

Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Thursday, July 25, 2024
1:30 PM – 3:30 PM
LA County Sanitation District – Conference Room E&F
1955 Workman Mill Rd
Whittier, CA 90601
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Tom Love, Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District (Agency)
Francisco Guerrero, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
Sean Woods, Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation (Agency)
Drew Ready, Council for Watershed Health (Community)
David Diaz, Active SGV (Community)
Fernando Villaluna, Los Angeles County (Municipal), Vice-Chair
*Sandy Costandi, Glendora (Municipal)
Julie Carver, Pomona (Municipal), Chair
Matthew Hudson, Industry (Municipal)
Romany Basilyous, Baldwin Park (Municipal)
Roberto Ortega, West Covina (Municipal)
James Cortes, Day One (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin (Agency)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
Stephanie Sandoval, Duarte (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Julie Carver, Chair of the Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) 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.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 4, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Member Sean Woods motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Romany Basilyous. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 10 votes in favor, 1 vote in abstention, 0 votes opposed, 1 absent at time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Committee Member and Public Works Updates

Public Works staff provided the following update:

- 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

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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.

4) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

5) Discussion Items

i. Introduction to Watershed Planning

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff presented an overview of the Watershed Planning process. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program Website](#).

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff presented on the Watershed Planning approach, including areas for development opportunities, milestones, community engagement and input, and how Watershed Planning will be integrated into the SCW Program.

Member Drew Ready shared that in other contexts, Population Indicators typically demonstrate how a population is impacted by some measure (e.g., the impact of a 10-acre park on a nearby community). Member Ready suggested reconsidering the definition of Population Indicators so that it serves as a better indicator of the quality of life of people and direct effects on populations.

Upon inquiry, SCW Program Watershed Planning staff clarified that Public Works is carrying out the community engagement portion of the Watershed Planning process, reiterating the commitment to engaging various parties throughout this process.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff clarified that the Watershed Planning effort will not include revisions to the Scoring Criteria. The Scoring Criteria will be revised by the SCW Program team but not with direct input from Watershed Planning staff. The Watershed Plan is intended to be a guiding resource for Committee Members, project developers, and interested parties and may inform future revisions to the Scoring Criteria at a later stage.

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

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 Plan. Committee Members were then requested to provide recommendation on additional resources that should be considered for the Watershed Planning effort.

Committee Members recommended the following resources: San Gabriel Valley (SGV) Greenway Network Strategic Implementation Plan, Emerald Necklace Vision Plan, Los Angeles County's 2022 Park Needs Assessment, 2006 San Gabriel River Corridor Master Plan.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff shared that Committee Members can provide further input through the Watershed Planning Post-Workshop Input Form on the [SCW Program website](#), under the Adaptive Management page.

iii. SCW Program Goals & Strategies Workshop

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Mike Antos and Hayat Rasul (Stantec, Watershed Planning) conducted a facilitated workshop on SCW Program goals and solicited recommended strategies with Committee Members. The Committee reviewed the 14 SCW Program goals and Committee Members reflected on which of the goals that are important to themselves and for the USGR Watershed Area.

Member Tom Love mentioned that existing facilities with rainwater capture infrastructure are reaching the end project life expectancy, with diminishing returns. Member Love cited that at the end of last year, some previously completed projects saw diminished percolation capacity. Member Love added that there are existing efforts to expand capture capacity, and that increasing drought preparedness remains very relevant for the USGR Watershed Area, especially since the region relies on groundwater. Member Love shared that there is a lot of private property that could be developed into multi-purpose use for asset recreation, groundwater recharge, and environmental enhancements.

Member Ready highlighted the robust level of detail included in the public health goal. Member David Diaz mentioned that the public health goal is critical to the USGR Watershed Area because the area is close to the freeway and many cities in the Watershed Area experience poor air quality. Member Diaz also added that some of these cities do not have enough open space and are impacted by nearby landfills. Member Diaz emphasized the need for more public health efforts in this Watershed Area while promoting the multiple needs for communities.

Member Ready discusses the leverage funding goal and reflected that this goal has not historically been a large focus for the Watershed Area, citing room for opportunities.

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 LLAR 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 based on common themes. The Committee's discussion for each theme is captured below.

a. Keep it Alive (Maintain Project Longevity & Sustainability)

Strategies included maintaining existing projects, expanding Operations & Maintenance (O&M) funding, and balancing multi-benefit maintainability. Chair Carver added that SCW Municipal Program funding limits O&M spend up to 30 percent, but as projects are built there is a need for more O&M. Member Diaz suggested combining the workforce development piece within this theme to be more intentional and thoughtful about O&M funding strategies. In particular, Member Diaz pointed out that there could be an opportunity to expand workforce development through collaboration with the SGV Greenway Network. Member Ready shared that there is a risk of approving unsustainable projects that need future funding, so requesting detailed operational designs for projects is something that the WASC should consider. Member Ready further shared that it would be strategic to identify other entities that could be involved with expanded O&M needs across projects, like California Conservation Corps and other organizations specializing in green infrastructure. Member Woods added that there is an emerging workforce opportunity within stormwater projects in which a focus of the contracted work includes maintaining filters and removing sediment.

b. SGV Multi-Benefit Greenways

One strategy suggested for this theme was more greenway projects, especially projects that could complement the SGV Greenway Network Plan that is in development. Other strategies included maintaining rivers as open spaces for communities to enjoy, more dry wells along channels to improve water quality, and removing concrete to create soft-bottom habitat while increasing infiltration. Another strategy was to prioritize Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) compliance.

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Member Diaz added that over 100 miles of channels and creeks are currently closed to the public and highlighted opportunities to turn these spaces into more walkable, connected paths. Member Diaz added that with robust coordination and multi-jurisdictional planning, greenways would allow more access to open, green space while capturing water. Member Diaz noted that work for the Emerald Necklace, carried out by the Watershed Conservation Authority, is a project that will run mostly north and south, meaning there is an opportunity to further develop channels in the east and west. Member Julian Juarez added that expanding greenways fits well with the multi-benefit goal.

Committee Members shared that through the County's Measure M transportation funding, Public Works is developing the SGV Greenway Network Plan. This plan creates a process to support greenway projects throughout the SGV watershed that improve transportation access, and which are widely accepted by the community. Member Diaz provided differentiation between greenways and on-street projects, noting that greenways are focused on river channels.

Another strategy raised for this theme was to locate projects downstream to have the largest impact on water quality. Member Juarez highlighted the importance of looking at the watershed-level impact, as opposed to only a given municipality's impact. Member Juarez added that there is an opportunity to ensure that MS4 compliance is maximized across jurisdictions.

c. Application Priorities

Strategies included boosting the diversity of applicants, ensuring that anti-displacement strategies are part of applications, and increasing expectations for cost-share while being open to reconsider on a case-by-case basis. Other strategies focused on seeking out projects that enhance multi-benefit opportunities and offer diversified results through varying innovative technologies. Member Ready added that innovation can stem from learning from other projects and sharing lessons learned, which can help inform NBS projects.

d. Green Streets

Strategies focused on complete streets with best management practices (BMPs) that limit impacts to the right of way and are strategically located in infiltration zones.

e. Greening and Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) to improve water quality & enhance public health

Strategies included those that increase access and connection to nature and open space so that it can lead to improved public health benefits, particularly for disadvantaged communities, as well as more biodiversity. Other strategies focused on addressing water supply and quality through vegetated swales and the use of drought-tolerant plants.

f. Green, Cool Schools

Strategies centered on more green spaces and schoolyards that offer additional benefits, such as infiltration. Member Diaz shared that green schoolyards are another opportunity to develop more regional projects with broader impact through partnership with SGV Greenway Network. Member Diaz cited the City of Baldwin Park greenway as an example of a SGV Greenway Network project.

g. Leveraged Funding

Strategies included multi-jurisdictional and multi-stakeholder projects to increase leveraged funding opportunities, seek out other grant funds through State and Federal channels, and set a leveraged funding requirement for projects. Another strategy suggested coordinating project implementation to advance SGV Greenway Network projects.

A matching fund analysis was discussed as another strategy suggested to better identify the type of funding that could support different project goals. Member Woods mentioned that a matching fund analysis presents an opportunity to match projects with funding opportunities, like the Climate Bond or funding through the City of Los Angeles' Department of Recreation and Parks. Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional

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Coordination) added that the Regional Coordination's Quarterly Funding Report will include an analysis of the Climate Bond. Last year, the Regional Coordination team generated funding memos for all new IP projects. Fossum noted that the Regional Coordination team is working closely with Watershed Coordinators to advance SCW Program leverage funding goals.

A major focus of the discussion was on leveraged funding requirements for projects. Member Ready shared that municipal project proponents often ask for full funding without fully exploring funding opportunities through cities and other means. Member Ready added that it would be helpful for the WASC to make suggestions on other funding opportunities that the project proponents should consider, which ties back to the strategy for a matching fund analysis. Fossum shared that Lower San Gabriel River WASC put out a prioritization criteria last year to set minimum funding match requirements based on project size (e.g. projects over \$10 million required 20% match). Committee Members acknowledged that funding match requirements could discourage applicants that are unable to secure funding and recognized the importance of considering exceptions for certain groups of applicants. Mike Antos added that a leveraged funding requirement could be included as a Population Indicator in the future.

Other strategies offered during this watershed planning session were to incorporate recycled water into park improvement projects, prioritize diversion to sewers and onsite reuse, establish a GIS inventory of open space per population, and have an iterative Stormwater Investment Plan application and approval process. Mike Antos clarified that the Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment Plus and Trust for Public Land maintain data related to open space inventory.

Mike Antos and Hayat 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 on the [SCW Program website](#).

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff added that the next Watershed Planning workshop with the USGR WASC will be in October.

6) Public Comment Period

No public comments were received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. There were no public comments.

7) Voting Items

There were no voting items.

8) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for August 22, 2024 from 1:30pm to 3:30pm. See the SCW Program website for more details.

- a. Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q1 and Q2
- b. SS Presentation: Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation
- c. FY24-25 Strategic Outreach & Engagement Plan (SOEP) Presentation
- d. Review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities (Presentation by Stantec)
- e. Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

9) Adjournment

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

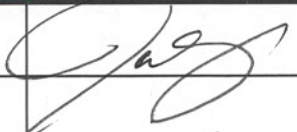



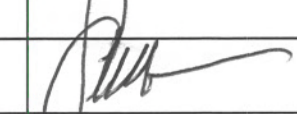
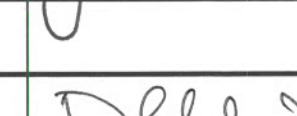
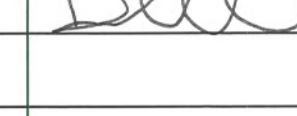

Attendance
USGR WASC - July 25, 2024

Alexia Skrbic	Donna T
Ali Rahmani LA Water Board	Eric Bonilla - LACPW
Alison MacCarley	Genevieve Osmena
Alonso	Grant Garcia - City of San Dimas
Alonso CWH	Gurjot Kohli Stantec
Amy Wolkins	Hayat Rasul
Andrew Kim	J Cramsie
Anthony Ortega	Jason Casanova, CWH
Chris Lapaz	Jenny Chau
Daria Antonova - LACPW	Joe Venzon - LA County
Don C. Moss	John Mendoza
Kerry Quinlan	Luis Perez
Kristina Kreter	Marisela Velasquez - LACPW
LACSD Conference Room	Note-Taker
Sofia Cardenas	Ryanna Fossum, Regional Coordination
rob garcia	Sam Hwang

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN

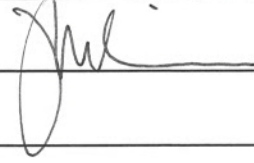
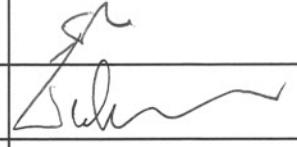





Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	Signature
Julian Juarez	FCD		P 
Jennifer Aborida	FCD		A 
Tom Love	Upper San Gabriel District		P 
Jennifer Aguilar	Upper San Gabriel District		A
Kelly Gardner	Main San Gabriel Basin		P
Tony Zampielo	Main San Gabriel Basin Watermaster		A
Francisco Guerrero	Sanitation Districts		P 
Christopher Lapaz	Sanitation Districts		A 
Sean Woods	Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation		P 
Andrea Vona	Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation		A
Drew Ready	Council for Watershed Health		P 
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health		A
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas		P
David Marquez	California Consulting, INC		A 
David Diaz	Active SGV		P

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Wesley Reutimann	Active SGV		A	
Fernando Villaluna	Los Angeles County		P	
Joseph Venzon	Los Angeles County		A	
Michael Sledd	City of Glendora		P	
Sandy Costandi	Covina		A	
Julie Carver	Pomona		P	
Nicholas Delgado	City of Diamond Bar		A	
Matthew Hudson	Industry		P	
Don Nguyen	El Monte		A	
Romany Basilyous	Baldwin Park		P	
Shari Garwick	San Dimas		A	
Stephanie Sandoval	Duarte		P	
Mario Flores	Bradbury		A	
Roberto Ortega	West Covina		P	
Gerardo Lopez	West Covina		A	

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
James Cortes Rivera	Day One			

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Jamie	Cortes	WC	