**SELA Cultural Center Advisory Panel Meeting #2**

January 23, 2025

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Lynwood Bateman Hall and Zoom

11331 Ernestine Ave, Lynwood CA

MEETING SUMMARY

**INTRODUCTION**

On January 23, 2025, the SELA Cultural Center Advisory Panel (Panel) participated in a hybrid meeting held in-person at Lynwood Bateman Hall Meeting Room #2 and virtually over Zoom. The project support team included representatives from the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), LA County Board of Supervisors Fourth District (BOS), San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), and Moore Iacofano and Goltsman, Inc. (MIG).

Members from the project support team present included: Jennifer Cabrera (State Parks), Tara Lynch (State Parks), Olivia Chiu (State Parks), Elisa Partin (State Parks), Daritza Gonzalez (BOS), Melissa Bahmanpour (RMC), Daniel Iacofano (MIG), Esmeralda García (MIG), Brittney Lu-Jones (MIG), Sara Perez Rojas (MIG), Emilio Garcia-Corona (MIG), and Joey Nielsen (MIG).

Members of the Panel present included:

Director Armando Quintero (Chair), California Department of Parks and Recreation

Daritza Gonzalez on behalf of Supervisor Janice Hahn (Co-Chair), 4th Supervisorial District

Kristin Sakoda, Los Angeles County Department of Arts and Culture

Gabriel Enamorado, Stay Arts

Mark Flores, City of Lynwood Recreation and Community Services Department

Danaly Leon, Latinas Art Foundation

Montserrat Hidalgo, SELA Youth Representative (Zoom)

Dilcia Barrera, Arts Organization Executive (Zoom)

Cynthia Fuentes, The Ford

Kimberly Morales Johnson, San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Tribal Representative

Guest presenters included:

Anthony Rendon, California Assembly Speaker Emeritus

Sam Gehry, Gehry Partners

Tensho Takemori, Gehry Partners

Meaghan Lloyd, Gehry Partners

Please note that the record of the meeting is provided via video recording. The video recording, and all other information and documentation, is posted at selaculturalcenter.org

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Director Armando Quintero called the meeting to order, and Esmeralda García facilitated a roll call for panel members present in-person and over Zoom. An announcement was made to share information about available Spanish translation.

**WELCOME AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Director Armando Quintero opened the meeting with a welcome, and both Director Armando Quintero and Daritza Gonzalez, on behalf of Supervisor Janice Hahn, gave remarks about the recent wildfires across Los Angeles County. Director Armando Quintero then provided a land acknowledgement.

**AGENDA OVERVIEW**

Daniel Iacofano reviewed the meeting agenda, which included a design process and community engagement overview provided by Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon and Sam Gehry of Gehry Partners, and preliminary workplan review including possible action.

**REMARKS ON THE SELA CULTURAL CENTER BACKGROUND AND PROCESS**

Speaker Emeritus Anthony Rendon spoke on the SELA Cultural Center’s legislative history and community outreach process. Speaker Emeritus shared that it is not a lack of talent, but a lack of investment which resulted in a gap of cultural resources for Southeast LA. Speaker Emeritus highlighted that the re-imagining of the LA River must happen equitably as the Lower LA River Revitalization Plan unfolds. Daritza Gonzalez commented on the ongoing support that the Speaker Emeritus has provided on this project, and Danaly Leon thanked Speaker Emeritus for listening to the SELA community since the beginning of this project.

**PRESENTATION ON THE SELA CULTURAL CENTER OUTREACH AND DESIGN**

Sam Gehry provided an overview of the planning process for the LA River before focusing on the SELA Cultural Center, its past community outreach and engagement process, and proposed schematic designs. Sam Gehry discussed that Gehry Partners was one of many team members involved with the development of the Los Angeles Revitalization Plan. Sam Gehry reviewed a series of heat maps that detailed cumulative burdens impacting the Southeast LA communities, which informed an extensive community engagement process to co-develop LA River programming.

The SELA Cultural Center project was initiated through this engagement process, and tailored outreach for the Center began in 2020. Outreach transitioned into digital spaces with the onset of COVID-19. Community member feedback generated a proposed visitor experience rooted in curiosity, learning, presentation, and performance.

Gehry Partners then created a preliminary design responsive to community input. The schematic design currently includes a 500-seat performance hall, 200-seat multi-purpose center, music hall, gallery spaces, education spaces, community workshop areas, and café, all connected via a central paseo, outdoor plazas, and one-acre of green space. Primary entrances would be accessible from the Imperial Highway and off a multi-use pathway. The Center is proposed to be built upon a podium to achieve a visual equilibrium with the LA River itself.

The buildings within the Center are designed to have a light-industrial feel and are meant to be flexible and responsive to a variety of programming needs, with the surrounding outdoor spaces accommodating different modes of activation. Only a few spaces are designed with specific uses in mind to accommodate various needs (e.g. acoustics, climate-controlled environments for certain artworks).

**DISCUSSION ABOUT THE SELA CULTURAL CENTER DESIGN**

Daniel Iacofano and Esmeralda García co-facilitated the Panel questions, comments, and conversation about the proposed design. Multiple panel members wanted to know how final the proposed design renderings are, expressing that other considerations could be incorporated into the final design. Gehry Partners responded that the current schematics are meant to be flexible, and they would be willing to return and have future conversations with the Panel.

Panel members also discussed the implications related to gentrification, capacity for green space and outdoor usage, thought processes behind programming, revenue generation and operating costs, safety and security, Indigenous practices for learning and ceremony, and landscaping.

The summary of conversation included:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Emerging Topics** | **Comments** |
| *Gentrification* | * Need to ensure that the Cultural Center is developed with community stabilization in mind, to avoid and mitigate against any gentrifying factors. Make sure that this is truly a community-serving space. * Having a public agency operate a cultural center takes it off of the private market and establishes it as a civic center that is more affordable and accessible to the local residents and artists. |
| *Outdoor Space* | * An outdoor amphitheater allows for flexible, multiple seating styles and experiences. An example could be the Epstein Family Amphitheater at the University of California, San Diego. |
| *Programming* | * Flexible gallery spaces could provide an affordable way for local artists to display their work. * Consider smaller spaces that could accommodate the technological needs of microcinemas and diverse media arts (e.g. smaller movie theaters, green screen rooms). |
| *Revenue and Costs* | * In general, more research needs to be conducted on revenue generation and operating costs. Given LA’s entertainment industry, there are opportunities to learn from other cultural centers and projects. * Providing artist studios could be one method of revenue generation. * Ensuring flexible seating options and accommodating larger audiences could be another method of revenue generation. |
| *Safety and Security* | * There should be a balance between maintaining safety and security while ensuring the Center is still an open and welcoming space. Traditional forms of security can become policing and uninviting for the public and SELA youth, in particular. * Residents and participants should feel safe, especially during evening workshops and performances. * There is also an opportunity to shift historic community perception that the LA River is a dangerous place to be. |
| **Emerging Topics** | **Comments** |
| *Indigenous Framework* | * Incorporate a sense of being near the LA River in a more organic, rather than planned and colonial way. * Provide small, outdoor cooking fires. Given what has been happening with wildfires in LA, there can also be an opportunity to teach the public about Indigenous communities’ relationship with fire as a relative and not as something solely dangerous. * Honor Indigenous communities through the naming of spaces, paseos, and plazas at the Center. |
| *Landscaping* | * Request for outdoor classroom spaces that have sinks, electricity, shade, etc. * Integrating landscaping that is reflective of Indigenous practices and supports the existing tribal communities around the LA River. * Incorporate native vegetation that can protect wildlife. |

**PRELIMINARY WORK PLAN**

Daniel Iacofano facilitated discussion on the provided draft work plan for Panel members to review, provide feedback, and potentially take action on a vote to finalize the plan. Director Armando Quintero requested that a conversation about the work plan take place during the meeting, but that a final vote would be scheduled for the following Panel meeting. In the meantime, Panel members would review the draft work plan and offer feedback for the interim. The Panel members and project team agreed on this process.

The Panel members discussed the following to be incorporated into the next iteration of the work plan:

* Emerging topics from the conversation with Gehry Partners
* Cultural center case studies and models
* Gentrification study to understand existing and projected trends and how to be conscious of potential changes
* Reorganize the work plan
  + Documenting all instances where community feedback is gathered
  + Ensuring the sequencing of sub-content is in chronological order
* Connect this work with the LA County Cultural Policy and supplemental research – identifying values
* Support an artist-led cultural asset mapping process; partnering with panel members; re-engaging artists from early outreach
* Inviting LA County Public Works to upcoming Panel meetings

**ADMINISTRATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Esmeralda García provided administrative announcements including State Parks’ support on paperwork related to Panel members’ per diem and travel expenses, upcoming communications to be conducted exclusively with assigned State Parks’ email addresses, reminders of digital materials available online, and upcoming meetings to be held on the fourth Thursday evening of each month.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments in-person or via Zoom.

**FOLLOW-UP ITEMS**

In response to the meeting, the project team will prepare the following for upcoming meetings:

* Share meeting summaries one week following each panel meeting
* Share meeting materials with Panel members 10 days prior to the next Panel meeting date
* Revise the draft work plan, incorporating discussion from Meeting #2
* Conduct research based on emerging topics from Meeting #2

In response to the meeting, the Panel members will prepare the following for upcoming meetings:

* Review of the draft work plan to provide feedback and be ready to vote at Meeting #3

**ADJOURNMENT**

Director Armando Quintero adjourned the meeting at 8:06 p.m.