

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



Wednesday, July 17, 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)
*Tammy Hierlihy, 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)
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
Vanessa Hevener, EWMP: Peninsula (Municipal)
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

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 Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established. Public Works staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial and instructions on public comment submissions. The Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Watershed Planning staff made self-introductions.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 2, 2024

Vice-Chair Trivedi presented the SSMB WASC meeting minutes from May 2, 2024. Member Thuan Nguyen motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Wilson Mendoza. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 3 in abstention, and 3 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3. Program Updates

Public Works Staff provided an update, noting:

- 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

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Board of Supervisors' (Board) subsequent motion on Progress and Adaptive Management of the 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.

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes announced an upcoming event on August 3 at the Los Angeles Environmental Learning Center at Hyperion in Playa del Rey. The event will be hosted by the South and Central Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinators, in collaboration with the Learning Center. The event will include a tour and will provide participants with opportunities to learn about sustainable water and solid resource management in Los Angeles through hands-on, interactive exhibits. Registration and more information can be found [on the registration page](#).

4. Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

5. Discussion Items

a) Watershed Planning Workshop

i) Introduction to Watershed Planning

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](#).

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, Public Works shared that more specific information regarding the definitions of population indicators (targets) and performance measures (metrics), and relevant examples can be found in the [Regional Oversight Committee \(ROC\) workbook](#).

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. Vice-Chair Trivedi emphasized the importance of including pertinent Los Angeles County Flood Control District data, such as flood risk areas.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes recommended Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education's (SCOPE) #OurWaterOurVoice Report, the "Equity in Stormwater Investments" whitepaper, the Upper and Lower Los Angeles River Revitalization Plans, the Los Angeles River Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Feasibility Report from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the 100 Acre Partnership at Taylor Yard, and any information on liquefaction zones. Member Susie Santilena shared that the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's Urban Water Management Plan and other plans from the agency may be relevant.

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Member Dave Pierce raised the need to explore GIS information on areas suitable for infiltration to support project development. Member Pierce recommended Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts' Recycled Water Plan, which details expansion areas and existing pipe routes.

Public Works added that additional input can be submitted following the meeting using the [Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form](#).

iii) SCW Program Goals & Strategies Workshop

Ryanna Fossum 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 from the Program Ordinance and Members reflected on which of the goals should have greater emphasis for the SSMB Watershed Area.

When the Committee was asked about what stood out to them about the 14 SCW Program Goals, Member Mendoza and Member Nguyen highlighted the goal "leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals." Member Mendoza noted that the word "maximize" particularly stood out, sharing observations that projects typically tend to rely on SCW Program funds first as the primary funding source, with other funding as supplemental. Member Nguyen underlined the importance of allocating funding to projects with existing leveraged funding.

Member Margie Hoyt voiced that the WASC needs to place greater emphasis on Disadvantaged Communities and noted observations that these communities often get left out.

Member Nguyen also added that it's important to focus on how to allocate the budget to support Municipalities in maintaining ongoing projects.

Member Santilena shared that the innovation and technology goal is important, however it's challenging for the WASC to implement this goal.

Member Daryl Ford highlighted the goal of addressing a spectrum of project sizes. Member Ford noted that project size and variety is important but hasn't historically been a priority for this Watershed Area.

Watershed Coordinator Shrodes highlighted the goal about green jobs and career pathways and shared experiences about numerous instances when community members have asked if the SCW Program provides local job opportunities. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes also highlighted the goal to improve public health and added that this goal encompasses the multi-benefit approach promoted by the SCW Program.

Vice-Chair Trivedi noted the importance of the water quality goal, citing personal experiences working with the Beach Cities Municipalities, which are also strongly focused on water quality.

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 SSMB 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.

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

- a. Improve / Strengthen Communications in the SSMB Watershed Area

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- b. Deepen Community Understanding of Regional Water Fate and OneWater
- c. Prioritize Environmental Justice and Equity in OneWater Studies and Projects
- d. Increase Scientific Research Partnerships
- e. Support SSMB Watershed Area in Holistically Understanding and Applying for Leverage Funding Opportunities Across County Departments
- f. Green It or Keep It Green
- g. Agency Collaboration
- h. Advance the Use of Technology for Onsite Reuse

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

a. Improve / Strengthen Communications in the SSMB Watershed Area

Strategies included more outreach, education, and engagement with the community, including through the SCW Program's social media. Communication and engagement was emphasized during all phases of the application and project development process.

b. Deepen Community Understanding of Regional Water Fate and OneWater

Strategies primarily focused on improving water capture, infiltration, and diversion to augment water supply and groundwater recharge. Committee Members added that diverting too much stormwater to a source that does not have the capacity to treat the water might necessitate an option to treat stormwater at a capture site. Further discussion among the Committee raised the SS Program as a vehicle to assess alternatives for feasible stormwater capture capacity and treatment. Member Pierce added that there is an opportunity to take advantage of existing infrastructure to increase stormwater capture capacity. The Committee also elevated ranking water priorities within the Watershed Area to assist the WASC in recommending funding for better projects. The WASC discussed how strategies and projects can work towards the goals of OneWater and climate resilience, and mentioned opportunities to leverage existing infrastructure between small and Regional Projects, such as the Pure Water Southern California Project.

c. Prioritize Environmental Justice and Equity in OneWater Studies and Projects

Strategies elevated the need to acknowledge and address high pollutant concentrations, poor air quality, and subsequent impacts to water quality and public health, especially in Disadvantaged Communities. Tools such as CalEnviroScreen4.0 were highlighted. Other strategies also emphasized increasing attendance at local hiring fairs and promoting green jobs and workforce development. Committee Members discussed that, although the proportion of Disadvantaged Communities in the SSMB Watershed Area is not as high as other areas across the County, another way to engage local Disadvantaged Communities is through job opportunities.

d. Increase Scientific Research Partnerships

Strategies included conducting a SS to assess air quality deposition and Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and improving waterway effluent monitoring practices. The Committee discussed knowledge sharing and the creation of a lessons learned list for Best Management Practices (BMPs) across different projects. This list could serve as a resource for applicants and allow for information exchange. Another strategy was to share information on the SCW Program and its potential opportunities with local universities across other Watershed Areas. Chair Cadwallader shared that Heal the Bay and The Surfrider Foundation conduct their own water monitoring and that consolidating resources will help the Watershed Area.

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e. Support SSMB Watershed Area in Holistically Understanding and Applying for Leverage Funding Opportunities Across County Departments

The Committee discussed the importance of minimizing the leverage funding burden on Project Proponents and Municipalities. Committee Members shared experiences and commented that there is typically a lack of resources available for applicants to complete funding applications, and suggested the SCW Program provide support and technical assistance to apply for leverage funding. There were suggestions to explore outside funding, including Municipal funds and any funding that might be available to County offices. Chair Cadwallader suggested that the WASC should provide a distinction in leverage funding expectations based on size of the project, with the goal of encouraging smaller projects in the Watershed Area.

f. Green It or Keep It Green

Strategies included removing hardscape and expanding the use of pervious surfaces to increase infiltration. Committee Members expressed a desire to see more County initiatives that replace impermeable surfaces with permeable surfaces. Additional strategies also included nature-based solutions, like greening school yards, creating new green space, and using vegetated swales. Disadvantaged Communities were noted as a particular area of focus for these multi-benefit green projects. Committee Members also prioritized expanding the use of green spaces through acquiring new space as opposed to leveraging existing open space.

g. Agency Collaboration

Strategies included seeking assistance to remediate legacy pollutants within the Watershed Area to address water quality and public health issues. The Committee additionally discussed opportunities to collaborate with other State and local agencies, such as California Department of Transportation and Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, to monitor project progress.

h. Advance the Use of Technology for Onsite Reuse

Strategies focused on expanding onsite reuse and leveraging technology to enhance stormwater capture and nature-based solutions. One suggestion was to ensure that there are clear, consistent, and attainable standards to further support stormwater reuse.

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

6. Public Comment Period

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

7. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for August 21 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm at the Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility. Items on the upcoming agenda include:

- a) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Q1 and Q2
- b) FY 2024-25 Strategic Outreach & Engagement Plan (SOEP) Presentation
- c) WASC Roles and Responsibilities Presentation
- d) Selection of Chair, Vice -Chair, or Co-Chairs

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8. Adjournment

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

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Member Type	Organization	Quorum Present				Voting Items
		Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Vote to approve May 2, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Agency	LACFC	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	x	CJ Caluag		y
Agency	West Basin MWD	Matthew Veeh		Tammy Hierlihy	x	a
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Robert Beste		Aimee Zhao	x	y
Agency	LAC Sanitation District	Dave Pierce	x	Christopher Lapaz		
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	x	
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Margie Hoyt	x			a
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	<u>Craig Cadwallader</u>	x	Mary Simun		
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	Caroline Orija	x			y
Community Stakeholder	(Vacant)					
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Conservation Corp	Bo Savage	x	Wendy Butts		a
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			Wilson Mendoza	x	y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Geraldine Trivedi	x	Doug Krauss		y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez					
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Vanessa Hevener	x	David Wahba		y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	x			
		Total Non-Vacant Seats	14			Yay (Y) 9
		Total Voting Members Present	15			Nay (N) 0
		Agency	5			Abstain (A) 3
		Community Stakeholder	4			Total 12
		Municipal Members	6			Approved

Other Attendees	
Alexia Skrbic	John Mendoza
Alonso Garcia	Justin Jones
Anthony Barreras	Kathleen McGowan
Austine Racelis	Kristina Kreter
Brenda Ponton	Larry Tran
Brett Perry	Luis Garcia
Bryan Igboke	Michael Scaduto
Caitlin Gray	Marisela Velasquez
Chris Minton	Mark Hall
Craig Doberstein	Mark Nguyen
Curtis Fang	Max Bracey
Donna Bautista	Melania Gaboyan
Dustin Bambic	Pablo Forni
Emily Ng	Paul Shadmani
Enrique Perez	Rebecca Kaliff
Eric Bonilla	Rob Garcia
Genevieve Osmena	Ryanna Fossum
Haris Harouny	Samantha Torres
Hayat Rasul	Sarah Followill
James Cortes	Sean Phan
Jasmin Mendoza	Stephanie Luu
Jenny Chau	Susana Vargas
John Bodenchak	Yige Yang