

Rio Hondo

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, February 20, 2024
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Monroe Room
119 W. Palm Avenue, Monrovia, CA 91016
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Dave Pierce, LA County Sanitation District (Agency)
Brent Maue, City of Pasadena Public Works (Agency)
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency)
Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)
Edward Belden, Monrovia Resident (Community)
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)
*Latoya Waters, Alhambra (Municipal)
Briget Arndell, Arcadia (Municipal)
Jalaine Verdiner, Los Angeles County
*Alex Tachiki, Monrovia (Municipal)
*James Tong, Pasadena (Municipal)
Richard Watson, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Julie Millett, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Agency), Vice-Chair
Thomas Wong, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Community)
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)
Sal Mendez, El Monte (Municipal)
Sarah Rocha, Irwindale (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Los Angeles Flood Control District (District) staff noted that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Rio Hondo (RH) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) were absent. As such, District staff facilitated the meeting. District staff welcomed the RH WASC Members, called the meeting to order, and facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established.

District staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial and direction on submission of public comments to the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program website.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 16, 2024

District staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Alex Tachiki motioned to approve, seconded by Member Brent Maue. The WASC voted to approve the January 16, 2024 meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 3 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3) Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

- Fiscal Year 2022-2023 (FY22-23) Regional Program Annual Reports were due December 31st, 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 Quarterly Report was due on February 15th.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) prepared a Biennial Report, also known as the SCW Program Progress Report, which includes a summary of the progress of the Regional Program, Municipal Program, and the District Program. On January 31st, the ROC voted to send the Biennial Progress Report to the Board. More details can be found on the [SCW Program website](#) under the ROC webpage. The ROC will continue to discuss next steps at the March 20th meeting.
- Municipal progress/expenditure Annual Reports were due December 31st, 2023. Municipal Annual Plans are due in April before the Fiscal Year (FY) and the Reports are due at the end of the year after the FY in December.
- The Scoring Committee scored all RH Feasibility Study applications for the Infrastructure Program (IP). All two RH applications passed the scoring threshold and are eligible for WASC consideration for inclusion in the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP).
- Round 4 Transfer Agreements and Addendums are available for download in the Transfer Agreement Module. District staff sent an email on January 24th with instructions on how to navigate the new module. Transfer Agreements will not be downloadable until the IP Project Developer contract information is uploaded. The new module is for projects included in Round 4 SIPs and future SIPs only. Projects from previous SIPs can submit documents via email.
- The District reviewed submitted Project Modification Request (PMR) forms. If found inconsistent with the SIP, the PMR discussion items will be scheduled in the project's respective WASC. RH PMRs will be discussed during today's meeting.
- 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 SIP deliberations to ensure a fair and transparent process.

Upon inquiry, District staff clarified that the projects being deliberated today have already been scored by the Scoring Committee. The focus of today's meeting is to discuss how Project Modification Requests (PMR) may affect the current SIP. SIP deliberations will take place in March or April. District staff will send out a request for input for project prioritization in March.

4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Julie Millett presented on recent activities. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Highlights include past and upcoming engagement events including the East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Tour, a Lunar New Year event in Alhambra, and ongoing coordination with community-based organizations.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) added that the ROC was impressed by Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson's presentation at the February 15th ROC meeting, including efforts engaging with communities and municipalities, as well as mapping out projects across the watershed.

5) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There was no ex parte communications.

6) Public Comment Period

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There were no public comments.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Project Modification Requests (PMR) Overview Presentation Presentation by Mike Antos, Stantec, Regional Coordination

Mike Antos presented on the WASC Roles and Responsibilities as related to the Project Modification Requests. Mike Antos shared that PMR Guidelines were updated on January 18th to reflect ROC recommendations and the July 25th, 2023 Board motion. PMR Guidelines can be found on the [SCW Program website](#) under the “Adaptive Management” tab. Antos summarized that District staff will review PMRs and categorize the PMR either as consistent with the original SIP or inconsistent with the original SIP. If consistent with the original SIP, District staff will notify WASC Members. If inconsistent, District staff will refer the PMR to the WASC for discussion. Antos provided example questions that the WASC can ask the PMR proponents. Mike Antos shared the three possible options the WASC could decide for an inconsistent PMR. The presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Mike Antos clarified that the updated PMR process streamlined requests, since PMRs that are inconsistent with the SIP will no longer need to be reevaluated by the Scoring Committee, likely saving several months. Member Daniel Rossman inquired about tools Committee Members can use to determine if projects are still meeting SCW Program goals. Mike Antos mentioned that the PMR evaluation entails a similar project deliberation process as is used with new project proposals, just without Scoring Committee support for judging eligibility.

District staff provided PMR developers the potential list of questions to answer regarding project funding and/or scope modification request. District staff provided an overview of the SIP Tool to demonstrate funding allocations with and without PMRs funding asks. The PMRs are posted on the [SCW Program website](#). Mike Antos offered to provide a walkthrough of the SIP tool.

b) PMRs for WASC Discussion

District staff notified the RH WASC that the Los Angeles County Public Works/Flood Control District Baldwin Lake and Tule Pond Restoration Project PMR was deemed consistent with the approved SIP because proposed changes did not include a request for additional funding from the Regional Program, and the proposed BMP changes were not impacting benefits provided. Proposed modifications include the removal of a recirculation system. These changes will be reflected in the Quarterly Progress and Expenditure Reports in the Reporting Module. The PMR form is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Jill Fosselman noted that the project was approved for FY21, but a Transfer Agreement has not been signed. District staff clarified that the Transfer Agreement has not been executed because the District is awaiting completion of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation due to the funds being for construction..

Member Brent Maue requested for clarification on SIP consistency, since the PMR shows an increase in the project cost. District staff clarified that the request is not for additional Regional Program funding, and that the project developer, Los Angeles County Flood Control District will be covering the increased cost using different funding. Project proponents Travis Diaz and Enrique Baul (Los Angeles County Flood Control District) noted that the increase in cost is more than 10%, prompting the PMR. Enrique Baul clarified that Los Angeles County Flood Control District funds covering the increased funding is not from SCW Program Regional Program funding. The PMR submitted is only to report the cost increase, minor scope modification, and a schedule change, but the project is not seeking any additional funding through the SCW Program.

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When asked about the project schedule, Travis Diaz revealed that the design phase is set to be completed in May, along with CEQA documentation. Construction is anticipated to be completed in early 2025. Member Tom Love inquired about Baldwin Lake's sediment removal. Travis Diaz highlighted ongoing coordination with the environmental compliance team to identify potential areas to locate the sediment. Travis Diaz added that the dredging will remove up to 14 feet to reach historic levels.

Upon inquiry, Travis Diaz shared that the primary changes reported in the PMR are related to a cost increase of more than 10% (not funded from the SCWP), a minor scope modification for the removal of the recirculation system, and the identification of a schedule change. The increased cost at each design milestone is listed in the PMR under attachment D.

Member Brent Maue inquired about the current status of the project's environmental analysis and whether there are any outstanding permits. Travis Diaz informed the WASC that the project will schedule the 30-day public review following tribal consultation in March and that CEQA documentation is expected to be completed in May. Enrique Baul added that the removal of the recirculation system was needed to reduce costs without impacting water quality.

Upon inquiry, Mike Antos clarified that the PMR for this project has already been deemed consistent by the District and will not require further deliberation from the WASC. Funds have already been allocated to this project.

Upon request, District Staff confirmed the project was awarded \$8.5 million. Enrique Baul added that the project received \$3.77 million for pre-construction and will receive \$4.8 million after CEQA documentation is complete. Mike Antos clarified that the District will not release construction funds through a fund Transfer Agreement until CEQA documentation is complete. Project proponents have only received funding for the design phase thus far. District staff added that projects are only funded on a yearly basis. Funding allocations for projects attached to the approved SIP are earmarked and require Board approval every year.

Member Jill Fosselman also inquired about on-site signage after the project's completion to indicate and promote how the SCW Program funding is being used. Enrique Baul replied that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District project partner is contributing \$1 million dollars of property funds that includes funding source signage. District staff also added that per the Transfer Agreement, project proponents are required to include signage that details project funding sources.

i) San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) **(1) Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area**

The Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area Scientific Study PMR was deemed inconsistent with the original SIP. Nicholas Ryu (SGVCOG) and Brianna Datti (Craftwater) provided a brief update on study. The project started in October 2023 to better understand and isolate the impacts of fires on water quality and determine which stormwater management strategies are more resilient under increasing fires and climate change conditions.

Nicholas Ryu noted that the PMR requests additional funding for just under \$96,000, which is less than a percent of the total annual RH WASC funding, to expand on the existing scope. Brianna Datti explained that the additional funding will support the expansion of historic data analysis, integration of modeling scenarios representing different fire characteristics and its impact on stormwater quality, and reserve potential funding for rapid response monitoring in the event of a future fire. Additional funding would help provide more context on the relative risk of fires that may occur in the future. The request also supports additional engagement with the Technical Stakeholder group and Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (LARWQCB) staff to allow for ongoing discussions on the study's findings beyond project completion.

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Member Daniel Rossman asked if there was any engagement with statewide agencies to fill the funding gap, noting that there has been an increased investment in evaluating the wildfire crisis. Brianna Datti mentioned initial collaboration with these agencies, such as CalFire, to compile data and exploring funding opportunities; however, noted that opportunities were not directly related and that the SCW Program better aligned with the project's emphasis on stormwater management.

Member Daniel Rossman inquired if there is a limitation on project duration, noting that funding is allocated for ongoing maintenance for years ahead. Mike Antos clarified that a project developer who has received funds must spend the funds within five years. The other five-year limitation is the evaluation of Disadvantaged Community Benefits, which is tracked in five year intervals. Mike Antos added that a project can receive funding in more than five continuous SIPs.

Member Tom Love asked about the certainty of project completion with the additional funding and when the funding will be needed. Brianna Datti replied that the additional funding would help close out the project. The project is currently finalizing the monitoring stage and is midway through the modeling stage, which represents the additional items in the scope. Brianna Datti also mentioned that the additional funding would expand the schedule by one year, and noted that the timing is flexible.

Member Tom Love suggested having project proponents respond to the PMR presentation questions, presented by Mike Antos, in writing for the WASC to review. Mike Antos noted that the questions are geared toward IPs rather than SS, but can still be valuable. District staff will send out questions to project proponents to collect written responses.

Member Daniel Rossman followed up on the project's flexibility of timing to receive funding, raising the possibility of providing incremental funding between this year and next year as example. Brianna Datti confirmed that there is flexibility, explaining that the data analysis and modeling portion of the project can continue. Reserves for rapid response monitoring would be preferable in the event of a fire but can be deferred if needed.

Upon inquiry regarding project status, Brianna Datti informed the WASC that a report, including the modeling approach, has been prepared following a year and half of research. The project proponent is currently preparing a watershed model report that will be shared with the technical stakeholders. The report will be available at the end of February. The current scope of the project will be completed November 2024, which will include the final consolidated report. Member Julian Juarez inquired if funding would impact or delay the final report. Brianna Datti replied that current funding without the PMR is sufficient to complete the report, but funds requested from the PMR would allow for the addition of addendums to reflect supplementary findings.

Brianna Datti confirmed that the funding request is just under \$96,000. District staff displayed the SIP tool to show the WASC the funding request breakdown. Upon request, District staff noted to make the funding request more apparent in the PMR forms provided to the WASC.

(2) preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration

The preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration Scientific Study PMR was deemed inconsistent with the original SIP. Nicholas Ryu provided a brief update on the study. The preSIP (pre-Stormwater Investment Plan) was completed in October 2023 and achieved project goals by engaging watershed partners, developing over 650 multi-benefit project opportunities, mapping alternative pathways of compliance for Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) and RH agencies to achieve clean water goals, and developing a website to facilitate ongoing efforts. Nicholas Ryu noted that the preSIP is designed to reduce costs to achieve MS4 permit compliance and will consequently increase the availability of SCW Program resources for other multi-benefit projects in the long-term. Members of the preSIP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) recommended reengagement with LARWQCB to validate the study's methodology and outcomes to determine regional compliance potential. Nicholas Ryu shared that TAC members also saw

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value in funding the ongoing support and maintenance of the digital platform due to its ability to track and adapt stormwater projects in real-time. Nicholas Ryu shared that the PMR was submitted to both the ULAR and RH WASC, with a total ask of \$73,500 per year. For the RH WASC, the PMR is requesting \$17,000 per year or \$51,000 over three years. The expanded scope would fund additional meeting opportunities with LARWQCB staff to review and validate modeling results, engage with individual peer reviews to examine model methods, update model and tools based on review comments, and pay for ongoing maintenance for the preSIP digital platform.

Upon inquiry, Nicholas Ryu invited interested WASC Members for more information and the link to the preSIP tool. Brad Wardynski (Craftwater) added that there is a StoryMap associated with the project will be available on the SGVCOG website, pending TAC approval.

Member Julian Juarez asked if the project and its findings were presented to the WASC. Brad Wardynski noted that the project last shared a progress update with the WASC in 2021. Much of the project has been completed since then and funding delays pushed out the initial schedule. Public workshops, coordination with ULAR Watershed Coordinators, and quarterly presentations to the SGVCOG water committee were organized to publicize the study. Brad Wardynski offered to present to the WASC at a future meeting. District Staff added that a preSIP presentation to the WASC has been requested, but PMRs are currently taking precedence in WASC meetings. District staff will invite the project proponents for a presentation following PMR deliberation. Committee Members also expressed interest in receiving other interim project presentations, in addition to presentations on final results.

Member Daniel Rossman asked if there were any examples of projects that met the objective of reducing the cost of MS4 implementation. Brad Wardynski informed the WASC that the alternative methods identified in the study revealed that project proponents are closer to clean water throughout the region than initially anticipated. This approach has been used in other compliance planning efforts throughout the region, but has not been applied to all the agencies in the RH watershed area. The ULAR Watershed Management Program (WMP) prescribed over \$6 million in infrastructure investment to achieve clean water. The preSIP recalibrated the model with recent monitoring data to better reflect localized data, showing where and how much work needs to be done. As a result, SCW Program funding can be allocated to other multi-benefit projects.

District staff reminded the WASC that the District will send out the PMR questions to project proponents to solicit written responses. The written responses will support the Committee Members in upcoming SIP deliberations. Upon request, District staff noted that the Craftwater presentation will be agendaized for the next meeting. A priority decision survey will be sent out to the WASC to prioritize allocations for the RH watershed area.

8) Voting Items

There were no voting items.

9) Items for Next Agenda

WASC Members requested presentations on the current progress and findings of the preSIP and Fire Effects Study. District staff encouraged Committee Members to access the SIP tool.

- a) preSIP Presentation
- b) Fire Effects Study Presentation
- c) Sharing independent review of proposed Scientific Studies
- d) Presentation by proposed Scientific Studies

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm.

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10) Adjournment

District staff thanked the WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

RH WASC - February 20th, 2024

| Member Type | Quorum Present | | | | Voting Item | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Member | Voting/ Present? | Alternate | Voting/ Present? | Approve 01/16/24 Meeting Minutes | | | |
| Agency | Julian Juarez | x | Jennifer Aborida | | y | | | |
| Agency | Tom Love | x | Patty Cortez | | y | | | |
| Agency | Kelly Gardner | | Tony Zampielo | | | | | |
| Agency | Dave Pierce | x | Alysha Chan | | a | | | |
| Agency | Brent Maue | x | Kris Markarian | | y | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Thomas Wong | | Bryan Matsumoto | | | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Jill Fosselman | x | | | a | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Mark Hall | | Mark Daniel | | | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Edward Belden | x | | | y | | | |
| Community Stakeholder | Daniel Rossman | x | Liliana Griego | | a | | | |
| Municipal Members | David Dolphin | | Latoya Waters | x | y | | | |
| Municipal Members | Briget Arndell | x | Paul Cranmer | | y | | | |
| Municipal Members | Jalaine Verdiner | x | Fernando Villaluna | | y | | | |
| Municipal Members | Gloria Crudgington | | Alex Tachiki | x | y | | | |
| Municipal Members | Sal Mendez | | | | | | | |
| Municipal Members | Dawn Petschauer | | James Tong | x | y | | | |
| Municipal Members | Sarah Rocha | | | | | | | |
| Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member (RWA Planning) | Richard Watson | x | Julie Millett | | | | | |
| Total Non-Vacant Seats | 17 | | | Yay (Y) | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Voting Members Present | 12 | | | Nay (N) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Agency | 4 | | | Abstain (A) | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Stakeholder | 3 | | | Total | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Municipal Members | 5 | | | Approved | | Not Approved | Not Approved | Not Approved |

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



| Member Name | Municipality/ Organization | Email Address | P/A | Signature |
|--------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----|--------------------|
| Julian Juarez | Los Angeles County Flood Control District | <i>Julian J</i> | | <i>Julian J</i> |
| Tom Love | Upper San Gabriel District | | | |
| Kelly Gardner | Main San Gabriel Basin | | | |
| Dave Pierce | Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts | <i>dpierce@lacsds.org</i> | | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Brent Maue | Pasadena | | | |
| Thomas Wong | San Gabriel Valley MWD Division 3 | | | |
| Jill Fosselman | Resident | | | |
| Mark Hall | Vector Control | | | |
| Edward Belden | Resident | | | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Daniel Rossman | The Wilderness Society | <i>[Signature]</i> | | |
| David Dolphin | Alhambra | | | |
| Briget Arndell | Arcadia | <i>BARNDELL@ARCADIA.CA.GOV</i> | | <i>BArdell</i> |
| Jalaine Verdiner | LA County Public Works | <i>JVerdiner@pw.lacounty.gov</i> | | <i>[Signature]</i> |
| Gloria Crudgington | Monrovia | | | |
| Sal Mendez | El Monte | | | |
| Dawn Petschauer | Pasadena | | | |


Rio Hondo
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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



| Member Name | Municipality/ Organization | Email Address | P/A | Signature |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------|-----|---------------------|
| Sarah Rocha | Irwindale | | | |
| Jennifer Aborida | Los Angeles County Flood Control District | | | |
| Patty Cortez | Upper san Gabriel District | | | |
| Tony Zampielo | Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster | | | |
| Alysha Chan | Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts | | | |
| Kris Markarian | Pasadena | | | |
| Bryan Matsumoto | Nature For All | | | |
| Mark Daniel | Vector Control | | | |
| Liliana Griego | Friends of the Los Angeles River | | | |
| Latoya Waters | Alhambra | | | <i>lw</i> |
| Paul Cranmer | Arcadia | | | |
| Fernando Villaluna | LA County Public Works | | | |
| Alex Tachiki | Monrovia | | | |
| James Tong | Pasadena | <i>jtong@rio-hondo.com</i> | | |
| Richard Watson | RWA | <i>rwatson@rio-hondo.com</i> | | <i>R. A. Watson</i> |

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



| Member Name | Municipality/ Organization | Email Address | P/A | Signature |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----|---|
| Julie Millett | RWA | | |  |
| Ryanna Fossum | Stantec | | | |
| Mike Antos | Stantec | | | |
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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



| First Name | Last Name | Municipality/Organization | Email Address |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ENRIQUE BAUC | BAUL | FLOOD CONTROL | ebaull@dprw.lacounty.gov |
| TRAVIS BAUC | DIAZ | FLOOD CONTROL | tdiaz@dprw.lacounty.gov |
| NICK BAUC | Ryu | SSVCA | nryu@ssvca.org |
| Brianna | Datti | CRAFTwater | brianna.datti@craftwaterinc.com |
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*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public