

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



Tuesday, May 23, 2023
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Progress Park Auditorium / Plaza West
15500 Downey Ave, Paramount, CA 90723

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency)
*Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
*Alysha Chan, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Stephen Scott, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
*Melissa Bahmanpour, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
*Mary Hillermeier, TreePeople (Community)
Erica Maceda, River in Action (Community)
Gina Nila, Commerce (Municipal), Chair
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)
Melissa You, Long Beach (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Julian Lee, Lynwood (Municipal)
*Sarah Ho, Paramount (Municipal)
Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Gladis Deras, South Gate (Municipal)
Tara Dales, SGA (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Irene Lopez-Muro, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
James Vernon, Port of Long Beach (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Gina Nila, Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed all Committee Members. District staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and provided an overview of meeting guidelines and participation instructions for any participants joining online. District Staff facilitated a roll call, Committee Members made self-introductions, and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 28, 2023

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Dan Mueller motioned to approve, seconded by Member Erica Maceda. The Committee voted to approve the February 28, 2023 meeting minutes, with 15 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

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- On April 20, 2023, the Regional Oversight Committee voted to advance all 9 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIP) to the Board of Supervisors for funding. The District is drafting the Board letter for final submission later in the summer.
- The District has released the Regional Program Funding Process Handbook. The handbook provides consolidated information on existing Regional Program requirements and guidance. The handbook is available under the Regional Program – Call for Projects tab on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.
- Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY 22-23) Quarter 3 (Q3) (October through December 2022) quarterly reports were due on May 15, 2023 and apply to Rounds 1, 2, and 3 Infrastructure Projects and Scientific Studies. Quarterly reports are still required even if there is no project activity or the transfer agreement has not been executed.
- The District has started to execute Transfer Agreements for projects included in the FY22-23 SIP. Round 3 Transfer Agreements are in progress to begin transfer of funding.
- The first term for WASC Community Stakeholder seats will end on June 30, 2023. Individuals interested in serving as a Community Stakeholder on the WASC for the next 3-year term should submit the Interest to Serve Form, [available here](#). Current Members do not need to submit another form; members stepping down should let District staff know as soon as possible.
- Applicants to the Regional Program Round 5 Call for Projects are required to attend one of two information sessions coming up on May 24 and May 25, 2023. Recordings and slides will be made available, and more information is posted on the website. The deadline to submit new applications is July 31, 2023.

Chair Nila reminded Committee Members that to ensure quorum in all meetings, having an alternate that can attend when needed is strongly encouraged.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Tara Dales noted that Watershed Coordinator updates will be provided as part of the presentation in Agenda Item 6c.

5. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. No comment cards were received before the meeting.

There were no public comments.

6. Discussion Items

a. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

b. Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY22-23 Q1 and Q2

District Staff noted that project developers were invited to the meeting to provide the opportunity for Committee Members to ask questions about the projects and modifications highlighted in the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY22-23 Q1 and Q2. The full Quarterly Reports are available on the SCWP website.

Member Mueller provided an update about Furman Park Stormwater Capture and Infiltration Project, noting that the project is at 60% level of design. Member Mueller commented on recent challenges related to piping depths and conflicting pipes from other utilities. Although this has led to higher than anticipated project costs, the project is moving forward with the design.

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Member Thuan Nguyen shared a status update for the Compton Blvd. Et. Al. Infrastructure Project noting that the design is being finalized and is scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023. Member Nguyen provided a general timeline for the construction phase and noted that the project is anticipated to be completed by 2025. Upon inquiry, Member Nguyen pointed out that the stormwater and road reconstruction components of the project have been combined to reduce construction impacts to the community.

Vice Chair Melissa You shared that the first phase of Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment (LB MUST) is almost complete, with the goal of having the final product by the end of 2023.

District Staff noted that although all project developers were invited to the meeting, none were present to provide an update or answer questions about the John Anson Ford Park Infiltration Cistern Infrastructure Project in the City of Bell Gardens. District Staff noted that Committee Members can send questions to District staff, who will distribute to appropriate project developers.

c. Updated Lower Los Angeles River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

Watershed Coordinator Dales reminded the WASC that the Watershed Coordinator is currently serving year three of a four-year contract. Watershed Coordinator Dales gave a presentation on specific metrics and results from the work that was done during the last year and noted changes to improve those metrics moving forward. Watershed Coordinator Dales presented several case studies as examples for outreach activities, highlighting key learnings and focus areas for each of the categories below:

1. Public education
2. Community engagement
3. Supporting new projects

Watershed Coordinator Dales reminded the WASC that the goal and role of Watershed Coordinators involves ensuring that all projects that come to the WASC are aligned with local priorities and needs, provide equitable access and opportunity, and meet the program's mission. Lastly, Watershed Coordinator Dales presented tactics, goals, and results on the following five focus areas: 1) understand community needs; 2) help solicit new projects; 3) support project applicants; 4) raise public awareness; and 5) support the WASC.

See slides available on the SCWP website and attached.

Watershed Coordinator Dales asked the WASC for input on: a) project tour candidates; b) community events; c) stakeholder engagement suggestions; and d) new WASC onboarding needs.

Vice Chair You shared that LB MUST is a potential candidate for a project tour since it is almost complete and expressed support for the idea of organizing a project tour for community members.

Watershed Coordinator Dales encouraged Committee Members to share suggestions for any stakeholders to be engaged.

Chair Nila asked if there is a database with contacts for agencies, groups, and organizations such as school districts or the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans). Chair Nila highlighted the need to maintain proper communication efforts with school districts, including details about project timelines. Additionally, Chair Nila suggested connecting prospective school applicants with agencies to support application requirements. Finally, Chair Nila noted the challenges that exist for school districts to engage in larger projects, due to their constrained timeline requirements for construction.

Member Melissa Bahmanpour shared information about recent engagement with the Montebello Unified School District in Laguna Nueva, and a property that requires remediation. Watershed Coordinator Dales offered to work with Member Bahmanpour to further discuss school engagement and potential project tour. District staff noted that if a tour is not included in a publicly noticed WASC meeting, WASC members may be required to split into multiple groups to comply with Brown Act requirements.

Watershed Coordinator Dales shared more details about lessons learned for the non-profit organization, Westwood Greenway, a potential project applicant. Most challenges faced were in relation to operations

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and maintenance. Watershed Coordinator Dales noted that there were other infrastructure issues, such as clogging of the filtration system and truck access to the facilities. Watershed Coordinator Dales noted that there is a need to find other funding opportunities for operations and maintenance.

Member Ernesto Rivera requested additional information about outreach and engagement for municipalities and private developments opportunities. Watershed Coordinator Dales noted that engagement efforts include fostering dialogue between cities and the Department of Public Works. From an equity perspective, Watershed Coordinator Dales noted the need to increase representation for smaller communities to access the same information and opportunities as larger communities.

7. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8. Voting Items

a. Approve the Updated Lower Los Angeles River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan.

Member Bahmanpour motioned to approve the Updated Lower Los Angeles River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan. Member Julian Lee seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the motion with 15 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

9. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, June 27, 2023, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., to be held in person at the Progress Park Auditorium/Plaza West in the City of Paramount.

Chair Nila noted that there may not be a meeting during the months of June and July. Decisions will be communicated promptly to Committee Members.

10. Adjournment

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