

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



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Wednesday, December 20, 2023  
1:00pm - 3:00pm  
Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility  
1935 S Hughes Way, El Segundo, CA 90245  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

Marcela Benavides-Aguilar, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)  
\*Matthew Veeh, West Basin MWD (Agency)  
\*Aimee Zhao, Water Replenishment District (Agency)  
\*Christopher Lapaz, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
\*Darryl Ford, Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (Agency)  
Hany Fangary, Fangary Law Group (Community)  
Bo Savage, Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Community)  
\*Roland Jen, Carson (Municipal)  
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles (Municipal)  
Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)  
James Flannigan, Torrance (Municipal)  
Carla Dillon, (Lomita) EWMP: Dominguez (Municipal)  
Doug Krauss, EWMP: Beach Cities (Municipal)  
Vanessa Hevener, (Rancho Palos Verdes) EWMP: Peninsula (Municipal)  
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

\*Committee Member Alternate

## Committee Members Attending Virtually:

Craig Cadwallader, Surfrider Foundation (Community), Chair

## Committee Members Not Present:

Caryn Mandelbaum, Resident (Community)

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

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

District staff welcomed the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) members, facilitated introductions, conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx, and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff reviewed brief house-keeping items.

Chair Craig Cadwallader joined the meeting virtually with just cause under AB 2449. Member Doug Krauss temporarily facilitated the meeting while Chair Cadwallader's WebEx audio issues were being resolved.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 20, 2023**

Member Krauss presented the minutes from the last SSMB WASC meeting held on September 20, 2023. Member Carla Dillon motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Vanessa Hevener. The WASC voted to approve the September 20, 2023 meeting minutes with 12 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

## **3. Committee Member and District Updates**

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Member Marcela Benavides-Aguilar provided an update on the Los Angeles County Water Plan (CWP), which was adopted on December 5. The CWP provides a shared, inclusive, regional path forward to achieve safe, clean, and reliable water resources sustainably and equitably for Los Angeles County. The Plan was a community-driven process that involved stakeholder engagement over a span of three years. Member Benavides-Aguilar also provided an update on the Department of Public Works' efforts in advancing the implementation of the SCW Program. Public Works is initiating the development of the SCW Program's watershed plans for the nine watershed areas to achieve multi-benefit outcomes. The watershed plans are expected to be completed within a year.

District staff acknowledged that Chair Cadwallader's audio has been restored and Chair Cadwallader facilitated the remainder of the meeting.

District staff provided an update, noting:

- Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Q1 reports were due on November 15. Quarterly reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project.
- The Scoring Committee completed scoring Infrastructure Program (IP) applications. SSMB had two out of three IP applications that met the 60 points threshold, the Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project and Dominguez Channel BMPs Prioritization Project. The Sorensen Park Stormwater Capture Project IP application was deemed incomplete by the District and did not get scored.
- The Project Modification Request (PMR) forms for the current FY were due November 30 for projects that may have to be reviewed and approved by the WASC for inclusion in the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP). For modification requests that are consistent with the application, PMR forms can be submitted after the deadline. For example, continuing projects that wish to reallocate funding during the FY24-25 SIP Program years without changing the overall SCW funding request may submit a PMR form as soon as able for review.
- Municipal progress/expenditure Annual Report for FY22-23 is due December 31. Municipal Annual Plans are due in April before the FY and the Reports are due at the end of the year after the FY in December.

Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) provided an update and shared that the Regional Coordination team has prepared funding memos for all eligible Round 5 IP projects. SSMB funding memos can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Fossum noted that memos are provided to the WASC to make informed decisions when determining funding priorities during SIP deliberations, particularly with partial funding. Funding memos are also shared with Project Proponents after they are deemed eligible by the Scoring Committee. Funding memos summarize project benefits (as stated in the SCW Program application), provide an overview of funding need, and identify two to three potential funding opportunities with a ranked competitiveness assessment.

Member Darryl Ford inquired if PMRs can include changes in funding and requested clarification if modified projects would receive funding memos, or if funding memos are only for future rounds.

Fossum responded that funding memos are only for Round 5 submitted infrastructure projects, not for continuing projects with modifications. Fossum also added that a quarterly funding report would be available and attached to a funding database in January. The quarterly funding report would provide a general funding opportunity update for both ongoing and new projects proponents and help connect project proponents with the Watershed Coordinator earlier on in the process.

Member Susie Santilena confirmed with District Staff that the due date for Regional Annual Reports is December 31.

#### **4. Watershed Coordinator Updates**

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Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes provided an update on recent outreach and engagement efforts, including attending West Basin Harvest Festival and San Pedro Community Garden farm-to-table event, facilitating two green schoolyard tours, and planning for the next watershed wide event.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes provided a summary of the Community Needs Survey responses. The Community Needs Survey was a collaborative effort between Heal the Bay and SGA Marketing and was used by the SSMB, Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB), and Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Coordinators. The results revealed top water-related concerns and community priorities based on 90 survey responses. The Community Needs Survey presentation slides can be found on the SCW Program website.

## 5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communications.

## 6. Public Comment Period

District staff received no public comment cards by 5:00pm the day before the meeting.

There were no public comments.

## 7. Discussion Items

### a) SSMB Funding Summary Presentation Presentation by Watershed Coordinator, Nancy Shrodes (Heal the Bay)

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes presented a summary of SSMB WASC funding. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Matthew Veeh asked if there was a way to compare SSMB budget allocations to other watershed areas. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes responded that comparisons can be viewed using the online SIP tool. District staff demonstrated how to use the SIP tool to the WASC and toggled between other watershed areas to compare funding details.

### b) Interim Guidance Presentation by Stantec Presentation by Regional Coordinator, Ryanna Fossum (Stantec)

Fossum presented on Interim Guidance. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Santilena mentioned that there is a lot of scrutiny surrounding disadvantaged community benefits during project deliberations. Member Santilena informed the WASC that a project needs to show a direct connection if it is claiming those benefits.

### c) Infrastructure Program Project (IP) Presentations

#### i) Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project

*This project include stormwater capture and sewer diversion facility below Torrance Airport to improve water quality in Machado Lake and increase water supply.*

Kathleen McGowan (McGowan Consulting) and Merrill Taylor (Craftwater) presented on the Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project. The project is anticipated to capture and divert the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile, 24-hour stormwater runoff and eliminate 100% diversion of dry weather flows. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Santilena asked whether the project proponent would consider revising the cash flow request, since first year funds requested exceed what is currently available. Member Santilena also directed the

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question to District staff to determine if this is something project proponents are allowed to do, instead of a partial funding request.

McGowan responded that the design schedule has been delayed, so it is possible that the project will not need as much funding in the first year. District staff added that adjustments in yearly funding allocations can be made during SIP deliberations. Member Santilena highlighted the importance of funding distribution timelines and how it may impact the project.

Member Dillon inquired if the design looked at the potential for contamination at the project site, and if there would be a risk during construction. McGowan confirmed that the project would not have any risks, based on the findings from a geotechnical study. The study determined that infiltration was not an option due to deeper groundwater levels. Member Dillon asked if there was an agreement with Los Angeles County Sanitation District (LACSD), regarding accepting the new water, and if LACSD would be receiving a payment for the water received. Wilson Mendoza (City of Torrance) responded that LA County uses water meters to determine how much to charge when water is being discharged to LACSD.

Member Krauss reiterated Member Santilena's concerns regarding disadvantaged community designations, since this project is claiming disadvantaged community benefits but is located outside of a disadvantaged community. Member Santilena also explained that this designation is "all or nothing," as there are no partial disadvantaged community benefits. Member Santilena reminded the WASC of the disadvantaged community benefit quota percentage that must be achieved for every SIP and noted that this requirement should be considered during SIP deliberations.

Committee Members discussed project benefits and highlighted that there may not be a clear connection between the project and disadvantaged community benefits. Member Santilena stated that it would be a challenge to convince the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) that there are disadvantage community benefits since the project is located at an airport. Without a clear connection to disadvantaged community benefits, there would be a risk of the ROC sending it back and receiving community pushback. McGowan noted that the project claimed disadvantaged community benefits by responding to the application prompts, highlighting a water quality benefit to a disadvantaged community. It would be up to the WASC to evaluate the project and disadvantaged community connection.

Member Hevener noted that there is a strong connection to the disadvantaged community benefits related to water quality aspects since the pretreatment of water can help minimize the amount of pollutant load that ends up at Machado Lake, located in the neighborhood of Harbor City. Member Hevener added that although the project site itself may not provide disadvantaged community benefits, broader benefits can be observed downstream at the lake, where people often frequent for recreation.

Member Ford noted that outreach was not directly conducted with the disadvantaged community members and the Committee should consider where the constituents for the project are located. Member Ford prompted the WASC to consider education and maintenance components to ensure people understand the project benefits and help reduce issues down the line.

Member Roland Jen expressed uncertainty around how water is managed at Machado Lake and questioned the impact on water levels from diverting water. McGowan replied that the City of Los Angeles is augmenting the water in the lake due to an algae bloom and will not be putting extra nutrients in the lake during the dry season. The addition of water is more effective since stormwater will still go to the lake during the wet season and will receive make-up water after the first flush is gone.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes asked for details regarding community outreach, including attendance numbers. Mendoza responded that outreach was conducted online last July and primarily targeted

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residents around the airport as well as hangar attendants, including pilots. Most of the comments received pertained to how the project may impact current operations. The final design will incorporate broader outreach and include residents of the disadvantaged community, which is also mentioned in the outreach plan prepared by Craftwater. McGowan also mentioned that Torrance Airport has a small museum accessible to the public. The project proposes nature-based solutions around the museum, so there are small areas of the airport that the public can access and interact with.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes informed the WASC that one of the members from the Scoring Committee expressed concern around the project's selective outreach.

District staff announced that the WebEx connection was temporarily interrupted during the Torrance Airport project discussion. Meeting minutes include discussion items about the presentation and slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

#### ii) Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project

*This project is a multi-benefit project that aims to improve water quality in the Dominguez Channel by reducing pollutants in dry-weather runoff.*

Mendoza and Larry Tortuya (CWE Engineering) presented on the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Tortuya indicated that the City would be open to reconsidering the funding request given the WASC's limited available funds.

Member Benavides-Aguilar inquired how operations and maintenance (O&M) would be funded once the project is constructed, since O&M was not included in the funding request. Mendoza stated that the project sought funding for engineering and construction but will apply for O&M funds at a later time.

District staff attending virtually informed the WASC that WebEx participants were back online. District staff stated that any missed conversations would be captured in the meeting minutes.

#### d) Technical Resources Project (TRP) Presentation

##### i) Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement Project (City of Gardena)

*This project is a community-driven project that provides nature-based solutions to manage stormwater flow and enhance the wetland treatment capacity.*

Allan Rigg (City of Gardena) and Yoshi Anderson (Geosyntec) presented on the Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement Project. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Rigg invited Cheral Sherman (Board Member, Friends of Gardena Willows Wetland Preserve) to speak to the WASC. Sherman emphasized the significance and beauty of the 14.6-acre preserve. Sherman stated that as a strong supporter of stormwater activities, the project's funding is crucial for exploring opportunities to enhance stormwater management. The study would be a critical part in establishing a stormwater program for the Willows.

## 8. Public Comment Period

Mark Hall (LA County Vector Control District) expressed support, on behalf of the LA County Vector Control District, for the Gardena Willows project. Hall shared previous experiences working with the Friends of the Willows for many years and explained that invasive vegetation has outpaced the group's efforts and available funding. Funding is essential for this preserve habitat, which sees significant bird activity. Hall also shared that the West Nile virus, which is endemic to the wild bird population, is also a concern due to its

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proximity to adjacent retirement facilities. Hall reiterated the importance to ensure the Willows are cared for, especially considering the added risk.

## **9. Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

## **10. Items for Next Agenda**

The next SSMB WASC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 2024. Items on the agenda include:

- a) Project Presentations

## **11. Adjournment**

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

**SOUTH SANTA MONICA BAY MEETING - December 20, 2023**

Member Type	Organization	Quorum Present				Voting Items
		Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Vote to approve September 20, 2023 meeting Minutes
Agency	LACFCD	Marcela Benevides-Aguilar	x	CJ Caluag		y
Agency	West Basin MWD	E.J. Caldwell		Matthew Veeh	x	y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Robert Beste		Aimee Zhao	x	a
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Dave Pierce		Christopher Lapaz	x	a
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Caryn Mandelbaum				
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	<b>Craig Cadwallader</b>	x	Mary Simun		y
Community Stakeholder	(Vacant)					
Community Stakeholder	Fangary Law Group	Hany Fangary	x			y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservation Corp	Bo Savage	x	Wendy Butts		y
Municipal Members	Carson	Gilbert Marquez		Roland Jen	x	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	x	Ryan Jackson		y
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	Thuan Nguyen	x	Jalaine Verdiner		y
Municipal Members	Torrance	James Flannigan	x	Wilson Mendoza		a
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	<b>Geraldine Trivedi</b>		Doug Krauss	x	y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Carla Dillon	x	Heecheol Kwon		y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Vanessa Hevener	x	David Wahba		y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	x			N/A
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	12
Total Voting Members Present		15			Nay (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	3
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	15
Municipal Members		7			Approved	

Other Attendees

- Alexander Iglesias - SCWP
- Annelisa Moe she/her
- Anthony Barreras
- ash
- Ava Farriday
- Billy Berler
- Call-in User\_2
- Christopher Vong
- CityUser
- CityUser
- Craig Cadwallader
- Curtis Fang
- Dave Pierce
- David Copp RPV
- Emily Huang Stantec
- Jacqueline Mak
- Jenny Chau
- Kara Plourde
- Lara Awad
- Mark Hall GLA Mosquito
- mary simun
- Maya
- Melanie Hu
- Merrill Taylor
- Michael Scaduto
- Michelle Staffield
- Paige Bistromowitz
- Rick Watson
- RPV Public Works
- Ryanna Fossum, Regional Coordination
- Sara

Regional Oversight Committee Meeting  
PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Alan Riggs	Riggs	Gardena	ariggs@cityofgardena.org
Cheral <del>Sherman</del>	Sherman	"	"
Hong	Lee	City of Gardena	hlee@cityofgardena.org
Emily <del>Huang</del>	Huang	Stantec	emily-huang@stantec.com
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Bo	SANAGH	LACS	BSANAGH@LACOFS.ORG

\*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public