

Lower San Gabriel River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, August 28, 2024
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
Lakewood City Hall Executive Board Room
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present

CJ Caluag, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Madeline Chen, Central Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
*Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Todd Leland, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
*Steven Mendoza, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal), Chair
*Konya Vivanti, Lakewood (Municipal)
Fernando Villaluna, Unincorporated Areas of LA County (Municipal)
Vicki Smith, Whittier (Municipal)
Kekoa Anderson, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Attending Virtually

Wataru Kumagai, Long Beach (Municipal)

Committee Members Not Present

Adam Galia, Resident (Community)
Gabrielle Weeks, Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment (Community), Vice-Chair
Len Gorecki, Bellflower (Municipal)
Mike O'Grady, Cerritos (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Dan Mueller, Chair of the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. Public Works staff made self-introductions and a quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from July 9, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from July 9, 2024. Member Konya Vivanti motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Madeline Chen. The Committee voted to approve the July 9, 2024 meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 1 in abstention, and 2 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- Round 6 Call for Projects will defer Infrastructure Program (IP) project submissions until Summer 2025. The deadline for Scientific Study (SS) and Technical Resource Program (TRP) applications

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was July 31. This is in alignment with the recent report by the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors' (Board) subsequent motion on Progress and Adaptive Management of the SCW Program. The deferral will enable Public Works to prioritize critical efforts informed by all recent reports, recommendations, and discussions with the ROC and key interested parties, while also allowing prospective applicants the opportunity to refine and enhance their project proposals, leverage additional funding, and engage more deeply with the community. This WASC received 5 SS and 0 TRP applications. Public Works staff will conduct completeness checks for applications brought to the WASC.

- The SCW Program has initiated Watershed Planning efforts to facilitate regional and watershed-based planning that identifies project opportunity areas and refines Population Indicators that will support strategic investments. This effort will build upon past and ongoing work, incorporate meaningful community input, and leverage available data and best practices to create useful, transparent, and accessible plans and tools. The SCW Program Watershed Planning Team, consisting of SCW Program Watershed Planning staff within Public Works and consultants, will return to WASCs starting in October for an additional engagement session. In November, the SCW Program Watershed Planning staff will share the initial Watershed Plans Framework, and mid next year will conclude with development of the final Initial Watershed Area Plans for each Watershed Area. Following, specific and more detailed Adaptive Plans will be developed.

4) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

5) Discussion

- a) Introduction to Watershed Planning**
 - i) Watershed Planning Approach**

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff gave a presentation introducing Watershed Planning and their approach for development of Initial Watershed Plans. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff's presentation outlined key planning milestones and outputs, timelines for engagement and community input, and how Watershed Planning will be integrated within the SCW Program.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff noted that the LSGR WASC's prioritization criteria will also be considered during the development of the LSGR Watershed Plan.

- ii) WASC Feedback on existing plans and 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. A simplified list was also presented on screen. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff requested recommendations from Committee Members on additional existing plans and datasets that should be investigated for the Watershed Planning effort.

Member Dan Knapp noted that the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plan prepared by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy should also be considered, in addition to the Los Angeles River Master Plan. Upon inquiry, SCW Program Watershed Planning staff confirmed that local Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) will also be considered. Chair Mueller suggested that the Central Basin Watermaster planning documents should be considered. Upon inquiry, SCW Program Watershed Planning staff confirmed that the Gateway Area Pathfinding (GAP) Analysis will be another document considered in the Watershed Planning process.

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SCW Program Watershed Planning staff informed the WASC that additional input can be submitted following the meeting using the [Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form](#).

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff shared that more specific information regarding the definitions of Population Indicators and Performance Measures. Relevant examples can be found in the [ROC Workbook](#).

iii) SCWP Goals & Strategies Workshop

Mike Antos and Hayat Rasul (Stantec, Watershed Planning) facilitated a 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 from the Program Ordinance and Members reflected on which of the Goals should have greater emphasis for the LSGR Watershed Area.

Member Smith expressed surprise at the 110 percent Disadvantaged Community investment goal and noted the complex language. Antos explained that the SCW Program incentivizes investment in low-income communities and confirmed that this has been the original ordinance language. Antos added that the 110 percent is the minimum and most WASCs contribute more than that percentage.

Upon inquiry, Antos provided examples of independent scientific research funded by the SCW Program, including the SS evaluated by the WASCs. Antos added that 10 percent of SCW Program funds are managed by Public Works, some of which is used for studies such as the Metric and Monitoring Study (MMS).

Antos clarified that prioritization of certain Program goals over others is not expressed in the Program Ordinance.

When prompted to consider unique characteristics of the LSGR Watershed Area and how it relates to the SCW Program Goals, Member Knapp noted that while the LSGR WASC sets aside funding for small, nature-based projects, there is a lack of community-based organizations to lead and implement these projects.

Member Vivanti added that the LSGR Watershed Area is made up of two Watershed Management Groups, which consists of Municipalities and does not include community-based organizations. Member Vivanti explained that each Watershed Management Group has a list of projects that needs to be submitted to the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board to comply with MS4 requirements, and that these projects may not align with the SCW Program. Member Vivanti noted that although the new Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional (CII) permit associated with the Los Cerritos Channel Watershed provides an opportunity to collaborate with commercial entities, Municipalities have had challenges working with non-government agencies, including School Districts. Member Vivanti confirmed that Municipalities are mandated to participate in the Watershed Management Groups. Member Vivanti further noted that the mandates through the Watershed Management Group regulatory process only partially align with the SCW Program Goals and highlighted that Disadvantaged Community Benefits and green jobs are not considered. Member Vivanti referenced infiltration projects as well as Operations and Maintenance (O&M) requiring specialized skills in the Cities of Downey, Lakewood, and Bellflower.

Member Knapp noted that the SCW Program specifically mentions promoting green jobs, in addition to requiring them. Upon inquiry, Antos confirmed that LSGR was the only WASC that developed prioritization criteria.

Committee Members participated in a workshop activity to identify priority strategies that they would like to be implemented through future projects and studies in the LSGR Watershed Area to better achieve the SCW Program Goals over the next five years. Committee Members first brainstormed proposed strategies individually, then came together to discuss and organize these strategies into relevant categories.

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Public Works staff announced that Member Wataru Kumagai joined the meeting virtually with just cause under AB 2449.

Antos read the strategies submitted by Committee Members and facilitated a discussion on categorizing the strategies into relevant groupings.

The final categories identified during the workshop were:

- a) Compliance is Cool
- b) Bring Money In
- c) Push Multi-Benefit Ideas Out
- d) Smart Design
- e) Scale for Health
- f) Creative Project Design to Optimize Investment
- g) Note to Self
- h) Innovative Projects and Land Use

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

a) Compliance is Cool

The one strategy in this grouping was ensuring Water Quality compliance for relevant constituents. Chair Mueller emphasized how monitoring plays a critical role in evaluating how projects are effective and provide multi-benefits. Antos noted that the projects developed for the compliance pathway are not designed in alignment with the SCW Program. Committee Members discussed ways to address regulatory constraints, including private partnerships, leveraged funding, and appropriation requests.

b) Bring Money In

Strategies included 1) maximizing leveraged funding due to regional funding limitations, 2) identifying additional funding/local funding match, 3) finding dollars to support SCW Program Projects, 4) leveraging funding from other programs such as the [Los Angeles County Measure A, Proposition 4](#), and the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), and 5) having Project Applicants provide a funding match per LSGR prioritization criteria. The criteria would be revisited to adjust matching funds. The strategies concluded maximizing leveraged funding, including state, federal and local funding as a main priority. Committee Members noted that there haven't been many projects with leveraged funding and highlighted the importance of leveraging funding and maximizing dollars due to regional limitations. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff confirmed the accuracy of the \$63 million in leveraged funding and the 22 percent allocated to Disadvantaged Community Projects reported in the Watershed Planning presentation slides.

c) Push Multi-Benefit Ideas Out

Strategies included 1) coordination with [County Measures W, H, A and M \(WHAM\)](#), 2) syncing proposals to economies of scale, 3) pairing efforts with regional complete and green street initiatives, 4) developing multi-jurisdictional projects to create more regional projects with larger drainage areas and larger volume capture, 4) tying SCW Program goals into other County Programs and Projects, 5) collaborating with Orange County cities to identify projects, and 6) opening up tributaries to help provide opportunities for additional funding, such as the El Dorado Regional Stormwater Capture Project.

Specifically, Committee Members discussed how other County Programs also have goals that align with the SCW Program. Antos explained there is an opportunity to identify projects that can intentionally leverage funding from more than one program, such as through [WHAM](#), to optimize the number of funding sources tapped. Committee Members noted that these potential overlaps can be observed in freeway, park, school, and complete street projects. Antos cited a project led by the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) in the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area as an example of a large

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transportation project that received SCW Program funding by providing Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits through stormwater management in adjacent neighborhoods. Member Knapp emphasized the importance of synchronizing applications and coordinating proposal submissions to maximize the benefits of economies of scale.

Member Kumagai suggested collaboration with cities in Orange County, since the LSGR Watershed Area borders Los Angeles County and Orange County lines. Watershed Coordinator Anderson referenced the Los Cerritos project as an example of coordination with Orange County cities and noted that the project did not use SCW Program funds. Member Knapp added that there may be opportunities to provide additional Disadvantaged Community Benefits since Leisure World is considered a Disadvantaged Community that abuts the San Gabriel River. Member Kumagai shared challenges associated with the El Dorado Regional Project due to a significant increase in construction costs. Member Kumagai noted that these connections could set the foundation for larger projects and more collaboration in the future.

d) Smart Design

Strategies included 1) combining and pairing Design and Construction project costs for funding requests, and 2) prioritizing existing Design Projects over new applications. Watershed Coordinator Anderson shared that larger Infrastructure Projects typically consider both Design and Construction costs together, rather than treating Design and Construction as independent components when seeking funding.

e) Scale for Health

Strategies included 1) removal or modification of non-recreational lawn spaces, 2) smaller nature-based solution projects at the neighborhood level, 3) conversion of hardscape to porous material, 4) school greening projects to increase stormwater capture for the wellbeing of Disadvantaged Communities and as a Community Investment Benefit, and 5) continuing to engage owners of large land to collaborate on projects.

Committee Members discussed the importance of prioritizing more small-scale projects that are both financially feasible and contribute to overall well-being. Member Todd Leland emphasized scalability and expressed preference for dozens of smaller projects providing more benefits over a few large projects. Antos provided an example in the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) WASC, where four complete green streets were submitted as a single project across multiple cities to be eligible for SCW Program funding. Member Knapp also highlighted the importance of project visibility contributing to public health and well-being. Watershed Anderson added how trees and bioswales are much more attractive than large underground cisterns.

f) Creative Project Design to Optimize Investment

Strategies included 1) maximizing the use of funding spent with sound design, 2) purposeful workforce training and development incorporated into projects including O&M and 3) reducing costly and ineffective components. Committee Members reflected on the need to design projects for efficient O&M, but also recognized that O&M leads to potential investment in workforce development. Chair Mueller also shared that in addition to O&M, creative design should look at multi-benefits as well as leveraged funds to maximize financial efficiency and referenced the LA Metro transportation project as an example. Watershed Coordinator Anderson mentioned that the WASC anticipates one project will return with a Project Modification Request (PMR) in response to economic conditions.

g) Note to Self

Strategies primarily focused on prioritizing projects that have already been considered for Design to ensure these projects are built out. Member Smith noted that, despite the assumption that Design Projects should easily secure Construction funding, this has not been the case. Committee Members mentioned that many

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approved Design Projects are now seeking Construction funding, and shared that one of the biggest challenges is Construction funding requests without matching or leveraged funds.

h) Innovative Projects and Land Use

Strategies include 1) upgrading sport fields in Disadvantaged Communities, 2) utilizing brownfields, and 3) collaborating with other projects (e.g., affordable housing) to integrate water-related benefits. Watershed Coordinator Anderson explained that the location of the brownfields near the confluence of the San Gabriel River is a major opportunity but expressed uncertainty on the ability to influence existing private property owners. Member Knapp highlighted the work done in Los Cerritos and by the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy that involved transforming brownfields into wetlands, which has become an educational and recreational asset to the community. Watershed Coordinator Anderson noted that there is a lot of collaboration with the Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Master Plan due to overlap of jurisdictional boundaries. Watershed Coordinator Anderson mentioned that the GAP Analysis is a prime example of a holistic project funded by the SCW Program featuring multiple Watershed Areas. Committee Members also discussed the opportunity of pairing SCW Program Projects with affordable housing development, which has been a critical need for many cities.

6) Public Comment Period

Public Works staff compiled all Public Comment Cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting and uploaded them to the SCW Program website. There were no Public Comment Cards.

Clara Solis inquired which Watershed Area Highland Park falls into. Public Works staff confirmed that Highland Park is in the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area.

7) Items for Next Agenda

Public Works staff shared that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for September 10. Items on the next agenda include:

- a) Updated Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Lower San Gabriel River Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP)
- b) Summary of SS Submitted for FY 2025-26.

Public Works staff also informed the WASC that the Watershed Planning workshop will continue at the October or November WASC meeting.

8) Adjournment

Chair Mueller thanked Committee Members and the public for their attendance and participation. He then adjourned the meeting.

LSGR WASC - August 28, 2024								
		Quorum Present				Voting Items (see meeting minutes for additional details)		
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve the July 9, 2024 Lower San Gabriel River WASC Meeting Minutes		
Agency	FCD	CJ Caluag	x			y		
Agency	Central Basin	Alex Rojas		Madeline Chen	x	y		
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Rob Beste		Asha Kreiling	x	not present at vote		
Agency	Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Alysha Chan		y		
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Todd Leland	x	Stephen Scott		y		
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Dan Knapp	x	Irene Lopez-Muro		y		
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Adam Galia		Noya Wang				
Community Stakeholder	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Steven Mendoza	x	a		
Community Stakeholder	Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment	Gabrielle Weeks						
Community Stakeholder								
Municipal	Bellflower	Len Gorecki						
Municipal	Cerritos	Mike O'Grady		Sergio Huizar				
Municipal	Downey	Dan Mueller	x			y		
Municipal	Lakewood	Kelli Pickler		Konya Vivanti	x	y		
Municipal	Long Beach	Wataru Kumagai	x			not present at vote		
Municipal	Unincorporated	Fernando Villaluna	x	Joseph Venzon		y		
Municipal	Whittier	Vicki Smith	x	Kyle Cason		y		
Non-Voting	Watershed Coordinator	Kekoa Anderson	x	Grace Kast				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yay (Y)	9	0	0
Total Voting Members Present		12			Nay (N)	0	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0	0
Community Stakeholder		2			Total	10	0	0
Municipal		5				Approved	Not Approved	Not Approved

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
CJ Caluag	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Primary	<i>CJ Caluag</i>
Mark Beltran	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Alternate	
Alex Rojas	Central Basin	Primary	
Madeline Chen	Central Basin	Alternate	<i>Madeline Chen</i>
Rob Beste	Water Replenishment District	Primary	
Asha Kreiling	Water Replenishment District	Alternate	<i>Asha Kreiling</i>
Francisco Guerrero	Sanitation Districts	Primary	<i>Francisco Guerrero</i>
Alysha Chan	Sanitation Districts	Alternate	
Todd Leland	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Primary	<i>Todd Leland</i>
Stephen Scott	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Alternate	
Dan Knapp	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Primary	<i>Dan Knapp</i>
Irene Lopez-Muro	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Alternate	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN

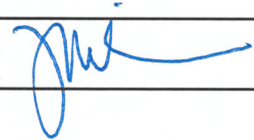




Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Adam Galia	Resident	Primary	
Noya Wang	City of Alhambra	Alternate	
Mark Stanley	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Primary	
Steven Mendoza	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Alternate	
Gabrielle Weeks	Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment	Primary	
Len Gorecki	Bellflower	Pimary	
Natalie Rivera-Estrada	Bellflower	Alternate	
Mike O'Grady	Cerritos	Primary	
Sergio Huizar	Cerritos	Alternate	
Dan Mueller	Downey	Primary	
Kelli Pickler	Lakewood	Primary	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Konya Vivanti	Lakewood	Alternate	
Melissa You	Long Beach	Primary	
Wataru Kumagai	Long Beach	Alternate	
Fernando Villaluna	Los Angeles County	Primary	
Joseph Venzon	Los Angeles County	Alternate	
Vicki Smith	Whittier	Primary	
Kyle Cason	Whittier	Alternate	
Kekoa Anderson	Watershed Coordinator		
Traci Gleason	Watershed Coordinator		

WebEx Webinar Attendees
Lower San Gabriel River WASC Meeting - August 28 2024

Alexa Reasoner
Alysha Chan
Andrew Kim
Carlos Rodriguez
Clara Solis
Emily Huang Stantec
Emily Ng

Eric Bonilla - LACPW
G Kast
Haris Harouny
Hayat Rasul
Jacqueline Mak
Jenny Chau
Jim C.

Joe Venzon - LA County
Kerry Quinlan
Larry Tran - LACPW
Luis
Mark Rounds
Melanie Hu
Oliver Galang Craftwater

Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination
SCW LSGR WASC
SCW Staff - Anthony Barreras
SCW Staff - Marisela Velasquez
Sofia Cardenas
Stephanie Luu
Wataru Kumagai