

Safe, Clean Water Program

South Santa Monica Bay

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



Meeting Minutes:

Wednesday, April 21, 2021
1:00pm - 3:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

Cung Nguyen (LACFCD)	Susie Santilena (Los Angeles)
E.J. Caldwell (West Basin)	TJ Moon (LA County Public Works)
Diane Gatza (Water Replenishment District)	John Dettle (Torrance)
Kristen Ruffell (LAC Sanitation District)	Geraldine Traveti (EWMP: Beach Cities)
Guang Yu Wang (SMB Restoration Commission)	Heecheol Kwon (EWMP: Dominguez)
Wendy Butts (LA Conservation Corps)	Ken Rukavina (EWMP: Peninsula)
Julio Gonzalez (Carson)	<u>Craig Cadwallader (Surfrider)</u>

Committee Members Not Present:

Cathie Santo Domingo (Los Angeles Rec & Park)
~~Craig Cadwallader (Surfrider)~~
Hany Fangary (Fangary Law Group)

*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for the full list of attendees.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Kristen Ruffell, Chair of the South Santa Monica Bay WASC, welcomed WASC and called the meeting to order.

The District conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of WASC. WASC made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 7, 2021

Kristen Ruffell noted that approval of the meeting minutes from April 7, 2021 would be moved to the next scheduled WASC meeting.

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Kristen Ruffell shared that she received a letter from OurWaterLA and indicated they were invited to make a Public Comment during the SSMB WASC meeting.

Kirk Allen (District) provided the District update, noting:

- Fund Transfer Agreements (TA) - First approved Annual Plans are posted on the Municipal Program webpage, with over 50 percent of the municipalities approved to receive their local returns.
- Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) web-based planning tool will be utilized by each Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) to select projects for their respective SIPs. SIPs should be completed by the end of May.

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- Watershed Coordinator (WC) - Nancy Schrodes from Heal the Bay is the WC for this WASC. WC is developing the Work Plan that, once completed, will allow WC to begin their work.
- Technical Resource Program (TRP) - All 14 consultants tasked with developing Feasibility Studies have been issued Notices To Proceed (NTP). The TRPs in this WASC include the Harbor City Park Project and Eastview Park Project. Kick-off meetings with the selected consultants are being planned.
- Round 3 call for projects deadline is July 31, 2021.
- Tax relief applications are due May 1, 2021. Low-Income Senior-Owned (LISO) properties are eligible for a full exemption of the SCWP tax if they meet the minimum income and age threshold. Also, there is a tax credit program for property owners who have invested in stormwater management infrastructure on their property. The deadline will remain May 1st every year.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Nancy Schrodes, Associate Director of Policy and Outreach at Heal the Bay announced that their Work Plan is almost ready for submission and that they are looking forward to working with the SSMB WASC.

5. Public Comment Period

Tiffany Wong, on behalf of OurWaterLA, spoke in support of projects that benefit Disadvantaged Communities and presented a detailed letter (see attached).

John Hunter, representing Rancho Palo Verdes and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Group, commented that the City of Torrance has decided to withdraw the Torrance Airport Project. The project will be resubmitted during the Round 3 call for projects.

Susan Robinson, of McGowan Consulting, commented on behalf of the Beach Cities Watershed Management Group in support of the 28th Street Infiltration Project in Manhattan Beach and the Torrance Basin Expansion Project.

David Wahba, Public Works Director for City of Rolling Hills Estates, expressed support of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Multi-Benefit Flow Diversion Project TRP.

6. Discussion Items:

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Susie Santilena participated in a working group meeting with Accelerate Resilience L.A. (ARLA) regarding the SCW Program.

b) Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)

Kirk Allen announced that the District received the final version of the scientific study summary completed by an independent panel of experts for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, but the summary has not been distributed to the WASC yet. Kirk Allen reviewed the concluding comments at this WASC meeting. The District will publicly post the summary and provide it to all the WASCs.

Guang Yu Wang asked for additional details about the scientific summary. Kirk Allen responded that the summary will be provided to all the WASCs involved prior to deciding on whether to advance the scientific study or not.

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Geraldine Traveti asked about the procedure for voting on scientific study within the WASC. Kristen Ruffell responded that the WASC will vote on which projects to approve for the SIP. Richard Watson responded this project has been submitted to 8 of the 9 WASCs and only the WASCs that fund the scientific study will be included in the analysis.

c) Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Benefit Validation

The District presented the three projects claiming DAC benefits using the SIP tool: 1. Torrance Airport Stormwater Project, 2. Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project, and 3. Carson Stormwater Runoff Capture Project. John Dettle requested that the Torrance Airport project be removed from the project list. TJ Moon requested that the WASC postpone voting until the Regional Oversight Committee completes DAC benefit guidance. Kirk Allen noted the DAC benefit guidance will not be complete before the WASC votes for its Round 2 SIP.

Susie Santilena commented that the Torrance Airport Project was the only one she questioned claiming a DAC benefit and is in support of the remaining applications claiming DAC benefits.

d) South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan (SCW Portal & SSMB Scoring Rubric)

i) Infrastructure Program (IP)

- (1) Carson Stormwater and Runoff Capture Project at Carriage Crest Park – City of Carson
- (2) Portuguese Bend Landslide Complex Mitigation Project – City of Rancho Palos Verdes
- (3) South Santa Monica Bay Water Quality Enhancement: 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project – City of Manhattan Beach
- (4) Stormwater Basin Expansion Project – City of Torrance
- (5) Torrance Airport Storm Water Basin Project, Phase 2 Construction – City of Torrance
- (6) Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project – City of Los Angeles

ii) Technical Resources Program (TRP)

- (1) Palos Verdes Peninsula Multi-Benefit Flow Diversion Project – City of Rolling Hills Estates
- (2) Prioritization of Parkway BMPs for Dominguez Channel/Harbors Toxics TMDL – City of Torrance
- (3) Watershed Coordinator

iii) Scientific Studies Program (SSP)

- (1) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study – Gateway Water Management Authority

Darryl Ford commented in support of the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project, SSMB Water Quality Enhancement Project, and the Carson Stormwater Project.

John Dettle commented in favor of including the Torrance Basin Project as part of the Top 4 Infrastructure Program projects.

Kristen Ruffell indicated that it is important to capture the WASC's preferences in terms of including projects as the top three or as the top four prior to finalizing the SIP.

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Julio Gonzalez commented on the importance of financial equity among Municipalities and providing each the opportunity to have their Projects funded. Kirk Allen mentioned a heat map in GIS format is in development that will show location of projects and the funding generated by each City.

John Dettle commented that completion of a TRP Feasibility Study does not necessarily mean the resulting projects will be funded. He also noted that it is too early in the program to determine the equity of project distribution; equity should be evaluated 5-10 years later. Kristen Ruffell commented that they do not want to create inequities by overfunding certain areas. Guangyu Wang agreed that equity is a long-term goal.

Kristen Ruffell noted that the Projects should be voted into the SIP individually by each Committee member due to the lack of consensus. They will be voted on at the next meeting after the WASC is able to review the Scientific Study Summary and the heatmap that the District will provide.

7. Public Comment Period

Richard Watson mentioned he was in a meeting with Caltrans, City of LA, and County of LA staff, regarding Caltrans' negotiations of their statewide permit with the State Water Board. He noted that Caltrans is looking to collaborate with watershed groups and there is potential for them to provide matching funds for projects. He commented on potentially inviting Caltrans to the WASC. The permit will be adopted later this year. Cung Nguyen asked which members of the LACFCD were at the meeting. Richard Watson named Fernando Villaluna, TJ Moon and several other County and City representatives.

8. Voting Items

- a) Validate DAC Benefit for Fiscal Year 2021-22 SSMB IP Projects (if needed)

Voting tabled until next meeting.

- b) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the SSMB Watershed Area and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review

Voting tabled until next meeting.

9. Meeting Schedule

- a) 1st Wednesday, 2PM to 4PM (proposed/placeholder)

- i) Next meeting: May 5th

- b) 3rd Wednesday, 1PM to 3PM (existing)

- i) Next meeting: May 19th

The Committee members had a discussion and concluded the next meeting will be May 19, 2021. The District noted the frequency of meetings will be reduced and asked the WASC to keep the monthly meeting date available.

10. Items for Next Agenda

- a) Validate DAC Benefit for Fiscal Year 2021-22 SSMB IP Projects (if needed)

- b) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2021-22 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the

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SSMB Watershed Area and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review

11. Adjournment

Kristen Ruffell thanked WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

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		Quorum Present			Voting Items	
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	
Agency	LACFCD	Cung Nguyen	x	Ramy Gindi		
Agency	West Basin MWD	E.J. Caldwell	x	Alex Heide		
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Diane Gatza	x	Lyndsey Bloxom		
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Kristen Ruffell	x	Mike Sullivan		
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford		
Community Stakeholder	VACANT					
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	Craig Cadwallader	x	Mary Simun		
Community Stakeholder	Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission	Guang Yu Wang	x			
Community Stakeholder	Fangary Law Group	Hany Fangary		Justin Massey		
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservation Corps	Wendy Butts	x	Bo Savage		
Municipal Members	Carson	Julio Gonzalez	x	Eliza Jane Whitman		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	x	Ilene Ramirez		
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	TJ Moon	x	Thuan Nguyen		
Municipal Members	Torrance	John Dettle	x	Wilson Mendoza		
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Geraldine Trivedi	x	Doug Krauss		
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Heecheol Kwon	x	Mitchell Wagner		
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Ken Rukavina	x	David Wahba		
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	0
Total Voting Members Present		13 14			Nay (N)	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	0
Community Stakeholder		2			Total	0
Municipal Members		7				Not Approved

Other Attendees	
Alfredo Magallanes	Paul Glenn
Annelisa Moe	Phuoc Le
Carmen Andrade	Richard Watson
Danielle Chupa	Shahram Kharaghani
Davie Wahba	Susan Robinson
Brett Perry	Tammy Takigawa
Ilene Ramirez	Taraneh.nik-khah
Jacqueline Mak	Thuan Nguyen
Jon Ball	Vik Bapna
Katie Harrel	Wendy Dinh
Lorena Matos	Wilson Mendoza
Mamerto Estepa	Seth Carr
John Hunter	
Marita DRA Inc	
Mercedes Passanisi	
Michelle Staffield	
Nate Schreiner	



Date: April 21, 2021

To: South Santa Monica Bay WASC Committee Members
Cc: SCWP Staff, Watershed Coordinator

From: OWLA Core Team (Heal the Bay, LAANE, LA Waterkeeper, Nature for All, NRDC, Pacoima Beautiful, SCOPE, The Nature Conservancy and TreePeople)

RE: Input on Project Prioritization for SCWP SIP

OurWaterLA is a diverse coalition of community leaders and organizations from across Los Angeles County united to create a strong water future for Los Angeles. Our goal is to secure clean, safe, affordable and reliable water for drinking, recreation and commerce now and for the future. We have a deep commitment to ensuring that the trust of the voters in passing this measure is upheld and that projects which achieve the three Safe Clean Water Program objectives of water quality, water supply and community investments are prioritized. Your active participation on this body is appreciated and we are excited about the prospects of working together to achieve a better water future for our region.

As we have identified in previous letters to this body, this program is dynamic, and based on the first round of project reviews, interested stakeholders such as OWLA, committee members and staff recognize the need for improvements to program metrics. With contributions from various stakeholders we are optimistic that future rounds of program funding will yield projects that not only improve water quality and water supply, but also provide community investments that are developed with community participation from concept to implementation and operations. The priorities for OWLA have always been clear: community led project designs using nature based solutions. These types of designs will not only address MS4 permit issues, but will also result in projects that can meet the multiple priorities for our region including addressing climate change, providing healthy recreational opportunities and developing engagement tools so that water issues are more broadly understood and supported by our communities.

As has been reported by staff to the committee, there is currently an assessment being conducted to determine how DAC investments and "benefits" are attributed to DAC communities. The position of OWLA on this issue is very clear: projects must be located in DACs in order to be considered a DAC benefit. We are expecting that the reports in development by the SCWP staff working with subject matter experts for Round 4 projects will provide us all with the metrics necessary to plan for and achieve our DAC investment goals. Until that time, we are urging all WASCs to use only the benchmark of projects located in a DAC to count toward the 110% threshold.

The task before you is to consider the prioritization of projects for funding in this round for the 2021-22 SIP. After careful review of the project submissions, **OWLA strongly recommends** that you approve only those projects that:

- clearly demonstrate they have a strong community engagement plan,
- include a significant community investment element and
- as, applicable, are located in a DAC.

For this WASC, the following projects are recommended for approval:

OWLA supports funding approval for the South Santa Monica Bay Water Quality Enhancement: 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project, and the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project.

With respect to the special studies presented to this WASC our recommendation is as follows:

Regional Pathogen Reduction Study – Gateway Water Management Authority:

We recommend that no funding be allocated for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study as no scientific professionals were involved in its development, which is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program, when feasible. This proposal targets a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and will potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the SCWP goals. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for a study like this including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan.

Funding should instead be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. Significant work has been done to better understand bacteriological pollution throughout southern California. We would encourage the WASC to invite scientific experts to present at a future WASC meeting about the work that has been done on bacteriological pollution, and what potential next steps should be taken to refine this work through legitimate scientific studies in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to continuing our engagement with this committee and the new watershed coordinators to work collaboratively towards a better water future for the region.

Sincerely,
OurWaterLA Core Team

