

Background

Whittier Narrows Dam was constructed in 1957 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a flood-risk management project and is located 11 miles east of downtown Los Angeles. The dam provides flood-risk reduction to more than 1.2 million people.

Following Hurricane Katrina, the Corps dramatically overhauled its process for prioritizing dam and levee evaluations and modifications to better account for potential impacts to the population protected by the structures. The Whittier Narrows Dam Safety Modification Study was subsequently initiated to evaluate the risk to the population, which extends from Pico Rivera to Long Beach.

In May 2016, the Corps placed Whittier Narrows Dam in the agency's highest risk category, "very high urgency," when it became clear three potential failure modes threatened the downstream population: the premature opening of the San Gabriel River Spillway gates, erosion resulting from water piping through the foundation of the earthen dam and overtopping during an extreme flood.

First steps

The Whittier Narrows Dam Safety Modification Study was completed in June 2019. The project went into the design phase in October 2019.

Modification of the San Gabriel River Spillway gates, which was one of the biggest factors driving the dam's reclassification rating change, was completed in December 2020. Utility contracts were awarded in late summer 2021 and construction contracts for the dam modification are anticipated to be awarded in 2022.

The modifications to prevent the earthen dam from eroding or failing if overtopped include placing soil cement on the crest and downstream slope of the embankment and improving the seepage control system with features like trench drains and graded filter/drainage blankets.

The way forward

The recommended plan reduces project risk to below individual and societal risk guidelines by addressing the two actionable failure modes: backward erosion piping and overtopping. The features are currently contained within four contracts:

- Contract 1: Utility Relocations near San Gabriel River
- Contract 2: Environmental Commitments
- Contract 3: Crest and downstream slope hardening, trench drain, parapet walls, Rosemead Boulevard road modification, relocation/protection of about 20 utilities
- Contract 4: Lincoln Avenue road raise and shift, relocation/protection of up to 31 utilities.

How this will affect your community

The remainder of the dam safety project is anticipated the have the following impacts during major construction, which is slated for 2025-2029:

TRAFFIC CHANGES

Lincoln Ave
Rosemead Blvd

TEMPORARY

Noise, vibration, dust
Impacts to bike riders, horse riders, walkers

CLOSURE OF

Streamland Park
Golf Course
Sports Arena Drive
Bicentennial Park



**Life safety is
ALWAYS our priority.**

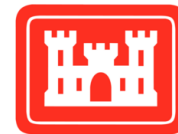
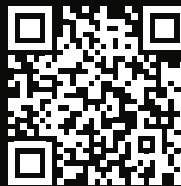
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**Whittier Narrows Dam
Safety Modification Project**