

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



Wednesday, November 2, 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)
Ida Meisami-Fard, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (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
Christine Peters, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
*Jason Casanova, 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:

John Luker, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (Community)
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice-Chair

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

District staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial in both English and Spanish and announced that the meeting was being broadcast live in Spanish. Staff also provided direction on submitting and sharing public comments.

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. District staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 5, 2022

District Staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Member Yazdan Emrani motioned to approve the meeting minutes from October 5 and Chair Villegas seconded the motion. The WASC voted to approve the October 5 meeting minutes with 14 in favor, 0 abstentions, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

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There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

4. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no updates from Committee Members.

District Staff provided an update:

- On October 18, the Board of Supervisors (Board) 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 its position every 30 days. If the Board decides to no longer approve findings to continue teleconferencing meetings under AB 361, the WASC has the authority to make their own AB 361 findings. District staff will provide additional guidance if and when that occurs.
- The Metrics and Monitoring Workshops (MMS) are scheduled for November 16 and November 17. Details are available on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) Website under the Resources dropdown menu. The information was also shared via email to the SCWP email subscribers.
- On October 4, the Board approved all nine Round 3 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) for funding. Approved Board letters are also available on the SCWP website under the Resources dropdown menu. This includes the funding for continuing projects.
- An email was sent out to the project developers for Funds Transfer Agreements and Funds Transfer Agreement addendums for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) fund disbursements.
- The Scoring Committee scored ULAR Infrastructure Program (IP) projects on October 6 and October 17. Projects that were deemed unable to be scored will be re-scored on December 1. The scoring schedule and scoring rubric are available on the Scoring Committee webpage of the SCWP website.
- FY22-23 Quarter 1 reports from July to September are due November 15 for Round 1 and Round 2 IP projects and Scientific Studies (SS). Quarterly reports must be completed even if there was no activity done on that project or transfer agreements have not yet been executed.
- FY21-22 Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 reports were discussed during the last meeting and the next Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 reports will be discussed in early 2023.
- Attending meetings regularly is a requirement for WASC members under Article 5 of the WASC Operating Guidelines. An absence of 2 consecutive meetings or more than 3 meetings in one year will be considered failure to attend meetings and may result in the absentee member's removal from the WASC. If attendance by the Primary member is not possible for a particular meeting, it is requested that the Alternate member be present at the meeting.
- Committee Members are required to fill out Form 700 when a member is assuming office for the first time (part of the onboarding process), continuing to serve on a committee (annual requirement), or leaving a committee (part of the offboarding process).

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Adi Liberman and Carlos Moran shared updates:

- Working with Los Angeles County Public Works to increase outreach and engagement for the Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project, one of the largest projects in the Program, through organizing a large community tour of the project site and its satellite projects. Collaborating with Leslie Friedman Johnson of California Natural Resources Group on the SCWP Education Program and revising the SCWP website to improve its accessibility to the public.

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- Upcoming Metrics and Monitoring Workshops. Community members and Committee Members will receive invitations to attend.
- Upcoming WaterTalks workshops with Council for Watershed Health and Tree People.
- Conducted engagement surveys for the Reseda Park project under the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. The proponents intend to apply to SCWP for funding. This survey will inform project benefits.
- Co-developing two educational products. The first is a WaterTalks video where community leaders will share best practices for community engagement. The other product is a field kit that includes a virtual tour of the Magic Johnson Park project that will be catered to diverse stakeholders.
- Previously held two education and outreach events. The first was a presentation at the California Stormwater Quality Association Conference on engaging community-based organizations in the Program, and the second was an outreach event held at the San Fernando Library by the community-based organization Parent Pioneers/Padres Pioneros and California State University, Northridge Humanities Action Lab.
- Planning events for the month of November which include a construction site tour at the San Fernando Park Infiltration project and tours with Water Education for Latino Leaders.
- Developing two school projects, the first of which is an ongoing project between the County's planned Bethune Park Regional Project and Los Angeles Unified School District's Diego Rivera Learning Complex in South Los Angeles. They coordinated a site tour of Aldama Elementary School in Highland Park, shared the benefits of SCWP, and discussed the potential for beginning a Technical Resource Program application.

Chair Villegas reminded the Committee that the Watershed Coordinators are a community engagement resource and to reach out to them with any ideas.

6. Public Comment Period

District Staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. The English-Spanish translator, Jeannette Hernandez, added that translations can be provided.

There were no public comments.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Partial Funding Guidelines (Mike Antos, [Presentation by Stantec](#))

Regional Coordinator Antos shared that this presentation comes at the request of several WASC members who are concerned about the number of project requests compared to the available funding for the current Stormwater Investment Plan program fiscal years. The Partial Funding Guidelines are available on the SCWP website and linked in the Presentation.

Regional Coordinator Antos noted that the Partial Funding Guidelines provide the WASC with some flexibility when planning SIPs as WASCs can decide to offer funding that is less than the total amount of what a project has requested in the application. The Partial Funding Guidelines require that a proponent must agree that they have enough capacity to achieve the project as it was proposed with a smaller funding award. In other words, the award cannot reduce the scope of the project, so it is up to the proponent to accept or reject an offer of partial funding. A proponent that accepts a partial funding award must describe how the funding shortfall will be covered, to the satisfaction to the WASC so that it can fulfill its responsibility to see projects to completion.

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Chair Villegas added that the WASC will have a broader discussion on the very limited funding availability for this round (approximately \$2) during the next agenda item 7.(b).

The Committee clarified how the partial funding option differs from the WASC's authority to redistribute a project's requested funds over multiple program years within a SIP. Distributing funds over multiple years does not diminish the funding amount requested by the proponent, only the timeline upon which the funds will be distributed. Partial funding awards reduce the total funds allocated to the project from what the proponent requested.

Antos stated that proponents of new and ongoing projects have engaged with WASCs to shorten or lengthen the number of program years when a project will receive funding from approved SIPs. The key to these tools is that the WASC and the proponent cannot change the scope of the project because it is scope that made a project initially eligible for funding. If a partial funding award would result in a changed project scope, the award cannot be granted and the reduced scope project must re-apply and re-compete for eligibility in a future program year.

The Committee requested an example of a project that could still achieve success in addressing their original scope with partial funding. District Staff shared an example of a project that moves from planning into design, funds required to execute the project could be readjusted, and the proponent can return to the WASC with edits to their initial estimate.

Antos added that the SIP includes new and continuing projects. Past and upcoming Quarterly Reports of continuing projects could signal changed timelines, and an adjustment from the proponent could be requested to inform flexibility as well.

The Committee clarified that proponents are not penalized for using less funding than their original award included. The Partial Funding Guidelines were written mainly for newly submitted projects rather than continuing projects, but it may be within the WASC's authority to reduce funding to a continuing project. Projects that have received funding have committed to fulfilling their project through the Regional Funds Transfer Agreement. District Staff added that the Regional Funds Transfer Agreement requires audits that need to be conducted after every activity completion, building accountability into the Program.

b) WASC Responsibility and Authority to Review the Status and Progress of Continuing Projects and Confirm Financial Needs and Schedules

The WASC can engage continuing project developers about the funding needs for their projects for the current SIP program years. District Staff are prepared to provide as much context as possible to the WASC for decision-making on the submitted 11 Infrastructure Program (IP) projects and 2 Scientific Study projects that are seeking funds that greatly exceed the approximate \$2 million that is available for the budgeted year (FY23-24). 21 continuing IP projects have earmarked funding for the budgeted year (FY23-24).

For this reason, continuing project developers have been asked to evaluate their earmarked funding requests, and have been invited to attend this WASC meeting to share their ability or desire to accept an adjustment to when their continuing funding is programmed in the SIP. District Staff shared a funding plan on screen that factored responses from continuing project developers, and emphasized that the funding plan is a draft, solely for discussion, and will be revisited during SIP deliberations. District Staff shared the related email correspondences from the continuing project developers with the WASC prior to this WASC meeting.

Given proposed funding reallocations by some project developers, the ULAR WASC may have an additional approximately \$16 million available to support new projects for the budgeted year (FY23-24) in the SIP. The specific projects that have proposed funding reallocations for the budgeted year include Lankershim

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Boulevard Local Area Urban Flow Management Network Project, Lincoln Park Neighborhood Green Street Network and Oro Vista Local Area Urban Flow Management Project from the City of Los Angeles—Bureau of Sanitation, Broadway-Manchester Multi-Modal Green Streets Project from the City of Los Angeles—Bureau of Street Services, and Valley Plaza Park Stormwater Capture Project from Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP).

Chair Villegas asked if the City of Los Angeles could speak to the proposed funding reallocation of their projects. Michael Scaduto of the City of Los Angeles shared that as projects advance they get a more precise estimate of when funding would be needed for the different project phases.

District Staff pointed out the continuing project developers that expressed an inability to reschedule funds from the budgeted year (FY23-24), including The Distributed Drywell System Project (City of Glendale), Echo Park Lake Rehabilitation Operation and Maintenance (City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation), Winery Canyon Channel and Descanso Gardens Stormwater Capture and Reuse Project (Descanso Gardens Guild, Inc.; City of La Cañada Flintridge), and Metro Orange Line a Water Infiltration and Quality Project and Active Transportation Rail to River Corridor Project - Segment A (Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority).

Peter Tonthat from LADWP shared that they are evaluating a new task flow and construction schedule, and that there may be space for shifting funds in FY23-24 and FY27-28 and they can send the alternate proposal to the District on November 3, 2022.

Chair Villegas thanked the developers for joining and the WASC for beginning this discussion. District Staff clarified that the SIP tool is being updated. Once SIP deliberations are underway, they can display the values from the spreadsheet discussed today into the SIP tool, adding any other changes that may occur until then.

8. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday December 7, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. See the SCWP website for details. Items on the agenda include:

- a) Findings to Continue Teleconference Meetings under Assembly Bill 361 (if needed)
- b) WASC Responsibility and Authority to Review the Status and Progress of Continuing Projects and Confirm Financial Needs and Schedules (if needed)
- c) Infrastructure Program (IP) Project Presentations (if needed)

11. Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked WASC members, project developers, 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 10-5-2022 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	X	Ramy Gindi		Y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	X	Y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	John Huynh	X			Y
Agency	Sanitation	Ida Meisami-Fard	X	Alfredo Magallanes		Y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	X	Javier Solis		Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	X	Sergio Rascon		Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	X	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		Y
Community Stakeholder	Environment	John Luker		Wendi Gladstone		
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	X			Y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	X	Felipe Escobar		Y
Municipal Members	Glendale / Pasadena	Yazdan Emrani	X	Kris Markarian		Y
Municipal Members	La Cañada Flintridge / South Pasadena	Patrick DeChellis	X	Ted Gerber		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	X	Barbara Romero		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski				
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Christine Peters	X	Rafael Prieto		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	X	Thuan Nguyen		Y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones	X	Alex Farassati		Y
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	X			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Clarasophia Gust		Jason Casanova	X	
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	X			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	15
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15
Municipal Members		6				Approved

Attendees

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Mike Antos (Regional Coordination)
Paige Bistromowitz
CHRISTINE PETERS
christine peters
Genevieve Osmena
Daniel Rydberg
brett perry
Mayra Cabrera LACFCD
Susie Santilena
Joyce Amaro
Mark Lombos
Amanda Zeidner
Sommer Sherwood-White
Conor Mossavi
gabriela gonzalez
Jeannette Hernandez
Hayat Rasul

Sunshine Saucedo
miguel luna
john huynh
Adi Liberman
Sarai Bhaga
Mara Luevano
Karen Rico
Carmen Andrade
Lorena Matos
Johanna Chang
Ted Gerber
Sarkis Oganessian - City of Glendale
Ana Tabuena-Ruddy
Patrick DeChellis
Miguel Luna
Yaz Emrani
Rafael Piamonte

Kenneth Jones
Ida Meisami (LASAN)
Max Liles
Gus Orozco
Arlene G
Kristina Leyva
Carlos Moran
Mike Rudd
Lisa Skutecki
Jessica Quach
Teresa Villegas
Veronica Padilla
Art Castro
Pablo Forni
Jason Casanova
Cathie Santo Domingo
Peter Tonthat

Mark Nguyen
Justin Jones - LACFCD
wendy Dinh
Rafael Piamonte
David Pohl
JALAINE VERDINER
Ernesto Pantoja
Luis Garcia
Maggie Gardner
benny kona
Dawn Petschauer
Haris LACFCD Harouny
Thuan Nguyen
NAYIRI VARTANIAN
Michael Scaduto
Alonso Garcia
Giselle Ramirez