

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



Wednesday, January 11, 2023
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)
Jesus Gonzalez, 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
*Rafael Prieto, 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 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 Yazdan Emrani. The WASC voted to approve the December 7, 2022 minutes with 14 in favor and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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



3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Chair Villegas shared that due to their role at the City of Los Angeles, they are privy to the Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project and that they have had conversations with LA Sanitation and Environment to review the project.

Member Cathie Santo Domingo and Member Ida Meisami-Fard noted that they have also been briefed on the Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project.

Member Mark Lombos and Member Veronica Padilla-Campos shared that they have been briefed on the Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Operation and Maintenance Project. Member Padilla-Campos noted that Pacoima Beautiful signed a letter of support the project.

4. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no updates from Committee Members.

District staff provided an update:

- On January 10, 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 and there is still a State of Emergency in place, the WASC has the authority to make their own AB 361 findings. District staff will provide additional guidance if that occurs.
- The District released the Regional Program Process Funding Handbook (Handbook). The Handbook provides consolidated information on existing regional program requirements and guidance. The Handbook is available under the Regional Program Call for Projects tab on the Safe Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.
- Emails have been sent to project developers for Funds Transfer Agreements and Funds Transfer Agreement addendums for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) fund disbursements.
- Quarterly Reports for FY 22-23 covering October to December of 2022 activities are due February 15, 2023 for Round 1 and Round 2 Infrastructure Program (IP) projects and Scientific Studies (SS). Regional Quarterly Reports must be completed even if there was no activity done on the project and if the transfer agreements have not yet been executed. To view Quarterly Reports, visit the [SCW Portal](#) Dashboard, select a project, then select Project Reports.
- Annual Reports for IP projects, SS, and Municipal Programs were due December 31, 2022.
- Annual Plans for Municipal Programs are due April 1, 2023 for FY23-24
- Attending meetings regularly is a requirement for WASC members under Article 5 of the WASC Operating Guidelines. 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.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Carlos Moran shared an update about outreach and engagement. A video resource of best practices for community engagement from community leaders and will be available for the WASC, peers, and other agencies to use. The video will be located on the ReDesign.LA and ULAR Watershed Coordinator websites. Another interactive learning resource, a virtual tour of Magic Johnson Park, has been developed by Accelerate Resilience LA (also known as ARLA) and is available on fieldkit.acceleratela.org.

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



Watershed Coordinator Moran added that they held two Water Tours, the first being at Magic Johnson Park with Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (also known as SCOPE) on December 16, 2022. The second tour was held on January 6, 2023 and was a collaboration between WaterTalks and Los Angeles Unified School District at the Normandie Avenue Elementary School Green Infrastructure Project. The next ULAR Water Tour will be in collaboration with Los Angeles County Public Works and will be on February 18, 2023 at Magic Johnson Park.

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman added that they are planning a tour for the Rory M. Shaw Wetland project. This month, the Watershed Coordinators are focused on outreach to neighborhood councils in their watershed. They are working with Valley Village Neighborhood Association to gather potential project ideas for Tujunga Wash. Watershed Coordinator Liberman also shared that the Los Angeles Federation of Businesses will host a panel on SCWP in April 2023, and the exact date will be shared with the Committee when it is available.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. Participants on the Spanish translation line and call-in users were also invited to provide public comment.

Pacoima Beautiful submitted a public comment card in support of the Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Operation and Maintenance Project and was displayed on the screen.

Katherine Castrejon, a representative for the new State Senator Caroline Menjivar, shared that the Senator is supportive of the Sylmar Channel Project. Castrejon shared that this project is essential for their constituents and hopes to mitigate any potential concerns by holding interactive meetings with local stakeholders.

Nate Hayward, Deputy Chief of Staff for Councilmember Kevin de Leon, spoke in support of the Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project, noting the history of freeways dividing Boyle Heights. Hayward added that the community is supportive of the project as it addresses a multitude of regional environmental injustices.

Jose Hernandez spoke in support of the Sylmar Channel project, noting the northeast San Fernando Valley is often underinvested in regarding green infrastructure projects and that the Council Office supports the project.

Francisco Romero shared on behalf of Promesa Boyle Heights support of the Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Operation and Maintenance and Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation projects. A Spanish audio recording was shared from Elizabeth Quiroz, a community member representing the Comité de Lideres with Promesa Boyle Heights, in support of the Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project. Quiroz notes it is long overdue for renovations and is essential to the community. Quiroz added that they are in close communication with the Friends of Hollenbeck Park and have learned about its stormwater and trash accumulation that causes damage to the space, noting that pavement in some places is falling into the lake. Quiroz and Promesa Boyle Heights have been working with LA Sanitation and Environment on community engagement and urged the WASC to vote in favor of the project that is in an under-resourced part of Los Angeles. An English translation of the recording was shared with District staff and shared with all attendees via chat box on WebEx.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items

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

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



i. Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Operation and Maintenance Project
Presentation by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

Rafael Piamonte of Los Angeles County Department of Public Works shared a presentation about the project which is an operation and maintenance project of a pump station, treatment facility, and stormwater best management practices to ensure that the project continues to improve water quality, and provides water reuse opportunity and park enhancement.

Chair Villegas asked about the project funding request and Piamonte clarified that the total requested amount of approximately \$1.6 million will be over a five-year span. Piamonte added that the County will be allocating additional funds.

Member Meisami-Fard asked for clarification on the specific stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that the funding would address, and Piamonte noted that the BMPs include irrigation lines and various pumps around the lake.

ii. Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project
Presentation by Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, LA Sanitation and Environment

Kevin Ho of LA Sanitation and Environment shared a presentation about the project which is a multi-benefit stormwater project to improve water quality in Boyle Heights. The project includes stormwater capture and green street elements. The project will also enhance recreational and educational opportunities.

Member Genevieve Osmena asked about the wet weather design of the project and whether there are areas near the site that flood. Ho shared that there is more flooding upstream than near the site and that they will do further investigation to address possible flooding areas. Member Osmena requested follow-up information on this when it is conducted.

The Committee discussed the placement of the dry wells and the water levels of the lake to prevent overflow. Ho shared that they have conducted geologic surveys that have indicated possibility for infiltration, and the wells will be able to capture dry weather and a portion of wet weather flows. Ho added that the subsurface wells are covered with maintenance lids and are located off site of the main park to prevent the public from being harmed by them. Ho also shared that there will be a valve that monitors the lake level to allow flow to enter the lake and shut off flow if water levels exceed a certain level.

iii. Sylmar Channel Project
Presentation by City of Los Angeles, Department of Public Works, LA Sanitation and Environment

Lorena Matos of LA Sanitation and Environment shared a presentation about the project which is a multi-benefit stormwater project that will improve water quality in Sylmar and the ULAR watershed more broadly. The project will enhance safety and recreational opportunities for the neighborhood.

Member Osmena asked if there is localized flooding in the region that the project can help alleviate and if the project has received feedback from community members since the corridor appears to be behind residential homes. Matos shared that they have conducted outreach, individual meetings, tabling, and door-knocking with and for community members.

Member Padilla-Campos shared that they have met with Matos for transparency to the WASC and added that community members have been excited for the project.

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



All presentation slides are on the [SCWP website](#).

8. Public Comment Period

Socorro Chacon of Social Model Recovery Systems in Boyle Heights, who is also a member of Friends of Hollenbeck Park, shared that they have been advocating for a healthy and safe park. Chacon noted that Friends of Hollenbeck Park is a group of around 60 residents, and they are in complete support of the Hollenbeck Park Lake Rehabilitation Project and urged the WASC to support the project as well.

Mark Hall, the Environmental Program Manager of the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District, shared that operation and maintenance is vital to projects like Earvin “Magic” Johnson Park Project Operation and Maintenance Project. Hall noted that the park currently has issues with its perimeter wetlands, particularly with invasive species management. Hall added that they would like to see as much support from the SCWP as possible and encouraged engagement with the Vector Control District earlier on. Hall suggested that the Sylmar Channel Project should be reviewed by the Vector Control District for the same reason.

John Mendoza, a community member in the Pomona area, shared their experience with the meaning of stormwater, noting that in the past, stormwater management had a different meaning. Mendoza shared that climate change underscores importance of stormwater capture and has been supportive of efforts to capture stormwater as outlined in SCWP.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

District staff reminded the Committee of the upcoming meeting schedule. There will be an additional meeting on January 19, 2023 that will cover four IP Project Presentations. The February 1, 2023 meeting will cover the final three IP Project Presentations. A preliminary ranking survey will be sent to the Committee for discussion purposes during SIP deliberations. The February 16, 2023 meeting will cover the SCWRRP peer review of SS, Quarterly Report summaries, update from the preSIP scientific study and an introduction to the SIP tool if available. The March 1, 2023 and March 16, 2023 meetings will cover SIP deliberations. The WASC can schedule additional meetings as needed.

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

11. Adjournment

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

Upper Los Angeles River - January 11, 2023

		Quorum Present			Voting Items	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 12-7-2022 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	X	Ramy Gindi		Y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	X	Y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	Jesus Gonzalez	X	John Huynh		Y
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		
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		Rafael Prieto	X	
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		16			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	14
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendees

Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - January 11, 2023

Johanna Chang	Jenny Chau	Jack Mikesell	Elena Chavez
Dawn Petschauer	cathie santo domingo	Patrick DeChellis	Daniel Rydberg
Craig Doberstein	Tanya Sullivan	Alonso Garcia	Ted Gerber
Rafael Prieto	Miguel Luna	Arlene Guzman	Jennifer Bautista
Adi Liberman	sean phan	Gil Crozes	Christine McLeod
Susie Santilena	Mark Nguyen	Dustin Bambic	kristina leyva
Max Liles	Conor Mossavi	Yaz Emrani	Luis Garcia
Mark Lombos	Lorena Matos	Kevin Ho	Chris Carandang
Ryanna Fossum	Jason Casanova	Mike Antos (Regional Coordination)	Lynda Bybee
Carmen Andrade	Mayra Cabrera - LACFCD	Max Podemski	Ernesto Pantoja
Lisa Skutecki	Jeannette Hernandez	Drew Ready	Hayat Rasul
Veronica Padilla	Rafael Piamonte	Brianne Logasa	Felicia Yin
Teresa Villegas	Rafael Piamonte	john huynh	Katherine Castrejon She/Her
Larry Tortuya - CWE	Seiko Oishi	Art Castro	aldair (Dleon)
Pablo Forni	Giselle Ramirez	Kelsey Reed	aldair (Dleon)
gabriela gonzalez	Kenneth Jones	Ida Meisami (LASAN)	Ana Rivera
Sunshine Saucedo	Yen Pham	miguel luna	Lidia Rivera
Thuan Nguyen	Maggie Gardner	Francisco Romero	seth carr
Jennifer Amarant	Justin Jones - LACFCD	Amanda Zeidner	Michael Scaduto
Michelle Zhang	Jesus Salas	Nate Hayward	Mike Scaduto
Kirk Allen	Carlos Moran	Anh Ta	Socorro
Debby Reece	Jesus (LADWP)	dorothy wong	Amanda Begley
Paige Bistromowitz	Paola Machan	Brenda Ponton	
Jose Hernandez	Haris Harouny - LACFCD	Mark Hall GLAmosquito	
Kara Plourde	Genevieve Osmena	brett perry	