

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, January 5, 2022
2:00pm - 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Genevieve Osmena, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Art Castro, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
*John Huynh, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Alfredo Magallanes, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
John Luker, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (Community)
Max Liles, NBCUniversal, Inc. (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
Yazdan Emrani, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice Chair
Christine Peters, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Brent Maue, Pasadena (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Clarasophia Gust, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Carlos Moran, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

The District conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. District Staff also provided a Spanish translation of the tutorial.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 1, 2021

The District provided the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes, by Member Yazdan Emrani. Member Genevieve Osmena seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the December 1, 2021 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no committee member updates.

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District Staff provided an update:

- Funds transfer process for Round 2 and Round 1 Project is in progress.
- The Scoring Committee has finished scoring all the Infrastructure Program (IP) projects and will proceed to score resubmitted projects. Resubmitted projects in the ULAR watershed area were rescored on December 9, 2021. Please refer to scoring rubric and the notes from Scoring Committee meetings. There were 12 projects total scored for ULAR. Two were unable to score and two scored below the threshold.
- SIP tool data has been updated for WASC review. Please review and provide feedback as needed.
- Under the municipal program, annual plans are due April 1, 2022 to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). Annual plans are required to receive the municipal program revenue.
- Claims for the Low-Income Senior-Owned Special Parcel Tax Exemption are due May 1, 2022. The [tax exemption and reduction claim form](#) can be found on the SCWP website within the "Resources" tab.
- On December 21, 2021, the Board of Supervisors voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority.

Chair Villegas asked whether there were any materials distributed regarding the low-income seniors' tax exemption. District staff responded that the District has been using the SCWP meetings, e-blasts and website as the main platform to advertise the low-income seniors' tax exemption and requested WASC members to help spread the news. District staff noted there is also a hotline number on the tax bill for property owners to contact District staff.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Clarasophia Gust, Adi Liberman and Carlos Moran provided a presentation on Disadvantaged Community Investment Benefit, in lieu of updates.

Member Patrick DeChellis asked where to find the presentation. Coordinator Gust replied, noting that it is available on the ULAR WASC webpage of the SCWP website.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Member John Luker disclosed ex parte communication with a project applicant regarding the LA Department of Sanitation's Scientific Study presentation on Community-Centered Optimization of Nature-Based BMPs Starting with the Gaffey Nature Center Facility Project. Member Luker noted that their non-profit organization would benefit from participating in the project, therefore, they will abstain from voting on it.

6. Public Comment Period

See attached Meeting Minutes for submitted public comment cards.

Public Member Kekeli Gtewonyo presented a public comment card from the Office of Councilmember Bob Blumenfield in support of the LA River Green Infrastructure Project.

Public Member Lorena Matos (Representative of LA River Green Infrastructure Project) presented a letter from the Hart Street Elementary School in support of the LA River Green Infrastructure Project.

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7. Presentations and Discussion Items:

a) Infrastructure Program (IP) Presentations

- i. Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project

Presentation by Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios) and Mike Rudd (Geosyntec). Multi-benefit project improves campus & neighborhood drainage and maximizes the student health benefits of natural infrastructure.

Member Osmena asked whether the discussions with the school were positive and whether there were opportunities for the students to be engaged with the project. Robinson responded that the project has worked with the school to identify active participation events where the living laboratory could be integrated with the existing school curriculum. Robinson noted that the discussions with the school were positive given the school's awareness of the flooding issues on campus.

Vice Chair Max Podemski asked whether the project could elaborate on the use of the green space by the community and by the school. Robinson responded that the school has existing green elements that the project is trying to activate; the green space is used by the students, teachers, and members of the community.

- ii. LA River Green Infrastructure Project

Presentation by Lorena Matos (City of LA Sanitation and Environment). The LA River Green Infrastructure Project adds new green infrastructure to residential, collector, and arterial streets in disadvantaged community areas along the LA River, between Canoga and White Oak Avenues.

Chair Villegas asked whether the City was planning to leverage other funds. Matos responded that they are seeking alternative funding sources and are currently waiting to hear back on grant applications.

Member Padilla asked whether two points is the maximum number of points available for community support. Matos clarified that the four is the maximum number of points for the community support category. The project received two letters of support at the time of the application and has received more letters of support since.

Member Padilla asked whether the project includes working with residents to get input on project design and monitoring. Matos responded that the project does intend to work with the community; a community meeting was held on December 8, 2021 to collect feedback, which will be integrated into the design.

Member Padilla asked what will happen to water that is captured by the project. Matos responded that during the feasibility study, the best solution was to divert the water into the sewers to be treated at the Tillman Water Treatment Plant to recycled water standards. Recycled water will be discharged into the LA River or be reused. Due to high groundwater levels at the project site, infiltration was deemed infeasible.

Watershed Coordinator Gust asked whether there are opportunities to install trees with all bioswales. Matos clarified that the feasibility study presented trees with bioswales at specific locations; the project will explore installing trees with other bioswales during the design phase.

Watershed Coordinator Moran referred back to Member Padilla's question and clarified that the maximum number of points that can be earned for community support is four.

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Member Padilla commented that it may be helpful for project presentations to show the total number of points possible, for the WASC's reference.

8. Public Comment Period

Public Member Melanie Winter asked whether the bike lane improvements would result in protected bike lanes and whether the feasibility study for the project will be available.

Public Member Winter commented that the project does not include very many trees, given its size and scope. The project does not use nature-based solutions and the bioswales are more landscape solutions. Public Member Winter also expressed concerns regarding the project's conversion of existing sewers into combined stormwater sewer (CSS) systems, which are typically avoided and increase risks for the City moving forward; the community may not provide input on this specific concern, as they will not feel the benefits of the CSS system. Public Member Winter believes the project is a "high dollar project with tremendous risks and unexpected consequences" and that a different project can be developed that is lower in cost, delivers more community and water quality benefits, and more effectively achieves SCWP goals.

Matos responded that the project currently plans to refurbish bike lanes and other improvements can be explored during the design phase. The feasibility study is available on the SCWP website. Public Member Winter's other comments will be addressed offline.

9. Voting Items

a) There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

a) Presentations for Infrastructure Program (2)

District Staff noted that after the infrastructure program presentations, the WASC will be developing the SIPs. Additional items to be included in future agendas include: the annual renewal and selection of the watershed coordinators and review of the quarterly reports for the infrastructure projects.

Mike Antos (Stantec) noted that TreePeople, the group responsible for the Disadvantaged Community Involvement Program (DACIP), has been invited to other WASC meetings to give presentations on the program. Antos suggested the WASC do the same when time permits.

11. Adjournment

Chair Villegas 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	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 12-1-2021 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	x	Ramy Gindi		Y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	x	Y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	Paul Liu		John Huynh	x	Y
Agency	Sanitation	Alfredo Magallanes	x	Michael Scaduto		Y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Javier Solis		A
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja		Sergio Rascon		
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	x	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		Y
Community Stakeholder	Environment	John Luker	x	Wendi Gladstone		Y
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	x			Y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Felipe Escobar		Y
Municipal Members	Glendale	Yazdan Emrani	x	Edward Hitti		Y
Municipal Members	La Canada Flintridge	Patrick DeChellis	x	Maged El-Rabaa		A
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x	Barbara Romero		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski	x	Ackley Padilla		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Christine Peters	x	Rafael Prieto		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	x	TJ Moon		A
Municipal Members	Pasadena	Kris Markarian		Brent Maue	x	Y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x			
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Clarasophia Gust	x			
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	x			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	12
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	3
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendees

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Chris Carandang	Mike	Seta Marjanian	brett perry
Arlene Guzman	Cathie Santo Domingo	Mike Rudd	Lauro Alvarado
Clarasophia Gust	Patrick DeChellis	Luis Garcia	Dawn Petschauer
john huynh	Daniel Rydberg	Jeannette Hernandez	Rafael Piamonte
TJ Moon	MARK LOMBOS	CJ Caluag - LACFCD	William OBraitis
Veronica Padilla	Rebecca Rasmussen	Melanie Winter	cp
Jose Rodriguez	Rafael Prieto	max Podemski	Lorena Matos
Danielle Chupa	Phuoc Le	carlos Moran	Wendi Gladstone
Teresa Villegas	Horacio Urias	Yaz Emrani	Jessica Medina
Traci MInamide	Conor Mossavi	Susie Santilena	Gus Orozco
Kirk Allen	Kelsey Reed	Dustin Bambic	Sheila Brice
Thuan Nguyen	Art Castro	Yvana H	Claire Robinson
Jason Casanova	Adi Liberman	Alfredo Magallanes	Eileen Alduenda
Carmen Andrade	Barbara Eisenstein	Maria Ramirez	Brian Baldauf
Genevieve Osmena	Wendy Dinh	Ryan Jackson	Brent Maue
Mike Antos (Stantec)	Alex Chin	Darin Son	shahram kharaghani
Max Liles	Keith Banks	Jalaine Verdiner	Jennifer Amarant
miguel luna	john luker	Amanda Zeidner	Ian Cesario
Brenda Ponton	Pablo Forni	Uriel Cobian - LACFCD	AdamAcosta