

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



Thursday, May 2, 2024
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 Municipal Water 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
Caroline Orija, Los Angeles Department of Public Health (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 Not Present:

Bo Savage, Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Community)
Hany Fangary, Fangary Law Group (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Craig Cadwallader, 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 provided a brief WebEx tutorial and instructions on public comment submissions.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 20, 2024 & April 17, 2024

Chair Cadwallader presented the minutes from the SSMB WASC Meetings held on March 20 and April 17. Chair Cadwallader requested a modification to the March 20 meeting minutes and noted 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 Dave Pierce motioned to approve, with the recommended corrections, the from March 20 and the April 17 meeting minutes, the motion was seconded by Member Carla Dillion. The WASC voted to approve

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both March 20 and April 17 meeting minutes with 13 votes in favor, 1 in abstention, and 2 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no Committee Member or District updates.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes provided an update on recent outreach and engagement initiatives. Highlights include the attendance at the LA County Water Plan Water Resiliency Summit and the April meeting of the Del Amo Action Committee. Additionally, Watershed Coordinator Shrodes reported participation in more than ten Earth Day Celebrations, connecting with a total of 832 community members. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes additionally shared insights from the BioBlitz event, which saw a significant turnout.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member Pierce and Member Wilson Mendoza spoke briefly about the projects that are being considered for the SSMB WASC Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP).

Member Susie Santilena shared a meeting held to brief new Member Caroline Orija on the SSMB WASC's recent activities.

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 one public comment card. Ali Sharbat (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona (Cal Poly Pomona)) provided public comment on the proposed Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity Scientific Study (SS). Sharbat shared that the study aims to contribute to scientific knowledge and workforce development, asserting that the SS requests less than 0.5% of the SSMB WASC budget.

Andres Urrutia (Student, Cal Poly Pomona) shared that the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS would provide research opportunities that would prepare them as a civil engineer. Urrutia expressed eagerness to collaborate with colleagues and professors and noted that the SS will make meaningful impacts.

Alexander Lam (Cal Poly Pomona) thanked the Committee and shared their experience at Cal Poly Pomona. Lam highlighted the hands-on approach provided by the university. Lam also noted that The Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS would offer students a hands-on experience, which would be a great investment to the community.

Sheryl Reyes (Student, Cal Poly Pomona) emphasized the importance of the Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS and expressed gratitude to the WASC for their time and potential funding support of the SS.

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7. Discussion

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 presented the updated ranking survey, which remained unchanged since the last WASC meeting. The ranking survey indicated consistent results, with the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project ranked number one as the highest project, followed by Torrance Airport Stormwater Basin Project (hereafter referred to as Torrance Airport Project), the Wilmington Neighborhood Greening Project (hereafter referred to as Wilmington Greening Project) Project Modification Request (PMR), and Wilmington Q Street Local Urban Area Flow Management Project PMR (hereafter referred to as Wilmington Q Project), respectively.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) facilitated the SIP discussion with a slideshow presentation covering the SSMB Round 5 projects under consideration, including a cost overview of two Infrastructure Program (IP) projects, two SS, one Technical Resources Program (TRP) project, and two IP PMR. The presentation also reviewed key decision points the WASC had discussed at the prior meeting, including whether to cap all future year funding allocations at 80% or only from Fiscal Year 27-28 onwards, the affirming or removing of the Disadvantaged Community Benefit designation from the Torrance Airport Project, and the determination of whether to award full additional funding, partial funding, or no additional funding for the submitted PMRs.

District staff pre-programmed four scenarios and shared them on screen. Scenario 0 involves no new funding, only continuing funding for projects that the WASC already committed funding in previous years. This scenario uses 80% of the Fiscal Year 24-25 funding.

Scenario 1 includes continuing projects, funding across four years for Torrance Airport Project with zero funding allocated for Wilmington Q PMR in Years 1-3. This scenario also includes the other new proposals: Dominguez Channel Project, Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS, Street Sweeping SS, Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement Project TRP, and the full funding request for the Wilmington Greening PMR.

Scenario 2 includes continuing projects, funding across three-years for Torrance Airport Project, neither of the PMRs, and the new proposals: Dominguez Channel Project, Identifying Best Practices for Maintaining Stormwater Drywell Capacity SS, Street Sweeping SS, Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement Project TRP, and no additional funding for the Wilmington Greening PMR.

Scenario 3 includes continuing projects, new proposals and PMRs, but excludes funding for Torrance Airport Project.

Upon inquiry, District staff confirmed that projects applicants were engaged and have expressed willingness to adjust funding request allocations.

Member Santilena asked whether the District plans to pause Round 6 of funding, which could influence the decision on capping funding at 80% in future years. District staff responded, indicating that the matter was on the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' (Board) meeting agenda; however, no decision had been reached yet. District staff assured that updates would be provided on decisions made regarding Round 6 funding.

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Chair Cadwallader inquired about negotiating Caltrans funding for the Torrance Airport Project. David Wahba (City of Rolling Hills Estates) expressed confidence that negotiations could occur if the four-year scenario is approved, allowing for discussions with Caltrans to alter the funding.

Chair Cadwallader asked Wahba about the probability of the partnering cities leveraging funding. Wahba replied that they could not speak on behalf of the other partnering cities.

Member Santilena asked why about the necessity for full funding from Caltrans and why partial funding was not considered. Wahba explained that full funding is required to proceed with bidding, citing Caltrans' spending deadline and the challenge of stretching the funding.

Member Pierce inquired about the feasibility of budgeting without Caltrans funding, noting the contribution from the City of Rolling Hills Estates and highlighted the potential cost increase with prolonged project timelines. Wahba reiterated an inability to speak on behalf of the other cities.

Member Darryl Ford requested more information about the Wilmington Q Project and the consequences if the WASC did not provide the additional funding requested by the Wilmington Green Street and Wilmington Q Street Project Modification Forms. Mike Scaduto (City of Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment (LASAN)) mentioned that currently the City is pursuing several grants as a backup plan to fund the projects. Member Ford inquired about the project's fate if the funding request is not approved, to which Scaduto responded that while the schedule may change, the project remains a commitment of the City of Los Angeles and that would be seen through to completion. Scaduto expressed the City of Los Angeles' flexibility in contributing \$9.8 million to the project to ensure its continuity.

Member Pierce suggested considering partial funding for the Wilmington Greening Project, proposing a potential budgetary allocation for the coming years. Member Dillon advocated for increased scrutiny of PMRs and their potential impact on Project eligibility, using the Torrance Airport Project as an example. Member Vanessa Hevener shared concerns about allowing PMRs and highlighted the review process undertaken this year to ensure consistency and significance. Member Santilena shared an understanding that the District elected to not ask for PMRs to prompt review of project eligibility, proposing quarterly reports as a source for WASC members to monitor the changes in scope or modifications.

Chair Cadwallader asked whether the WASC should adhere to the 80% funding threshold, despite the earlier vote by the SSMB WASC not to adhere to the threshold. Member Thuan Ngyuen expressed comfort with surpassing the 80% threshold to meet County goals and advocated for more projects to be implemented. Member Santilena voiced comfort with exceeding 80% for the next two years but expressed reluctance toward a higher allocation for future years due to the pause in round 6 project calls.

Member Pierce emphasized the importance of gradual progress toward the 80% threshold and advocated for Scenario 1 to allow more projects to proceed. Member Ford expressed the need to pause the application process to update the IP structure function. The WASC showed support for Scenario 3, which excluded the Torrance Airport Project.

Member Aimee Zhao shared insights on the Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement TRP and Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project. Member Zhao stated that these projects could potentially return for construction or PMR due to their significance and emphasized that the WASC should be mindful of that outcome.

Chair Cadwallader inquired about the potential contribution of municipalities benefiting from the Torrance Airport Project. Member Dillon expressed support for the Torrance Airport Project and stressed the benefits for compliance at Machado Lake. Member Hevener echoed support for the Torrance Airport Project and

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emphasized that the project provides critical water quality and community benefits. Member Matthew Veeh also expressed support for the Torrance Airport Project due to the project's Water Supply Benefits. Chair Cadwallader asked if the WASC should expect more PMRs next year. Antos shared that PMRs are new to the SCW Program and that more are likely in the future, but also shared it is clear across the Regional Program that proponents are reviewing available resources before making an application or PMR of WASCs.

8. Public Comment Period

Scaduto shared that LASAN made recommendations to the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), Los Angeles County, and various District staff members regarding the minimum assumptions in rates used for cost escalation and encouraging the Program to adopt a standard cost escalation rate for all applicants. Scaduto is cognizant of the funding challenges confronting the SCW Program and acknowledged that LASAN has other projects to propose but is mindful of the financial limitations.

Ramzi Awwad (Public Works Director, City of Rancho Palos Verdes) addressed the SSMB WASC and acknowledged the challenging decisions ahead. Awwad highlighted the Peninsula Project, also known as the Torrance Airport Project, as a multi-agency initiative benefiting the City of Rolling Hills Estates and surrounding areas, promising Water Quality, Water Supply, and Community Investment Benefits. Awwad stressed the project's importance due to water quality concerns. Awwad additionally noted the absence of funding for other projects at Machado Lake. Moving the project to construction was deemed crucial to avoid penalties and preserve invested funds. Favoring investment in construction over fines, Awwad aimed to expedite project completion and minimize future penalties.

9. Voting Items

- a) **Approve the final FY24-25 SIP funding recommendations for the RH Watershed Area and approve submission to the ROC for review.**

Member Benavides-Aguilar motioned to approve to include the Torrance Airport Project in FY24-25 SIP recommendations for the SSMB Watershed Area, seconded by Member Dillon. The motion was passed with 11 Members in favor, 2 in abstention, and 2 opposed (approved, see voting tracking sheet).

District staff shared the SIP tool and presented the scenarios as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Member Santilena asked District staff to show Scenario 1, but excluding the Dominguez Channel Parkway BMPs Prioritization Project and adding the Wilmington Greening Project, both SS, and the Gardena Willows Wetland TRP.

Members Dillon and Pierce expressed support to include the Street Sweeping SS and believed the study would provide valuable information for the Los Angeles Region. Member Hoyt opposed and questioned if the study has been done in other regions and if those lessons and outcomes could be applied in the Los Angeles region.

The Committee discussed and created a "Scenario 5-2-2024 Motion 1" in the SIP tool. The scenario included the Torrance Airport Project (four-year stretch), the Identifying Best Practices Maintaining Drywell SS, the Street Sweeping SS, the Gardena Willows Wetland Stormwater Enhancement TRP Project, and the full PMR amount for the Wilmington Greening Project.

Member Santilena motioned to approve Scenario "5-2-2024 Motion 1" as the final Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the SSMB Watershed Area, including Watershed Coordinator budget, and advance to the Regional Oversight Committee for review. The motion

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was seconded by Member Dillon. The motion to approve Scenario “5-2-2024 Motion 1” as the final Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the SSMB Watershed Area, including Watershed Coordinator budget, and advance to the Regional Oversight Committee for review passed with 12 members in favor and 3 opposed (approved, see voting tracking sheet).

10. Adjournment

Chair Cadwallader thanked WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for May 15.

SOUTH SANTA MONICA BAY MEETING - May 2, 2024

		Quorum Present				Voting Items			
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Vote to approve March 20, 2024 and April 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes	Approve to include Torrance (Peninsula) Airport in Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan recommendations for SSMB Watershed Area	Approve Scenario "5-2-2024 Motion 1" as the final Fiscal Year 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for SSMB Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator budget and advance to the Regional Oversight Committee for review.	
Agency	LACFCD	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	x	CJ Caluag		y	y	y	
Agency	West Basin MWD	E.J. Caldwell		Matthew Veeh	x	y	y	y	
Agency	Water Replenishment D	Robert Beste		Aimee Zhao	x	y	y	y	
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Dave Pierce	x	Christopher Lapaz		Motioned	y	y	
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	x	y	n	y	
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Margie Hoyt	x			y	a	y	
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation So	Craig Cadwallader	x	Mary Simun		y	y	y	
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Dep	Caroline Orija	x			abstain	y	y	
Community Stakeholder	Fangary Law Group	Hany Fangary							
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservatio	Bo Savage		Wendy Butts					
Municipal Members	Carson	Gilbert Marquez		Roland Jen	x	y	a	y	
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	x	Ryan Jackson		y	n	y	
Municipal Members	LAC Public Works	Thuan Nguyen	x	Jalaine Verdiner		y	y	y	
Municipal Members	Torrance			Wilson Mendoza	x	y	y	n	
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Geraldine Trivedi	x	Doug Krauss		y	y	n	
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Carla Dillon	x			Second	y	y	
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Vanessa Hevener	x	David Wahba		y	y	n	
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	x				N/A	N/A	
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16				Yay (Y)	12	11	12
Total Voting Members Present		15				Nay (N)	0	2	3
Agency		5				Abstain (A)	0	2	0
Community Stakeholder		3				Total	12	15	15
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved	Approved	

Other Attendees

- Alex Bennett
- Ana Rivera
- Babetta Aguirre
- Ben O'Neal
- Bryn Evans
- Carmen Andrade
- Chris Lapax
- Christopher Vong
- Dominic Kader
- Giselle Ramirez
- Jenny Chau
- Joyce Amra
- Kara Plourde
- Kathleen McGowan
- Lara Awad
- Mark Hall
- Mark Nguyen
- Max Braxey
- Melania Gaboyan
- Michelle Staffieled
- Naomi Diep
- Roland Jen
- Sheryl Reyes
- Susan Robinson
- Wendy Dinh

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 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting
 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



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