

South Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, March 16, 2022
1:00pm - 3:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Cung Nguyen, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
E.J Caldwell, West Basin (Agency)
*Aimee Zhao, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
*Christopher Lapaz, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
*Darryl Ford, Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (Agency)
Craig Cadwallader, Surfrider Foundation (Community), Chair
Marissa Caringella, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission (Community)
Hany Fangary, Fangary Law Group (Community)
Eliza Jane Whitman, Carson (Municipal)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Jalaine Verdiner, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
John Dettle, Torrance (Municipal)
Geraldine Trivedi, EWMP: Manhattan Beach (Municipal), Vice Chair
*Lauren Amimoto, EWMP: Inglewood (Municipal)
Ken Rukavina, EWMP: Rancho Palos Verdes (Municipal)
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present

Wendy Butts, Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Craig Cadwallader, Chair of the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) WASC, welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order.

District Staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee members. All Committee members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2022

District Staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Vice Chair Geraldine Trivedi, seconded by Member Marissa Caringella. The Committee voted to approve the February 16, 2022 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no Committee member updates.

District Staff provided an update, noting:

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- On March 1, 2022, the Board of Supervisors voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing its position every 30 days.
- Under the Municipal Program, Annual Plans are due April 1st to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). Annual Plans are required to receive the Municipal Program revenue. If any municipality has not submitted their Annual Plan, please do so promptly. The Reporting Module has been updated to increase functionality and streamline the Annual Plan process. The recording for the info session is available on Safe Clean Water (SCW) website and FAQ will be uploaded soon.
- The SCWP Interim Guidance draft document is available for public review on the SCW website. The District provided interim guidance for disadvantaged community benefits and nature-based solutions in May of 2021, and now updated the guidance for water supply and community outreach and engagement. The public review period has been extended to March 27, 2022).

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes provided an update on recent activities:

- Presented to the South Bay Council of Governments, the Northwest San Pedro Neighborhood Council Environment and Sustainability Committee. Other organizations are free to reach out for the presentation.
- Hosted a watershed-wide event on March 15th with 189 public attendees and 103 virtual attendees.
 - Highlighted community outreach efforts for organizing events. There were nearly 200,000 impressions on Facebook, and 16,454 people opened the email blast. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes gave a shout out to the Heal the Bay communications team. Community outreach brought the SCWP to more people's attention, even if those people did not attend the event itself.
 - Miguel Luna spoke to the effectiveness of watershed coordinators during the panel.
 - The event included separate Zoom events with translations of each panelist's presentation.
- Participated in monthly check-ins and meetings with the Los Angeles Sanitation Districts (LASAN).
- Attended a grant-writing workshop.
- Noted that now is the time for potential project proponents to engage with Watershed Coordinator Shrodes so that the coordinator can provide options and resources for community outreach.

Chair Cadwallader expressed kudos to Watershed Coordinator Shrodes for the previous night's meeting.

5. Public Comment Period

OurWaterLA submitted a letter to the District. The letter will be included in the meeting minutes.

Public member Mike Etter spoke on behalf of a nearby homeowners association in support for the Machado Lake Ecosystem Rehabilitation (MLER) Operations and Maintenance Project.

Mike Scaduto (City of Los Angeles) expressed support for the Machado Lake project. The project benefits the cities of Los Angeles, Torrance, Carson, and Lomita, among others, and Unincorporated County Areas. The project provides open space benefits and recreational opportunities to Disadvantaged Communities. The Los Angeles Sanitation Districts' funding request equates to 1% of the capital cost the City has invested

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in the project. Scaduto noted that there is widespread support for the project among members of the community.

6. Discussion Items:

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member John Dettle disclosed attending the Beach Cities Watershed meeting along with Vice Chair Trivedi and Alternate Doug Krauss.

b) Round 1 (FY20-21) Developer Quarterly Reporting Summary ([SCW Portal](#)) - Q3 (January – March 2021) and Q4 (April – June 2021) ([Reports Summary](#))

i) Alondra Park Multi Benefit Stormwater Capture Project – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$10,000,000

Harris Harouny (LA County Public Works) reported the final project design is nearly complete with only minor changes. Construction will likely begin March 2024 and last approximately two years. Construction estimates have not changed. Funding that is currently pending will go towards project construction. Project Developer confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23.

ii) Recalculation of Wet Weather Zinc Criterion – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$20,261

This project was not discussed.

iii) Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project – FY20-21 SIP Allocation: \$906,000

This project was added to the agenda. Wilson Mendoza (City of Torrance) said the City has recently selected a consultant for the project and has provided them with drawings. Project Developer confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23.

c) Round 2 (FY21-22) Developer updates and budget confirmation

i) Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project (IP) – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$504,673

Seth Carr (City of Los Angeles) noted the project is behind schedule by at least six months. The City usually appoints the Bureau of Engineering to oversee construction design, but the Los Angeles Sanitation District is managing project delivery instead, so the project is currently behind. Carr confirmed that the City received the requested funds from the WASC and confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23.

ii) South Santa Monica Quality Enhancement: 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project (IP) – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$4,005,733

Jon Ball (City of Manhattan Beach) said the project is experiencing delays, but the team recently selected their consultant and will issue a notice to proceed in the next few weeks. Ball thinks the project can get back on track. The project is being funded by another WASC in addition to SSMB. Katy Doherty (City of Manhattan Beach) confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23.

iii) Carson Stormwater and Runoff Capture Project at Carriage Crest Park (IP) – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$207,500

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Member Eliza Whitman confirmed that the dollar amounts for each year of the project in the SIP tool are correct. Due to damage from a recent stormwater event, the project needs to order new equipment and is consequently slightly behind schedule. Whitman confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23

iv) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study (SS) – FY22-23 SIP Allocation: \$343,964

Richard Watson (Richard Watson & Associates, Inc.) confirmed that the dollar amounts for each year of the project in the SIP tool are correct. Watson said that the project schedule depends on whether they receive approval for additional funding. The applicant hopes to receive funding from two or three additional sources, in addition to funding from this WASC and the Upper San Gabriel River WASC. Watson confirmed their funding request for FY 22-23

d) FY22-23 SCCWRP Scientific Studies Summaries Overview ([Review Summary](#))

i) Microplastics in LA County Stormwater – Dr. Andrew Gray, University of California at Riverside (UCR)

Dr. Gray shared that the study involves both sophisticated, work-intensive monitoring performed by their team at UCR as well as monitoring by Los Angeles County. The team aims to develop an empirical modeling approach to better predict microplastic flux in California watersheds.

One reviewer requested additional details regarding sampling plans and modeling. Dr. Gray said the goal of the project is to focus on stormflow. Point-based sampling occurs automatically and is undertaken by LA County. Dr. Gray's UCR team will perform modeling in addition to the point-based sampling. All proposed modeling is empirical in nature and based on estimating the relationship between microplastics concentration and river discharge. Additional modeling will incorporate watershed characteristics and demographics to predict microplastics flux in other rivers, to guide future monitoring efforts.

Dr. Gray addressed questions about tireware particles. The proposal uses a tireware approach that has been successful for other projects, but they are monitoring the literature to ensure they use the most up-to-date approach.

Dr. Gray addressed questions regarding the cost breakdown. Dr. Gray said most funding covers personnel costs; a smaller portion funds analysis and monitoring; and materials, supplies, and travel expenses make up smaller sub-components.

The study placed a higher priority on first flush events since those have been monitored less in the past, however, the team cannot catch all first flush events.

One reviewer suggested adding an additional monitoring method. Dr. Gray is open to the suggestion but noted that additional funds and effort would be required. A high amount of effort is needed to process microplastic samples.

ii) Rebuilding Soils for Effective Nature-based Solutions – TreePeople

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Justin Herman (TreePeople) said that TreePeople is focusing their study in South Santa Monica Bay due to problems posed by compacted soils. The study aims to improve soils so they can better infiltrate and retain stormwater. The applicant will use three sites in the watershed and develop a protocol for rebuilding soils that involves breaking up the subsoil and adding mature, stable compost. Topsoil is applied atop the rebuilt soil and native landscaping (trees and shrubs) is installed to activate the system and maintain the rebuilt soil. TreePeople will assess runoff and water quality in the system by monitoring and modeling the hydrology and vegetation growth, measuring the system's ability to maintain performance over time. The study monitors the system's performance for three years.

One reviewer asked how the study relates to water quality. Herman explained that the project increases the soil system's capacity to infiltrate. The study then models the corresponding reduction in runoff produced during storm events.

The study would produce a report for use at the watershed scale. The study may demonstrate a protocol for urban soils which can be adopted for use in policy.

There were no questions from Committee members.

iii) Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation – Los Angeles Community Garden Council

Juan Diaz-Carreras (Los Angeles Community Garden Council) shared that this technical land use study seeks to assess whether a community garden can be used to advance the goals of the SCWP. The applicant needs to assess what makes a garden compatible (e.g., size, location, etc.). After developing criteria for site selection, the team will develop a smaller list in collaboration with community gardeners to explore what is possible at each. The LA Community Garden Council manages 45 gardens and has relationships with many more. The applicant will facilitate multilingual discussions with gardeners.

Member Caringella asked how the Community Garden Council will ensure cooperation with and access to the many gardens included in the project. Diaz-Carreras replied that their existing relationships with the gardeners has informed their understanding of what gardens are and are not willing to do. The applicant will engage with gardeners early on to discuss the SCWP and develop ideas for how the site might be compatible with the project. The Garden Council plans to engage the gardeners as early and as often as possible.

iv) Regenerate LA: Nature-Based Solutions for Community Parks – Kiss the Ground

Callie Ham (Kiss the Ground) noted that this study was originally included in the TRP. The study analyzes regenerative practices and prevents runoff. The study will inform how nature-based practices can be applied elsewhere. The site was selected based on input from LA Recreation and Parks. The study includes assessment of management, maintenance, and engagement with park users.

Jessica Chiartas (Kiss the Ground) added that the study employs conservation planning and adaptive management and emphasized that it will last five years. One of the first things

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the applicant will do is collect samples throughout the park to identify baseline nutrient levels to inform the quantity and quality of compost that will be applied. Chiartas addressed concerns from reviewers about nutrient runoff by clarifying that applied nutrients release slowly. Additionally, the applicant will apply buffer strips around the lake to capture runoff. Volunteers would be recruited to collect water samples during rain events. The sampling would be stratified. The study results will inform adjustments to future management and sampling design.

e) Preliminary Ranking Worksheet of Round 3 Projects

District Staff reported that all WASC members except three submitted their preliminary rankings of the proposed projects. District Staff presented the aggregated rankings and reminded the WASC that it should be used as a discussion tool.

Member Susie Santilena asked whether WASC members should rank all projects. District staff said yes and conveyed that the surveys may be resubmitted if needed.

Member Caringella asked how selecting the option to not rank a project factored into the overall ranking. District staff said unranked projects received zero points.

Chair Cadwallader suggested discussing the project rankings by category.

f) South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the FY2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) ([SIP Tool](#) & [SSMB Scoring Rubric](#))

i) Infrastructure Program (IP)

- [Hermosa Beach Multi-Benefit Parking Lot Greening Project \(Lot D\)](#)
Hermosa Beach
- [Fulton Playfield Multi-Benefit Infiltration Project](#)
City of Redondo Beach
- [Downtown Lomita Multi-Benefit Stormwater Project](#)
City of Lomita
- [West Rancho Dominguez - San Pedro Street Green Improvement](#)
Los Angeles County Public Works
- [Machado Lake Ecosystem Rehabilitation \(MLER\) Operations and Maintenance](#)
City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment

ii) Technical Resource Program (TRP)

- [City of Lawndale Southern Revitalization Project](#)
City of Lawndale
- [Darby Park Multi-Benefit Project](#)
City of Inglewood

iii) Scientific Studies (SS)

- [Microplastics in LA County Stormwater](#)
Dr. Andrew Gray, University of Riverside
- [Rebuilding Soils for Effective Nature-based Solutions](#)
TreePeople
- [Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation](#)

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Los Angeles Community Garden Council

- [Regenerate LA: Nature-Based Solutions for Community Parks](#)
Kiss the Ground

District staff demonstrated how to use the SIP tool.

Member Santilena noted that the Downtown Lomita Multi-Benefit Stormwater Project claimed a Disadvantaged Community benefit because they are downstream of a Disadvantaged Community. This reason can be applied for many projects and isn't necessarily indicative of true community benefits. Member Santilena asked that project applicant to further explain the disadvantaged community benefit at the next meeting.

Member Cung Nguyen and Watershed Coordinator Shrodes noted the importance of not over-extending the WASC's budget to make sure program fund is available for future community driven projects.

7. Public Comment Period

Public member Jessie De la Cruz applauded Heal the Bay's event held the day prior and expressed support for the Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation study. De la Cruz sees potential for community members to get involved and believes the study will benefit census-tract disadvantaged communities.

Martin Adams, one of the original members of Heal the Bay, said the Machado Lake project has been radically transformed since it received \$110 million from Proposition O. It represents an innovative approach to watershed and ecological improvement. The 1% annual maintenance cost seems reasonable to continue reaping the benefits of the project. Adams said the project is an important resource for wildlife and wants to make sure it continues to benefit the community.

Gordon Haines (LA Sanitation Districts) echoed the importance of the Machado Lake project.

8. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

9. Items for Next Agenda

Chair Cadwallader recommended holding two meetings next month instead of one. Member Nguyen suggested holding one three-hour meeting rather than two two-hour meetings. Member Ken Rukavina and Member Santilena supported Member Nguyen's recommendation.

The next meeting will be scheduled for April 20, 2022, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM. See the SCWP website for meeting details including time and duration.

- a) Continued SSMB Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the FY 2022-23 SIP

10. Adjournment

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

SOUTH SANTA MONICA BAY WASC MEETING - March 16, 2022						
Member Type	Organization	Quorum Present				Items
		Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Approve Meeting Minutes For February 16th, 2022
Agency	LACFCD	Cung Nguyen	x	Ramy Gindi		y
Agency	West Basin MWD	E.J. Caldwell	x			
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Robert Beste		Aimee Zhao	x	y
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Kristen Ruffell		Christopher Lapaz	x	y
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	x	y
Community Stakeholder	VACANT					
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	Craig Cadwallader	x	Mary Simun		y
Community Stakeholder	Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission	Marissa Caringella	x			y
Community Stakeholder	Fangary Law Group	Hany Fangary	x	Justin Massey		y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservation Corps	Wendy Butts		Bo Savage		
Municipal Members	Carson	Eliza Jane Whitman	x	Vernon Villanueva		y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	x	Ryan Jackson		y
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	Jalaine Verdiner	x	Thuan Nguyen		a
Municipal Members	Torrance	John Dettle	x	Wilson Mendoza		y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Geraldine Trivedi	x	Doug Krauss		y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Heecheol Kwon		Lauren Amimoto	x	y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Ken Rukavina	x	David Wahba		y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	x			N/A
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	13
Total Voting Members Present		15			Nay (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	14
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Other Attendees

- Aimee Zhao
- Alfredo Camacho
- Amanda Begley (TreePeople)
- Amir Haghverdi
- Andrew Gray
- Austine Racelis
- Brenda Ponton
- brett perry
- Callie Ham
- Carla Dillon
- City of Los Angeles Ford
- City of Los Angeles Scaduto
- CLA carr
- Cordoba Corporation Chupa
- Curtis Fang
- Dustin Herrmann
- Elizabeth Sala
- Emily Ramos
- Esther Woo
- Fangary Law Group Fangary
- Gordon Haines, Environmental Spe Haines
- Gregor Patsch
- Gus Orozco
- Haris Harouny
- Heal the Bay Randolph
- Hermosa Beach Krauss
- Jacqueline Mak
- Jennifer Coryell
- Jesse De la Cruz
- Jessica Chiartas
- Jon Ball
- Joyce Amaro
- Julian Lee
- Kathleen McGowan
- Katie Doherty
- Kevin Kim (LACFCD)
- Lauren Amimoto
- LIA SOORENIAN
- Lorena Matos
- Manny Gonez
- Maria Murillo
- Marissa Caringella
- Martin Byhower
- Merrill Barr
- Michael Drennan
- Michael Scaduto
- Michelle Staffield
- Mike Antos
- Mike Etter
- Miller Zou
- Nathan Schreiner
- Richard Watson
- Ryan Jackson
- shahram Kharaghani
- Susan Day (TreePeople)
- Tammy Takigawa
- Thuan Nguyen
- Tori Klug (Regional Coord.)
- Vernon Villanueva
- wendy Dinh
- Wilson Mendoza
- WSP Diaz-Carreras
- Yujuan Chen



Date: 3/15/2022

To: South Santa Monica Bay WASC Committee Members
cc: SCWP Staff, Watershed Coordinator

From: OWLA Core Team (Heal the Bay, LAANE, LA Waterkeeper, Nature for All, NRDC, Pacoima Beautiful, SCOPE, The Nature Conservancy and TreePeople)

RE: Input on Project Prioritization for SCWP SIP

OurWaterLA is a diverse coalition of community leaders and organizations from across Los Angeles County united to create a strong water future for Los Angeles. Our goal is to secure clean, safe, affordable and reliable water for drinking, recreation and commerce now and for the future. We have a deep commitment to uphold the trust that voters had in this program when passing Measure W, and that projects which achieve Safe Clean Water Program objectives of water quality, water supply, nature-based solutions and community investments are prioritized. Your active participation on this body is appreciated and we are excited about the prospects of working together to achieve a better water future for our region.

As we have identified in previous letters to you, this program is dynamic, and based on the first two rounds of project reviews, interested stakeholders such as OWLA, committee members and staff recognize the need for improvements to program metrics. With contributions from various stakeholders we are optimistic that future rounds of program funding will yield projects that not only improve water quality and water supply, but also provide community investments that are developed with community participation from concept to implementation and operations. The priorities for OWLA have always been clear: community-led project designs using nature-based solutions. These types of designs will not only address MS4 permit issues, but will also result in projects that can meet the multiple priorities for our region including addressing climate change, providing healthy recreational opportunities, and developing engagement tools so that water issues are more broadly understood and supported by our communities.

As has been reported by staff to the committee, there is currently an assessment being conducted to determine how investments and benefits are attributed to disadvantaged communities. The position of OWLA on this issue is very clear; projects must be located in disadvantaged communities in order to be counted. We are expecting that the reports in development by the SCWP staff working with subject matter experts for Round 4 projects will provide us all with the metrics necessary to plan for and achieve our disadvantaged community

investment goals. We are urging all WASCs to use only the benchmark of projects located in and providing benefits to a disadvantaged community to count toward the 110% threshold, until new assessment strategies are further refined.

We found most applicants in Round 3 did not provide enough information on both prior and planned engagement to allow a clear assessment on community engagement. For example, in some cases, applicants mentioned community meetings but lacked details on who participated, how many people attended, and whether/how input was solicited and incorporated. We see this as an important area where WASC members can request more information from applicants, especially given they may receive additional feedback from ongoing community engagement while under WASC consideration.

We also found many applicants mainly listed discussions with organizations as part of their outreach/engagement activities. We would like to see more emphasis on direct engagement with community members, especially across a broad cross-section of stakeholders. For example, the City of Lakewood held focus groups with seniors, youth, parents, and center users in addition to two community meetings and a survey with over 1,000 responses to guide Lakewood Equestrian Center renovations. Additionally, Amigos De Los Rios connected with Jackson Elementary students, teachers, admin, parents, and area residents to design its school greening and stormwater project.

For projects claiming to benefit disadvantaged communities, few applicants explicitly outlined targeted and direct engagement with members of these communities which further obscured whose needs are being addressed, who is benefitting, and whether there is local support.

We are encouraged to see more references to project proponents proactively seeking Tribal consultations and cross-agency collaborations as well as reaching out to Watershed Coordinators. We hope to see these efforts lead to more community-driven, multi-benefit projects.

Finally, we want to caution WASC members about efforts to claim prior local support when there have been major changes to project concepts, such as the North Hollywood Park Stormwater Capture Project, or a significant gap in time since the last engagement, such as projects coming from prior Watershed Management Program or Master Plan planning processes.

The task before you is to consider the prioritization of projects for funding in this round for the 2022-23 SIP. After careful review of the project submissions, **OWLA strongly recommends** that you approve only those projects that include strong remarks for water quality and water supply and that:

- clearly demonstrate a strong community engagement plan and process took place,
- include a significant community investment element,
- provide benefits to and, as applicable, are located in a disadvantaged community, and
- utilize vegetated nature-based solutions.

Many of the projects proposed in the South Santa Monica Bay watershed area do offer multiple benefits and represent good projects aspects in many ways; however, given limited funds, we would like to highlight the Hermosa Beach Multi-Benefit Parking Lot Greening Project for funding approval this year.

With respect to the special studies presented to this WASC, our recommendation is as follows:

Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation - Los Angeles Community Garden Council

OWLA sees the direct connection between this proposed study and the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program to provide community investment through multi-benefit projects, with a wide range in project sizes. The acquisition of land comes with a high capital cost, so identifying any opportunities for cost sharing partnerships will provide a benefit to the program. We encourage the Los Angeles Community Garden Council to work in close collaboration with the Watershed Coordinators on this study, if funding is approved. Our only concern with this study is with the lack of accessibility of these community garden green spaces. If public funds from the Safe, Clean Water Program are used in any way in coordination with community gardens across Los Angeles County, there must be public access. Therefore, we recommend that the WASC include funding for the Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation in their SIP, but require an accessibility assessment to be included as part of the study.

Rebuilding Soils for Effective Nature-based Solutions - Tree People

We recommend funding allocation for the Rebuilding Soils for Effective Nature-Based Solutions study considering the benefit to overall ecosystem resilience that healthy soils can provide, not to mention the increased water retention potential. If application of the findings for this study is properly implemented, this study could help to achieve Safe, Clean Water Program goals for prioritizing nature-based solutions as well as providing myriad community benefits associated with a thriving and resilient environment.

Regional Pathogen Reduction Study – Gateway Water Management Authority

We recommend that no funding be allocated for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study as no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, which is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible. We do appreciate the external review conducted by the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, but these external experts seem conflicted about how well this study will achieve its proposed goals. OWLA agrees, as we do not understand what new information will be achieved with this study. Additionally, this proposal targets a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and will potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study therefore will not support many of the program goals. There are already other potential opportunities to conduct a study like this, including through the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan. Therefore, funding should instead be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.

In addition, we support the South Santa Monica Bay WASC limiting their project approvals this year to ensure that sufficient funds remain for future projects such as those highlighted by the watershed coordinators in their presentations. It is preferable for WASCs to maintain their SIP at 75% or below each year.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations. We look forward to continuing our engagement with this committee and the watershed coordinators to ensure a better water future for the region.

Sincerely,

OurWaterLA.

South Santa Monica Bay
Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary

Full reports are available at: <https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/scw-reporting/map>

Call for Projects FY	FY20-21
Report Year	FY20-21

Row Labels	Project Developer	Report Period	Active Phase List	Scope Modification	Exhibit Modification	Activity Concern	Activity Delay	Sum of Funding Projected	Sum of Funds Awarded to Date	Sum of Expenditures to Date	WASC Notes
Infrastructure Project											
Alondra Park Multi Benefit Stormwater Capture Project	Los Angeles County	Q3 (January - March)	Design	No	A-10 Work Schedule and Completion Date Modifications	N/A	No	\$30,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00	\$0.00	
		Q4 (April - June)	Design	No	A-10 Work Schedule and Completion Date Modifications	N/A	No	\$30,000,000.00	\$10,000,000.00	\$0.00	
Torrance Airport Storm Water Basin Project, Phase 2	City of Torrance	Q3 (January - March)	Planning	No	No	N/A	No	\$906,000.00	\$906,000.00	\$0.00	
		Q4 (April - June)	Planning	No	No	Yes	No	\$906,000.00	\$906,000.00	\$0.00	
Wilmington Q Street Local Urban Area Flow Management Project	City of Los Angeles, Bureau of Sanitation	Q3 (January - March)	Planning, Design, Environmental Documentation	No	No	Yes	No	\$4,923,700.00	\$2,668,325.00	\$0.00	
		Q4 (April - June)	Planning, Design, Environmental Documentation	No	No	N/A	No	\$4,923,700.00	\$2,668,325.00	\$0.00	
Scientific Study											
Recalculation of Wet Weather Zinc Criterion	City of Los Angeles Sanitation	Q3 (January - March)	Pre-Study and Work Planning, Study Implementation	No	No	Yes	No	\$410,717.00	\$102,678.00	\$0.00	
		Q4 (April - June)	Pre-Study and Work Planning, Study Implementation	No	No	Yes	No	\$410,717.00	\$102,678.00	\$0.00	
Grand Total								\$72,480,834.00	\$27,354,006.00	\$0.00	

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Proposal identification information and summary of the project goals.

Title: **Microplastics in LA County Stormwater**

Proposing Organization: **University of California Riverside**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

The reviewers agree that the project's overarching goal is to develop standardized methods for monitoring microplastics in urban streams and to collect baseline monitoring data for L.A. County rivers and streams. Specifically, the project will compare two different measurement methods – one cheaper and more rapid, and the other more costly but known to produce more accurate results. The project also will seek to estimate microplastic loadings – key numerical data that will be used to build regional understanding of the source, fate and transport of plastic pollution. The project is part of a series of ongoing microplastics monitoring, modeling and analysis projects by the study team.

2. Are the objectives clearly stated? What portion of the objectives need more clarification?

All three reviewers agreed that the study's objectives are clear. Two of the reviewers offered suggestions for further improving clarity, including more details about the sampling plans, modeling, as well as about why there is unevenness in the number of samples to be collected at each site during different years.

3. How do the project goals directly support a nexus to increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All three reviewers agreed that the project effectively supports the SCWP's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution. All reviewers emphasized that this study constitutes foundational research to understand microplastics contamination in rivers and streams, noting that managers cannot effectively intervene to reduce microplastics pollution until they understand how much is present and how it is entering and traveling through stormwater systems. The baseline data from this project will be critical for evaluating future management action success. Finally, two reviewers commented on the positive aspects of developing a standardized sampling method that could be used throughout L.A.

4. What is (are) the overarching technical approach element(s) of the proposed project as you understand them (not necessarily the same as the elements described in the proposal)?

The reviewers agreed that the key technical elements of the study are: (1) Conduct field sampling using two different, previously developed methods to gather data on microplastic fluxes, (2) estimate microplastics fluxes via established modeling techniques, (3) compare results from the two methods and (4) integrate the data into regional watershed modeling.

5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

All three reviewers agreed that, on the whole, sufficient information was provided describing the study's technical approaches. However, all three reviewers cited things they would have preferred to see more information on. Two reviewers expressed a preference for more details on how the flux modeling portions will be done. Although the third reviewer explicitly stated that the modeling work is "well-described". The third reviewer, asked for an explanation of how the proposal's authors decided to use a specific analytical technique for identifying tire wear particles.

6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

All three reviewers agreed that the technical approach for the sampling methods portion of the study is sound. The reviewers disagreed on whether the modeling portion of the study is sound: Two expressed confidence that the modeling portion is technically sound, while the third said it was difficult to make this determination because of a lack of detail.

7. How achievable are the study's stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

All three reviewers expressed general optimism that the study's objectives are achievable within the proposed timeframe and budget, although two of them caveated their assessments by saying they would have preferred to see a breakdown of costs by task to have more confidence that the budget will be appropriate.

8. What are the greatest technical risks that you foresee the proposing agency facing when implementing the project?

All three reviewers identified technical risks, but they said that none of these risks would be insurmountable or would be likely to derail the project. One reviewer said that an unavoidable risk is the prospect of insufficient rain events during the planned sampling period. A second reviewer noted the logistical difficulty of having a sampling team ready to deploy within minutes of a "first-flush" rain event. And the third reviewer said identification and analysis of microplastics in a laboratory can often take more time than is allocated, especially in stormwater where there are likely to be a lot of [microplastic and non-microplastic] particles.

9. Please describe the linkages between the project's technical objectives and the types of decisions that stormwater managers will make based on the project's outcome(s)? Will the technical achievements provide stormwater managers useful linkages that extend beyond this study?

All three reviewers agree that the study has direct and important links to stormwater management. One reviewer characterized the information that will be provided by the study as "extremely useful." Two reviewers stated that the monitoring will help to establish estimates of microplastic loads providing information about the magnitude of stormwater loads relative to other pathways, establish baseline loads against which future loads assessment may be compared, and help establish grounds for potential concern. All three reviewers also agreed that the vetting of the two candidate monitoring methods is likely to pave the way for establishment of routine microplastics monitoring initiatives for the region's rivers and streams.

10. Please provide any additional technical perspectives you would like to share.

Two of the reviewers provided additional comments. One reviewer commended the study design as being the most robust microplastics monitoring study of its kind that they've come across, and suggested that the study could be further strengthened by comparing the two monitoring methods to a third method (a single depth-integrated sample at the thalweg), provided additional funding could be secured. The other reviewer suggested that the study reconsider the method that the study is planning to use for monitoring tire wear particles, but characterized it as a "small" suggestion because the authors can adjust the method to optimize as the study progresses.

11. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting one of the following five answer choices: *Excellent, Very good, Adequate, Inadequate or Not applicable because of insufficient information.* Please add an explanation to accompany your answer choice (or refer to the question number above for appropriate context and rationale):

- a. How well do the proposal objectives address the County's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

Two reviewers rated the proposal's objectives as being "excellent" for addressing SCWP goals, while the third reviewer gave a "very good" rating and did not elaborate further.

- b. How well do you think the technical approaches will achieve the study objectives and stated outcomes?

Two reviewers rated the chances of the study's technical approach achieving its stated outcomes as "excellent." The third reviewer gave a "very good" rating and cited concerns about the method that will be used to identify tire wear particles as the reason for not giving the highest possible rating.

- c. Technical experience and qualifications of the study team?

All three reviewers rated the study team's capabilities as "excellent."

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Proposal identification information and summary of the project goals.

Title: **Rebuilding Soils for Effective Nature-based Solutions**

Proposing Organization: **TreePeople**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

The reviewers agree that the study's overarching goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of a method developed in Virginia to rehabilitate compacted soils in L.A. to increase the soil's water infiltration capacity. Specifically, the study will conduct the rehabilitation work at three testing sites, quantify infiltration rates before and after, and use the improved infiltration estimates for evaluating the effectiveness of nature-based solutions.

2. Are the objectives clearly stated? What portion of the objectives need more clarification?

All three reviewers agreed that the study's objectives are, on the whole, clearly stated, although two of the reviewers identified areas that they would have liked to see clarified. One reviewer would have preferred more detail on the different types of soil conditions and remediation methods to be tested. The other reviewer said it is unclear how the project is defining what the soil infiltration rate would need to be for the method to be considered an effective nature-based solution.

3. How do the project goals directly support a nexus to increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All three reviewers agreed that the project effectively supports the SCWP's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution. Two of the reviewers offered only positive comments affirming the value of this work to managers, citing the positive impact similar work had in Virginia. The third reviewer caveated their generally positive assessment by noting that on-the-ground implementation of this work would be "somewhat limited" by the limited number of direct connections to end-user managers.

4. What is (are) the overarching technical approach element(s) of the proposed project as you understand them (not necessarily the same as the elements described in the proposal)?

The reviewers agree that the main study elements are: (1) Physically decompact soils at three urban sites, (2) implement multiple types of rehabilitation, including carbon amendments and woody plant species, (3) assess infiltration rates through monitoring and (4) model how the soil rehabilitation work influences soil moisture and runoff rates.

5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

All three reviewers noted that key information is missing about the study design, including how the soil rehabilitation work will be conducted, how effectiveness will be assessed, and how the modeling work will be conducted. While all three reviewers agreed that the proposal is significantly lacking in its description of the technical approach, the reviewers disagreed on how

big of a deal this is. Two reviewers expressed dismay at the lack of detail, while the third reviewer was not bothered, noting that missing details will “be determined if the project is funded.”

6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

The reviewers did not agree about whether the project is technically sound. Two of the reviewers expressed optimism about the soundness of the technical approach and offered suggestions for how to ensure the study is conducted in a technically rigorous fashion. Examples include depth of topsoil, use of plants, use of soil amendments, and the use of untreated control sites, amongst others. The third reviewer, while never explicitly saying the proposal is not technically sound, heavily critiqued the technical approach, expressing concerns about how monitoring data will be analyzed, how key water-quality parameters will be selected, and whether sufficient data will be collected to enable researchers to conduct necessary model calibration work.

7. How achievable are the study’s stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

All three reviewers expressed overall confidence that the study will achieve its goals within the proposed timeframe and budget, although each reviewer caveated their assessment by pointing to gaps in the proposal that could jeopardize the project’s path to success. One reviewer said considerations such as types of pollutants to be monitored could have a significant impact on costs. Another reviewer noted that the budget to support salary seemed excessive to produce a single manuscript, which is what is planned to be written. Both of these reviewers noted that the scope of the monitoring design could affect the timeline. And the third reviewer said the exact scope of the soil rehabilitation work – which was not specified in the proposal – will affect the timeline.

8. What are the greatest technical risks that you foresee the proposing agency facing when implementing the project?

All three reviewers identified multiple significant technical risks that could affect the project’s success. One reviewer highlighted a possible lack of appropriate control sites, as well as the unintended influence that nutrients introduced during soil rehabilitation could have on monitoring measurements. A second reviewer expressed concerns about the applicability of findings to other sites if the study sites are not representative, whether the study would appropriately capture site-specific hydrological dynamics, the potential high degree of uncertainty associated with the modeling outputs, and whether the planned scale at which measurement and modeling work will be conducted is appropriate. The third reviewer echoed concerns about selecting study sites that are representative, whether the timeline to complete soil rehabilitation work is sufficiently long, and how the study will adapt if none of the soil rehabilitation methods being tested are deemed to be successful in Southern California.

9. Please describe the linkages between the project’s technical objectives and the types of decisions that stormwater managers will make based on the project’s outcome(s)? Will the technical achievements provide stormwater managers useful linkages that extend beyond this study?

The three reviewers expressed differing degrees of confidence about whether the study will produce results that are utilized by managers. Two of the reviewers expressed only optimism that the study could be managerially relevant. The third reviewer noted that the study lacks “explicit links” to management decision-making, although this reviewer simultaneously noted that the study team has had success getting recommendations codified into building codes – which is a holy-grail scenario and an ideal outcome.

10. Please provide any additional technical perspectives you would like to share.

All three reviewers offered additional comments. One reviewer said the project’s success could hinge on whether the County has legal mechanisms in place for codifying the study’s recommendations into permitting for future development/redevelopment projects. This reviewer also said it would be valuable to contextualize soil rehabilitation in terms of the role it could play in advancing the County’s overall water-quality improvement goals. A second reviewer said that the project’s integration with management decision-making is “somewhat weak,” and that they would have preferred much more information on the study design. The third reviewer suggested that the study team might want to rethink aspects of the study design, as well as consult with the Huntington Library and other L.A. County organizations that have previously explored investing in soil rehabilitation.

11. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting one of the following five answer choices: *Excellent, Very good, Adequate, Inadequate or Not applicable because of insufficient information*. Please add an explanation to accompany your answer choice (or refer to the question number above for appropriate context and rationale):

- a. How well do the proposal objectives address the County’s goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

One reviewer rated the proposal’s objectives as being “excellent” for addressing SCWP goals, while the other two reviewers gave a “very good” rating and did not explicitly state why they did not give a higher rating.

- b. How well do you think the technical approaches will achieve the study objectives and stated outcomes?

The reviewers rated the likelihood of the study achieving its objectives either “adequate” or “very good.” The reviewer who gave an “adequate” rating said the study design could be improved by separately validating the efficacy of the individual aspects of the soil rehabilitation work (i.e., soil decompaction, addition of organic matter to the soil, and addition of plants).

- c. Technical experience and qualifications of the study team?

The three reviewers disagreed in their assessment of the technical capabilities of the study team. Two reviewers gave an “excellent” rating, while the third reviewer gave a “Not applicable due to insufficient information” rating and cited the lack of information in the proposal about whether the study team has prior experience doing this type of work.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Proposal identification information and summary of the project goals.

Title: **Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation**

Proposing Organization: **Los Angeles Community Garden Council**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

The proposal reviewers agree that the goal of this project is to identify existing community gardens in L.A. County that are optimally suited to serve as implementation sites for BMPs, and to develop BMP design concepts for multiple sites across multiple watersheds where runoff capture/treatment could be optimized.

2. Are the objectives clearly stated? What portion of the objectives need more clarification?

The reviewers disagree on whether the objectives are clearly stated. Two reviewers said the objectives are generally clear, while the third said the objectives are not entirely clear. One of the reviewers who indicated the objectives are generally clear said they would have liked to see more clarity on how candidate sites will be ranked and prioritized, while the other reviewer described the objectives as clear but too brief. The third, more critical reviewer said the number of watersheds to be studied is not clear – either 7 or 14, depending on where in the proposal you read – nor is there clarity around how the sites will be analyzed and what kinds of design criteria will be used.

3. How do the project goals directly support a nexus to increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

The reviewers disagree on how effectively the project supports the SCWP's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution. Two of the reviewers expressed doubts, while the third reviewer expressed confidence. Of the two reviewers who expressed doubts, one questioned whether a lack of BMP concept designs for community gardens is the limiting factor and the cause of more BMPs not being built, and also questioned whether, as a result of having concept designs, more BMPs would actually be implemented in L.A. County. The other reviewer who expressed doubts pointed out that no BMPs will actually get built by the end of the project, although with additional future funding for implementation, the reviewer expressed optimism that the project could be impactful. The third reviewer expressed confidence in the proposal's potential management impact, commending the proposal for considering both site characteristics and the buy-in of community garden leaders in selecting BMP sites.

4. What is (are) the overarching technical approach element(s) of the proposed project as you understand them (not necessarily the same as the elements described in the proposal)?

The proposal reviewers agree that the proposal consists of the following steps: (1) compile basic information for about 750 community gardens in L.A. County, (2) narrow down these sites to a much smaller number of candidate sites using screening criteria, (3) visit the candidate sites to collect field information, (4) develop conceptual designs for implementing BMPs at a subset of the

candidate sites, and (5) develop materials to support future efforts to secure the necessary funding to implement the BMP concept designs.

5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

All three reviewers expressed concerns about the lack of detail in the technical approach. One reviewer noted the lack of information about what site selection criteria will be used – specifically, if volume of stormwater the site is capable of capturing would be considered. A second reviewer noted that the proposal writer had skipped or provided little information in multiple key subsections, including neglecting to specify site selection criteria and threshold cutoffs. The third reviewer expressed concerns about the feasibility of obtaining some types of data for various sites, and the lack of detail on the role of the [SCWP] Coordinator .

6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

All three reviewers expressed concerns about the technical soundness of the proposal. One reviewer deemed the technical gaps to be “significant,” noting that the proposal should have offered much more specificity around what the final concept designs will look like, what types of BMPs will be considered, and what field data will be collected. A second reviewer said that the proposal’s plan to rely on existing, publicly available soil survey data would be a mistake, as these data are “notoriously inaccurate.” The third reviewer expressed concerns about the lack of detail on BMP sizing requirements and feasibility evaluations at the sites where concept designs will be created.

7. How achievable are the study’s stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

All three reviewers agreed that the study’s timeframe and budget seem reasonable, although one reviewer said they are “somewhat unsure” about taking this stance due to insufficient technical details in the proposal. The other two reviewers said the timeframe was reasonable and that the budget might be larger than necessary.

8. What are the greatest technical risks that you foresee the proposing agency facing when implementing the project?

All three reviewers agreed that the project could experience significant technical risks, although the reviewers had difficulty pinpointing these risks and providing solutions because of the lack of technical detail in the proposal. One reviewer questioned whether narrowing down the sites during the screening process will result in a viable list of candidate sites, and also whether the site selection data to be collected will identify all relevant site-specific factors that the project team will need to know when preparing its concept designs (and moreover, that managers will need to know to sign off on the design plans). A second reviewer expressed concerns about improper soils or groundwater elevation data sets resulting in multiple candidate sites identified through the evaluation process being ultimately disqualified during the concept design stage. The third reviewer expressed concerns that the proposal does not explicitly identify all of the data sets that

will be collected, noting that the quality of these data sets will determine the feasibility of the project itself.

9. Please describe the linkages between the project’s technical objectives and the types of decisions that stormwater managers will make based on the project’s outcome(s)? Will the technical achievements provide stormwater managers useful linkages that extend beyond this study?

The reviewers disagreed on whether the study will produce results useful to stormwater managers. Two of the reviewers expressed doubts, with one noting that it remains unclear whether the BMP concept designs developed through this project will actually be implemented, and the other reviewer noting that with no plan for data collection presented, the proposal is unlikely to advance management practices. The third reviewer expressed confidence in the proposal’s potential management impact, noting that the study will give managers a list of sites that are appropriate for implementing BMPs.

10. Please provide any additional technical perspectives you would like to share.

All three reviewers provided additional perspectives expressing doubts about the technical underpinnings of the proposal. One reviewer said that the proposal should have discussed the positive impact of “green jobs” creation, and provided more detailed cost justification, especially given that some watersheds have many more community gardens to evaluate than others. A second reviewer expressed disappointment that the proposal did not highlight how much stormwater could be captured if the BMP concept designs to be developed via this study were to all be eventually implemented; the second reviewer also noted that many of the sites – being former housing plots – are likely to be above street level, which would require implementing BMPs requiring disruptive excavation work. The third reviewer simply expressed disappointment at the lack of technical detail in the proposal.

11. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting one of the following five answer choices: *Excellent, Very good, Adequate, Inadequate or Not applicable because of insufficient information.* Please add an explanation to accompany your answer choice (or refer to the question number above for appropriate context and rationale):

- a. How well do the proposal objectives address the County’s goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

Two of the reviewers rated the proposal’s objectives as being “adequate” for addressing SCWP goals, but simultaneously used their rating to criticize the proposal, with one reviewer noting that community gardens may not be optimal BMP locations in the first place and may not have sizeable-enough watersheds to justify placing BMPs in them, and the other characterizing the project’s final products as “underwhelming for the total budget proposed.” The third reviewer provided a “Not applicable because of insufficient information” rating.

- b. How well do you think the technical approaches will achieve the study objectives and stated outcomes?

All three reviewers rated the chances of the project achieving its stated outcomes as “adequate.” One of the reviewers did not elaborate, while the other two reiterated their concerns about the lack of technical detail.

- c. Technical experience and qualifications of the study team?

All three reviewers provided a “Not applicable because of insufficient information” rating, with one explicitly calling out the fact that no information was provided for any members of the project team, except for the proposal writer.

SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM SCIENTIFIC STUDY PROPOSAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Proposal identification information and summary of the project goals.

Title: **Regenerate LA**

Proposing Organization: **Kiss The Ground**

Your summary of the Project Goals and Objectives:

The project's overarching goal is to expand use of compost to improve urban soil health. Specifically, the project will conduct a feasibility study to determine where compost should be locally made, apply compost to a site and then monitor its soil health, develop a network for producing and distributing compost regionally, and educate end users on the benefits of using compost instead of industrial fertilizers to improve soil health.

2. Are the objectives clearly stated? What portion of the objectives need more clarification?

All three reviewers expressed confidence that the study's objectives are, on the whole, reasonably clear, although they all caveated this assessment by identifying multiple areas where the objectives aren't clear. One reviewer said the objectives should have been placed into the context of previously completed work in this area and planned future work. A second reviewer noted potential contradictions in the objectives – for example, whether it will be possible to study compost amendments if the study does not include constructing a viable site where this study can be conducted, and whether there will be time during the relatively short, one-year study for both a pre- and post-assessment of soil health. The third reviewer said the proposal could have been strengthened by putting into context how much compost in total the City has the potential to produce and how much of a positive overall benefit could be realized by making this investment.

3. How do the project goals directly support a nexus to increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All three reviewers agreed that the project effectively supports the SCWP's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution. But each reviewer simultaneously offered critiques of the project's anticipated effectiveness. One reviewer said that the project could be strengthened if it also were to investigate how compost enhances runoff capture opportunities, as well as how construction of the composting facility could simultaneously become an opportunity to reduce impervious surface, which is a major impediment to effectively managing runoff. A second reviewer lamented that the study does not go far enough in describing a long-term vision for building a local network of composting facilities, as this network could result in compost being utilized at a massive scale across the entire city. The third reviewer said the study's planned monitoring of soil health would not be adequate, as the study also needs to monitor for nutrient-laden runoff leaving the site – a potential outcome that could run counter to County water-quality improvement goals.

4. What is (are) the overarching technical approach element(s) of the proposed project as you understand them (not necessarily the same as the elements described in the proposal)?

Only one of the reviewers felt confident articulating the technical elements of the proposal. (The other two reviewers expressed confusion about what the technical elements will actually consist of; see Question 5). The reviewer who articulated the technical elements of the proposal said it will consist of designing a composting facility, determining the facility's capacity to generate compost, applying compost to nearby areas, and monitoring soil health for a year.

5. Has the proposal provided sufficient information to describe the technical approach for each element? If not, what information is missing?

Two of the reviewers expressed doubts that they could even articulate what the technical elements of the proposal will consist of, noting that the proposal is not framed and presented the same way that scientific study proposals typically are. These two reviewers noted that the proposal largely glosses over the nuts and bolts of how the composting facility will be designed, how the soil monitoring program will be designed, and precisely how the demonstration plots that are referenced in the proposal's appendix will be used. The third reviewer came to the opposite conclusion, indicating a comfort level with the fact that the proposal was not framed as a traditional scientific study, and offering minor suggestions for improving the clarity of the technical approach, including citing scientific literature that offers a technical rationale for why the study was designed as it was.

6. Is the technical approach sound? If not, what do you recommend should be done to improve the technical approach of the proposed project?

The reviewers did not reach the same conclusions about the soundness of the technical approach. Two reviewers said they struggled to even evaluate the technical approach because of a lack of detail; these two reviewers emphasized that they were looking for much more technical meat about the scope and size of the composting efforts, where the composting will take place, and how the soil monitoring program will be designed and conducted. The third reviewer expressed confidence in the proposal's technical soundness (see Question 5, above).

7. How achievable are the study's stated technical objectives, especially within the proposed timeframe and budget?

The reviewers offered a mixed assessment regarding whether the study's objectives will be achievable within its stated timeframe and budget. Regarding timeframe, one reviewer did not weigh in at all, and the other two reviewers expressed concern that the timeframe will be too short, due to pandemic-related delays and other factors. Regarding budget, one reviewer expressed concerns about not being able to account for how the requested budget will be spent, a second reviewer deemed the budget "reasonable," and the third reviewer said the budget felt "underestimated."

8. What are the greatest technical risks that you foresee the proposing agency facing when implementing the project?

All three reviewers identified technical risks associated with implementing the project. One reviewer cited the lack of clarity around how the study will be conducted. A second reviewer said convincing end users to adopt composting will involve more than just education and outreach; end users also may need to acquire different equipment for tillage, as well as to provide ongoing

staff training to prevent rapid soil re-compaction. The third reviewer identified potential COVID-19 pandemic-related delays, such as not being able to generate the necessary amounts of compost within the study's timeframe.

9. Please describe the linkages between the project's technical objectives and the types of decisions that stormwater managers will make based on the project's outcome(s)? Will the technical achievements provide stormwater managers useful linkages that extend beyond this study?

All three reviewers expressed tepid optimism that the study will produce results that are relevant and directly applicable to stormwater managers. One reviewer said the proposal would have been stronger if the link between this project and stormwater management needs had been "brought out as a focal point" in the proposal. The other two reviewers said the project's management influence will depend largely on whether the project is able to take a technically rigorous approach to showing that compost can substantially reduce runoff volumes – because the main reason stormwater managers will be interested in this project is for its potential to improve runoff management.

10. Please provide any additional technical perspectives you would like to share.

Only one of the reviewers provided additional comments. This reviewer said they appreciated the project's statement on anticipated benefits for local disadvantaged communities, as well as the strong letter of support from the City of L.A.'s Sanitation and Environment division affirming the project's potential to be scaled up into a city-wide initiative.

11. Please answer each of the following questions by selecting one of the following five answer choices: *Excellent, Very good, Adequate, Inadequate or Not applicable because of insufficient information*. Please add an explanation to accompany your answer choice (or refer to the question number above for appropriate context and rationale):

- a. How well do the proposal objectives address the County's goals of increasing stormwater or urban runoff capture and/or reducing stormwater or urban runoff pollution?

All three reviewers rated the proposal as "adequate" for achieving SCWP goals. Two of the reviewers said the proposal does not lay out a strong enough case about the relationship between composting and the potential benefits to stormwater management. The third reviewer said the proposal did not include enough information about how soil monitoring will be conducted.

- b. How well do you think the technical approaches will achieve the study objectives and stated outcomes?

The reviewers disagreed about the likelihood of the study achieving its goals. One reviewer gave an "excellent" rating and expressed confidence the project can be achieved. A second reviewer gave a "very good" rating and said that while they would have liked more clarity around some of the goals, the project overall represents a

“potentially good value” if it can serve as a catalyst for a citywide composting effort. The third reviewer gave an “inadequate” rating and said that while the project has a “strong potential for success,” the clarity of the proposal is significantly lacking.

- c. Technical experience and qualifications of the study team?

All three reviewers rated the capabilities of the study team as either “excellent” or “very good” and had only complimentary things to say about the study team, including pointing out that the study team has had prior successes with similar initiatives.