

# Rio Hondo Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes

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Tuesday, January 17, 2023  
1:00pm - 3:00pm  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)  
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency)  
Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Agency)  
Kristen Ruffell, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency), Chair  
Brent Maue, City of Pasadena Public Works (Agency)  
\*Bryan Matsumoto, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Community)  
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)  
Edward Belden, Resident (Community)  
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)  
\*Latoya Waters, Alhambra (Municipal)  
Jalaine Verdiner, Los Angeles County (Municipal)  
Gloria Crudgington, Monrovia (Municipal)  
Sal Mendez, El Monte (Municipal)  
Dawn Petschauer, Pasadena (Municipal), Vice-Chair  
Sarah Rocha, Irwindale (Municipal)  
Richard Watson, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Not Present:

Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)  
Carmen Masud, Arcadia (Municipal)

See attached attendance sheet for full list of attendees.

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Kristen Ruffell, Chair of the Rio Hondo (RH) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members, and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff and Chair Ruffell facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established.

District staff and Chair Ruffell provided a brief WebEx tutorial and direction on submission of public comments to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 15, 2022**

District staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meetings. Motion to approve meeting minutes by Member Tom Love, seconded by Member Mark Hall. The Committee voted to approve the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes, with 12 votes in favor and 2 abstained (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

## **3. Committee Member and District Updates**

District staff provided an update, noting the following:

- On December 20, 2022, 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. The Board is reviewing its

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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 District distributed the first batch of Transfer Agreements and Transfer Agreement Addendums for new and continuing projects approved in the Round 3 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs). Project developers should look out for emails from the District and provide requested items in a timely manner. Developers should create an account on the portal and submit the Infrastructure Program Project Developer (IPPD) form, signed Transfer Agreement or Transfer Agreement Addendum, scope of work, Resolution or Authorization to execute the Transfer Agreement, and Vendor Identification form. If a project is entering a phase that requires a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) determination within the funding year, Developers should send their CEQA documentation to the District so they may make their own determination.
- Regional Program Annual Reporting functionality is now available on the SCWP Reporting Module. Infrastructure Program Projects and Scientific Studies funded in Round 1 and 2 SIPs are required to submit their first Annual Progress Report by December 31, 2022. District staff sent an email to Project Developers.
- FY22-23 Q2 Quarterly Reports from the period of October through December are due February 15, 2023. Quarterly reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project.
- The Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) Workshops were held on November 16 and November 17. Details are available on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) Website under the Resources dropdown menu.

#### 4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Julie Millett gave an update on activities conducted since the previous WASC meeting and their planned upcoming activities. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

#### 5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### 6. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

#### 7. Presentation and Discussion Items

##### a) Presentations for Infrastructure Program

##### i. El Monte Norwood Elementary School Stormwater Capture Project

Presentation by Edna Robidas and Larry Tortuya. *Creation of multi-benefit park with playground, native and drought tolerant plants, edible garden, & bioretention/biofiltration BMPs.*

Edna Robidas (Trust for Public Land) and Larry Tortuya (CWE) presented on the El Monte Norwood Elementary School Stormwater Capture Project, with the primary objective to improve water quality and create usable public green space. Larry Tortuya presented two prospective project site layouts. Robidas additionally shared the project's score (62 points), timeline, estimated cost, leverage funding, and SCWP funding request breakdown. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

Member Edward Belden asked why the score for Water Supply was 0. Larry Tortuya replied that the project does not meet the cost efficiency threshold. Larry Tortuya also adds that there is no groundwater basin in the area or no benefit to the groundwater basin.

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Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer asked about the buildings at the site. Edna Robidas clarified the plan to remove one portable building. The El Monte City School District will be responsible for the necessary improvements to the other buildings in a separate project phase.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer asked about operations and maintenance costs. Edna Robidas explained that the City of El Monte will maintain the stormwater improvements along the right of way. The open space of the site is planned to be maintained by the School District and Active San Gabriel Valley (ActiveSGV). Member Jalaine Verdiner asks if any of the captured water comes from the Unincorporated Area. Robidas believes it all comes from the City of El Monte, but she will need to confirm this detail for the WASC.

Member Jalaine Verdiner asked for clarification regarding the difference in cost between each alternative. Larry Tortuya replied that the costs are similar in both alternatives and that Alternative 2 was used in the estimates. Member Jalaine Verdiner asks if there were any other designs considered, for example capturing storm water and diverting it from the system. Larry Tortuya explained that diverting water from the current system would require permitting.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson mentioned that the project lists a 24-hour storage capacity and asks which alternative this was based on. Larry Tortuya confirmed this value was based on Alternative 2. Watershed Coordinator Watson asks how much reduction in water quality benefits would occur with Alternative 1. Larry Tortuya says that they did not model this for Alternative 1, but that it would be assumed that both alternatives would still have the 5.12 ac-ft capacity.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson asked about additional funding. Edna Robidas shared that they received seed funding from the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy which funded initial design and the feasibility study. They have applied to other grants, but none have been a good fit for the project

#### ii. **Burke Heritage Park & Marengo Yard Stormwater Capture Project**

Presentation by Merrill Taylor. *Regional and onsite stormwater capture and infiltration facility located beneath open space at Burke Heritage Park and Marengo Yard.*

Merrill Taylor (Craftwater Engineering on behalf of City of Alhambra) presented on the Burke Heritage Park & Marengo Yard Stormwater Capture Project that will improve stormwater quality through nature-based solutions. The team is asking for funding for design and construction. The site is not located directly in a disadvantaged community but will be used by these community members. The benefits of this project include water quality, park enhancements, and a reduction in the heat island. This project will be part of a cost share with the Statewide Park Program who have given \$250,000 in funding. Merrill Taylor additionally shared the project's score (67 points), timeline, estimated cost, leverage funding, and SCWP funding request breakdown. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

Member Kelly Gardner asked about the water quality at the maintenance yard and if there will be pre-treatment for chemicals from the yard. Merrill Taylor replied stating that the yard will be hydraulically disconnected from the park infiltration facilities. There will be freestanding basins with forebays that will settle out sediments that may accumulate. Contaminants and pollutants are not expected to be an issue from this yard site. The most active pollutant is sediment. In the park infiltration element, there will be a hydrodynamic separator and pretreatment for the water from the storm drain network.

#### iii. **Merced Avenue Stormwater Capture Project**

Presentation by Oliver Galang. *New bicycle/pedestrian path and subsurface culvert & infiltrating bioswale starting at Merced Ave and ending at the Rio Hondo confluence.*

Oliver Galang (Craftwater Engineering on behalf of the City of El Monte) presented on the Merced Avenue Stormwater Capture Project, which would improve water quality and connecting city of El Monte with Rio Hondo Channel. The team is requesting design and construction funding for the linear median park. The

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City has received \$4.6M from Caltrans Clean California Grant Program. Benefits include improved water quality and disadvantaged community support through increasing access to recreational opportunities, nature-based solutions, and reduction in the heat island. Galang additionally shared the project's score (67 points), timeline, estimated cost, leverage funding, and SCWP funding request breakdown. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

Member Jalaine Verdiner noted that there were many agencies in support of the project but asks if the residents are also supportive. Galang states that The City has been actively conducting door-to-door outreach and workshops and that there is strong support from the community. Member Jalaine Verdiner asked how the improvements along the street affect connection to the other paths. Oliver Galang states that there will be a gate that will open to the channel and its bike path.

Vice-Chair Dawn Petschauer asked if the system discharges directly into the Rio Hondo. Oliver Galang confirms that the concrete trapezoidal channel that discharges directly to the Rio Hondo Channel will be converted to a culvert. The dry weather flow will be routed to more a natural creek. The project will be maintained by the City of El Monte.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson states this is good way to take advantage of a very wide two-lane road and the existing maintenance road that is closed to the public. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson asked what the capacity of the culvert under the trail will be. Oliver Galang confirms that the rectangular culvert will have same or larger capacity than the existing trapezoidal channel. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson asked about pumping water to the natural swale in wet weather conditions. Oliver Galang responded that they would be able to capture 1.5 cfs during wet weather in the swale.

Member Bryan Matsumoto requested more information regarding the box culvert. Oliver Galang says that the Tujunga Wash stream restoration project is similar with small trickle flows in dry conditions and the creation of bike trails. It also converted an existing trapezoidal channel into a culvert with the addition of a bike path on top which took advantage of a 45-foot wide access road.

#### **b) Continue Discussions regarding the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study**

Chair Kristen Ruffell asks Bruce Hamamoto if he could follow up and update on questions that the RH WASC asked during the last meeting.

The first question was if the Regional Board can change the Fecal Indicator Bacteria (FIB) standards without the state approval. Bruce Hamamoto said that they cannot guarantee this.

The WASC asked for a complete breakdown of cost. Bruce Hamamoto pointed to the cost shares in the Scientific Study application.

The third question the WASC raised was regarding redundancy in the load reduction study and associated cost savings. Bruce Hamamoto responded that the expectation would be to avoid redundancy and that the annual SIP process would help this.

#### **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 will tentatively be held Tuesday, February 21, 2023, from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. See the SCWP website for details. Items proposed for the next meeting agenda include:

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#### a) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY21-22 Q3 and Q4.

The District will be sending out project ranking sheet to facilitate discussions for SIP deliberations. The Southern California Coastal Water Research Project's (SCCWRP) reviews of Scientific Studies and the FY23-24 SIP Tool updates should be ready within the coming weeks.

Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson requests adding an update on the 3 TRPs to the meeting agenda. The TRPs will become produce feasibility studies so there will need to be coordination with projects from surrounding watershed area.

Chair Kristen Ruffell requests that ranking occurs after next meeting so that the Watershed Coordinators can provide their updates.

Additionally, Member Gloria Crudgington wanted to acknowledge an article from the *Los Angeles Times* where Wade Crowfoot stated that Measure W is a world leading policy.

#### **11. Adjournment**

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

## RH WASC - January 17, 2023

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Quorum Present					Voting Item	
Member Type	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 11/15/2022 Meeting Minutes	
Agency	Julian Juarez	X	Ramy Gindi		Y	
Agency	Tom Love	X	Patty Cortez		Y	
Agency	Kelly Gardner	X	Tony Zampiello		Y	
Agency	Kristen Ruffell	X	Alysha Chan		Y	
Agency	Brent Maue	X	Kris Markarian		Y	
Community Stakeholder	Thomas Wong		Bryan Matsumoto	X		
Community Stakeholder	Jill Fosselman					
Community Stakeholder	Mark Hall	X	Mark Daniel		Y	
Community Stakeholder	Edward Belden	X			Y	
Community Stakeholder	Daniel Rossman	X	Liliana Griego		A	
Municipal Members	David Dolphin		Latoya Waters	X	Y	
Municipal Members	Carmen Masud		Paul Cranmer			
Municipal Members	Jalaine Verdiner	X	Fernando Villaluna		Y	
Municipal Members	Gloria Crudgington	X	Alex Tachiki		Y	
Municipal Members	Sal Mendez	X			Y	
Municipal Members	Dawn Petschauer	X	James Tong		A	
Municipal Members	Sarah Rocha	X			Y	
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member (RWA Planning)	Richard Watson	X	Julie Millett	X		
Total Non-Vacant Seats	17			Yay (Y)	12	0
Total Voting Members Present	15			Nay (N)	0	0
Agency	5			Abstain (A)	2	0
Community Stakeholder	4			Total	14	0
Municipal Members	6				Approved	Not Approved

**Attendance**  
**RH WASC - January 17, 2023**

Sarah Rocha	Richard Watson
Nikolas Aquino	Kelly Gardner
Sal Mendez	Brent Maue
Bruce Hamamoto	Cas, CWH
Oliver Galang	Kristen Ruffell
Edward Belden	Edna Robidas
Anna Philipp	Lee Torres
Eric Bonilla	Andrea Dell'Apa
Mike Antos (Regional Coordinator)	Ryanna Fossum
Daniel Rossman	Mark Hall
yisak kim	jalaine Verdiner
Chris Lee	Oscar Clavijo Bernal
Latoya Waters	Bryan Matsumoto
gabriela gonzalez	Julie Millett
Kirk Allen	Jenny Chau
Brianne Logasa	Eddie Villegas
Julian Juarez	Gloria Crudgington
Merrill Taylor	Larry Tortuya - CWE
Melanie Morita-Hu	Alex Tachiki
Tom Love	Robert Gomez
Paul Cranmer	Fernando Villaluna
William OBraitis	Larry Tran
Paul Choy	Dawn Petschauer