

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



Wednesday, April 17, 2024
1:00pm - 4:00pm
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)
*Aimee Zhao, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
Dave Pierce, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
*Darryl Ford, Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (Agency)
Margie Hoyt, Resident (Community)
Craig Cadwallader, Surfrider Foundation (Community), Chair
Bo Savage, Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Community)
*Roland Jen, Carson (Municipal)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Wilson Mendoza, Torrance (Municipal)
Geraldine Trivedi, EWMP: Beach Cities (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Carla Dillon, (Lomita) EWMP: Dominguez (Municipal)
Vanessa Hevener, (Rancho Palos Verdes) EWMP: Peninsula (Municipal)
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Present Attending Virtually:

*Matthew Veeh, West Basin MWD (Agency) - Online

Committee Members Not Present:

Caroline Orija, Los Angeles Department of Public Health (Community)
Hany Fangary, Fangary Law Group (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Geraldine Trivedi, Vice-Chair of the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District) staff facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established. District staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and called the meeting to order. District staff announced that Member Matthew Veeh joined the meeting virtually with just cause under AB-2449.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 20, 2024

Vice-Chair Trivedi presented the minutes from the last SSMB WASC meeting held on March 20, 2024. Chair Craig Cadwallader requested a modification, noting that the Fulton Playfield Multi-Benefit Infiltration Project reads "submitted to the City of Manhattan Beach" but should read as "submitted to the City of Redondo Beach." Member Doug Krauss motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Chair Cadwallader. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 15 votes in favor, 0 in abstention, and

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2 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached). Note, since both Vice-chair Trivedi and her alternate, Doug Krauss, were present at the meeting, Krauss would be attending as a member of the general public and would be unable to move for approval of the meeting minutes. The WASC can revote on this item at the next meeting.

3. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

- In March, Director Mark Pestrella of Public Works submitted a SCW Program Status Report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor (Board), which expands upon the insights provided in the “Accelerating Implementation of the SCW Program” Board Motion Report and is informed by the Biennial Report, an audit commissioned by the Director, and the Board’s recommendations.
- Additionally, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Lindsey Horvath for “Progress and Adaptive Management of the SCW Program” which calls for a report-back in 90 days. These items can be found on the [SCW Program website](#), under the Resources tab.
- On March 19, the Board approved the appointment and reappointment of Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), Scoring Committee, and some WASC community stakeholder Members. For the SSMB WASC, Margie Hoyt was appointed to a community stakeholder seat and will be replacing Caryn Mandelbaum. Caroline Orija was also appointed to a community stakeholder seat, and Chair Cadwallader was reappointed to a community stakeholder seat.
- A new website for Los Angeles County’s SCW Program has been launched. The updated website represents a significant step forward in the SCW Program’s commitment to transparency, accessibility, and collaboration. The site includes new features and enhancements, such as the [Resource Library](#), [Search feature](#), and [Calendar](#).

Chair Cadwallader shared that navigation on the website is difficult and would like to offer some feedback to simplify the navigation scheme. District staff is working with the website development team and will take the feedback into consideration.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes provided an update on recent outreach and engagement efforts. Highlights include the training of 12 new staff and volunteer members for the Heal the Bay Speakers Bureau. Additionally, Watershed Coordinator Shrodes participated in the Summit for Equity and Resilience in Water WaterTalks event, and an Earth Day Celebration at Wilson Park. Outreach efforts included five presentations, engaging over 248 community members.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes also shared an upcoming opportunity to attend the BioBlitz at Bixby Marsh event on April 27. Interested individuals can find more information on the [registration page](#).

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member Vanessa Hevener attended a meeting regarding the Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project (hereafter referred to as the Torrance Airport Project).

Vice-Chair Trivedi disclosed that SCW Program projects were discussed at the Beach Cities Watershed Management Group meeting. Member Wilson Mendoza and Member Krauss were also in attendance.

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6. Public Comment Period

District Staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCW Program website, and displayed them on-screen. In-person, virtual and call-in users were invited to provide public comments. District staff received four public comment cards.

Ali Sharbat (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona)) provided public comment on the proposed Scientific Study (SS), Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity. Sharbat shared that the study aims to contribute to scientific knowledge and workforce development. The SS requests less than 0.5% of the SSMB WASC budget and seeks consideration during deliberations for the Fiscal Year (FY) 24-25 SSMB SIP.

David Wahba (City of Rolling Hills Estates) provided public comment on the Torrance Airport Project. The Peninsula Watershed Group conveyed the importance of that project for the cities of Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills Estates, and Los Angeles County unincorporated areas, and offered some SIP programming scenarios that would allow the WASC to meet the funding needs of each of the infrastructure projects, with some compromise. The project team conferred with City of Torrance, and Torrance has agreed to adjust their funding schedule for the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMP project.

Ramzi Awwad (City of Rancho Palos Verdes) expressed support for the Torrance Airport Project for construction funds. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is eager to move the project forward. The project will contribute towards improving regional water supply and water quality, while also protecting the value of the Machado Lake Habitat Restoration Project.

Kathya Padilla Tapia (Cal Poly Pomona) shared support for the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to be part of a research team evaluating dry well infiltration testing methods over the last two years. Tapia highlighted the practical application of the coursework to real-life projects. Tapia expressed excitement for the SS and expressed appreciation for SCW Program support.

Anastasia Seims (City of Palos Verdes Estates) expressed support for the Torrance Airport Project and asserted that it is the most important infrastructure project for the Palos Verdes Peninsula Watershed Group. Seims commented that the project will provide water quality compliance benefits to the cities of Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, and Rolling Hills Estates, along with Los Angeles County unincorporated areas. The project will also address past-due TMDLs for Machado Lake and will bring the group into compliance with the MS4 permit TMDL provisions. Seims requested that the SSMB WASC consider the various scenarios for the project to move forward with funding from the SCW Program.

Ayema Hussain (Student, Cal Poly Pomona) expressed gratitude for the opportunity to learn about stormwater research projects over the past year. Hussain shared that these experiences provided a deeper understanding of stormwater management systems and the complexities involved in flood control, erosion prevention, and water management. Hussain is excited to continue growing as a professional and would like the SSMB to consider funding the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS.

Dominic Kader (Student, Cal Poly Pomona) expressed support for the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS and shared excitement for potential opportunities for direct involvement as a Masters of Civic Engineering student at Cal Poly Pomona. Kader shared that the project would enable students to engage in a unique project, embodying the Cal Poly Pomona's learn-by-doing model. Kader expressed gratitude for the opportunity and requested the consideration of the project during funding deliberations.

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7. Discussion Items

a) **South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Project Prioritization Discussion for Populating the [Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Stormwater Investment Plant](#) (SCW Portal & Summary of Resources)**

District staff shared that the SSMB WASC has approximately \$17.2 million available annually to fund projects, not including allocations from previous SIPs. In the scenario to fund all previous projects, the six new proposed projects, and no Project Modification Requests (PMRs), the SSMB WASC would be overallocated by \$6.5 million, representing 138% of the available budget.

District staff explained that the goal is to discuss what the WASC can fund within the budget constraints and reminded the WASC that the District recommends allocating no more than 80% of available funding for the 4 years of projected funding. To aid in the SIP deliberation, District staff sent out a survey prior to the meeting asking the WASC to preliminarily rank the projects. The projects were ranked in the following order:

IP

1. Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project
2. Torrance Airport Project
3. PMR - Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project
4. PMR - Wilmington Q Street Local Urban Area Flow Management Project

SS

1. Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity
2. Street Sweeping Study
3. Pollutant Source Characterization Study

Technical Resources Program (TRP)

1. Gardena Willows Wetlands Stormwater Enhancement Project

District staff presented several scenarios using the SIP tool, including "All Considered Projects," "All Considered Projects plus PMRs," "All PMRs plus Projected Construction," and "No PMRs plus Projected Construction." Additional scenarios programmed by SSMB WASC Members were shared.

Member Susie Santilena presented a scenario which included funding for the Gardena Willows Wetlands Stormwater Enhancement Project, full funding for the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project PMR, and a funding reallocation of Torrance Airport Project spread across four years instead of the initially requested three years.

Two scenarios were presented by Wahba, which included updated funding allocations for the Torrance Airport Project, the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project, and the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project. In both scenarios, Wahba allocated 100% of the SSMB SIP funding for the next three years. (SIP Funding Scenarios: Scenario A and B by DW).

Member Marcela Benavides-Aguilar presented a scenario which excludes PMR funding for the Wilmington Q Street Project but allocates partial funding of \$2.5M to the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project for FY26-27 and incorporates the prop. Upon request, District staff updated Member Benavides-Aguilar's scenario with the funding allocations outlined in Wahba's comment letter for both the Torrance Airport Project and the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project. However, this scenario resulted

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in an over-allocation of 103% for FY26-27 and high allocations for FY24-25 and FY25-26. District staff recommended maintaining funding at 80% to accommodate potential PMR adjustments and accommodate increases in construction and labor costs. (SIP Funding Scenario: Scenario by MB v2).

Vice-Chair Trivedi expressed support for partially funding the two PMRs. Due to constraints, achieving full funding of 100% for all projects is not feasible and would not reserve any funding for projects that are currently in design and may return for construction funding.

Member Hevener requested an update on the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project and invited the project proponent to share their ability to continue with partial funding. Sean Phan (City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment (LASAN)) shared that the project is expected to reach the 90% design milestone in the coming months, with construction slated to begin in the summer of 2025. Mike Scaduto (LASAN) expressed approval for Scenario B, which entails allocating design funds for the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project across FY24-25 and FY25-26, skipping a year of funding, and then directing all construction funds to FY27-28.

The Committee discussed an alternative funding schedule for the Torrance Airport Project, noting that if the funding were distributed across four years, the Peninsula Watershed Group partners would have to forego \$2 million in Caltrans funding and seek new leveraged funding to mitigate inflationary cost impacts. The Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project PMR would be split between FY24-25 and FY26-27 to facilitate project completion as scheduled. Similarly, the Wilmington Q Street Local Urban Area Flow Management Project PMR would be divided across FY24-25 and FY28-29, with the majority of funds allocated in FY28-29, closer to the construction phase.

Member Santilena inquired about the Caltrans funding constraints. The proponents of the Torrance Airport Project clarified that the funding is reimbursement-based and must be utilized within a strict three-year timeframe, with construction completed within this three-year period. Additionally, it was highlighted that the project proponent is unable to initiate the project until the funding is secured. Moreover, the project proponent clarified that paying for construction costs upfront and seeking reimbursement later is not feasible. Although the project proponent intended to leverage the Caltrans funds, opting for Scenario B would result in funding delays, requiring additional funding sources to bridge the gap.

Chair Cadwallader mentioned that the City of Torrance has received a substantial portion of the SSMB WASC funding, amounting to 22% of the SSMB SCW Program funding awarded to date. Chair Cadwallader expressed alignment with the District's recommendation of allocating 80% of the funding. Member Dave Pierce noted an increase in PMRs due to inflationary pressures and advocated for maintaining an 80% cap to mitigate uncertainties in the future.

Chair Cadwallader raised the question of whether the Committee should exclusively allocate funding to the City of Torrance or consider a broader perspective. Chair Cadwallader proposed limiting the five-year funding allocation to 80% and discussed the possibility of partial funding for other projects.

Member Mendoza clarified that the Torrance Airport Project is not solely affiliated with the City of Torrance. Rather, the project serves to benefit the Rancho Palos Verdes Peninsula, with its location situated at the Torrance Airport, offering advantages to the broader region.

Chair Cadwallader suggested the addition of a benefit column to the SIP tool. Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) shared that the SIP tool has a summary page that reflects the projects selected, and displays Water Quality, Community Investment, Leveraging Funds, and Water Supply Benefits.

Member Santilena expressed that the recommended 80% allocation threshold is less of a concern due to the potential pause in projects for Round 6. Member Santilena expressed concerned about the capacity of

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projects and future needs. Member Santilena discussed looking at a scenario that reflects the priority rankings, including the TRP, potentially the two SS based on decisions made at other WASCs, and then think through the two IPs and PMRs.

Member Thuan Ngyuen emphasized the importance of bringing community projects to fruition and suggested a cautious approach to project pacing while ensuring projects previously funded for design move into construction. (SIP Funding Scenarios: Scenario TN, TN v2, TN PMR with Wilmington Greening).

The Committee deliberated on projects that have not expended funds within a five-year timeframe. Vice-Chair Trivedi noted that delays in executing Transfer Agreements should not be included in the required timeframe for expenditures. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) clarified that other WASCs have programmed longer-term projects and highlighted the possibility of forecasting future funding needs beyond five years. Antos reminded the WASC that the SIP includes committed funds for the current FY and a loose commitment of future years funding and emphasized the need to factor in unforeseen costs, especially post-pandemic.

Member Hevener asked whether the two submitted PMRs were re-evaluated by Scoring Committee. Vice-Chair Trivedi noted that District staff reviewed the submitted PMRs for consistency with the SIP. PMRs with increased funding requests were considered inconsistent with the SIP and brought to the WASC for deliberation. Member Santilena noted that the Scoring Committee did not rescore the PMRs. In both cases, the modified funding request is to cover cost increases due to inflation rather than the entire shortfall. Member Santilena additionally raised concerns about the impact of a potentially Round 6 Call for Projects pause on the Torrance Airport Project and the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Projects if they remain unfunded in Round 5.

Chair Cadwallader prioritized a strategy to invest WASC funds equitably throughout the SSMB Watershed Area. Member Ngyuen reiterated the SSMB WASC's commitment to Disadvantaged Community Benefits and emphasized that the WASC continues to be on track to reach that program objective.

Member Hevener inquired about the [SIP](#) approval timeline, and Fossum indicated that the SSMB WASC is the last WASC to vote on the approval of a SIP but can continue deliberations at the next meeting. Member Pierce suggested focusing on two scenarios for the next SSMB WASC meeting using survey results. Both Member Santilena and Member Benavides-Aguilar requested their scenarios be removed to streamline discussions during the next meeting.

Chair Cadwallader requested that project proponents consider partial funding strategies to avoid overallocation. Scaduto expressed willingness to adjust funding to accommodate both LASAN projects and the Torrance Airport Project.

Upon inquiry, Sharbat shared that the Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS was funded by seven other WASCs and expressed hope that the SSMB watershed would also fund the SS.

8. Public Comment Period

Wahba discussed the Torrance Airport Project's willingness to collaborate with the WASC on funding. Wahba recommended a thorough examination of annual funding allocations and emphasized the importance of leveraging available resources effectively. Furthermore, Wahba strongly advocated for a funding scenario in which the City of Torrance could accept leveraged funding from Caltrans.

Awwad emphasized the broader scope of the Torrance Airport Project and highlighted that the project extends beyond Torrance and offers significant benefits to the Peninsula area. Awwad underscored the

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importance of recognizing the project's wider impact and ensuring that the project's benefits are understood and acknowledged by all stakeholders.

Alan Rigg (City of Gardena) conveyed enthusiasm for the Gardena Willows Wetlands Stormwater Enhancement Project TRP and expressed a desire for support from the WASC in funding its implementation. Rigg outlined the project's potential and the positive outcomes and underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in making the project a reality.

Rudy Martinez (City of Los Angeles) affirmed full support for the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project and the Wilmington Q Street Local Urban Area Flow Management Project. Martinez highlighted the significance of these projects for the community, expressed commitment to their success, and emphasized the importance of collective support from all involved parties.

9. Items for Next Agenda

District staff will poll WASC Members on availability for an earlier meeting on Wednesday, May 1 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. District staff will determine if the original SSMB WASC meeting is needed on May 15, 2024.

Items on the agenda include:

- a) South Santa Monica Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion populating the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan.

10. Adjournment

Chair Cadwallader thanked WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting at 4:19pm.

SOUTH SANTA MONICA BAY MEETING - March 20, 2024

		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Vote to approve February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Agency	LACFCD	Marcela Benavides-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	
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Dave Pierce	X	Christopher Lapaz		y
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	X	y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Caryn Mandelbaum				
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	Craig Cadwallader	X	Mary Simun		y
Community Stakeholder	(Vacant)					
Community Stakeholder	Fangary Law Group	Hany Fangary	X			y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservation Corp	Bo Savage		Wendy Butts		
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	Geraldine Trivedi		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			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	12
Total Voting Members Present		14			Nay (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1
Community Stakeholder		2			Total	13
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Other Attendees	
Ana Rivera	Lara Awad
Andrew Gray	Larry Tortuya
Anh Ta	Luis Garcia
Ashwini Bhide	Marisela Velasquez
Austine Racelis	Mark Hall
Ben O'Neal	Melania Gaboyan
Brenda Ponton	Melanie Hu
Brett Parry	Michelle Staffield
C.J. Caluag	Naomi Diep
Carmen Andrade	Paige Bistromowitz
Chris Minton	Paul Mead
Christopher Vong	Ramzi Awwad
Curtis Fang	Robyn Finley
Giselle Ramirez	Ryan Parks
Haley Johnson	Ryanna Fossum
Jacqueline Mak	Samantha Torres
Jasmin Mendoza	Sara Mcgaugh
Jeff Fijalka	Susana Vargas
Jenny Chau	Yoshi Andersen
Jon Ball	
Joyce Amaro	
Kara Plourde	
Katie Harrel	

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Mehrad	Kamalzare	CPP	mkamalzare@cpp.edu
Ali	Sharbat	CPP	sharbat@cpp.edu
Josie	Santilera	Los Angeles	

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