

Rio Hondo Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, July 30, 2024
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Monroe Room
119 W Palm Ave, Monrovia, CA 91016
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Jennifer Aguilar, Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Agency)
*Alysha Chan, LA County Sanitation District (Agency)
Richard Yee, City of Pasadena Public Works (Agency)
Jill Fosselman, Resident (Community)
Mark Hall, Greater LA County Vector Control District (Community)
Daniel Rossman, The Wilderness Society (Community)
David Dolphin, Alhambra (Municipal)
Briget Arndell, Arcadia (Municipal)
Jalaine Verdiner, LA County (Municipal)
*Alex Tachiki, Monrovia (Municipal)
Dawn Petschauer, Pasadena (Municipal), Chair
Richard Watson, Richard Watson and Associates Planning (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster (Vice-Chair)
Thomas Wong, San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District (Community)
Edward Belden, Monrovia Resident (Community)
Eddie Chan, Irwindale, (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Dawn Petschauer, Chair of the Rio Hondo (RH) 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 April 16, 2024

Public Works staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Member Jill Fosselman motioned to approve, seconded by Member Julian Juarez. The WASC voted to approve the April 16, 2024 meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 2 in abstention, and 1 Member absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Program Updates

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

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- Round 6 Call for Projects for the Regional Program will defer Infrastructure Program (IP) project submissions until Summer 2025. Scientific Studies (SS) and Technical Resource Program (TRP) applications can be submitted by the July 31 Call for Projects deadline. This deferral 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 Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program. The deferral will enable the SCW Program 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.
- In alignment with Board Supervisor Horvath's motion calling for the Accelerating the SCW Program, 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 Investment.

4) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member Alex Tachiki disclosed participation in a discussion with ROC Member Diana Mahmud through involvement in the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' (SGVCOG) Water Committee sharing updates on the Water Committee's current efforts.

5) Discussion Items

a) Introduction to Watershed Planning

i. Watershed Planning Approach

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff within Public Works 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](#). Chair Dawn Petschauer clarified with SCW Program Watershed Planning staff that the SCW Program Watershed Plans will not replace the annual Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) but will be a resource for reviewing projects during SIP deliberations.

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.

Upon inquiry, staff briefly described the relationships between the new SCW Program Watershed Planning Section, the Safe, Clean Water Program Section that administers the Program, and the Watershed Sections of Public Works.

Chair Petschauer explained that Municipalities in this WASC have previously been driven by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) compliance requirements and have worked in Watershed Management Groups to develop Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) at the watershed level.

Chair Petschauer noted that many jurisdictional boundaries exist (such as SCW Program, cities, Integrated Regional Water Management boundaries, etc.) and inquired if SCW Program Watershed Planning staff will be identifying projects that are in the overlapping areas. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff noted that the Technical Team is considering the various jurisdictional boundaries' overlaps, and that SCW Program Watershed Plans will follow SCW Program Watershed Area boundaries. Mike Antos (Stantec, Watershed Planning) clarified that the SCW Program Watershed Plans differ from other planning efforts in that it will not identify specific projects, instead it will include assessments of opportunities and setting targets. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff also noted that the different jurisdictional boundaries are shown in the [GIS Spatial Data Library](#), which can be accessed through the resources page on the [SCW Program website](#). Mike Antos added that compliance-driven plans' boundaries are often difficult to match because compliance is often delimited by political boundaries, which do not always follow Watershed Boundaries.

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Chair Petschauer confirmed with SCW Program Watershed Planning staff that the Performance Indicators will be interim targets established and adaptively managed as those targets are reached.

Chair Petschauer confirmed with SCW Program Watershed Planning staff that the completed planning products will feature both an online document and planning tools that will be integrated into the SCW Program website.

Chair Petschauer inquired whether SCW Program Watershed Planning staff is conducting Community Outreach during the development of these Watershed Plans. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff explained that engagement is underway but not broadly to the public beyond the opportunity for the public to participate in the WASC, Scoring, and Regional Oversight Committee meetings. Watershed Planning will incorporate insights from the SCWP Watershed Coordinators, a Community Strengths and Needs Assessment, and other interested party engagement. Chair Petschauer recommended that the SCW Program Watershed Planning staff consider actively reaching out to community members during the development of the first Watershed Plan.

Member Fosselman confirmed with SCW Program Watershed Planning staff that Watershed Plans are meant to be a helpful resource during SIP deliberations, and that, if desired, the WASC can still approve projects that are not in direct alignment with Watershed Plans.

ii. WASC Feedback on existing plans and datasets for Watershed Planning

Prior to the meeting, SCW Program Watershed Planning provided committee members a list of planning efforts, such as existing plans and datasets, that will be considered during the development of Initial Watershed Planning Plans. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff requested input from Committee Members oneffort additional existing plans and datasets that should be considered for the Watershed Planning effort.

Chair Petschauer suggested the Regional Board's Basin Plan, Enhanced Watershed Management Programs (EWMPs), and Stormwater Master Plans from smaller cities within the Watershed Area.

Member Daniel Rossman added that demographic data, such as CalEnviroScreen, should play a larger role in Watershed Planning. Member Rossman noted that there are opportunities for the SCW Program to draw from several other datasets to expand the SCW Program's definition of Disadvantage Communities.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff noted that Committee Members can submit additional suggestions to the [Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form](#). The entries will generate a living resource that will be frequently updated and used for future iterations of Watershed Plans.

Member Fosselman confirmed with SCW Program Watershed Planning staff and Chair Petschauer that the pre-SIP Scientific Study that the RH WASC previously recommend for the Round 6 funding is being included as a part of Watershed Planning efforts.

Chair Petschauer emphasized the importance of considering downstream effects during Watershed Planning, since this WASC is treating water before it reaches downstream WASCs. Downstream WASCs expect a certain level of water quality and may not be aware that water is already being treated upstream. Watershed Coordinator Richard Watson agreed that the WASC must focus on long term relationships with other WASCs regarding downstream effects.

iii. SCWP Goals & Strategies Workshop

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.

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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 RH Watershed Area.

Member Tachiki noted that the SCW Program needs to ensure ongoing Operation and Maintenance (O&M) for projects. Member Tachiki pointed out that the SCW Program does not have cost escalation built into the County Measure to bring in additional funds each year, but projects applying to the SCW Program are all facing increasing costs.

Chair Petschauer noted that the RH Watershed Area has the Whittier Narrows Dam, which creates a hydrological break in the watershed. Chair Petschauer added that not only are there issues with conveyance and receiving points for water supply, but the dam has also created a situation where the Regional Board and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have opposing priorities. The Regional Board requires nuisance flows to be treated and therefore requires flows to be diverted, but the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service considers flow diversion as damaging riparian habitat.

Chair Petschauer shared that the Watershed Management Group in this area has discussed with the Regional Board about how to collaboratively resolve compliance issues without negative environmental outcomes.

Watershed Coordinator Watson commented that the SCW Program evolved to have a heavy focus on water quality.

Chair Petschauer expressed observations that the SCW Program has not made much progress on promoting green jobs and career pathways, noting that each agency or entity will need to create positions that move away from traditional maintenance to more green infrastructure-focused maintenance. Chair Petschauer noted that this is an area where O&M planning and workforce development are connected.

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 RH Watershed Area to achieve 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.

- a. Committee Members grouped their proposed strategies based on the following common themes; Comprehensive O&M collaborations that center Workforce Development
- b. Stretch to new/untapped partnerships and potential funding
- c. Downstream effects and compliance
- d. Synergize Regional and local green Infrastructure/ Low Impact Development Plans, Projects, and Studies
- e. Applicants show that they apply for other grants as attempts to leverage funds
- f. Conservation as a way of life
- g. Program recommendations
- h. Diverse project scale in Applications
- i. Multi-benefit and one Watershed (Regional Project connections mapping)

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

- a. Comprehensive O&M collaborations that center workforce development

Strategies suggested include creation of a Workforce Development Coordinator through Public Works to offload the burden on Watershed Coordinators, skilled jobs across sector in specializations via educational opportunities which requires a workforce needs assessment, leveraging the City of Pasadena's MASH (Municipal Assistance, Solutions, and Hiring) initiative, planning ongoing O&M, long-term O&M will need to be done by Municipalities that requires a shift in traditional maintenance roles, create more training programs for City staff to obtain knowledge regarding O&M for green projects, create database for

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collaboration and information sharing for O&M partnerships, demonstrate ability to fund O&M in-house or with other leveraged funds, and collaborate between Education Institutions and Municipalities.

Chair Petschauer recommended that Municipalities establish a Scientific Study (SS) and mentioned the City of Pasadena has a MASH study that allows people from diverse backgrounds to go through a job training process in landscape maintenance, road maintenance, or clerical work. Chair Petschauer explained that many of the participants often become hired at the City of Pasadena or transition to other agencies that have similar job opportunities and positions but lack training programs. Member Tachiki also noted that there is a need for administrative skill development, skilled labor development, and teaching or training development. Member Tachiki recommended that a needs assessment be conducted across these workforce areas to identify where programs should be created. Several Committee Members noted that High Schools, Community Colleges, and the California Conservation Corps could introduce more young people to these workforce areas. Member Tachiki agreed that early exposure to green career pathways, prior to the college level, is important.

Mike Antos noted that this discussion involves two topics: connecting Workforce Development with O&M and ensuring that applicants consider the entire lifetime of a project (thus including O&M).

Member Fosselman responded that as cities consider the entire lifetime of a potential project, cities also need to ensure that their projects are included in the city's annual budgeting process. As a Project Proponent, a city needs to raise awareness of project needs so that City Managers can allocate resources to support the O&M of those projects.

Member Rossman reflected that during SIP deliberation, project proponents are often told of a missed opportunity for including Workforce Development. Member Rossman suggested creating a tool or resource so Developers can create partnerships with Workforce Development organizations at earlier stages of a project. The tool could also be an opportunity to support leverage funding sources. Chair Petschauer added that the burden is not only on the project proponent, but that Public Works should create a Workforce Development Coordinator to focus on identifying partnerships without overburdening the Watershed Coordinators.

b. Stretch to new/untapped partnerships and potential funding

Strategies included collaboration between Education Institutions and Municipalities, collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, project coordination to identify partners to share costs, California Natural Resource Agency's Urban Greening Grant, explore deepening federal collaboration, promote the development of school stormwater harvesting and greening projects within the watershed, and engage those not yet directly involved in the SCW Program (e.g., golf courses, schools, public-public partnerships, spreading basins/grounds) to increase opportunities and Community Benefits.

Watershed Coordinator Watson shared that for the Plymouth School Neighborhood Stormwater Capture Demonstration Project located at Plymouth Elementary School experienced challenges due to staffing changes at the school, which led to uncertainties regarding O&M responsibilities. Watershed Coordinator Watson noted that schools and Municipalities must be in coordination to prevent these similar issues from arising.

c. Downstream effects and compliance

Strategies included locating water quality projects toward the downstream end of subwatersheds to have the largest impact on water quality and maximizing funding, working with downstream projects to "sign off" on being aware of and can work with water flows affected by a proposed upstream project, balance between compliance, community benefits, and effective/efficient budget controls.

d. Synergize regional and local green infrastructure/low impact development plans, projects, and studies

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Strategies included green corridors (i.e., Emerald Necklace), utilize wash service roads into green transportation corridors that intercept surface flows to improve water quality and improve mobility in between cities, and link with transportation projects to provide urban greening in relationship to complete streets (walk, bike, transit projects) through traffic circles, cycle trails, lane reductions, and medians.

Mike Antos provided background that the Emerald Necklace Plan is a plan to use different reaches of flood control channels as a location for recreational and active transportation corridors. Antos confirmed with some Committee Members that the SGV (San Gabriel Valley) Greenway includes the RH Watershed Area. Member Juarez shared that the SGV Greenway Plan should be ready this fall.

e. Applicants show that they apply for other grants as attempts to leverage funds

Strategies included leverage funding from outside sources to extend WASC funding, revise SCW Program Application to include a question on whether a project applied for other grant programs, and balanced funding strategies over the duration of the SCW Program.

Mike Antos asked if Committee Members were interested in establishing a WASC-specific leverage funding percentage requirement and referenced the Lower San Gabriel River WASC's efforts as an example. Chair Petschauer shared that the SCW Program Project Application should allow Applicants to demonstrate that attempts at leveraged funding were made, even if those efforts were unsuccessful.

f. Conservation as a way of life

Strategies included enhancing resiliency of underground Infrastructure, implementing "Making Conservation a California Way of Life" and other regulations for compliance issues related to diversion, advanced water purification collaboration, more drought tolerant and California native habitat and landscaping, and increased underground storage of stormwater due to diminishing capacity in sewers for diversion.

Mike Antos explained that some of the strategies listed refer to the inability for sewers to take wet weather flows during a storm event, and how that flow could be temporarily stored before being outlet to sewers. Member Mark Hall noted that there is not enough flow to the sewer system when considering the advanced water purification efforts being undertaken. Mike Antos noted that according to the 2022 Interim Guidance, the SCW Program awards points to water diverted to sewer because eventually, that water would be reclaimed when advanced water purification projects are completed. Mike Antos noted that since this Watershed Area has a unconfined groundwater basin and costs for sewer diversion are high, capturing stormwater flows would lend to infiltration before pumping to the sewers.

Member Alysha Chan explained that capacity in sewers is diminishing and therefore flows cannot be diverted to sewers during wet weather. Member Chan added that Project Applicants could plan to design a storage facility to hold flows during storm events and then divert to sewer after the storm event has subsided to receive Water Supply points.

Member David Dolphin noted that cities are being mandated to reduce water usage, citing the "Making California a Conservation Way of Life" regulation. Member Dolphin added that these regulations will result in less water going to the spreading grounds and sanitary sewers, and a decreased demand of water supply. The effects of regulations must be considered when evaluating a project's long-term benefits. Member Dolphin noted that Compliance Measures in the next five years, Metropolitan Water District's Pure Water Project, conservation effects, and PFAS regulations must all be considered.

g. Program recommendations

Mike Antos shared the topics were advisements aimed more towards the SCW Program rather than to Project Proponents, particularly the recommendation to implement an opportunity planning process to

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identify potential projects at various levels throughout the Watershed Area. That strategy is something that the Watershed Coordinators and SCW Program Watershed Planning team are working on.

h. Diverse project scale in applications

Strategies included a larger reach of each project, or benefiting more disadvantaged populations, and better utilization of small space infiltration.

Member Jennifer Aguilar commented that many of the projects brought to the RH WASC demonstrate benefits within the project footprint and expressed desires to see projects with components that work towards a larger system with a broader reach and benefit.

Chair Petschauer noted that the community is often more accepting of smaller, quicker projects like small space infiltration, compared to larger projects where progress is harder to visualize.

i. Multi-benefit and one watershed (regional project connections mapping)

Strategies included encouraging identification of greater Community Benefits outside project site, achieving Community Investment Benefits outside project footprint, expanding the definition of a Disadvantaged Community aside from economic characteristics, and ensure early and frequent community engagement.

Member Rossman shared that Disadvantaged Community Benefits should not be solely defined by geographic location as projects can provide benefits to those outside the project area, and cited the Arboretum Natural Treatment Wetland and Groundwater Recharge Facility Project (hereafter referenced as the Arboretum Project) as an example. Member Rossman recommended that in these instances a project may receive partial points for Disadvantaged Community Benefits. Antos confirmed with the Committee Members that helping a disadvantaged city reach compliance is a Disadvantaged Community Benefit.

Member Rossman brought up that there are other ways to characterize a Disadvantaged Community other than median household income, such as environmental factors shown in CalEnviroScreen. Mike Antos noted that the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) had considered adding severely Disadvantaged Community tracts as a characteristic.

Mike Antos recalled mixed reactions to the Disadvantaged Community Benefit points awarded to the Arboretum Project. Chair Petschauer added that the Brookside Park Stormwater Capture Project is not located in a Disadvantaged Community but benefits Disadvantaged Communities since it is located near the Rose Bowl, an area where people from various backgrounds visit and therefore benefit from.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff noted that the next RH WASC Watershed Planning workshop will occur in October and will cover specific Performance Indicators. SCW Program Watershed Planning staff will provide brief updates on Initial Watershed Plan efforts at each WASC meeting until the next workshop.

6) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

7) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20, 2024 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm. Items to be discussed at the next meeting include:

- a) WASC Roles and Responsibilities. Presentation by Regional Coordination.
- b) Updated FY24-25 Rio Hondo Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP).
- c) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair or Co-Chairs

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8) Adjournment

Chair Petschauer thanked the WASC Members and the public for their attendance, participation, and adjourned the meeting.

RH WASC - July 30th, 2024						
Member Type	Quorum Present				Voting Item	
	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 04/16/2024 Meeting Minutes	
Agency	Julian Juarez	X	Jennifer Aborida		Y	
Agency	Tom Love		Jennifer Aguilar	X	Y	
Agency	Kelly Gardner		Tony Zampielo			
Agency	Dave Pierce		Alysha Chan	X	A	
Agency	Richard Yee	X	Kris Markarian		A	
Community Stakeholder	Thomas Wong		Bryan Matsumoto			
Community Stakeholder	Jill Fosselman	X			Y	
Community Stakeholder	Mark Hall	X	Mark Daniel		Y	
Community Stakeholder	Edward Belden					
Community Stakeholder	Daniel Rossman	X	Liliana Griego		Y	
Municipal Members	David Dolphin	X	Latoya Waters			
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	Dawn Petschauer	X	James Tong		Y	
Municipal Members	Eddie Chan					
Municipal Members						
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member (RWA Planning)	Richard Watson	X	Julie Millett			
Total Non-Vacant Seats	16			Yay (Y)	9	0
Total Voting Members Present	12			Nay (N)	0	0
Agency	4			Abstain (A)	2	0
Community Stakeholder	3			Total	11	0
Municipal Members	5				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			
Tom Love	Upper San Gabriel District			
Kelly Gardner	Main San Gabriel Basin			
Dave Pierce	Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts			
Brent Maue	Pasadena			
Thomas Wong	San Gabriel Valley MWD Division 3			
Jill Fosselman	Resident			
Mark Hall	Vector Control			
Edward Belden	Resident			
Daniel Rossman	The Wilderness Society			
David Dolphin	Alhambra			
Briget Arndell	Arcadia			
Jalaine Verdiner	LA County Public Works			
Gloria Crudgington	Monrovia			
Dawn Petschauer	Pasadena			
Jennifer Aguilar	Upper San Gabriel District			

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	P/A	Signature
Jennifer Aborida	Los Angeles County Flood Control District			
Tony Zampielo	Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster			
Alysha Chan	Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Richard Yee	Pasadena			<i>A. Yee - Pasadena</i>
Bryan Matsumoto	Nature For All			
Mark Daniel	Vector Control			
Liliana Griego	Friends of the Los Angeles River			
Latoya Waters	Alhambra			
Paul Cranmer	Arcadia			
Fernando Villaluna	LA County Public Works			
Alex Tachiki	Monrovia			<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
James Tong	Pasadena			
Eddie Chan	Irwindale			
Richard Watson	RWA			
Julie Millett	RWA			

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	P/A	Signature
Ryanna Fossum	Stantec			
Mike Antos	Stantec			
Emily Ng	Stantec			
Hayat Rasul	Stantec			