

Safe, Clean Water Program

Scoring Committee

Meeting Minutes



Tuesday September 14, 2021
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Bruce Reznik (LA Waterkeeper)

TJ Moon (LA County Public Works)

Dave Sorem (Mike Bubalo Construction Co., Inc)

Kirsten Schwarz (UCLA)

David Diaz (Active SGV)

Matt Stone (Santa Clarita Valley Water Agency)

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

1. Welcome and Introductions

District staff conducted a brief tutorial of the WebEx platform.

Bruce Reznik, Chair of the Scoring Committee, welcomed Committee Members, and called the meeting to order. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 3rd, 2021

District staff provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes, by Vice Chair TJ Moon. Member Dave Sorem seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the August 3rd, 2021 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Twelve Watershed Coordinators have started working with the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs). They are developing Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plans which outline their approach to engaging communities to develop project ideas.

The Safe, Clean Water Program received 41 Infrastructure Program Projects in the third Call for Projects that closed on July 31, 2021. The District has shared a schedule for project scoring online.

The Board of Supervisors will review the FY21-22 Stormwater Investment Plans and consider approval at their September 15th meeting.

4. Public Comment Period for Non-Agenda Items and 6. Public Comment Period for Agenda Items

Chair Reznik opened the floor for all public comments, including comments related to agenda items.

District staff reported that Councilmember Bob Blumenfield of LA City Third District submitted a letter of support for the LA River Green Infrastructure Project.

Annelisa Moe (OurWaterLA) reviewed her comment letter and provided a series of suggestions to update the Nature-Based Solutions Scoring Criteria. In particular, she noted that the scoring methodology does not differentiate between vegetated and non-vegetated solutions and the scoring criteria does not reward projects that use native over non-native vegetation. She recommends implementing a sliding scale or partial point allocation system.

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Azeneth Martinez (OurWaterLA) reviewed her comment letter related to demonstrating strong community support. She suggests awarding points on a sliding scale based on the extent of their public engagement rather than awarding points in binary fashion.

Chair Reznik asked District Staff to distribute these comment letters to all Committee Members prior to the meetings, to help inform the Agenda. Staff replied that they will endeavor to post the letters on the website prior to the meeting.

District staff replied to OurWaterLA's comments, noting that these suggestions could be incorporated in the future, but in order to keep scoring consistent, the committee cannot change the scoring criteria for this round. This input could, however, still inform project selection at the WASC level. The District is leading a Metrics and Monitoring Study where input like this can be considered for incorporation in the scoring criteria. Based on feedback collected through this effort, the criteria may be updated as early as 2023.

5. Discussion Items:

a. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Chair Reznik shared that he read the comment letters prior to the meeting but did not help develop recommendations.

Member Sorem had a general discussion with the Engineering Contractors' Association and the Rebuild SoCal Partnership to share that the Program is starting up on Round 3.

b. Overview of Scoring Committee and SCW Projects Module

District staff shared a presentation on requirements for submitting Infrastructure Program Projects, including background on the program's funding distribution. Vice Chair Moon reviewed the Scoring Criteria and provided detail on how points are allocated in different categories.

Member Stone raised the question of differentiating between water capture vs water that is put to beneficial use.

Chair Reznik proposed building a list of items that need to be discussed by the Scoring Committee in greater detail. The list of topics includes:

- Member Stone's question about evaluating the amount of water supply put to beneficial use.
- Discussion of whether the scoring criteria provide a level playing field across WASCs, particularly how should the group consider advantages granted to certain Watershed Areas based on geography. For example, some areas have unconfined aquifers and therefore score higher on recharge.

Vice Chair Moon continued his presentation and walked through the components of the online application.

The group adjourned for a quick break from 10:48 – 10:53 AM.

c. Scoring of Feasibility Studies (see attached Scoring Rubric)

Ladera Heights – W Centinela Ave Green Improvement

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Vice Chair Moon provided an overview of the dry swale/ bioswale combination project in Ladera Heights. The project is requesting \$500,000 for design only. Vice Chair Moon then led the discussion of the Water Quality criteria and Chair Reznik led the discussion of the Community Investment, Natura-Based Solutions, and Community Support/Leveraging Funds criteria.

For Community Investment, Member Kirsten Schwarz weighed in with her thoughts on the process as a whole and particularly noted the similarities between the tree and permeable surface questions. Based on the current Interim Nature-Based Solutions Programming Guidelines, she believes the points have been awarded correctly for Ladera Heights project but recommends further discussion on the way those points are awarded.

For Leveraging Funds, Member David Diaz reflected that the scoring methodology for this criteria doesn't seem to meet the urgency of our current climate crisis and critiqued the low level of community participation required to meet the point threshold. He understands the precedent for being lenient in scoring but suggests being stricter moving forward. Chair Reznik also expressed his concern that a letter of support may not adequately convey community support and reflected that he did forewarn applicants that the Committee would be elevating their standards when judging community engagement in this next round. Because of that warning, he believes the Scoring Committee has the discretionary power to begin awarding projects on a more stringent basis, as long as the Scoring Committee is consistent moving forward.

The Scoring Committee will vote on the points awarded to the Ladera Heights project at the next meeting.

The Scoring Committee did not have time to discuss the Stormwater Treatment and Reuse (STAR) System, Hacienda Park Project, Fulton Playfield Multi-Benefit Infiltration Project, or the LA River Green Infrastructure Project.

d. Scoring Schedule for FY22-23 Infrastructure Program Projects

Chair Reznik shared the Scoring Committee's draft schedule for upcoming meetings and clarified that the next meeting will take place on Tuesday October 5th from 1 PM – 5 PM. Meetings on October 19, November 2, and November 16 will follow. The meetings are scheduled for four hours each and will ideally end earlier.

6. Public Comment Period for Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

7. Voting Items:

None.

8. Items for Next Agenda

The Scoring Committee will vote on the Ladera Heights project at the next meeting.

District staff will determine how the three projects that were not scored during this meeting will be rescheduled. The draft scoring schedule indicates the following projects from Upper LA will be reviewed on October 5. Stay tuned to the website for updates to the schedule.

1. Acacia Avenue Storm Drain Infiltration Project

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2. Alexandria Park Stormwater Capture Project
3. California Avenue and Adjacent Streets Stormwater Capture Project
4. Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project
5. LAMC South Arroyo Improvement and Deep Underground Infiltration Project
6. North Hollywood Park Stormwater Capture Project
7. Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway
8. Whitsett Fields Park North Stormwater Capture Project
9. Winery Canyon Channel and Descanso Gardens Stormwater Capture and Reuse Project

9. Adjournment

Vice Chair Moon motioned to adjourn the meeting and Chair Reznik seconded. The Chair thanked members of the Committee and the public for attending and adjourned the meeting at 12 PM.

Next Meeting:
Tuesday, October 5, 2021
1:00PM – 5:00PM
See SCW website for meeting details

SCORING COMMITTEE MEETING - September 14, 2021

Member Type	Quorum Present		Items
	Member	Voting?	8/3 Meeting Minutes
Water Supply	Matt Stone	x	Not Present
Water Quality / Community Investments Benefits / Nature-Based Solutions	Kirsten Schwarz	x	Y
Community Investments Benefits	David Diaz	x	Y
Nature-Based Solutions / Water Quality	Bruce Reznik	x	Y
Water Quality	Dave Sorem	x	Y
Water Quality	TJ Moon	x	Y
Total Non-Vacant Seats	6	Yay (Y)	5
Total Voting Members Present	6	Nay (N)	0
		Abstain (A)	0
		Total	5
			Approved

Other Attendees	
Alex Paxton	Jim Rasmus
Alfredo Magallanes	Jonathan Lee Tech
Annelisa Moe	Jose Rodriguez
Brandon Chung	Kara Plourde
Brett Perry	Katie M
Carlos Moran	Lorena Matos
Carmen Andrade	Marisol Ibarra
Chris Wessel	Melanie Rivera
Christopher Rochfort	Michael Scaduto
Conor Mossavi	Michelle Zhang
Curtis Fang	Mike
Daniel Rydberg	Pablo Forni
Danielle Chupa	Paul Glenn
Drew Ready	Phuoc Le
Dustin Bambic	Scott Struck
Garaldine Trivedi	Shahram Kharaghani
Gus Orozco	Sheila Brice
Heather Mrenda	Susie Santilena
I EC	Tara Dales
Ian Cesario	Thom Epps
Ilene	Wendy Dinh
Jacqueline Mak	Clarasophia Gust
Jason Casanova	Gurjot Kohli

Safe, Clean Water Program

Scoring Rubric - Fiscal Year 2022-2023



Watershed Area	Central Santa Monica Bay
Project Name	Ladera Heights - W Centinela Ave Green Improvement
Project Lead	Los Angeles County Public Works
Total Funding Requested	\$500,000
Project Type	Wet

Scoring Section	Applicant Score	Maximum Points	Scoring Committee Score	Notes
Water Quality Wet + Dry Weather Part 1	20	20	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Series of drywells (67) and bioswales
Water Quality Wet + Dry Weather (30 pts) Part 2 Dry Weather (20 pts) Part 2	25	30	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Water Supply Part 1	0	13	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Water Supply Part 2	0	12	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Community Investment	5	10	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantified amount of trees and bioswales Engagement more about informing community than outreach 6 trees not adequate for heat island effect reduction
Nature-Based Solutions	14	15	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Leveraging Funds Part 1	6	6	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Leveraging Funds Part 2	4	4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not strong community support
TOTALS	74	110	72	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

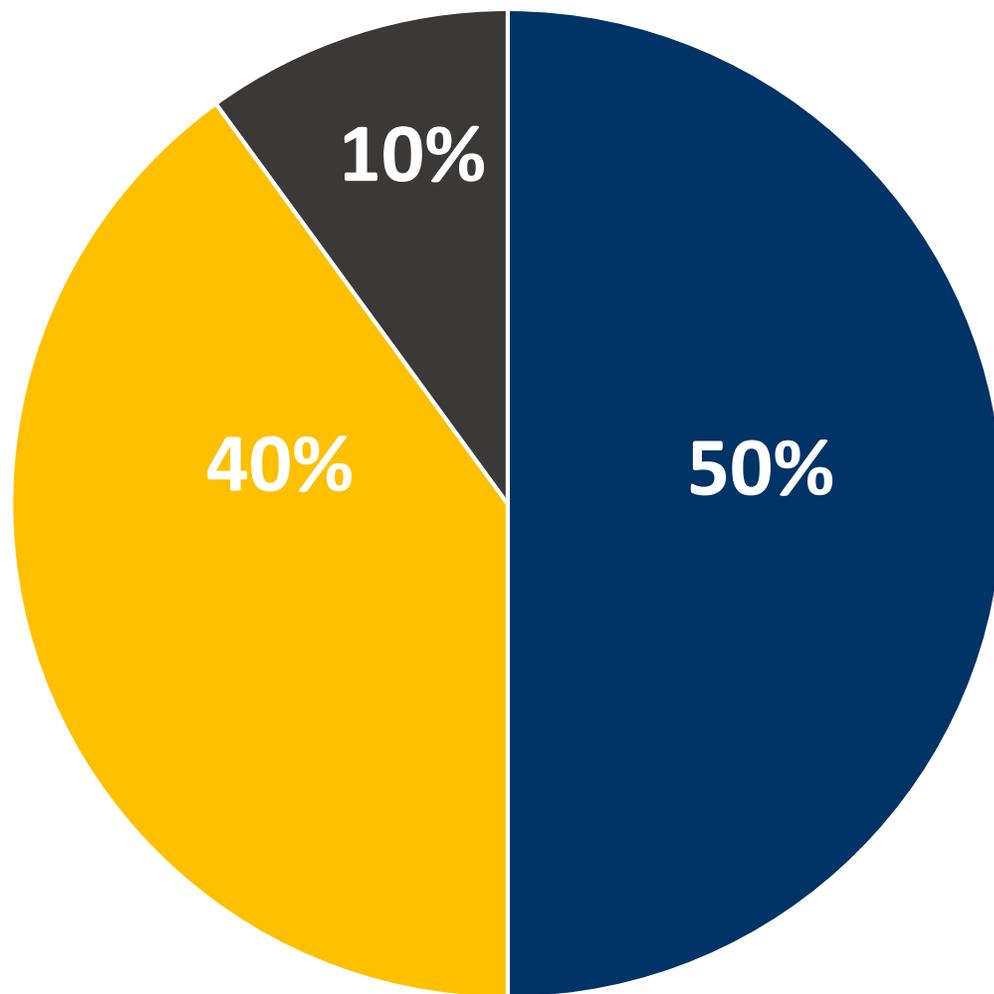
- TO BE VOTED BY SCORING COMMITTEE -



SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM



Safe, Clean Water Program Fund Allocation



■ **Regional Program**
(50% = ~\$142.5M annually)

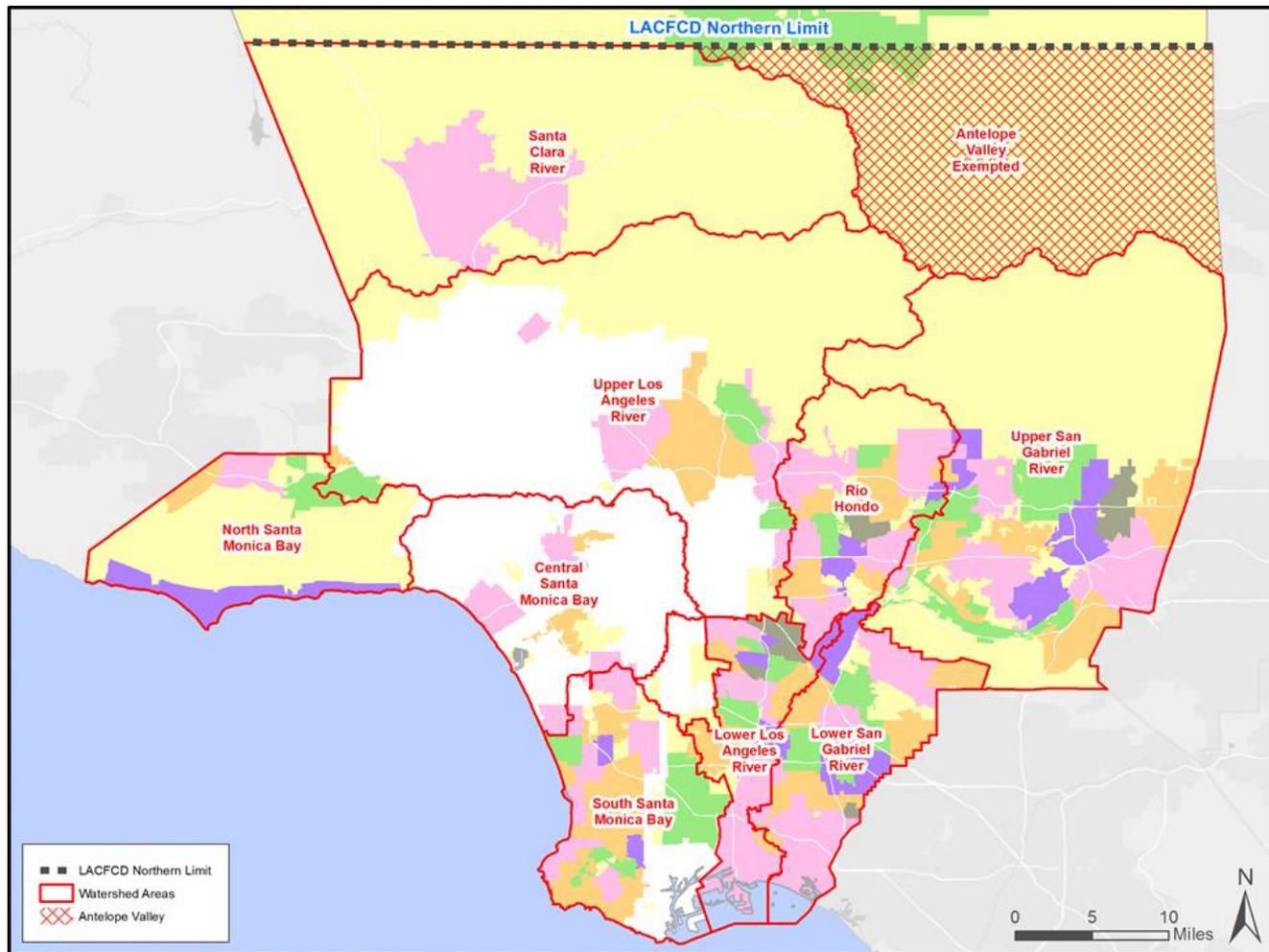
■ **Municipal Program**
(40% = ~\$114M annually)

■ **FCD Program**
(10% = ~\$28.5M annually)

Total Program: Approx. \$285M annually)



Regional Program



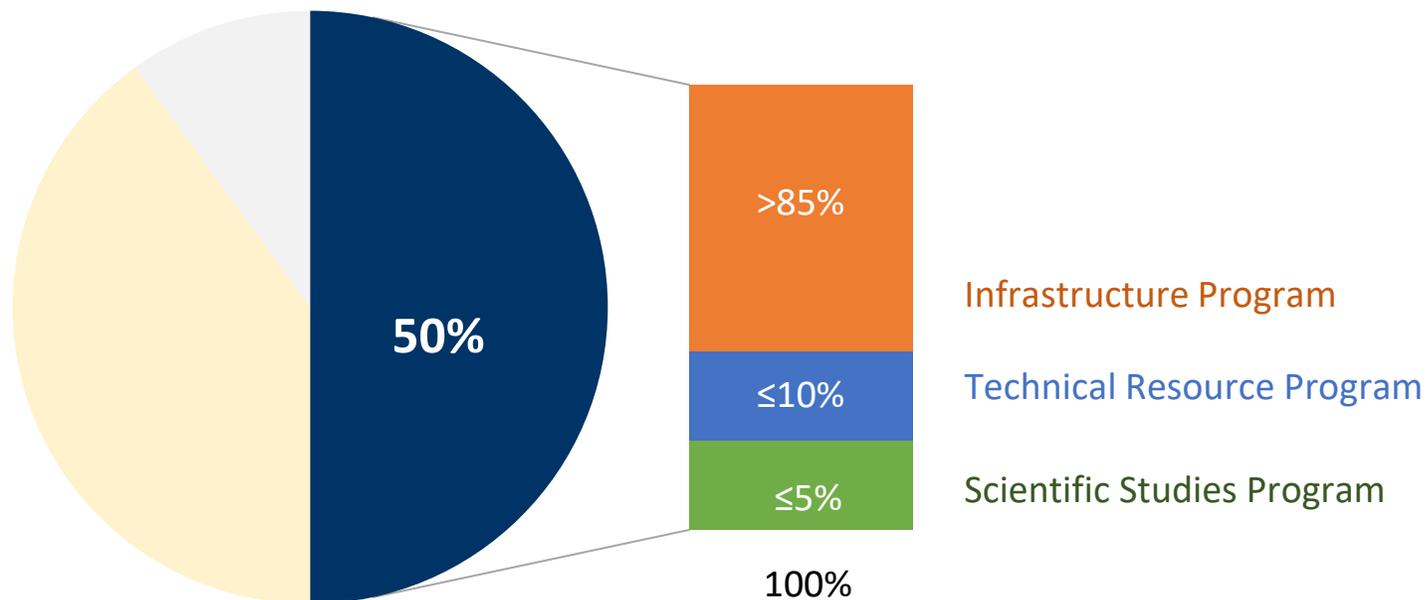
50% Program revenue

WATERSHED AREA	ANNUAL RETURN*
Central Santa Monica Bay	\$17.42 Million
Lower Los Angeles River	\$12.72 Million
Lower San Gabriel River	\$16.56 Million
North Santa Monica Bay	\$1.83 Million
Rio Hondo	\$11.49 Million
Santa Clara River	\$5.87 Million
South Santa Monica Bay	\$17.58 Million
Upper Los Angeles River	\$38.44 Million
Upper San Gabriel River	\$18.78 Million

*2020-21 Regional Tax Return Estimates



Regional Program



Not less than 85%: Infrastructure Program

- To implement Multi-Benefit watershed-based Projects

Up to 10% Technical Resource Program

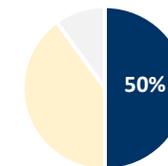
- To provide resources for the development of Feasibility Studies through support from Technical Assistance Teams
- To provide Watershed Coordinators to educate and build capacity in communities and facilitate community and stakeholder engagement

Up to 5%: Scientific Studies

- To provide funding for eligible scientific and other activities



Regional Program-Infrastructure Program



Project Applicants:

- Any entity with a completed Feasibility Study
 - Feasibility Studies funded by Technical Resource Program
- Requires Municipal sponsors (MOU)

Safe Clean Water Project Scoring Website:

<https://portal safecleanwaterla.org/projects-module/application>

Projects and Activities:

- Multi-benefit
- Watershed-based
- Water Quality Benefit plus either or both...
 - Water Supply Benefit
 - Community Investments Benefit
- Projects to be included in an approved water quality plan such as E/WMP, IRWM, and others
- Design, construction, land acquisition, O&M, programs, and other eligible activities



Infrastructure Program - 19 Feasibility Study Requirements

**P. 47 in
SCW
Handbook**

1

Detailed description of the proposed Project

2

Description and estimate of the benefits provided

- Calculated through WMMS in the Project Module

3

Estimated schedule

4

Review of effectiveness of similar types of Projects

5

Monitoring plan



Infrastructure Program - 19 Feasibility Study Requirements

6

Lifecycle cost estimate and schedule

- Calculated in the Project Module. Must include ALL project costs.

7

O&M Plan

8

Engineering analysis

- E.g. soil sampling, geotechnical investigations, hydrology report, etc.

9

Potential CEQA-related and permitting challenges

- Include associated time requirements and cost.

10

Letter of support from the Municipality

- Must include concurrence with the plan for O&M



Infrastructure Program- 19 Feasibility Study Requirements

11

Outreach/engagement Plan

12

Comply with any County-wide displacement goals

13

Vector Minimization Plan

- Recommend review by local vector control district

14

Description of how Nature-Based Solutions are utilized

- [Interim Nature-Based Solutions Programming Guidelines](#)

15

Summary of any legal requirements or obligations



Infrastructure Program- 19 Feasibility Study Requirements

16

Confirmation of conceptual approval from LACFCD

17

Acknowledgement of eligible expenditures

- Only those incurred on or after November 6, 2018

18

Leveraged funds

19

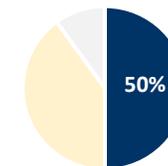
Summary of how project will benefit DACs

- [Interim Disadvantaged Community Programming Guidelines](#)

Refer to **Feasibility Study Guidelines** at **SafeCleanWaterLA.org** for more information



Infrastructure Program-Project Scoring Criteria



**All Regional Program Projects must meet the
Threshold Score of 60 points or more.**

**P. 54 in
SCW
Handbook**

Section	Score Range
A.1 Wet + Dry Weather Water Quality Benefits	50 points max
-OR-	
A.2 Dry Weather Only Water Quality Benefits	40 points max
B. Significant Water Supply Benefits	25 points max
C. Community Investments Benefits	10 points max
D. Nature-Based Solutions	15 points max
E. Leveraging Funds and Community Support	10 points max
TOTAL	110 points



Scoring Criteria – Water Quality Benefits

A.1 Wet + Dry Weather Water Quality Benefits	50 points max	The Project provides water quality benefits A.1.1: For Wet Weather BMPs Only: Water Quality Cost Effectiveness (Cost Effectiveness) = (24-hour BMP Capacity) ¹ / (Capital Cost in \$Millions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <0.4 (acre feet capacity / \$-Million) = 0 points • 0.4-0.6 (acre feet capacity / \$-Million) = 7 points • 0.6-0.8 (acre feet capacity / \$-Million) = 11 points • 0.8-1.0 (acre feet capacity / \$-Million) = 14 points • >1.0 (acre feet capacity / \$-Million) = 20 points <p><i>¹. Management of the 24-hour event is considered the maximum capacity of a Project for a 24-hour period. For water quality focused Projects, this would typically be the 85th percentile design storm capacity. Units are in acre-feet (AF).</i></p>			
	20 points max	A.1.2: For Wet Weather BMPs Only: Water Quality Benefit - Quantify the pollutant reduction (i.e. concentration, load, exceedance day, etc.) for a class of pollutants using a similar analysis as the E/WMP which uses the Districts Watershed Management Modeling System (WMMS). The analysis should be an average percent reduction comparing influent and effluent for the class of pollutant over a ten-year period showing the impact of the Project. Modeling should include the latest performance data to reflect the efficiency of the BMP type. <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Primary Class of Pollutants</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>Second or More Classes of Pollutant</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% = 15 points • >80%= 20 points (20 Points Max) </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% = 5 points • >80%= 10 points (10 Points Max) </td> </tr> </table>	<u>Primary Class of Pollutants</u>	<u>Second or More Classes of Pollutant</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% = 15 points • >80%= 20 points (20 Points Max)
<u>Primary Class of Pollutants</u>	<u>Second or More Classes of Pollutant</u>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% = 15 points • >80%= 20 points (20 Points Max) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >50% = 5 points • >80%= 10 points (10 Points Max) 				
- OR -					
A.2 Dry Weather Only Water Quality Benefits	20 points	A.2.1: For dry weather BMPs only, Projects must be designed to capture, infiltrate, treat and release, or divert 100% (unless infeasible or prohibited for habitat, etc) of all tributary dry weather flows.			
	20 points max	A.2.2: For Dry Weather BMPs Only. Tributary Size of the Dry Weather BMP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <200 Acres = 10 points • >200 Acres = 20 points 			

Point thresholds & equations determined based on an extensive stakeholder review of projects

- Any projects
- Projects designed for 0.25-inch rain events or below.
- Must capture, infiltrate, or divert 100% dry weather flows.



Scoring Criteria – Section A1.2

Potential modeling metrics for analysis of long-term pollutant reduction

Long-term pollutant reduction can be calculated in the Project Module through the Watershed Management Modeling System (WMMS).

www.lacountywmms.com

		Pick Any One Primary Pollutant Class and Any One Secondary Pollutant Class		
Pollutant Class	Pollutant Name	Method 1 (% Concentration Reduction)	Method 2 (% Load Reduction)	Method 3 (% Exceedance Day Reduction)
Primary or Secondary	Bacteria	✓	✓	✓
	Metals	✓	✓	
	Toxics		✓	
	Nutrients	✓	✓	
	Chloride	✓	✓	
Secondary	Trash		✓	✓
	Bacteria	✓	✓	✓
	Metals	✓	✓	
	Toxics		✓	
	Nutrients	✓	✓	
	Chloride	✓	✓	

Notes:

- The Secondary Pollutant Class includes all primary pollutants with the addition of trash (NOTE: the primary pollutant class cannot be the same as the secondary pollutant class).
- Primary and secondary pollutants are pollutants subject to TMDLs for the nearby downstream receiving waters of the project.
- Secondary pollutants may also include 303(d)-listed pollutants and pollutants that have been subject to exceedances during recent monitoring programs.
- Trash is not considered a valid primary pollutant. For estimate of trash reduction, the analysis can demonstrate equivalence with the Full Capture System definition for 100% reduction.



Scoring Criteria – Water Supply Benefits

B. Significant Water Supply Benefits	25 points max	The Project provides water re-use and/or water supply enhancement benefits
	13 points max	<p>B1. Water Supply Cost Effectiveness. The Total Life-Cycle Cost² per unit of acre foot of Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff volume captured for water supply is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• >\$2500/ac-ft = 0 points• \$2,000–2,500/ac-ft = 3 points• \$1500-2,000/ac-ft = 6 points• \$1000–1500/ac-ft = 10 points• <\$1000/ac-ft = 13 points <p>². Total Life-Cycle Cost: The annualized value of all Capital, planning, design, land acquisition, construction, and total life O&M costs for the Project for the entire life span of the Project (e.g. 50-year design life span should account for 50-years of O&M). The annualized cost is used over the present value to provide a preference to Projects with longer life spans.</p>
	12 points max	<p>B2. Water Supply Benefit Magnitude. The yearly additional water supply volume resulting from the Project is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <25 ac-ft/year = 0 points• 25 - 100 ac-ft/year = 2 points• 100 - 200 ac-ft/year = 5 points• 200 - 300 ac-ft/year = 9 points• >300 ac-ft/year = 12 points

Typically for spreading facilities or diversions to sanitary sewer for recycled water



Scoring Criteria – Community Investments Benefits

Section	Score Range	Scoring Standards
C. Community Investments Benefits	10 points max	The Project provides Community Investment Benefits
	10 points	<p>C1. Project includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One of the Community Investment Benefits identified below = 2 points• Three distinct Community Investment Benefits identified below = 5 points• Six distinct Community Investment Benefits identified below = 10 points <p>Community Investment Benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved flood management, flood conveyance, or flood risk mitigation• Creation, enhancement, or restoration of parks, habitat, or wetlands• Improved public access to waterways• Enhanced or new recreational opportunities• Greening of schools• Reducing local heat island effect and increasing shade• Increasing the number of trees increase and/or other vegetation at the site location that will increase carbon reduction/sequestration and improve air quality.

Explanation must include supporting analysis and information



Scoring Criteria – Nature-Based Solutions

D. Nature-Based Solutions	15 points max	The Project implements Nature-Based Solutions
	15 points	D1. Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implements natural processes or mimics natural processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that protects, enhances and/or restores habitat, green space and/or usable open space = 5 points• Utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation = 5 points• Removes Impermeable Area from Project (1 point per 20% paved area removed) = 5 points

If Nature-Based Solutions are not utilized, include an explanation, with supporting analysis and information, of why it is not feasible to do so.

Refer to [Interim Nature-Based Solutions Programming Guidelines](#)



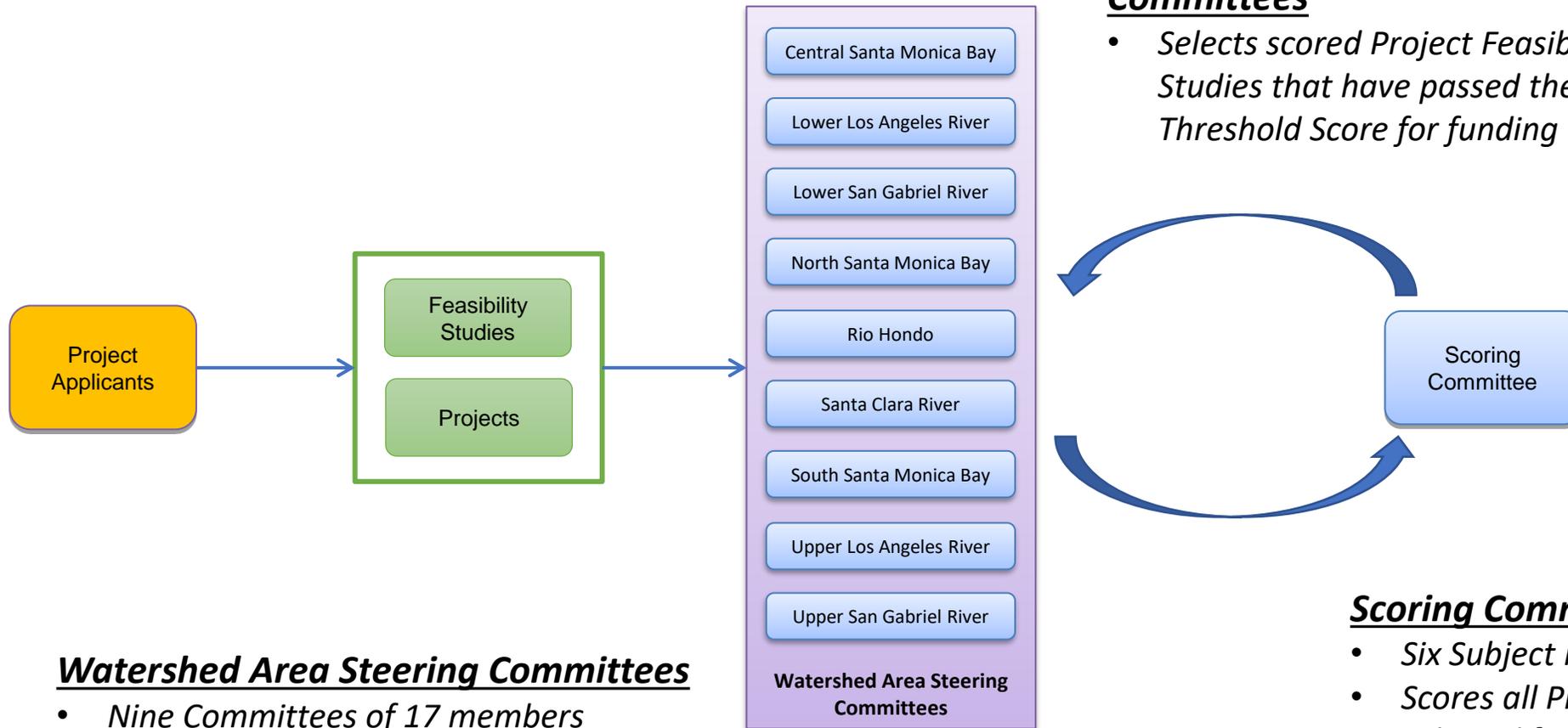
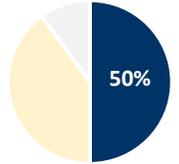
Scoring Criteria – Leveraging Funds

E. Leveraging Funds and Community Support	10 points max	The Project achieves one or more of the following:
	6 points max	E1. Cost-Share. Additional Funding has been awarded for the Project. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• >25% Funding Matched = 3 points• >50% Funding Matched = 6 points
	4 points	E2. The Project demonstrates strong local, community-based support and/or has been developed as part of a partnership with local NGOs/CBOs.

Other funding sources could include funds from the SCW Municipal Program



Infrastructure Program -Process



Watershed Area Steering Committees

- *Selects scored Project Feasibility Studies that have passed the Threshold Score for funding*

Watershed Area Steering Committees

- *Nine Committees of 17 members*
- *Selects Projects Feasibility Studies for scoring*
- *Staff support provided by the District*

Scoring Committee

- *Six Subject matter experts*
- *Scores all Project Feasibility Studies selected for scoring*
- *Staff support provided by the District*



BOB BLUMENFIELD

Councilmember, Third District

September 8, 2021

Safe, Clean Water Program
County of Los Angeles
900 S. Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803

Attention: Scoring Committee
Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee

RE: The LA River Green Infrastructure Project

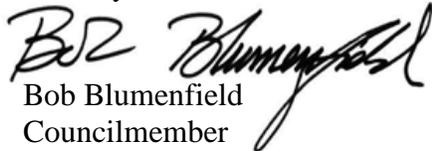
I am writing to express my support for the City of Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment's (LA Sanitation) proposed multi-benefit LA River Green Infrastructure Project for funding consideration by the Safe, Clean Water Program's Regional Infrastructure Program. This project is located in my district, which benefits greatly from this green infrastructure investment.

The Project locations are within and adjacent to several Disadvantaged Community census tracts in the West San Fernando Valley which will greatly benefit from the project's improved water quality by using nature-based solutions to remove bacteria, trash, and other pollutants through the implementation of best management practices.

The addition of bike lanes, trees, and greenery will improve the usability of the area with much needed pedestrian-friendly amenities to enhance mobility and combat the Heat Island Effect.

I hope the experience will inspire community members to be ambassadors of change and advocates of the Safe, Clean Water Program and the LA River.

Thank you for the consideration,



Bob Blumenfield
Councilmember
City of Los Angeles

BB: cmg



Public Comment Form

Name:* Annelisa Moe Organization*: OurWaterLA Core Team
Email*: amoe@healthebay.org Phone*: 707-540-4303
Meeting: Scoring Committee Meeting Date: 9/14/2021

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

The Safe, Clean Water Program aims to achieve 14 goals, including the goal to "prioritize nature-based solutions" with a stated "preference for native vegetation." However, 91% of projects in Round 2 received a NBS score of 10 or more points, out of a possible 15 points, with 48% receiving exactly 10/15 points. This means that the final score of a project is not able to reflect the stated "preference for native vegetation," or even differentiate between vegetated and non-vegetated NBS in any way. Therefore, we must revisit how we approach the nature-based solutions points under the current scoring criteria to ensure that the Safe, Clean Water Program keeps the promises made to the public to "prioritize nature-based solutions" with a "preference for native vegetation."

First, we recommend that the Scoring Committee allocate points under the third points category (which assesses whether a project removes impermeable area), only for new permeable space created by the project. Second, we also recommend a sliding scale for point allocation under the second points category (which assesses whether the project uses natural material, with a stated reference for native vegetation). This sliding scale could, for example, allocate 1 point for using soil but no vegetation, 3 for using soil and vegetation, 4 for using soil and native vegetation, and 5 for using soils and a variety of native vegetation. This will, of course, require that the project proponents provide more information to the Scoring Committee so you can make this determination, and we urge the County to advise project proponents as soon as possible to provide this information. This wider range of scores will provide additional information to the WASC members to allow for a more informed decision-making process, and it will improve transparency for the members of the public who voted to approve, and now fund, the SCWP.



September 9, 2021

To: Scoring Committee Chair Bruce Reznik (bruce@lawaterkeeper.org)
Scoring Committee Vice Chair TJ Moon (tmoon@dpw.lacounty.gov)

CC: Matthew Frary (MFRARY@dpw.lacounty.gov)
Kirk Allen (KALLEN@dpw.lacounty.gov)

From: OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team (ourwaterla@gmail.com)

RE: OurWaterLA recommendations to the Safe, Clean Water Program Scoring Committee concerning Nature-Based Solutions Scoring Criteria.

The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) aims to protect water quality within our communities and provide new sources of water for current and future generations. In pursuing this programmatic vision, the County also committed to working towards 14 goals in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance, including the goal to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with the stated “preference for native vegetation.” If designed properly, using healthy soil and vegetation, nature-based solutions (NBS) provide myriad ecosystem benefits as well as community investment benefits (CIB), particularly in comparison to traditional grey infrastructure. Therefore, OurWaterLA (OWLA) continues to advocate for the differentiation between vegetated and non-vegetated NBS (with a preference for vegetated NBS), and for scoring criteria that reflects that differentiation (Attachment 1). Unfortunately, there were many examples during Round 2 when high NBS scores were coupled with low CIB scores.¹ We would like to revisit a conversation about altering the definition and scoring criteria for both CIB and NBS to address this issue, but in the meantime, we must revisit how we approach the 15 NBS points under the current scoring criteria to ensure that the SCWP keeps the promise made to the public to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with a “preference for native vegetation.”

Concerns with the current Scoring Criteria for NBS:

- Implements natural processes or mimics natural processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that protects, enhances and/or restores habitat, green space and/or usable open space = 5 points
- Utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation = 5 points
- Removes Impermeable Area from Project (1 point per 20% paved area removed) = 5 points

The first bullet point, assessing whether a project “implements natural processes or mimics natural processes to slow, detain, capture, and absorb/infiltrate water in a manner that protects, enhances

¹ One example is the Salt Lake Park Cistern Project, which received 15/15 NBS points, but only 5/10 CIB points. Salt Lake Park is an existing park, so no *new* open space has been created by this project. Another example is the 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project, which received 13 NBS points, but only 2 CIB points because the project only proposed to add 3 trees, which could not effectively reduce heat island effect on their own.



and/or restores habitat, green space, and/or usable open space,” already provides an opportunity to allocate 5/15 points to both vegetated and non-vegetated NBS. Under the current definition of NBS, this allows nature-mimicking projects to score a minimum of 5/15 points in this category. Nature-mimicking projects are often designed to capture or retain water, getting the project water supply points as well, but still receiving some NBS points even if it does not offer the myriad ecosystem benefits and CIB that vegetated NBS projects do. Only 6% of projects from Round 2 did not qualify for these initial 5/15 points. This means that it is very difficult (though not impossible) for projects to not receive any NBS points. On the other hand, there does exist a stringent threshold for a project to receive any water quality or water supply points.

The second bullet point, assessing whether a project “utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation,” offers a lot of flexibility as to what may qualify as “utilizing natural material” and does not require the use of native or any other type of vegetation. Without a sliding scale, projects are often automatically awarded the full 5 points for this category, even when only minimal natural material is used. As a result, 91% of projects in Round 2 received a NBS score of 10 or more points (out of a total possible 15 points), with 48% receiving exactly 10/15 points. This means that the final score for a project is not able to reflect the stated “preference for native vegetation,” or even differentiate between vegetated and non-vegetated NBS in any way.

The third bullet point, assessing whether a project “removes impermeable area from projects,” uses a sliding scale that allows for a clear representation of how much impermeable space a project removes. However, as stated above, there were many examples during Round 2 when high (11-15) NBS scores were coupled with low CIB scores, indicating that the original intent behind the prioritization of NBS – to invest in and benefit our communities – is not accurately reflected in current project scores.

OWLA Recommendations

We recommend that any points awarded under bullet point 3 of the NBS scoring criteria (“removes impermeable area from projects”) be only allocated for *new permeable space created* by the project. If a project is built below an existing park, that does not create any *new permeable space*, even if some surface improvements are proposed.

Additionally, if a project creates new permeable space through the use of, for example, permeable pavement, but does not offer any use of vegetation, it should not be given a full 15/15 NBS points. Therefore, **we also recommend a sliding scale for point allocation under bullet point 2 of the NBS scoring criteria** (“utilizes natural materials such as soils and vegetation with a preference for native vegetation”).

This sliding scale could allocate 1 point for using soil but no vegetation, 3 for using soil and vegetation, 4 for using soil and native vegetation, and 5 for using soil and a variety of native vegetation. This will, of course, require that the project proponents provide more information to the Scoring Committee so they can make this determination. We urge the County to advise project proponents as soon as possible to provide this information to the Scoring Committee.

Members of the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) are tasked with selecting projects for funding that will achieve the 14 SCWP goals, including the goal to “prioritize nature-based solutions” with the stated “preference for native vegetation.” Project selection is not based on project scores, but



project scores have the potential to provide a lot of information during this decision-making process. However, in Round 2, 48% of projects received a NBS score of exactly 10/15 points. This provides little information to the WASC about which projects will better achieve the goals to prioritize NBS or to prioritize native vegetation. Using the OWLA proposed sliding scale would result in a wider range of point allocation from 0 to 15, rather than 91% being between 10/15 and 15/15, and 48% being exactly 10/15. This wider range of scores will provide additional information to the WASC members to allow for a more informed decision-making process, and it will improve transparency for the members of the public who voted to approve, and now fund, the SCWP.

Thank you for considering these recommendations, and for all of the work, time, and expertise that you contribute to the SCWP. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the County Flood Control District and the Scoring Committee to achieve successful implementation of the SCWP.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Belen Bernal".

Belen Bernal

Coalition Coordinator

OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team



ATTACHMENT 1

Revised Definitions

Community Investment Benefits (CIBs): Benefits created in conjunction with Stormwater Capture and reduced Stormwater and Urban Runoff pollution projects, as stated in AB 1180. CIBs include but are not limited to creation and enhancement of parks and wetlands, or creation or restoration of habitat and wetlands; improved public access to recreation and open space or providing enhanced or new recreational opportunities; greening of schools or public right-of-way; flood control; improved public health; reduction of urban heat island effect; carbon reduction/sequestration; improved air quality; green waste reduction/diversion.

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS): Projects that manage Stormwater by: relying predominantly on soils and vegetation to slow, detain, and absorb water; infiltrate water to aquifers; and filter pollutants out of water and air. In the context of urban stormwater management, NBS are practices that use natural systems and processes to treat and manage stormwater runoff. Processes include soil filtration and/or infiltration, or physical and biological treatment using vegetation and/or soils and their biomes. Either or both may be used. As such, NBS can be vegetated or non-vegetated, and may include removing or increasing permeability of impervious surfaces, utilizing spreading grounds, strategically protecting undeveloped mountains and floodplains; creating and restoring riparian habitat and wetlands using bioretention basins (e.g. rain gardens), bioswales, soil enhancement through composting and mulching and, and tree and vegetation planting, with preference for native species; and creating parkway basins.

Vegetated Nature-Based Solutions (NBS): A subset of NBS that include both healthy soil and vegetation as a primary component of their design. The soils and vegetation may be a critical component of the treatment process or installed primarily for habitat and/or aesthetic purposes. Designed properly, vegetated NBS offer abundant co-benefits including but not limited to improvements in air quality, water quality, public health, habitat and ecosystem health, and biodiversity, as well as reduction in heat island effect, and sequestration of carbon.

Non-Vegetated NBS (Non-Vegetated NBS): Another subset of NBS that do not include vegetation but do include soil filtration and/or infiltration. Typically, this would occur beneath the surface as is the case with, for example, infiltration galleries, or permeable paving systems that are unlined. Non-vegetated NBS do not convey the broad co-benefits of vegetated NBS and should be considered as a middle ground between NBS and gray stormwater solutions.

Threshold Score: The threshold score must include at least 5 points from Section C. Community Investment Benefits and 5 points from Section D. Nature-Based projects.

Revised Scoring Criteria (Regional)

C. Community Investment Benefits	
10 points	<p>Community Investments – 2 points for achieving at least 1 of the following community benefits, 5 points for achieving at least 4 of the following community benefits, 10 points for achieving 7 of the following community benefits:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation and enhancement of parks and wetlands, or restoration of habitat and wetlands; 2. Improved public access to recreation and open space or providing enhanced or new recreational opportunities; 3. Greening of schools, streets; 4. Flood control; 5. Improved public health; 6. Reduction of urban heat island effect; 7. Carbon reduction/sequestration; 8. Improved air quality; 9. Green waste reduction/diversion; 10. Education

D. Nature-Based Projects	
15 Points	<p>Points will be awarded for nature-based projects as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Percentage of project footprint converted from impermeable surface to climate appropriate vegetation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 25%-49% - 1 point b) 50%-74% - 2 points c) 75%-99% - 3 points d) 100% - 4 points 2) Percentage of project footprint covered by new, native vegetation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) 5%-14% - 1 point b) 15%-24% - 2 points c) 25%-34% - 3 points d) 35%+ - 4 points 3) Include a number of different/distinct native plant species and type to ensure appropriate diversity and composition:

- a) 11-20 different/distinct native plant species newly planted – 1 point
 - b) 21-30 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across at least 2 distinct classes (groundcover, shrub, tree) – 2 points
 - c) 31-40 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across all three classes (groundcover, shrub & tree) – 3 points
 - d) 41-50 different/distinct native plant species (total) newly planted across all three classes (groundcover, shrub & tree) – 4 points
- 4) Have an appropriate **monitoring and maintenance** plan in place for:
- a) 3-5 years – 2 points
 - b) More than 5 years – 4 points

Note – There is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ for ideal nature-based projects. Project proponents are strongly encouraged to take into account specific community needs in designing projects. For example, in areas prone to flooding, native trees with strong root systems that absorb a significant amount of water may make the most sense; in areas particularly impacted by heat island effect, trees that maximize shade might be most appropriate; and areas highly impacted by poor air quality should consider low VOC-emitting trees...or some combination of all of these in areas impacted by all these concerns.



September 10, 2021

To: Scoring Committee Chair Bruce Reznik (bruce@lawaterkeeper.org)
Scoring Committee Vice Chair TJ Moon (tmoon@dpw.lacounty.gov)

CC: Matthew Frary (MFRARY@dpw.lacounty.gov)
Kirk Allen (KALLEN@dpw.lacounty.gov)

From: OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team (ourwaterla@gmail.com)

RE: OurWaterLA recommendations to the Safe, Clean Water Program Scoring Committee concerning Local Support Scoring Criteria.

The OurWaterLA Coalition (OWLA) has [advocated](#) for better distinguishing good community engagement in the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) in order to move from a paradigm of simply pushing information out to one where projects are developed with meaningful community input and true community ownership. In the [past round](#), the Scoring Committee gave either 0 or 4 points depending on whether there was at least one letter of support from an NGO/CBO. We offer the following recommendations to the Scoring Committee to more accurately and consistently evaluate SCWP projects' community support. Our recommendations are not intended to suggest that local support and community engagement can be achieved by checking boxes, but to provide a sense of how projects could be scored systematically.

Project scoring for local support:

- 0-4 points: The Project demonstrates strong local, community-based support and/or has been developed as part of a partnership with local NGOs/CBOs.

Information available in feasibility studies for evaluation of local support:

- "Prior activities" - Please describe any prior outreach and engagement conducted for this project.
- "Table of support" - The following table details the support by local, community-based organizations for the project.

Based on the information available in SCWP feasibility studies, we recommend the Scoring Committee allocate 0-2 points for prior activities and table of support then combine them to determine the final local support score of 0-4 points. We recommend the following scoring matrix:



	0 points	1 point	2 points
Prior activities	Lack or deny community access to decision-making processes (e.g., closed-door meetings, public notices, fact sheets)	Gather input from the community (e.g., surveys, focus groups, public comment, interactive workshops)	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into project and integrate community members as key decision-makers (i.e., community advisory committee, community-driven planning)
Table of support	No letters of support from NGOs/CBOs	1-2 letter(s) of support from NGOs/CBOs	3+ letters of support from NGOs/CBOs and community advisory committee; MOU with NGOs/CBOs At this level the project should include a community advisory committee with key decision making responsibilities.

As [highlighted](#) by the Scoring Committee, “strong local, community-based support” must include concrete evidence of meaningful support or collaboration(s) established prior to application. We recommend the following guidelines for documentation:

- There should be evidence that prior activities were accessible and community members were involved.
- Letters of support and memoranda of understanding should be from NGOs/CBOs that organize or represent community members that are/will be impacted by the project.
- They should include background on the organization and how long they have worked in the local community.
- They should also include a statement from the NGO/CBO that the project sponsor has integrated the organization into the planning/design process.

Thank you for considering these recommendations, and for all of the work, time, and expertise that you contribute to the SCWP. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with the County Flood Control District and the Scoring Committee to achieve successful implementation of the SCWP.

Sincerely,

Belen Bernal
Coalition Coordinator
OurWaterLA Coalition Core Team