

Safe, Clean Water Program

Regional Oversight Committee



Meeting Minutes:

Tuesday, June 29, 2021
11:00am - 2:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Attendees

Committee Members Present:

Maria Mehranian (Cordoba Corp.)
Diana Tang (City of Long Beach)
Kristine Guerrero (League of Cities)
Belinda Faustinos (Retired NGO/State Executive)
Shelley Luce (Heal the Bay)
Lauren Ahkiam (LAANE)

Elva Yañez (Prevention Institute)
Charles Trevino (Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District)
Carl Blum* (LA County Flood Control District)
Lawrence Yee* (LA Regional Water Quality Control Board Chair)

Committee Members Not Present:

Barbara Romero (City of Los Angeles)

*Non-voting members

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

1) Welcome and Introductions

Shelley Luce, Co-chair of the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), welcomed the Committee Members and the public and called the meeting to order. She announced that the ROC meeting was being broadcasted in Spanish and that participants could also make comments in Spanish that would be translated for the committee. She reviewed the instructions on how to access the Spanish broadcast and how to participate in the public comment periods.

Matt Frary (District) facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and quorum was established. Mr. Larry Yee was acknowledged as the new non-voting member representing the Regional Water Quality Control Board and Mr. Yee shared his enthusiasm, experience, and priorities related to the Safe Clean Water Program. Matt Frary reviewed the WebEx Event features and protocols for the meeting.

2) Public Comment Period

Matt Frary (District) noted receipt of 7 public comment cards and letters in advance of the meeting and confirmed all but one would be held for the public comment period preceding discussion of the recommended Stormwater Investment Plans.

Lauren Marshall (Administrative Analyst for the City of San Dimas) commented on behalf of the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Program. She noted the group contributes \$23M over 5 years while the past and proposed Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) allocate only \$7M to the group. She noted the group fully expects to be awarded significant amounts throughout the upcoming years.

3) Approval of February 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Belinda Faustinos made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Maria Mehranian seconded the motion. Shelley Luce asked the Committee Members for comments or revisions. No comments or revisions were received from the Committee members.

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Matt Frary (District) conducted the roll call vote, and the Committee unanimously voted to approve the meeting minutes. (See vote tracking sheet)

4) Committee Member and District Updates

Matt Frary provided the District update, including:

- A recap of the year 2 submissions (over 80 submittals requesting over \$500M, with similar amount of leveraged funds) and process. The anticipated timeline to go to the Board, pending results of this meeting, would be October 2021.
- A reminder about the SIP tool and Partial Funding Guidelines that were used for programming.
- That Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) provided review of the submitted Scientific Studies.
- Progress on Regional and Municipal Transfer Agreements.
- Updates that all Watershed Coordinators (WCs) had executed contracts and are being onboarded.
- The Regional Program Round 3 Call for Projects deadline is July 31, 2021.
- The Metrics and Monitoring Study is being launched currently.
- Nature-based Solutions and Disadvantaged Community Benefits interim guidance will inform Round 3 discussions. The District also anticipates advancing 2022 guidance for Community Engagement, Community Investment Benefits, and Water Supply Benefits.
- The District is planning for the Governor's Executive Order that currently provides for public Brown Act meetings to be conducted virtually to expire September 30, 2021.

Maria Mehranian requested to discuss the definition of Regional Projects, the spectrum of project sizes, and a potential cap on funding requests. Matt Frary (District) noted these concerns for consideration for 2022 guidance. Belinda Faustinos also requested to discuss the definition of Regional Projects and the spectrum of project sizes.

Shelley Luce asked if the Annual Plans for the Municipal funds were available for viewing through the Safe, Clean Water website. Matt Frary confirmed the information is available. Shelley encouraged all participants to view annual plans on the webpage and encouraged all ROC Members to grow their familiarity with the SIP tool and benefits dashboard to help analyze Program outcomes to date.

5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Maria Mehranian noted she attended a MacArthur Park presentation hosted by the LA Sanitation. She also informed the ROC of her recusal from discussions and voting on the Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), South Santa Monica Bay WASC, and Upper Los Angeles River WASC SIPs.

Belinda Faustinos noted she attended many of the Rio Hondo and the Upper San Gabriel River WASC meetings as a member of the public.

6) Public Comment Period

Jenny Newman (Regional Water Quality Control Board) commented that the LA Waterboard staff have been focusing on the new MS4 permit but are in support of all the SIPs, as the projects included would provide Water Quality Benefits and help permittees comply with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit. She noted a balance of Water Quality, Water Supply, and Community Benefits that reflect the local perspectives of each of the Watershed Areas. She commented that the District produced very user-friendly and informative resources to facilitate the annual process.

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Guangyu Wang (Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission) referenced their Letter of Support to the Board of Supervisors, the ROC, and the three Santa Monica Bay WASCs. He commented that they were in support of seven of the eight proposed projects by the North, Central, and South Santa Monica Bay WASCs' SIPs. The only Project that they did not take a position on was the Scientific Study adopted by the South Santa Monica Bay WASC. (See attached letter)

Annelisa Moe (OurWaterLA) commented in support for eight of the SIPs (Central, South, North Santa Monica Bay WASCs, Upper and Lower Los Angeles River WASCs, Lower San Gabriel River WASC, Rio Hondo WASC, and Santa Clara River WASC) and seven exemplar projects which reflect the goals of the SCWP. She also commented that OurWaterLA was disappointed that many SIPs appeared to include some cookie cutter projects that do not fully reflect all the goals of the SCWP. She requested the ROC call for future funding rounds to be increasingly dominated by community-driven, multi-benefit, nature-based projects. She stated that OurWaterLA maintains that no more than 70% of available funding should be allocated at this time. She requested on behalf of OurWaterLA that the ROC consider setting limits for funding allocation. She also noted OurWaterLA believes that low flow diversion projects largely represent outdated single benefit grey solutions, and that urban and stormwater runoff is best treated as close as possible to the source through conservation and nature-based, multi-benefit solutions. (See attached letter)

Sarai Jimenez (OurWaterLA) commented that OurWaterLA is supportive of more Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and Watershed Coordinator involvement, more guidance on Disadvantaged Community (DAC) benefits to not include upstream or downstream water quality or water supply benefits, community engagement that involves, collaborates, and defers to communities, and requiring applicants to submit engagement plans with outlined costs, proposed engagement, and reporting. (See attached letter)

Elva Yañez requested clarification regarding Annelisa Moe and Sarai Jimenez's public comments relating to their references for types of projects. Annelisa Moe responded that though they have noticed that there were indeed more exemplar projects (i.e., NGO and community driven) in this round compared to the last round, they are still seeing that the majority of projects applying for funding are more conventional compliance driven projects. Elva Yanez acknowledged the progress and asked the District if there were summary statistics of agencies and/or organizations advancing projects through the SIPs. Matt Fray indicated that the project details are available on the existing dashboard and that the District anticipates additional summary information in upcoming reports.

Steve Forster (City of Huntington Park) commented that the City's Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern project meets SCWP requirements, is more regionally natured than other approved projects, and requested that the ROC consider directing the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) WASC to reevaluate the Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern project at the upcoming meeting.

John Mendoza (Resident of the City of Pomona) commented on the Fairplex Project. He noted the proposed Fairplex project borders the City of La Verne, which is not a disadvantaged community, while the Washington Park project [not proposed for consideration of SCWP funding] is in a heavily disadvantaged community. He raised concern that the project may not be coordinated with the City Council's plan or the public's concerns. He also raised concern for businesses not contributing their fair share for developments. Belinda Faustinos acknowledged the comments made by John Mendoza and some of the issues raised.

7) Review/Discussion of FY21-22 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) Submittals

Shelley Luce thanked everyone for comments and acknowledged there be one additional period following discussion and before voting. As such, motions during discussion would be held for the voting item. Shelley acknowledged the District's posted SIP transmittal packages and the District provided a brief summary of the SIP development process and the ROC's role.

Shelley Luce asked the Committee members if they had any overarching or higher-level comments along with those mentioned by Maria Mehranian earlier.

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Elva Yañez requested all project executive summaries be more easily accessible in a single location. Belinda Faustinos agreed with Elva and requested the project executive summaries also have consistent levels of detail. The District acknowledged the intent to develop a master site for executive summaries and a potential standard template in the future.

Charles Trevino commented that he supports moving the SIPs forward because he felt the WASCs did their due diligence and the SIPs create jobs and improve water reliability. Shelly Luce agreed.

Maria Mehranian requested that the Committee vote separately on each SIP since she is recusing herself from voting on three of them. She also reiterated her request that the ROC discuss the spectrum of project sizes and potential caps on project funding requests and durations. Shelly Luce noted the incredible due process so far and also acknowledge the ROC should provide guidance for future improvements and give comments on specific SIPs when appropriate.

Maria Mehranian, Shelley Luce, and Matt Frary discussed the cap and equity of allocations with size, years, and impact of project in mind, acknowledging the complexities. Matt indicated that the current guidelines recognize the importance of small, medium, and large projects. Matt also indicated there would be an opportunity for more explicit language or additional tools to assist with the distribution of project sizes in upcoming guidance. Elva Yañez commented that the resulting information should also be accessible in the project executive summary.

Carl Blum reiterated that the ROC is an oversight committee and needs to continue to maintain that focus. He stated that he was pleased with the progress and direction of the program, and is eager to see more improvements with proactive WCs and other aspects of the program, but doesn't want to micro-manage.

Shelley Luce proceeded to ask the ROC to discuss individual SIPs.

Upper San Gabriel (USGR) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos expressed concern with the USGR SIP funding allocation of 86%, as it far exceeds the recommend 70% funding allocation. She suggested the USGR WASC pursue more nature-based solutions and community investment benefits in SIPs, especially for the Fairplex project. She indicated that DAC benefits should be justified before submitting, not after. She praised Zamora Park Renovation project's community engagement.

Shelley Luce reminded WCs at the meeting to pay attention to ROC feedback and public comment for future consideration. She asked for clarifications from Belinda, and Belinda clarified that the Fairplex Project had its DAC designation changed by the WASC.

Joshua Nelson, Chair of the USGR WASC, indicated that the available information (ordinance language, etc) at time the Fairplex project was submitted led to no claim of DAC benefits – i.e., no one lives there and therefore project applicant did not include DAC designation in their initial submittal. Upon the release of the Interim DAC Benefit Programming Guidelines, the WASC majority decided that the project benefited the surrounding DAC Communities. Regarding the SIP, he indicated that the WASC approved the SIP via good collaborative efforts and reasonable compromises.

Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos expressed concern about 82% of the funding being allocated and potentially precluding newer projects in the future. However, she was very impressed with the level of Community Engagement. She noted that the Lincoln Park Neighborhood Green Street Network project very effectively characterized and quantified the Community Investment benefits. She was also really pleased to see a Metro project in the SIP, which was incorporating both stormwater improvements and recreational access.

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Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) WASC SIP:

Shelley Luce acknowledged the leveraged funding and the utilization of the new partial funding programming guidelines, and also indicated the importance of identify potential opportunities that are expected as part of the joint WHAM (Measures W, H, A, and M) efforts that are underway. Belinda Faustinos commended the Slauson project's tribal consultation and incorporation of green alleys.

North Santa Monica Bay (NSMB) WASC SIP:

No discussion amongst the committee members.

South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos commended a couple projects for their fantastic Executive Summaries that included a chart of major program activities and community engagement through the whole project timeline.

Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos commended the Furman Park Stormwater Capture and Infiltration project for substantive contribution of Municipal funds from the City of Downey. She also noted that the Spane Park project had detailed allocations in their proposed budget for the Community Engagement.

Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos noted that the Cerritos Sports Complex project claimed to provide DAC Benefits but is not located within a DAC. She suggested that the WASCs closely review those issues when reviewing projects, and noted that she hopes for more DAC Benefit guidance for the next round of projects.

Rio Hondo (RH) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos commented she really appreciated the Rio Hondo Ecosystem Restoration project concept, which clearly articulated how the Community Investment benefits were going to be able to provide recreational access to site. She noted it was a well-rounded project with significant Water Quality benefits, and also included Nature-Based Solutions and Community Investments in the form of recreational access. As for the Merced Avenue Greenway project, she indicated that this project is exemplary as a comprehensive project that clearly articulated the type of Community Engagement that went into the development of the project.

Santa Clara River (SCR) WASC SIP:

Belinda Faustinos requested clarification of the listed "project lead" for the Via Princessa Park project since it appeared to be the name of an individual rather than the City of Santa Clarita. Matt Frary clarified that it is indeed the City but the database currently listed the name of their staff member.

Matt Frary acknowledged a request to speak or respond to comments or discussions held by the ROC and the Chair solicited the comment.

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the ULAR WASC, commented that they were appreciative of the ROC, public, and OurWaterLA comments received today to improve projects and process moving forward. She noted that, as the largest watershed area, they were very mindful of staying within budget.

Lauren Ahkiam expressed her gratitude to the Scoring Committee and the WASCs for their work and expressed her enthusiasm to see what is next in the following rounds. She noted she hopes to see opportunities for big picture planning at the watershed level, additional green street or green alley network

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projects, as well as additional projects that are in schools, particularly schools serving disadvantaged communities. She noted she looks forward to the ability of the Watershed Coordinators to work with community organizations and community institutions to diversify the applicant pools and the types of projects in the coming years to ensure the program is best serving disadvantaged communities.

8) Public Comment Period

John Hunter (Consultant) expressed his gratitude to Belinda Faustinos for mentioning the Furman Park Stormwater Capture and Infiltration project and the Spane Park project. He noted support for the strong LLAR SIP projects.

Shawn Igoe (City of La Verne) briefly spoke on the goals and objectives of the Safe, Clean Water Program. He indicated that he felt the program should make sure it is investing back into local communities and adjacent DACs for Water Quality Benefits and Water Resilience.

9) Voting Items

- **Approval of one or more of the 9 FY21-22 SIPs for advancement to the Board**

USGR SIP: Charles Trevino made a motion to advance the USGR SIP as recommended by the WASC to the Board to Supervisors for consideration. Kristine Guerrero seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet).

ULAR SIP: Charles Trevino made a motion to advance the ULAR SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Belinda Faustinos seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 7, Abstain: 1, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

CSMB SIP: Belinda Faustinos made a motion to advance the CSMB SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Charles Trevino seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 7, Abstain: 1, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

NSMB SIP: Maria Mehranian made a motion to advance the NSMB SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Kristine Guerrero seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

SSMB SIP: Charles Trevino made a motion to advance the SSMB SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Belinda Faustinos seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 7, Abstain: 1, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

LLAR SIP: Maria Mehranian made a motion to advance the LLAR SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Kristine Guerrero seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

LSGR SIP: Charles Trevino made a motion to advance the LSGR SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Maria Mehranian seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

RH SIP: Maria Mehranian made a motion to advance the RH SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Kristine Guerrero seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

SCR SIP: Belinda Faustinos made a motion to advance the SCR SIP as recommend by the WASC to the Board of Supervisors for consideration. Kristine Guerrero seconded the motion. District staff facilitated the rollcall vote. (Ayes: 8, Nays: 0, see vote tracking sheet)

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10) Items for Next Agenda

Elva Yañez requested a presentation from Nicola Ulibarri from University of California, Irvine who has developed a new mapping tool that shows the intersection of flood risk and sociodemographic vulnerability factors (called FloodBridge). She indicated that it would be great to consider finding a way to integrate that tool with the tools we already have on the SCWP portal.

Shelley Luce requested an update on the Watershed Coordinators, perhaps by the Regional Coordinator a representative.

Belinda Faustinos requested an update on education program funding. She also indicated that she would like to be able to visit projects that are near completion or breaking ground.

Matt Frary noted the need to continue to be involved in WHAM and indicated the District would continue to incorporate WHAM information sharing in the future as well.

Laura Ahkiam requested an update on the biannual review, interim guidance, and compliance and monitoring. Matt Frary indicated that a voluntary discussion is still expected to occur around late summer while the official biennial hearing would occur at end of 2023 (after two years of accumulated reporting).

Matt Frary noted that the July 29, 2021 meeting date would be released since additional time is not needed to consider the 9 SIPs and that the District would work with the Chairs to determine subsequent dates and topics.

11) Meeting Adjourned

Shelley Luce thanked the ROC members and public for their time and participation and then adjourned the meeting.

Attendees

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Alexander Iglesias - LACFCD	Gerald Greene	Matt Rich
Alfredo Camacho, Day One	Gina Nila	Mayra Cabrera -LACFCD
Alfredo Camacho, Day One	Gladis Deras	Melanie Rivera
Allen Ma - LA Co Public Works	Grace Kast	Melina Watts
Alvin Cruz - LACFCD	Guangyu Wang	Melissa Levitt
Alysha Chan	Gus Orozco	Melissa Turcotte
Amanda Zeidner	Heather Merenda	MELISSA YOU
Ana Tabuena-Ruddy	Ilene Ramirez	Michael Gagan
Annelisa Moe	Jacqueline Mak	Michael Yosef
Art Castro	Jason Casanova	Mikaela Randolph
Aydin Pasebani	Jason Gibbs	Mike Antos
Azeneth Martinez	Jason Park	Mike Scaduto
Belinda Faustinos	Jenny Newman	Nancy Shrodes
Brenda Ponton	Johanna Chang	Napoleon Beraza
Brett perry	John Hunter	Oliver Galang (Craftwater)
Brittany Rivas	John Mendoza	Peter Massey
Caitlin Sims	Joshua Nelson	Renee Purdy
Carl Blum	Joyce Amaro	Richard Watson
Carolina Hernandez	Julie Carver	Rita Kampalath
Cecilia Salazar	Justin Jones - LACFCD	Ryanna Fossum
Charles Herbertson	Karen Lee	Samantha Matthews
Charles Trevino	Katie Mika	San Dimas
Christine McLeod	Katie Ward	Sarai Jimenez
CJ Caluag	Kevin Kim - LACFCD	shahram kharaghani
Clarasophia Gust	Kirk Allen - LACFCD	Sharon Gallant
Conor Mossavi	Kristen Ruffell	Shawn Igoe
Craig Cadwallader	Kristine Guerrero	Sheila Brice
D K	Larry Yee	Sheila Holt
Danielle Chupa	Lauren Ahkiam	Shelley Luce
David Pedersen	Lisa O'Brien	Sophie Freeman
Dawn Petschauer	Lisa Rapp	Stephanie Tong - LACFCD
Dee Corhiran	Mara Luevano	Steve Forster
Diana Tang	Marci Stanage	Susan Robinson
Ed Suher, CASC Engr.	Maria Mehranian	Tara Dales
Edna Robidas	MARISOL IBARRA	Teresa Villegas
Elizabeth Orozco	Maritsa DRA INC	Thomas Wong
Elva Yanez	Matt Fray - LACFCD	Tori Klug
		WATARU KUMAGAI
		Wendy Dinh



June 29, 2021

Regional Oversight Committee Members
Safe Clean Water Program

RE: Stormwater Investment Plans and Projects

Dear Committee Members & Staff:

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is pleased to provide the following comments to the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) as you consider the various Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) provided by the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs). As community organizations, stakeholders and constituents concerned about the investment of limited financial resources to improve water quality, increase water supply, and protect public health, we have developed our comments with stakeholder input.

Overall, OWLA is pleased with the progression of the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) and appreciates efforts to continue refining guidance and criteria to ensure more community-driven, multi-benefit, nature-based projects.

1. Recommendations on SIPs

OWLA recommends the approval of SIPs for Central, South and North Santa Monica Bay, Upper and Lower LA River, Lower San Gabriel River, Rio Hondo, and Santa Clara River.

2. Prioritization of Multi-Benefit, Exemplary Projects

OWLA believes that there was a strong portfolio of 'exemplar' projects presented by the various WASCs. Projects such as the Urban Orchard Project in South Gate and those listed below reflect the type of community-driven, nature-based projects that will provide myriad benefits to frontline communities in need of open space and recreational opportunities. The projects below are exemplary to what the Safe Clean Water Program represents, should receive prioritized attention when allocating public tax dollars, and should be elevated to serve as models for future project development:

- Urban Orchard Project (Lower Los Angeles River)
- Slauson Connect Clean Water Project (Central Santa Monica Bay)
- Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater Capture Demonstration Project (Rio Hondo)
- Merced Avenue Greenway (Rio Hondo)
- Altadena Mariposa Green Street (Upper Los Angeles River)
- Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands (Upper Los Angeles River)

- Zamora Park Renovation Project (Upper San Gabriel River)

That said, OWLA was disappointed that many SIPs also include a number of ‘cookie-cutter’ projects that don’t reflect the type of community-driven, multi-benefit projects which we would like to see prioritized in future SIPs. We ask the ROC to make this point so that future funding rounds will be increasingly dominated by examples like those highlighted above, as opposed to more run-of-the-mill compliance projects that are found in too many of the SIPs before you.

3. Additional Observations on Round 2 SIPs

Maximum Funding Allocation

OWLA took a position for this second round of funding that WASCs should not allocate more than 70% of available funding over the next five years. Our reasoning for this is to not over-allocate funding at this time to allow all Watershed Coordinators to be onboarded and begin their work to help foster more community-driven projects, while also allowing Technical Resource Program (TRP) projects to move forward. Over-allocating five years of funding now might preclude more community-driven, multi-benefit, nature-based projects from moving forward in the near-term.

Unfortunately, two WASCs have submitted SIPs that include greater than this 70% allocation. The ULAR SIP allocates 82% of available funding over the next five years, while 86% of available funding over the next five years is earmarked in the USGR SIP. While not opposing the adoption of these SIPs, we think it is important to recognize that each round of approvals is actually earmarking up to five years of available funding. As such, it is imperative that only the best of the best projects are included in SIPs to avoid precluding better projects from moving forward in future years.

Low Flow Diversion

While the SIPs before this Committee include many exemplar projects, we are disappointed to also see the inclusion of Low-Flow Diversion (LFD) projects within certain WASCs. While recognizing that LFDs can be valuable water quality compliance projects, we believe these projects largely represent outdated, single-benefit, ‘gray solution’ thinking on how to solve our environmental problems. Urban and stormwater runoff is best treated as close as possible to the source through conservation and nature-based, multi-benefit solutions. Letting renegade flows impact local waterways before diverting them to treatment facilities is not the ideal solution from an ecological, climate, or community health perspective. This is especially true for some LFD projects that only qualified for funding by receiving water supply points that rely on planned future water reclamation facilities that still have many hurdles to overcome before they ever get built. While OWLA is supporting SIPs that included major LFD projects (such as CSMB and RH), we ask the ROC to send a message that applicants should be moving away from such LFD projects in favor of closer-to-the-source, community-driven, multi-benefit, nature-based solutions.

NGO-driven Projects

OWLA was excited to see a significant increase in the number of NGO-driven applications and recommended projects in Round 2. Not surprisingly, these projects often represented some of, if not the most, community-driven, nature-based, multi-benefit projects we have seen.

Recognizing that at times smaller NGOs may have a hard time competing for funding through the SCWP due to some fairly intensive requirements of the program (e.g., feasibility studies), we are nonetheless excited to see several key projects moving forward in these SIPs. We also believe that the TRP, potential partnerships with larger municipal applicants (which can often benefit from NGO involvement to gain more community support and provide more community benefits), investment of SCWP education funding, and a greater reliance on Watershed Coordinators all offer the opportunity for continued increases in meaningful NGO involvement in SCWP projects.

Schools

OWLA was also heartened to see significantly more school district applications submitted this past round, further demonstrating significant progress in the SCWP's ability to attract a diverse population of project applicants. Schools, which are often central to communities and typically include a large amount of hardscape, offer a tremendous opportunity for greening and enhanced community and environmental health. While disappointed that many of these applications were not as strong as they could have been and, as such, were not included in recommended SIPs, we believe the increase in submittals represents an important step in the greening of local schools through the SCWP. As with NGOs, we are hopeful that with Watershed Coordinators on board and with more opportunities for TRP applications and partnerships with local municipalities and/or NGOs, school district applicants and others will present stronger and more multi-benefit applications in the upcoming Round 3.

Intersectional Projects

Lastly, as with Round 1, we were happy to see SCWP applications for stormwater projects that are linked with parks and even transportation projects (such as the Slauson Connect project in CSMB WASC). We believe such forward-looking projects that integrate water, land-use, transportation, and housing planning, offer tremendous opportunities for the emerging WHAM efforts and represent the future of planning for a more sustainable and equitable LA region.

4. Applying Consistent Disadvantaged Community Benefits Program Policies

Although the Interim Guidelines around DAC Benefits have been drafted, we know that there is a need to have a uniform and accurate definition about what a DAC is, what a DAC Benefit is, and what should count towards the 110% return on investment for those communities. Without a clear framework for DAC projects, the SCWP risks funding projects that do not generate direct benefits to community members and create additional burdens in historically underinvested communities. DAC projects should be located in a DAC and provide a direct benefit to members of that community, not upstream or downstream. Moreover, these benefits should align with the community investment benefits outlined in the SCWP scoring criteria, not water quality or water

supply benefits that provide regional benefits. We will continue to engage on this issue to ensure more equitable, future SIPs.

5. Strengthening Community Engagement and Support

Community engagement requirements should encourage projects to not only inform and consult community members, but also to involve, collaborate, and defer to them across each project phase, as outlined in the Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership framework. We ask that the ROC elevate this point as critical for ensuring SCWP funding prioritizes community-driven, multi-benefit projects and accountability to County residents. As such, SCWP administrators should consider requiring applicants to submit community engagement plans that they will implement if they receive SCWP funding which outline the costs, the types of engagement pursued, and regular submission of evidence of engagement.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on these issues. OWLA is committed to improving the Safe Clean Water Program implementation process.

Sincerely,



Belen Bernal
OWLA Coordinator

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



SANTA MONICA BAY
RESTORATION COMMISSION
MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

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June 28, 2021

Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Re: Letter of Support and Recommendations for Safe Clean Water Program's
Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Stormwater Investment Plans in the Santa Monica
Bay Watershed**

Dear Board of Supervisors:

On behalf of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (Commission), I am writing to provide support and recommendations for the Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program (SCW Program) Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) within the Santa Monica Bay watershed.

The Commission was established by an act of the California Legislature in 2002 to monitor, assess, coordinate, and advise the activities of state programs and oversee funding that affects the beneficial uses, restoration and enhancement of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. The Commission serves as the Management Conference for the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (NEP). Implementation of the SCW Program is a key action of the Santa Monica Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP).

In June 2020, the Commission conveyed to the Board of Supervisors and various SCW Program committees a letter of support and recommendations for the first round of SCW Program funding, which supported funding of eight projects included in the FY 2020-2021 SIPs in the Santa Monica Bay watershed. Commission staff have also engaged with SCW Program staff and other partners to discuss the possibility of implementing other recommendations expressed in the letter, including implementation of enhanced and standardized monitoring programs for all SCW Program-funded infrastructure projects and incorporation of the stormwater Best Management Practices standardized monitoring framework developed by the Commission's Technical Advisory Committee.



The Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's mission is to restore and enhance Santa Monica Bay through actions and partnerships that improve water quality, conserve and rehabilitate natural resources, mitigate the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, and protect Santa Monica Bay's benefits and values.


The North Santa Monica Bay, Central Santa Monica Bay, and South Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committees each developed a SIP for FY 2021-2022 that recommends funding allocations for projects and programs that lie completely or partially within the Santa Monica Bay watershed. The FY 2021-2022 SIPs include eight new projects within the Santa Monica Bay watershed: five Infrastructure Program projects, two Technical Resources Program projects, and one Scientific Studies Program project. Seven of these projects will further the implementation of the CCMP: the five Infrastructure Program projects and two Technical Resources Program projects identified in Table 1. Therefore, the Commission supports SCW Program funding of the projects included in the FY 2021-2022 SIPs within the Santa Monica Bay watershed and as identified in Table 1.

The Commission looks forward to continuing to support implementation of the SCW Program and promote projects that will increase water supply, improve water quality, and enhance communities throughout the Santa Monica Bay watershed.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact Guangyu Wang, Chief Administrative Director of the Commission, at 213-576-6639 (guangyu.wang@waterboards.ca.gov) should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

BY:



Charlie Caspary
Governing Board Chair
Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

cc: Guangyu Wang, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission
Barbara Romero, Co-Chair, Regional Oversight Committee
Shelley Luce, Co-Chair, Regional Oversight Committee
David Pedersen, Chair, North Santa Monica Bay WASC
Charles Herbertson, Vice-chair, Central Santa Monica Bay WASC
Kristen Ruffell, Chair, South Santa Monica Bay WASC
Timothy Lippman, Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor, District 3
Mark Pestrella, Director, Los Angeles County Public Works
Cung Nguyen, Los Angeles County Public Works
Matt Frary, Los Angeles County Public Works

Attachments

Table 1

SCW Program FY 2021-2022 Projects Supported by Resolution
21-02 of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Table 1. SCW Program FY 2021-2022 Projects Supported by Resolution 21-02 of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission

Name of Proposed Project	SCW Program Watershed Area
Viewridge Road Stormwater Improvement Project	North Santa Monica Bay
Las Virgenes Creek Restoration Phase III	North Santa Monica Bay
Ballona Creek TMDL Project	Central Santa Monica Bay
Slauson Connect Clean Water Project	Central Santa Monica Bay
Syd Kronenthal Park Stormwater Capture Project	Central Santa Monica Bay
Stormwater Basin Expansion Project	South Santa Monica Bay
South Santa Monica Bay Water Quality Enhancement: 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project	South Santa Monica Bay



June 28, 2021

RE: Huntington Park Request for Re-consideration of Lower Los Angeles River WSAC SIP FY 21-22

Dear, Regional Oversight Committee:

On Behalf of the City of Huntington Park, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their work in providing funding for significant water related projects in the region. The City of Huntington Park is working collaboratively with a consortium of Cities in the Lower Los Angeles River Watershed to construct regionally significant projects to meet NPDES goals outlined by the RWQCB "Regional Board". A project was submitted by the City of Huntington Park (Salt Lake Park Cistern Project) that is one of six in the region that have been identified as being required to meet the goal of the Regional Board. A similar project in Bell Gardens has received funding from the WASC and is currently in construction. However, at the May 26, 2021, meeting of the LLAR WASC funding was denied for the Salt Lake Park Cistern Project. It is our belief that the project meets all the requirements set forth and received a favorable score yet was not recommended. Projects that were not regional in nature and that did not meet the requirements of the WASC were moved ahead of the Salt Lake Park Cistern project at the May 26, 2021, meeting. While these projects may have merit, they are not the large-scale regional type of projects the Regional Board will be focusing on in the future to meet storm water permit goals for the region.

The City of Huntington Park feels the process for evaluation and meeting protocols were not followed properly during the May 26th meeting by the WASC committee. The City is formally requesting that the Regional Oversight Committee table the funding plan of the WASC and ask that they re-evaluate the Salt Lake Park Cistern Project at their upcoming July meeting.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience via email at rreyes@hpca.gov or (323) 582-6161 with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

RICARDO REYES
City Manager



Public Comment Form

Name*: Guangyu Wang Organization*: Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commi
Email*: guangyu.wang@waterboards.ca.gov Phone*: 626-203-2293
Meeting: Regional Oversight Committee Date: 6/29/2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov. All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments

Would like to make comment during the meeting re resolution adopted by the Governing Board of the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission in support of the SIP for the Central, North, and South Santa Monica Bay Watershed Areas.



Public Comment Form

Name:* Annelisa Moe Organization*: OurWaterLA
Email*: amoe@healthebay.org Phone*: 707-540-4303
Meeting: 6/29 Regional Oversight Committee meeting Date: 6/29/2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

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Comments

(See comment letter)



Public Comment Form

Name*: Sarai Jimenez Organization*: OurWaterLA Coalition
Email*: sarai.jimenez@tnc.org Phone*: (213) 787-9418
Meeting: Regional Oversight Committee Meeting Date: 6/29/2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

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Comments

Hello,

On behalf of the OurWaterLA Coalition, I would like to request the opportunity to give public comment to the Regional Oversight Committee.

Thank you for your time.

Best,
Sarai Jimenez



Public Comment Form

Name:* Bryn Lindblad Organization*: Climate Resolve
Email*: blindblad@climateresolve.org Phone*: 213-634-3790 x102
Meeting: Regional Oversight Committee Date: June 29, 2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

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Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for the Metro Orange Line Water Quality & Infiltration Project. I was overjoyed to learn that the ULAR WASC voted to include the project for the full amount requested in its Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP). I now urge you, the Regional Oversight Committee, to approve that SIP recommendation and fund this groundbreaking, silo-busting project.

For the past several years, I have served as co-chair of Metro's Sustainability Council, and prior to that I was a highly-engaged voter outreach organizer in the lead-up to the Measure M vote. My organization and the 70+ local environmental and social equity organizations that make up the EnviroMetro coalition have been advocating tirelessly to see more green infrastructure investments made in our public transit right-of-way. Even though Metro is not obligated to achieve stormwater compliance targets, it is a massive land-holder in our region, with much potential to make our region a more sustainable one. Approving this project for Measure W funding would be a massive step in the right direction to achieve multi-benefit goals with capital infrastructure investments that blend funding streams. Transportation dollars alone would not be able to achieve the proposed stormwater objectives. Angelenos want smarter investments that bridge silos, and this Orange Line project is an excellent example of what is possible with a bit of determination and leadership.

The project is cost-effective at achieving groundwater recharge, and the potential for educational signage to expose thousands of daily commuters to the value of local water supply investments will pay dividends for years to come.



Public Comment Form

Name:* Dr. Ghina Yamout Organization*: Community / MARRS Services
Email*: ghina.m.yamout@gmail.com Phone*: 850-980-2078
Meeting: ROC Date: 6/28/2021

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

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Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to submit a public comment. I am writing you in support of the Metro Orange Line Water Infiltration and Quality Project which was included in the ULAR Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) by the ULAR WASC at the June 17th meeting!

I am writing you to express my support for approving the SIPs.

Partnering with LA Metro, one of the LA County's leading agencies, will set a very positive precedence for many other agencies and projects, especially that LA Metro is endeavoring on this project it is voluntarily.

By awarding this project, the Safe Clean Water Program would be leveraging funds by LADWP, Metro-owned land, and engineering/construction resources and process.

Advocates and industry experts have been encouraging Metro for years to incorporate multi-benefits into their programs, including green infrastructure. Awarding this project would be an encouragement for Metro to keep evolving in this direction of achieving multi-benefits across their programs, including protecting our watersheds.

If the Safe Clean Water Program can't commit to funding the project, the opportunity will be lost.

Thanks and Regards,
Dr. Ghina Yamout