

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



Tuesday, July 23, 2024
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Progress Park Auditorium/Plaza West
15500 Downey Ave, Paramount, CA 90723
WebEx Meeting

Committee Member Present:

Ernesto Rivera, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency) Co-Chair
Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency) Co-Chair
*Alysha Chan, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Stephen Scott, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
*Melissa Bahmanpour, River & Mountains Conservancy (Community)
*Mary Hillermeier, Tree People (Community)
Erica Maceda, River in Action (Community)
Gina Nila, Commerce (Municipal)
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)
Cecilia Salazar, Long Beach (Municipal)
*Pamela Torres, Lynwood (Municipal)
Adriana Figueroa, Paramount (Municipal)
Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Gladis Deras, South Gate (Municipal)
Tara Dales, SGA Marketing, Watershed Coordinator (non-voting member)

Committee Members Attending Virtually:

Irene Lopez-Muro, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)

Committee Members Not Present:

James Vernon, Port of Long Beach (Community)

*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. New members made self-introductions.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx, provided an overview of meeting guidelines and participation instructions, and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. Public Works staff confirmed that Member Irene Lopez-Muro was attending virtually with just cause under Assembly Bill 2449. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 25, 2024

Co-Chair Chen presented the meeting minutes from June 25, 2024. Member Dan Mueller motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Adriana Figueroa. The Committee approved the meeting minutes with 13 votes in favor, 2 votes in abstention and 2 members absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3. Public Comment Period

Public Works staff received no public comment cards by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. There were no public comments.

4. Discussion Items

a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

b) Watershed Planning Workshop

i) Introduction to Watershed Planning

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff from LA County Public Works gave a presentation introducing Watershed Planning and their approach for development of Initial Watershed Plans. The effort aims to facilitate regional and watershed-based planning by identifying opportunity areas and refining Population Indicators (i.e., targets) to support strategic investments. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff outlined the timeline and milestones for developing the Initial Watershed Plans by mid-2025.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff added that, once developed, the Initial Watershed Plans may be referenced by the WASC as a resource during Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) deliberations to consider project alignment with the Watershed Area's priorities. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff clarified that the LLAR WASC's roles and responsibilities will continue as usual throughout the Watershed Planning process. The next Watershed Planning facilitated workshops are scheduled for October 2024. The Initial Watershed Plans will be living documents that will support the Watershed Area in reaching the SCW Program goals.

ii) WASC feedback on existing plans & datasets for Watershed Planning

Prior to the meeting, SCW Program Watershed Planning staff provided committee members a list of key planning efforts, such as existing plans and datasets, that are being considered to assist in the development of Initial Watershed Plans. Watershed Coordinator Tara Dales suggested adding TreePeople's Los Angeles County LiDAR Tree Canopy Map, Green Schoolyards America's California Schoolyard Tree Canopy Equity Study Map. Member Melissa Bahmanpour highlighted the 2018 LLAR Revitalization Plan and the San Gabriel and Lower Rivers and Mountains Conservancy Para Todos Equitable Development Campaign. Member Adriana Figueroa mentioned Gateway Cities and Rivers Urban Greening Plan, and Gateway Water Management Authority's Integrated Regional Water Management Plan. Member Gladis Deras recommended park master plans as a resource. Member Ernesto Rivera suggested flood risk maps developed by the University of California, Irvine.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff encouraged Committee Members to submit additional resource recommendations to the [Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form](#), which can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Watershed Coordinator Dales inquired if the Watershed Plan intend to target the County's 2045 stormwater capture goal. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff confirmed that the Watershed Plans will identify similar Population Indicators (targets) to meet the SCW Program's goals.. The Watershed Plans will be strategically refined every five years.

iii) SCW Program Goals & Strategies Workshop

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Mike Antos and Hayat Rasul (Stantec, Watershed Planning) conducted a facilitated workshop that revisited SCW Program goals and solicited recommended strategies that are important to Committee Members and the Watershed Area. The Committee reviewed the 14 SCW Program goals and Members reflected on which goals should have a greater emphasis in the LLAR Watershed Area.

Watershed Coordinator Dales noted that the goal of providing different-sized projects has been overlooked. Member Mueller highlighted that the goal of investing in independent scientific research is often neglected in project discussions.

Member Bahmanpour mentioned that the promotion of green jobs and career pathways had not been a primary focus during project reviews, despite its importance.

Committee Members also shared that a significant portion of the LLAR Watershed Area is classified as a disadvantaged community, with most census block groups in the watershed falling into this category. The Committee noted that this statistic is higher than other watersheds, making it a unique aspect of the LLAR Watershed Area.

Member Ngyuen noted that the watershed is highly built-out, posing challenges for new project implementation, and suggested utilizing existing infrastructure for water treatment and contributing to annual maintenance costs.

Member Bahmanpour emphasized the importance of improving public health and increasing access to open space, highlighting these goals as critical community issues. In response to Antos' inquiry about specific community challenges, Watershed Coordinator Dales shared that water quality and trash were top concerns. Watershed Coordinator Dales also noted that the LLAR Watershed Area has one of the lowest tree canopy areas and the highest park need.

Several LLAR Committee Members discussed the challenges of working within a built-out environment. Member Figueroa shared ADA compliance and utility right-of-way restrictions as challenges that limit project implementation. Antos asked Committee Members if drought compliance was an issue in the watershed, to which Member Figueroa shared that cities must follow drought compliance requirements to receive state funding.

Committee Members participated in a workshop activity to identify priority strategies that they would like to be implemented by future projects and studies in the LLAR Watershed Area to better achieve SCW Program Goals over the next five years. Antos read the strategies submitted by Committee Members and facilitated a discussion on categorizing the strategies into relevant groupings.

Committee Members grouped their proposed strategies based on the following common themes:

- a. Needed Science
- b. Low-impact Development and Green Infiltration
- c. Projects with Clear Operations and Maintenance (O&M) Plans
- d. Green Streets
- e. Prioritizing Green School Yards for Community Investment Benefits
- f. Partnerships for Regional Collaboration
- g. Strengthen Workforce Development Opportunities
- h. Creative Land Use and Rehabilitation
- i. Leverage State and Federal Funding Programs
- j. Analyze Least-cost pathways

The Committee's discussion on each grouping is captured below.

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a. Needed Science

Strategies included sewer capacity analysis, prioritizing the allocation of available space, conducting scientific studies on stormwater solutions for Brownfields usage, and seeking investment in innovative studies that encourage the adoption of new technologies, especially considering the lack of open space in the watershed area.

b. Low-impact Development and Green Infiltration

Strategies included implementing dry wells and infiltration galleries, increasing green space, using dry wells at pocket parks, increasing bioswales where feasible, and incorporating infiltration bioswales and stormwater capture.

c. Projects with Clear O&M Plans

Strategies included developing strategic O&M plans that can leverage support from the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (Conservation Corps), community-based organizations (CBOs), and non-profits; implementing low-maintenance improvements such as bioswales and landscaped curb extensions and designing projects that do not have exorbitant O&M costs through good project design.

d. Green Streets

Strategies included creating green streets in heavily trafficked pedestrian corridors with shade trees, planted medians, and bioswales; and forming partnerships for regional green street projects. The WASC expressed interest in green street projects but reflected that the process can be challenging.

e. Prioritizing Green School Yards for Community Investment Benefits

Strategies included partnering with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) to prioritize nature-based solutions, make use of the land for multi-benefit projects that improve water quality, implementing school greening multi-benefit projects, and developing green school yards.

f. Partnerships for Regional Collaboration

Strategies included improving water quality, supporting stormwater capture projects that benefit the region and multiple agencies, and formation of partnerships with schools, the private sector, and the post office.

g. Strengthen Workforce Development Opportunities

Strategies included increasing access to community education, leveraging the local conservation corps to help with funding and career pathway training, and development of Project Labor Agreement (PLA) tree workforce development programs.

The inclusion of the Conservation Corps in projects was discussed, with emphasis on their role in community investment and job creation. Member Bahmanpour suggested ways to incorporate Conservation Corps and non-profits into the project application process. For example, applicants can include letters of intent and intended adherence to Project Labor Agreements. The Committee shared varied experiences with Conservation Corps, and noted the importance in ensuring that the work done meets expectations and standards.

h. Creative Land Use Rehabilitation

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The Committee discussed incorporating creative land use strategies in Watershed Planning. Strategies included coordinating agreements with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for Brownfield cleanup, creating infiltration and capture opportunities, and developing new open spaces. Other strategies included converting public golf courses, diverting stormwater to sewers using existing infrastructure to improve water quality and supply, and increasing public access to rights-of-way where feasible.

i. Leverage State and Federal Funding Programs

Strategies included selecting projects based on their return-on-investment, effectiveness, and providing Disadvantaged Community Benefits by allocating funding that is at least 110 percent of the disadvantaged community population ratio.

The Committee highlighted the importance of supporting disadvantaged communities and proposed using data from the State to identify areas with the highest burdens. Member Figueroa suggested engaging smaller cities in the SCW Program process.

j. Analyze Least-cost Pathways

Member Ngyuen mentioned that the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, approved by the LLAR WASC, could be helpful in reducing regulatory challenges, but expressed concerns about the time required for completion and implementation. Antos clarified that altering regulations was beyond the SCW Program's authority and instead rests with other organizations.

Member Figueroa shared that drywells at potential pocket parks may be another opportunity for cost-effective solutions across municipalities.

Antos and Rasul thanked the LLAR WASC for participation in the workshop and discussion and reminded Committee Members to submit additional comments in the [Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form](#).

5. Public Comment Period

Dr. Green shared thoughts on the limited greenspace in the LLAR Watershed Area and urged the Committee to review the County Assessor's Property Tax database for properties with delinquent taxes or those classified as abandoned. Dr. Green commented that the properties should be identified early in the process and brought to the attention of relevant committees or cities for potential projects. Dr. Green also expressed concerns regarding funds originally intended for water quality compliance that are being diverted to other uses, highlighting the limited availability of money and the risk of municipalities failing to meet state objectives due to insufficient funds from the SCW Program.

6. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

7. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 27, 2024, from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. See the SCW Program website for details. Items on the agenda include:

- a) Review of WASC roles and responsibilities
- b) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs
- c) Gateway Water Management Authority Presentation

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LLAR WASC Members confirmed interest in a presentation from the Gateway Water Management Authority. Public Works staff will coordinate a presentation for the next public meeting.

8. Adjournment

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

LLAR WASC - July 23, 2024

		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 06-25-2024 Meeting Minutes
Agency	District	Ernesto Rivera	x	Enrique Baul		y
Agency	Central Basin	Madeline Chen*	x	Alex Rojas		y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Asha Kreiling*	x	Rob Beste		y
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Dave Pierce		Alysha Chan	x	y
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	Stephen Scott	x	Todd Leland		y
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Irene Lopez-Muro	x	Isabelle Campiformio		
Community Stakeholder	Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Melissa Bahmanpour	x	y
Community Stakeholder	TreePeople	Manny Gonez		Mary Hillermeier	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Port of Long Beach	James Vernon		Dylan Porter		
Community Stakeholder	River in Action	Erica Maceda	x			y
Municipal Members	City of Commerce	Gina Nila	x	Thomas Bekele		y
Municipal Members	City of Downey	Dan Mueller	x			y
Municipal Members	City of Long Beach	Cecilia Salazar	x	Wataru Kumagai		y
Municipal Members	City of Lynwood	Julian Lee		Pamela Torres	x	a
Municipal Members	City of Paramount	Adriana Figueroa	x			y
Municipal Members	County of Los Angeles	Thuan Nguyen	x	Fred Gonzalez		a
Municipal Members	City of South Gate	Gladis Deras	x			y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	SGA Marketing	Tara Dales	x			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	13
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	2
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendees
Lower Los Angeles River WASC Meeting
July 23, 2024

Alexa Reasoner

Ali Rahmani LA Water Board

Alonso

Alonso

Anthony Barreras

Arturo Gonzalez

Carlos Rodriguez

David Lee - LACPW

David Vilas

Fred Gonzalez - LACFCD

G Kast

G2

Haris Harouny

Hayat Rasul

Irene Lopez-Muro

Jacqueline Mak

Jenny Chau

Jesus Saldana

John Bodenchak

John Mendoza

JonPaul Sarro DPW

Jose Castro - LACPW

Justin Jones - LACPW

Kristina Kreter

Mark Hall GLAmosquito

Mary Kohav

Mei-Lin Hanna JLHA

Melania G.

Michelle Kim JLHA

Oliver Galang Craftwater

Pablo Forni - LACPW

Paul Mead

Ryanna Fossum

Sara

Uriel Cobian

Wataru Kumagai

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 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	
Todd Leland	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation	todd.leland@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	
Melissa Bahmanpour	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	mbahmanpour@rmc.ca.gov	A	
Manny Gonez	TreePeople	mgonez@treepeople.org	P	

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 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	
	Downey		A	
Cecilia Salazar	Long Beach	cecilia.salazar@longbeach.gov	P	
Wataru Kumagai	Long Beach	wataru.kumagai@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	
	Paramount		A	
Thuan Nguyen	County of Los Angeles	thunguyen@dpw.lacounty.gov	P	

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Karen Diaz	Diaz	RMC	Kdiaz@rmc.ca.gov

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