

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



Monday, February 26, 2024
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Clearwater Building
16401 Paramount Blvd
Paramount, CA 90723
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency) Co-Chair
Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency) Co-Chair
Dave Pierce, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Stephen Scott, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
Irene Lopez-Muro, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
*Arturo Gonzalez, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
*Mary Hillermeier, Tree People (Community)
*Dylan Porter, Port of Long Beach (Community)
Erica Maceda, River in Action (Community)
Gina Nila, Commerce (Municipal)
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)
*Cecilia Salazar, Long Beach (Municipal)
Julian Lee, Lynwood (Municipal)
*Fred Gonzalez, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Gladis Deras, South Gate (Municipal)
Tara Dales, SGA Marketing (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Not Present:

Adriana Figueroa, Paramount (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Madeline Chen, Co-Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed all Committee Members and called the meeting to order. District staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and provided an overview of meeting guidelines and participation instructions for any participants joining online. District staff facilitated a roll call, Committee Members made self-introductions, and a quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from October 24, 2023

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Gina Nila motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Dan Mueller. The Committee voted to approve the October 24, 2023 meeting minutes with 14 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Member Ernesto Rivera shared that the LA County Water Plan was approved by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) on December 5, 2023. The County Water Plan is a forward-looking strategic plan that is a collaborative effort of agencies and organizations throughout the region. The County Water plan is a living document, and it is anticipated to have future iterations.

Melissa You informed the LLAR WASC about their upcoming departure from the City of Long Beach next month. Member Cecilia Salazar was designated to succeed You as the primary Committee Member.

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



District staff provided an update, noting:

- Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) Regional Program Annual Reports were due December 31, 2023. Progress reports must still be completed even if there was no activity done on the project or if the Transfer Agreement has not been executed for projects. The last Quarterly Report was due on February 15. The next Quarterly Report is due on May 15.
- On January 31, the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to send the Biennial Progress Report to the Board. The ROC began discussing next steps and timeline at the February 15 meeting and will begin SCW Program goal-setting sessions at the March 20 meeting. The Committee is welcomed to attend and provide input. The final Biennial Report, presentations, ROC meeting details, and more information, can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).
- Municipal progress/expenditure Annual Reports were due December 31, 2023. As a reminder, Municipal Annual Plans are due in April before the FY and the Reports are due in December.
- Round 4 Transfer Agreements (TA) and Addendums are available for download in the TA Module. Project applicants and developers should refer to the reminder email sent out on January 24 for checklist instructions on how to navigate the new Module. Those who did not receive the email should contact District staff and provide the project name and contact email.
- WASC Members whose job connects to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about or advocate for those projects during Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) deliberations to ensure a fair and transparent Regional Program process. WASC Members should also avoid using their position as WASC Members to advocate for projects from their home entities.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Tara Dales presented on the partial funding guidelines and gave an update on the Community Needs Survey, which received over 1,000 responses across three watersheds. Watershed Coordinator Dales highlighted recent community engagement and outreach efforts and upcoming school tours. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Watershed Coordinator Dales shared that an upcoming school tour is scheduled at Environmental Charter High School and Daniel Webster School in Lawndale on March 12. Interested individuals can RSVP on [Eventbrite](#).

5. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. No comment cards were received before the meeting. There were no public comments.

6. Discussion Items

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

b) Summary of Scientific Study from CASC Engineering and Consulting

Co-Chair Chen clarified that the rapid review serves as a resource tool for WASC decision making, accessible to both WASC Members and the public. The Scientific Study (SS) Summary can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

The WASC sought clarification on whether the project applicant would present on the SS. District staff explained that, as in previous years, the study underwent independent review, and a report was generated for the WASC's review. The project applicant is present today to address any questions that may arise. Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that in other WASCs, applicants were invited to highlight key aspects of the review.

i) Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity Presentation by Ali Sharbat and Mehrad Kamalzare (Cal Poly Pomona)

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



Co-Chair Kreiling inquired about the reviewers' recommendation to update the County's Low Impact Development (LID) Manual drywell development factsheet. Mehred Kamalzare (Cal Poly Pomona) stated that the study will lead to the establishment of LID guidelines. Ali Sharbat (Cal Poly Pomona) additionally noted that upon completion of the study, with input from stakeholders, the study aims to develop an operational manual for distribution to both stakeholders and students.

Member Dave Pierce inquired about the applicant's ability to provide further detail on the study's scope, including the requirements of the drywell owners throughout the study and the ongoing activities at the drywell locations. Kamalzare provided an example of seven factors that will be examined throughout the study period, aiming to determine their impact on the drywell's performance. Sharbat expressed a desire for the owner's cooperation in installing transducers on the drywell to collect data and samples for analysis, allowing for a comparison of infiltration rates over time. This collaboration would result in the owner receiving a comprehensive guide outlining the best practices for operations and maintenance (O&M) of the drywell.

Member Rivera inquired about potential updates to the proposal and whether there were plans to evaluate pre-treatment systems and the correlation to the infiltration systems analysis. Kamalzare confirmed that there are plans to update the proposal. In response to concerns raised in the SS summary regarding permits, Kamalzare assured the WASC that the project team is experienced with permitting processes and has obtained permits for similar studies in the past. Sharbat also added that because the study is the first of its kind, the SS may adapt throughout the duration of the study.

c) Project Updates for Previously Funded Projects

Member Nila asked whether there would be an opportunity to revisit past projects that have been approved to discuss potential changes or further adjustments to the budget.

District staff informed the WASC that the District emailed all applicants and developers to inquire about any revisions to the projected budget allocated in previous SIP years and received responses from most developers. These updates are reflected in the SIP tool. District staff noted that the LLAR SIP, without alternative funding distributions, is currently overallocated.

Watershed Coordinator Dales inquired whether the over-allocation includes Project Modification Requests (PMRs) for increased funding. District staff explained that while the LLAR did receive PMRs, there were none that requested additional funding and none that were considered inconsistent with the SIP.

Member Nila observed that, under the scenario of "All Considered Projects + Alternate Funding Distribution + Anticipated Construction Costs," the SIP is overallocated from FY26 onward.

Fossum noted that the changes proposed in the "Alternative Funding Distribution" scenario reflect updated made and verified by project developers of continuing projects. Upon inquiry, District staff shared that the "Alternative Funding Distribution" scenario includes requested adjustments for the following projects: Spane Park, Long Beach Municipal Urban Stormwater Treatment - Phase 2, Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern, and Furman Park Stormwater Capture and Infiltration Project.

Member Mueller shared that Furman Park has encountered design challenges, but approximately 60% of the design has been completed. The plan is to finalize the design by the end of this calendar year and begin construction in 2025. The project proponent is actively seeking alternative funding sources.

Member Kreiling requested that the Spane Park proponent elaborate on the change in funding distribution. John Hunter (John L. Hunter & Associates) explained that construction will not commence this year, allowing the project to reallocate those funds to later years. The applicant intends to retain a small portion of funding for the current year to complete design. Hunter clarified that the total timeline length remains unchanged.

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



Upon request, District staff provided the scenario on the SIP tool that excluded construction costs or alternative funding distributions.

Member Rivera sought clarification regarding the process of asking project proponents to confirm funding distribution updates and asked whether there is a shortfall for continued project funding. District staff clarified that the “All Considered Projects + Alternative Funding Distribution” scenario does not result in a funding shortfall, even with the addition of the two Round 5 applications for this year. However, this scenario does not include anticipated construction costs.

Watershed Coordinator Dales asked if the Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern project schedule will be extended. Oliver Galang (Craftwater) shared that the design phase has begun, however collaborating with other partners in the region has been a major challenge. Progress on the project design is expected to remain on schedule.

**d) Lower Los Angeles (LLAR) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating
Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Stormwater Investment Plan**
i) Infrastructure Program (IP)
(1) Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project

Member Nila expressed concern about future construction costs and asked if the LLAR WASC has sufficient funds to award to the Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project. Member Nila noted the large funding allocations in FY27-28 and FY28-29, in particular. Hunter shared that the project cannot be phased and anticipates 100% design to be done before June. Hunter further noted that any delay in funding would delay the project timeline.

Member Nila requested District staff present the funding scenario without alternative funding distributions. District staff explained that the SIP allocated funding for the upcoming fiscal year, but future years of projected funding are not guaranteed. While funding is reviewed in five-year increments, the Board approves funding on a yearly basis. Member Nila expressed approval of the FY24-25 allocation and hoped that project proponents could secure funding from other sources in the future.

Member Rivera asked whether the scenario includes annual increases or escalation of construction costs. District staff shared that the application includes a 3.7% cost escalation, which is lower than the industry average escalation rate for construction.

Upon clarification, District staff confirmed that the cost of the Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project includes both design and construction phases for the duration of the project's lifetime.

Fossum reminded the WASC that funding memos were created for all submitted IP projects this year and that two to three other funding sources were identified for the Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project. Fossum reiterated that the SIP only guarantees funding in this FY and earmarks funding for additional years. Total funding request can be adjusted through a PMR or reduced if leverage funding is secured. Member Kreiling highlighted the challenges of partially funding projects without a guarantee of secured alternative funding.

District staff explained that the design phase of the Lynwood Stormwater Capture Project was funded through the LLAR WASC, and the current funding request pertains to construction. District staff shared a provision in the Fund Transfer Agreement stating that the project must be completed to its full benefits, and failure to do so could result in a breach of the agreement. Watershed Coordinator Dales inquired whether the project proponent has explored other funding sources. Member Lee shared that other funding sources have been sought, but it is a competitive process. The proponent submitted funding applications to Los Angeles Metro and Clean California and is currently awaiting a response.

Co-Chair Chen expressed support for both the Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project and the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS. District staff noted that in this

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



scenario, the LLAR WASC would allocate 66% of anticipated funds for FY24-25, which does not include anticipated construction costs.

Member Pierce inquired about best practices regarding the level of funding to reserve for potential construction costs. District staff explained that the SCW Program is in its fifth year and the Program is actively learning how to best manage the situation as design-only projects are beginning to return to the Program for construction funding. Member Pierce pointed out that if the LLAR WASC approved funding for the current projects and the two presented projects, the WASC would not have funds available for new future projects.

Member Kreiling asked Watershed Coordinator Dales if, through outreach work, there are any known future projects. Watershed Coordinator Dales shared that there are two potential Technical Resource Program (TRP) projects, the Connecting Compton Project and Bell Gardens Golf Conversion Project.

Member Nila expressed support for funding large regional infrastructure projects, such as the Lynwood City Park Stormwater Capture Project, through the SCW Program. The Committee additionally discussed the benefits of focusing on the current FY and funding the projects currently presented to the LLAR WASC.

ii) Scientific Studies Program (SS) **(1) Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity** **Presented by Ali Sharbat (Cal Poly Pomona)**

Member Kreiling expressed support for the drywell study, believing it will be beneficial overall for stormwater practitioners, particularly for the LLAR WASC.

District staff mentioned that the ROC has recently discussed the possibility of pausing the Round 6 Call for Projects to allow for funds to accumulate. District staff shared that the recommendation is currently under consideration and no decision has been made.

7. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. No comment cards were received before the meeting. There were no public comments.

8. Voting Items

- a) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the LLAR Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review.**

Co-Chair Chen motioned to approve the final Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the LLAR Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and to approve the submission to the ROC for review funding scenario labeled "PMR none all considered projects and alternate funding distribution." Member Nila seconded the motion. The motion was passed with 14 votes in favor and 1 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

9. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday March 26, 2024, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. See the SCW Program website for details. Items on the Agenda include:

- a) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary

10. Adjournment

Co-Chair Chen thanked WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

LLAR WASC - February 26, 2024							
			Quorum Present			Voting Items	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 10-24-2023 Meeting Minutes	Approve the Final Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Stormwater Investment Plan for LLAR Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the ROC for review (funding scenario: all considered projects and funding alternatives)
Agency	District	Ernesto Rivera	x	Enrique Baul		y	y
Agency	Central Basin	Madeline Chen*	x	Alex Rojas		y	y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Asha Kreiling*	x	Rob Beste		y	y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Dave Pierce	x	Alysha Chan		a	n
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	Stephen Scott	x	Todd Leland		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Irene Lopez-Muro	x	Isabelle Campiformio		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Arturo Gonzalez	x	y	y
Community Stakeholder	TreePeople	Manny Gonez		Mary Hillermeier	x	y	y
Community Stakeholder	Port of Long Beach	James Vernon		Dylan Porter	x	y	y
Community Stakeholder	River in Action	Erica Maceda	x				
Municipal Members	City of Commerce	Gina Nila	x	Thomas Bekele		y	y
Municipal Members	City of Downey	Dan Mueller	x			y	y
Municipal Members	City of Long Beach	Melissa You**		Cecilia Salazar	x	y	y
Municipal Members	City of Lynwood	Julian Lee	x	Pamela Torres		y	y
Municipal Members	City of Paramount	Adriana Figueroa		Sarah Ho			
Municipal Members	County of Los Angeles	Thuan Nguyen		Fred Gonzalez	x	y	y
Municipal Members	City of South Gate	Gladis Deras	x			y	y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	SGA Marketing	Tara Dales	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	14	14
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0	1
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	15	15
Municipal Members		6				Approved	Approved

Attendees
Lower Los Angeles River WASC Meeting
February 26, 2024

Alysha Chan	Mark Hall GLAmosquito	Shannon Johnson
Andrew Gray UCR	Mei-Lin Hanna	Uriel Cobian
Colin Averill	Melania Gaboyan - LACFCD	Veronica A Carrillo
Dustin Herrmann TreePeople	Michelle Kim JLHA	Wataru Kumagai
Enrique Baul	Oliver Galang Craftwater	
Gregor Patsch	Pablo Forni	
Haris Harouny	Paul MEad	
Jenny Chau	Ryanna Fossum, Regional Coordination	
Justin Jones	Sara	

Lower Los Angeles River
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting
 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ernesto Rivera	FCD	erivera@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	
Enrique Baul	FCD	ebaul@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Madeline Chen	Central Basin	madelinec@centralbasin.org	P	
Alex Rojas	Central Basin	alexr@centralbasin.org	A	
Asha Kreiling	Water Replenishment District	akreiling@ wrd.org	P	
Rob Beste	Water Replenishment District	rbeste@ wrd.org	A	
Dave Pierce	LA County Sanitation Districts	DPierce@lacsds.org	P	
Alysha Chan	LA County Sanitation Districts	alysachan@lacsds.org	A	
Stephen Scott	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	stephen.scott@longbeach.gov	P	
Nancy Villasenor	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	nancy.villasenor@longbeach.gov	A	
Irene Lopez-Muro	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	ilopezmuro@cclb-corps.org	P	
Isabelle Campiformio	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	icampiformio@cclb-corps.org	A	
Mark Stanley	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	mstanley@rmc.ca.gov	P	
Arturo Gonzalez	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	agonzalez@rmc.ca.gov	A	
Manny Gonez	TreePeople	mgonez@treepeople.org	P	




Lower Los Angeles River
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting
 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Mary Hillemeier	TreePeople	mhillemeier@treepeople.org	A	
James Vernon	Port of Long Beach	james.vernon@polb.com	P	
Dylan Porter	Port of Long Beach	dylan.porter@polb.com	A	
Erica Maceda	River in Action	ericamaceda@gmail.com	P	
Gina Nila	Commerce	ginan@ci.commerce.ca.us	P	
Thomas Bekele	Signal Hill	tbekele@cityofsignalhill.org	A	
Dan Mueller	Downey	dmueller@downeyca.org	P	
Delfino Consunji	Downey	dconsunji@downeyca.org	A	
Melissa You	Long Beach	Melissa.You@longbeach.gov	P	
Cecilia Salazar	Long Beach	cecilia.salazar@longbeach.gov	A	
Julian Lee	Lynwood	jlee@lynwood.ca.us	P	
Pamena Torres	Lynwood	ptorres@lynwood.ca.us	A	
Adriana Figueroa	Paramount	afigueroa@paramountcity.com	P	
Sarah Ho	Paramount	sho@paramountcity.com	A	
Thuan Nguyen	County of Los Angeles	thunguyen@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	

Lower Los Angeles River
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting
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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Fred Gonzalez	County of Los Angeles	fgonzal@dpw.lacounty.gov	A	
Gladis Deras	South Gate	gderas@sogate.org	P	
Tara Dales	SGA Marketing	tdales@sgamarketing.com		

Lower Los Angeles River
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting
 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Mekrad	Kamalzare	Cal Poly Pomona	mkamalzare@cpp.edu
Alex	Bennett	Torrent Resources	alex.bennett@oldcastle.com
Ali	Sharbat	Cal Poly	sharbat@cpp.edu
John	Hunter	JLHA	JHunter@JLHA.net
Ehsan	Khodayari	Cal Poly	ehsank@cpp.edu
Amir Pouria	Zavar	Cal Poly	zavar@cpp.edu
Shaun Peng	Peng	Cal Poly Pomona	stpeng@cpp.edu
Patrick Nguyen	Nguyen	Cal Poly Pomona	patrickn@cpp.edu
Dominic	Kader	Cal Poly Pomona	dakader@cpp.edu
Avery	Patrick	Cal Poly Pomona	apatrick@cpp.edu

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