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COASTAL
COMMISSION

Sea Level Rise Workshop #2 | Nov. 4, 2017

Venice Local Coastal Program

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The City of Los Angeles has initiated preparation of the coastal hazard component of the Local Coastal Program (LCP) for Venice, focusing on hazard adaptation planning for sea level rise. Sharing critical information with the community and soliciting input are part of the planning process. In November 2017, the City conducted the second of four community workshops. This summary documents the workshop objectives, format and input activities, and major themes in the input. All input is documented in the appendices.

The workshop was staffed by the City Department of City Planning team for Venice and the consultant team supporting sea level rise planning for Venice – Dudek, Moffat & Nichol, and Kearns & West.



WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop focused on three objectives:

- Establish a common framework for community dialogue on sea level rise planning.
- Facilitate input and discussion on the community assets for the team to consider in the upcoming vulnerability assessment.
- Help community members obtain important information related to sea level rise and coastal hazards.

WHERE AND WHEN

Saturday, November 4, 2017, 10:00 am to noon
Westminster Avenue Elementary School
1010 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Venice 90291

ATTENDANCE

The City used multiple methods to inform community members about the workshop and encourage participation, as shown in the table below. Approximately 35 people attended.

Notification Methods
E-mail announcement using Venice LCP’s Unit database (approximately 250 individuals and 70 organizations /stakeholder groups)
Announcement on Local Coastal Program Website (www.VeniceLCP.org)
Briefings with canal area organizations
Customized e-mail invitations to prioritized organizations, with request to forward/post invitation to members and constituents
Outreach via City’s Public Affairs Office to local groups who have a presence on social media via the Planning Departments platforms (Planning4LA)
Phone calls and targeted emails to Community Organizations/Stakeholders
Posting physical flyers at activity centres located throughout the community.



FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES

By sharing information and soliciting input using different methods, people with varying communication styles had opportunities to participate in ways that felt comfortable and productive to them. The workshop progressed in three steps:

- 1) Presentation;
- 2) Open house stations; and
- 3) Break-out discussion groups.

Spanish translation accommodations were provided, including availability of Spanish translators and the transmitter/headset system. No attendees at this workshop required use of the Spanish translation services. Subsequent planning will expand outreach to target the local Spanish speaking community in order to ensure the City's efforts to feasibly engage this community is fully exhausted.

Detailed descriptions of the workshop steps follow below.

Presentation

All participants convened for the project team's opening presentation, which supplied general information about the role of sea level rise adaptation planning in the Venice Local Coastal Program. More specifically, it addressed sea level rise trends, potential implications for Venice in the beach and canals areas, and the role of adaptation planning to reduce risks. The planning process and role of public input was explained, with particular focus on the first step of completing the vulnerability assessment. The team also explained that input from the workshop would help to inform the vulnerability assessment, and that the next workshop will focus on soliciting feedback on both the results of the vulnerability assessment and the flooding and inundation scenario assessment. Appendix A contains the presentation slides.

Open House Stations

Open house stations provided opportunities for attendees to ask questions, learn more, and provide input. There were four stations staffed by the project team's planning and technical experts:

- Station 1: What is Coastal Hazard Planning?
- Station 2: Sea Level Rise Scenarios and Vulnerability Assessment
- Station 3: Sea Level Rise Hazards in Venice Beach Areas and Canal Areas
- Station 4: Venice Local Coastal Program

The station staff recorded notes on attendee's questions, comments, and ideas on flip charts – see Appendix B.



Break-out Discussion Groups

Break-out discussion groups were used to learn from community members about study topics for the vulnerability assessment. A facilitator from the project team supported each group in a three-step process:

- **Step 1, *Brainstorm*:** In the first step, participants provided responses to the prompt, “What input do you have on coastal community and shoreline assets, questions, concerns, and ideas that the team should consider during the Vulnerability Assessment?”
- **Step 2, *Prioritization*:** Using the responses from brainstorming, attendees used sticky dots to identify the points that they believe are most important for the project team to consider in the vulnerability assessment.
- **Step 3, *Summary*:** The facilitator reviewed the priorities as identified by the dots, made notes of additional input and comments.

The group discussions were documented on flip charts, and some groups made additional notes on the maps. The transcribed notes and map notes are consolidated in Appendix C.

Input Card

Upon arrival, all attendees received an input card to record comments pertaining to the Open House stations and small group discussions. Appendix D contains the input cards submitted during the workshop.

ONLINE INPUT OPPORTUNITY

From November 5 to December 31, 2017*, an on-line input activity (in English and Spanish) was linked to the project website so that community members unable to attend the workshop could still provide input. The presentation was also posted for information and project orientation.

Two questions were asked:

- What input do you have on coastal community and shoreline assets, questions, concerns, and ideas that the team should consider during the Vulnerability Assessment for Venice?
- Please use the space below to provide additional input, ideas, questions, and considerations for sea level rise planning in Venice.

To date (Dec.5th, 2017) two responses have been received by community members that attended the November 4th workshop. Appendix E contains the responses.



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MAJOR INPUT THEMES

Major themes represent big ideas and input that were repeatedly discussed in various settings. Below are seven themes that strongly represent participant input. Importantly, understanding the breadth and depth of input requires reviewing the input, which is documented in the subsequent sections and appendices.

The themes are listed in alphabetical order, and therefore, the ordering does not reflect any determination of prioritization or relevance.

Canal Hazards and Beach Area Hazards

Many wondered about both the short-term and long-term effects on the area, including the canal and beach areas. Since the beach is a public area, many believed that it should be protected, but were unsure about the nature of potential sea level rise effects. Questions were raised about impacts to beach sand, erosion effects, and what the potential methods to protect the beaches from erosion entailed. A few suggested that planting native plant species on the beach could help reduce coastal erosion as a long-term solution. There was also discussion about increased vulnerabilities in the canal and beach areas from new development projects. A few voiced concerns for people who live near the canals – both current canals and filled-in canals – and what might occur in the face of rising sea levels.

Community Involvement

A sentiment repeated during the workshop was the need to involve all the subareas of Venice in coastal hazard and sea level rise planning. Participants expressed that creating the best plan depends on representation from diverse groups and reflecting the community as a whole. Participants suggested using historic photos and “punchy” headlines as advertisements in the community to spread the word alongside strong online materials. In addition to a one- to two-minute YouTube video, community awareness could also be spread verbally through contacting local groups. Beyond Venice involvement, there were suggestions to coordinate with surrounding communities, the County of Los Angeles, and the State of California to ensure best practices are employed to align the City’s Specific Plan and the County Plan for beaches and habitat areas.

Flooding

Many participants wondered how increased flooding, sea level rise, and superstorms would impact existing infrastructure. One common question addressed whether sea level rise is happening faster than anticipated. Community members noted that some areas already flood during high tide. Storage for flood waters and runoff was a high priority amongst community members. There were suggestions for increasing flood management capacity by utilizing open space and groundwater storage. Some participants wondered if groundwater could be pumped out to provide space and groundwater storage.



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Habitat in the Beach and Canal Areas

The community expressed that canals have a high habitat value for nesting and migrating birds which may be threatened by sea level rise and increased storms. Some felt there should be contingencies for species that have state and/or federal listings due to reduced populations (in addition to vulnerable local species such as the snowy plover, least tern, and grunion).

Infrastructure

Some workshop participants noted concern for potential infrastructure failures from increased flooding events. They placed priority on retrofitting existing structures in order to protect them from sea level rise. Priority was also placed on planning additional infrastructure in advance for adaptation. Many questioned the ability of the infrastructure capacity to handle increased flow volume, especially due to recent development in the area. The discussion included comments about needs for sewer system expansion due to age, and opportunities to “green” the system to reduce beach damage. Additional comments addressed the question of the pump station having flooding vulnerabilities. Transportation was also considered at the workshop, including comments about needing critical transportation infrastructure and public access in emergencies along Pacific Avenue, Washington Boulevard, Abbot Kinney Boulevard, Rose Avenue, Palms Boulevard, and Lincoln Boulevard, including public transit routes and pedestrian/bicycle paths in busy commercial areas.

Protect Housing

High priority was placed on protecting existing housing at low elevations. There was discussion of retrofitting structures in order to avoid damage associated with flooding. There was also discussion about residents needing to be aware of the effect of sea level rise and flooding risks on housing property values. There was a concern that housing is very expensive to build in the area and retrofitting existing structures increases housing costs. There were suggestions and recommendations that (planning / construction (?) processes should be simplified and that more housing types (and more housing in general) should be offered. Some expressed that protecting private homes is a lower priority than protecting commercial areas.

Venice Community and Historic Character

Many voiced that Venice is a unique community and special attention needs to be paid to its unique character, history, and culture. The risk to cultural assets was voiced repeatedly. Many believed cultural resources, including the boardwalk, should be protected as well as the Westminster Avenue area / Windward Avenue Historic District i.e., the “Heart of Venice.” Additionally, some believed historic homes and historic resources will need to be protected from sea level rise in addition to historic monuments and single-family districts.