

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



Wednesday, December 7, 2022
2:00pm - 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Genevieve Osmena, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Art Castro, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Ida Meisami-Fard, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
Max Liles, Michael Baker International (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
Yazdan Emrani, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Christine Peters, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
*Jason Casanova, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Carlos Moran, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

John Huynh, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
John Luker, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

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

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

District staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from November 2, 2022

District staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Chair Villegas motioned to approve, seconded by Member Patrick DeChellis. The WASC voted to approve the November 2, 2022 minutes with 14 in favor and one member absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

4. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no updates from Committee Members.

District staff provided an update:

- On November 15, 2022, the Board of Supervisors (Board) voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing its position every 30 days. If the Board decides to no longer approve findings to continue teleconferencing meetings under AB 361, the WASC has the authority to make their own AB 361 findings. District Staff will provide additional guidance if that occurs.
- Metrics and Monitoring (MMS) workshops were conducted on November 16 and November 17. Details are available on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website under the Resources dropdown menu.
- An email was sent out to the project developers for Fund Transfer Agreements and Fund Transfer Agreement Addendums for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) fund disbursements.
- FY22-23 Quarterly Reports for the period of July to September were due on November 15 for Round 1 and Round 2 Projects and Scientific Studies. Regional Quarterly Reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project and if the transfer agreement has not been executed yet.
- The WASC will discuss FY21-22 Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 reports in early 2023.
- The District notified Project Developers via email about the new Annual Report functionality in the SCW Portal – Reporting Module. Projects and studies funded in Round 1 & Round 2 SIPs are required to submit their first Fiscal Year 21-22 Annual Progress Report by December 31.
- The Scoring Committee scored ULAR projects on October 6, October 17, and December 1. Out of the 13 Infrastructure Program (IP) projects, 12 met the scoring threshold and 1 could not be scored. Final scores and the scoring rubric has been uploaded to the Projects Module. The ULAR Scoring Rubric is also posted on the ULAR webpage.
- Attending meetings regularly is a requirement for WASC members under Article 5 of the WASC Operating Guidelines. An absence of two consecutive meetings or more than three meetings in one year will be considered failure to attend meetings and may result in the absentee member's removal from the WASC. If attendance by the Primary member is not possible for a particular meeting, it is requested that the Alternate member be present at the meeting.

Upon request for more information about the unscorable project, District staff shared that scoring and re-scoring details are available in the Scoring Rubric found in the Scoring Committee and ULAR WASC webpages.

Member Veronica Padilla-Campos asked District staff about updates from previously approved and funded projects. District staff shared that project updates are provided through Quarterly Reports and presentations at WASC meetings. Committee Members are encouraged to review the Quarterly Reports in the Reporting Module, the summary of Quarterly Reports provided by the District, and the upcoming Annual Progress Report for more information about project and scientific study progress.

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5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Carlos Moran shared an update about outreach and education between June and November. The presentation can be found on the [SCWP website](#) and attached.

Highlights included the successful conduct of SCWP project tours and plans for future tours. The ULAR Watershed Coordinator newsletters have played a significant role in facilitating outreach and participation and members of the WASC are invited to share feedback on the newsletters with Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman. Watershed Coordinators Liberman and Moran also met with other Watershed Coordinators to discuss nature-based solutions as a means of addressing water quality and supply issues. The Watershed Coordinators also participated in a WaterTalks workshop about community-engaged planning.

The Committee discussed involving local unions in SCWP projects. A coalition of union groups were involved in educating the public about the Program. The Watershed Coordinators may revisit the list of unions and reconnect with them. Watershed Coordinator Moran has connected with the Builders Industry Association and has been invited to give a presentation at their annual conference.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiles all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploads them to the SCWP website, and displays them on-screen during the meeting. There were no comment cards. Participants on the Spanish translation line and call-in users were also invited to provide public comment.

Nate Hayward (City of Los Angeles on behalf of Councilmember DeLeon) commented on the Eagle Rock Boulevard: A Multi-Modal Stormwater Capture Project. Hayward noted that they have received widespread community support for the project which improves active transportation (walking and biking) and increases connectivity with Northeast Los Angeles. The project combines stormwater capture with green elements, including the addition of many trees. Many schools, non-profits, and other organizations along the corridor will have access to the new green spaces.

Wendy Diaz-Antonio (Mission Hills resident) expressed support for the Mission Mile Sepulveda: A Climate Resilient Urban Greenway to Cultural Connections Project. Diaz-Antonio noted that the project adds much needed green space, and enhanced pedestrian and bike safety to a corridor that experiences heavy traffic. The project also includes water conservation and supply components.

Roy Perez (Mission Hills resident and water quality professional) also expressed support for the Mission Mile Sepulveda: A Climate Resilient Urban Greenway to Cultural Connections Project. Localized stormwater capture and increased access to green space will be valuable for children in the neighborhood.

Anthony Espinoza (area representative on behalf of Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez) added that the Mission Mile Sepulveda: A Climate Resilient Urban Greenway to Cultural Connections Project has engaged the community a lot on green infrastructure, pedestrian safety, stormwater capture, vehicle speed safety, and benefits of a multiuse median path.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items

District staff provided an update, noting during the previous ULAR WASC meeting, the WASC discussed the reallocation of earmarked funding between SIP Program years, starting FY23-24 and on. Since then, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) has offered revisions to their allocations for David M. Gonzalez Recreation Center and Valley Plaza Park Stormwater Capture projects. The David M. Gonzalez Recreation Center project reallocations did not affect the budgeted year (FY23-24), but the Valley

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Plaza Park project pushed \$2 million from the budgeted year to a future year. As a result of the reallocations put forward by the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation, Bureau of Street Services, and LADWP, the FY23-24 budget has approximately \$19 million available for new projects and studies. This will be revisited around March 2023 during SIP deliberations and finalized within the online SIP Tool.

a) Infrastructure Program (IP) Project Presentations ([SCW Portal](#))

i. [Mission Mile Sepulveda: A Climate Resilient Urban Greenway to Cultural Connections Project](#)

Presentation by City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, StreetsLA

Merrill Taylor of Craftwater Engineering presented the project to the Committee. The proposed project is a regional onsite stormwater capture and infiltration facility along 3.63 miles of Sepulveda Boulevard between Rayen Street and Rinaldi Street. The primary objectives include increasing corridor safety, providing alternative transit options, and increasing water quality and supply in the ULAR basin.

The Committee discussed matching funds and Caltrans's involvement. Ana Tabuena-Ruddy of the City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works clarified that the project is well-vetted across stakeholder groups, inclusive of Caltrans, Los Angeles Department of Transportation, and StreetsLA. The project has been awarded approximately \$40 million from the Caltrans Active Transportation Program (ATP), meaning that everything related to traffic improvements and design have been approved. Tabuena-Ruddy clarified that the leverage funding noted in the application will use the portion of the ATP funds that relate to stormwater improvements.

Member Padilla-Campos shared support for the project on behalf of Pacoima Beautiful.

ii. [Eagle Rock Boulevard: A Multi-Modal Stormwater Capture Project](#)

Presentation by City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, StreetsLA

Merrill Taylor of Craftwater Engineering presented the project to the Committee. The proposed project is a regional dry-weather and biofiltration project along Eagle Rock Boulevard between Westdale Avenue and York Boulevard. The project will complement 2.7 miles of improvements achieved through CalTrans ATP.

The Committee discussed Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs for the project and whether they are solely for stormwater capture or if they can include street maintenance. Some projects return to the WASC to ask for more maintenance funds over time. Taylor clarified that costs include maintenance of the subsurface and surface features like the bioretention cells along the corridor. Tabuena-Ruddy added that a portion of the estimated O&M costs are covered. The portion not covered in the request can be filled by the City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, as they have purview of street maintenance and urban forestry funds.

Member Max Liles commented on the urban runoff feature and wanted to hear more about the characterization of the runoff and whether the water quality will change or be suitable for the bioretention facilities discussed. Taylor replied that an analysis was completed when the project was originally conceived of as wet-weather. The project has been converted to a dry-weather project and a full reanalysis has not yet been conducted. Member Liles shared that they are mainly concerned with the high groundwater table.

Watershed Coordinator Jason Casanova asked about constraints on trees noting that the Mission Mile Sepulveda project proposes to add 500+ trees and the Eagle Rock Boulevard project only proposes 18. Taylor clarified that less trees are proposed because there is an existing canopy along Eagle Rock Boulevard and that they do want to maximize tree cover with the space they have.

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The presentations can be found on the [SCWP website](#).

8. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

Following discussion, the Committee decided that the next meeting planned for Wednesday, January 4 would be postponed to Wednesday, January 11 to allow more time for the most participation from the Committee, project presenters, and the public after the holidays. Following District staff suggestion, the Committee also decided to schedule additional meetings for the 3rd Thursdays in January and February to accommodate the quantity of IP project presentations. District staff will reach out to presenters regarding the date changes and to gauge availability.

The following ULAR WASC meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, January 11, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 19, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 1, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday, February 16, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Agenda items for the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, January 11, 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. includes:

- a) Findings to Continue Teleconference Meetings under Assembly Bill 361, if needed
- b) Infrastructure Program Project Presentations

See the [SCWP website](#) for meeting details and materials.

11. Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked Committee Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

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		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 11-2-2022 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	X	Ramy Gindi		Y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	X	Y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	John Huynh				
Agency	Sanitation	Ida Meisami-Fard	X	Alfredo Magallanes		Y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	X	Javier Solis		Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	X	Sergio Rascon		Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	X	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		Y
Community Stakeholder	Environment	John Luker		Wendi Gladstone		
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	X			Y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	X	Felipe Escobar		Y
Municipal Members	Glendale / Pasadena	Yazdan Emrani	X	Kris Markarian		Y
Municipal Members	La Cañada Flintridge / South Pasadena	Patrick DeChellis	X	Ted Gerber		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	X	Barbara Romero		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski	X			Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Christine Peters	X	Rafael Prieto		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	X	Thuan Nguyen		Y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones	X	Alex Farassati		Y
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	X			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Clarasophia Gust		Jason Casanova	X	
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	X			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	14
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	14
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendees
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Arlene Guzman
carmen andrade
brett perry
Ernesto Pantoja
Max Podemski
Alonso Garcia
Paige Bistromowitz
Thuan Nguyen
Adi Liberman
miguel luna
Justin Jones (LACFCD)
gabriela gonzalez
Teresa Villegas
Drew Ready
Rafael Piamonte
Ted Gerber
Max Liles
Haris Harouny (LACFCD)
Alfredo Magallanes

Kara Plourde
Pat DeChellis
Mark Lombos
Amanda Zeidner
Jessica Medina
Nate Hayward
Mayra Cabrera - LACFCD
Yaz Emrani
Wendy Diaz-Antonio
Nayiri Vartanian
Hayat Rasul
Genevieve Osmena
Veronica Padilla
Cathie Santo Domingo
Tanya Sullivan
Mara L
Carlos Moran
Conor Mossavi
Mark Nguyen

Lorena Matos
Jenny Chau
Joyce Amaro
Anh Ta
Jason Casanova
Giselle Ramirez
Stacy Luell
Brianna Logasa
roy perez
Lidia Rivera
Mark HALL GLAmosquito
Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)
Karen Rico
Kenneth Jones
Yen Pham
Sunshine Saucedo
Carrie Morris
Ana Tabuena-Ruddy
Art Castro

Anthony Espinoza
Dawn Petschauer
Jennifer Amarant
Mike Antos (Regional Coordinatio)
Maggie Gardner
Johanna Chang
Merrill Taylor
Christine E McLeod
chrisitne peters
William OBraitis
Ida Meisami (LASAN)
Nicholas Ryu
Mike Scaduto
Jonathan Guerrero
Ann Bechtel
john mendoza
seth carr