include the idea that the river, restored to its natural beauty, offers opportunities for business development and housing. The principles also advocate that the river can have many uses, including recreation, open space and flood protection.

The Los Angeles River runs from the western San Fernando Valley to Long Beach. In some parts, it has vibrant natural habitats. But in some parts--such as the stretch through the central city--its path was paved long ago, creating an attractive target for graffiti vandals.

Last May, Reyes asked Council President Alex Padilla to create an Ad Hoc Committee on the Los Angeles River. Reyes' request stems from the belief that the City can and should play a greater role in the restoration of the LA River, a role, he contends, the City has shied away from for too long and one that should work in close partnership with local residents.

"Our challenge is making sure we engage the community, and listen to the people who will visit and use the river. That is how we develop a vision of what the LA River can truly become," Reyes said.

Specifically, the committee would serve as a clearinghouse of community, City and regionally driven revitalization efforts. It would also serve as a venue for public/private discussions on opportunities in creating and accomplishing short-term and long-term goals.

"For the first time in the City Council's history, we are bringing a real focus to the LA River. It's long overdue, particularly for the neighborhoods along the river's path. This type of focus will be in everyone's best interest," said Reyes.