

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, September 4, 2024

2:00pm - 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1st Floor (Courtyard), Conference Room C

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, FCD (Agency)

*Conor Mossavi, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

John Huynh, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

Ida Meisami-Fard, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)

Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)

Edith de Guzman, University of California, Los Angeles (Community)

*Roxy Rivas, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)

*Brent Maue, Pasadena (Municipal)

*Ted Gerber, South Pasadena (Municipal)

Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair

Karo Torossian, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice Chair

Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Alonso Garcia, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Kristina Kreter, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Absent:

Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)

Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial in both English and Spanish and announced that any public comment made in Spanish will be translated to English. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members, and a quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from August 7, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from August 7, 2024. Vice-Chair Karo Torossian motioned to approve the meeting minutes from August 7, 2024. The motion was seconded by Member Ernesto Pantoja. The WASC approved the August 7, 2024, meeting minutes with 8 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 5 in abstention, and 1 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

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There were no Ex Parte communications.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Chair Villegas announced a tree planting event in the City of Los Angeles that will take place on October 12 to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

Member Edith de Guzman informed that there will be an art exhibition at the end of September titled “What’s on Tap,” focusing on Los Angeles water topics such as water sourcing, recycled water, and the human right to water.

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman reminded WASC Members that Watershed Coordinators produce an electronic newsletter sent to over 850 recipients, which can be used to publicize events.

Public Works staff provided Program updates, noting:

- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) reviewed and voted to advance ULAR’s recommended Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) for approval, with a tentative Board approval date of October 22. Chair Villegas attended the ROC’s August meeting and addressed the ROC’s questions about the recommended SIP. The upcoming ROC meetings are scheduled for September 11 and October 9 from 1:00 to 3:30 pm.
- Per the Levine Act, (SB 1439), Project Developers and Watershed Coordinators receiving funds through the recommended FY 2024-25 SIP were emailed a Campaign Contribution Declaration Form, which must be completed by September 3. This form requires disclosure of any contributions made to a county officer in the past 12 months. The form will assist with the Board’s approval of the SIP, Transfer Agreements, and any future addendums.
- The Business Relations and Contracts Division released the Watershed Coordinators [Request for Statement of Qualifications \(RFSQ\)](#) on August 27. Proposers have the option to attend the [Proposers’ Conferences](#) on September 12 at 9:00 am or September 16 at 10:00 am. The deadline for submitting Statements of Qualifications is September 30 at 5:30 pm. Additional details will be provided in the September Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program implementation email.

SCW Program Watershed Planning staff within Public Works provided updates regarding Watershed Planning efforts, noting:

- Watershed Planning is progressing, with the first workshop completed across all nine WASCs. Continued engagement and planning discussions will occur in the October or November WASC meetings. Feedback from the workshop, existing data evaluations, and information from plans and datasets are being used to identify watershed needs and opportunity areas for the Initial Watershed Plans. These plans will outline opportunity areas but will not specify individual projects, which will be determined through the application and SIP deliberation process.
- A Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) is also underway, involving a survey to gather community feedback on SCW Program projects. This assessment will build on previous outreach efforts and existing countywide data.
- Engagement is being initiated with various groups such as OurWaterLA (OWLA), Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, Rebuild SoCal Partnership, and feedback is being sought from ROC and Scoring Committee to refine key definitions and ensure consistent terminology. This will help in developing population indicators to track progress towards SCW Program goals.

Upon inquiry, Watershed Planning Staff clarified that the updates will be captured in WASC meeting minutes. Watershed Planning staff added that two more engagement workshops are planned with WASCs and input from these will be aggregated and synthesized to develop Watershed Plans. Adaptive

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Management Plans, which extend beyond the Watershed Plans, include ongoing engagement and updates to keep WASC Members informed and involved. A brief demo of the [News & Updates](#) section of the SCW Program website was presented on screen, with a focus on the Implementation Update for 2024.

Member Roxy Rivas suggested inviting individuals engaged as part of the CSNA to attend WASC meetings to provide further input. Watershed Planning staff noted that some groups engaged are already part of some of the WASCs or involved in the SCW Program, including OWLA, but will explore opportunities for other groups working within the ULAR Watershed Area.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items (moved up on the agenda)

a) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

Chair Villegas and Vice-Chair Torossian both expressed interest in serving another term as Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Public Works staff clarified that nominations could be made during this discussion item, but a public comment period must be held prior to the motion and vote in the voting item.

6) Public Comment Period (moved up on the agenda)

Public Works staff compiled all public comments and uploaded them to the [SCW Program website](#). In-person, virtual, and call-in users were invited to provide public comments.

Steve (member of the public) commented on the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, noting concerns such as the potential high costs for local residents if water is supplied to a golf course. Steve expressed that there would be an imbalance of benefits going to the City of South Pasadena and the City of Los Angeles. Steve proposed an alternative to the project. Steve expressed importance of the proposed project to save wildlife, minimize the impact of noise, dust, and light on Los Angeles residents.

Yael Pardess (member of the public) commented on the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, noting that the community suggests alternative project site locations. Pardess commented on the location's importance to animal habitats and the historical and cultural importance to tribes. Pardess expressed that local tribes should be actively involved in the decision-making process of the project.

Clara Solis (member of the public) commented on the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, noting that the jurisdiction of the project potentially falls within the City of Los Angeles, South Pasadena, Pasadena. Solis shared concern of whether the project would clean the San Rafael Creek and the importance of trees mitigating pollution and alleviating heat in the San Pascual Valley. Solis shared concern of the amount of outreach conducted to the City of South Pasadena residents and that public comment cards from many residents were submitted regarding these concerns.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

a) Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

Watershed Coordinators Alonso Garcia and Kristina Kreter gave a presentation on the updated Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) for FY 2024-25. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member de Guzman liked the clarity and accessibility of the SOEP. Member de Guzman clarified that the Los Angeles County Water plan has been completed. Member de Guzman noted the ambitious goals

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outlined in the SOEP and inquired about the resources currently available to support them. Watershed Coordinators provided an overview of the engagement work being conducted, despite current capacity constraints. Watershed Coordinator Liberman noted limited funding resources for projects and emphasized the need for the WASC to be flexible in project decision-making to ensure community-driven projects have a fair chance at securing SCW Program funds.

Member Rivas thanked the Watershed Coordinators for a community event at the Los Angeles Aqueduct, noting that community members in the Northeast Valley are grateful for the field trip opportunities hosted by the Watershed Coordinators and appreciate learning from engineers and technical experts.

8) Public Comment Period

Public Works staff compiled all public comments and uploaded them to the [SCW Program website](#). In-person, virtual, and call-in users were invited to provide public comments.

Clara Solis (member of the public) commented on the SOEP, recommending that SOEP and SCW Program materials be available in English and Spanish.

Yael Pardess (member of the public) expressed support on the community outreach efforts through the SOEP. Pardess expressed concern that outreach for the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project did not reach the San Pascual Community.

9) Voting Items

a) Approve the Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

Vice-Chair Torossian motioned to approve the updated ULAR Watershed Area SOEP. The motion was seconded by Member Pantoja. The WASC voted to approve the SOEP with 14 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention, and 0 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Chair Villegas inquired about outreach requirements for project developers. Public Works staff explained that a comprehensive outreach and engagement plan is required once a project reaches the design and construction phases.

Member Ida Meisami-Fard noted that projects are partially evaluated based on community benefits, which is distinct from a project obtaining direct letters of support. Member Meisami-Fard also noted that the Scoring Committee considers leveraged funding, which can indirectly reflect community support.

Member Conor Mossavi mentioned that project developers must conduct one to three outreach activities per project phase once projects are approved per the Fund Transfer Agreement. Member Meisami-Fard added that the City of Los Angeles provides letters of support for projects coordinating with community-based initiatives. An invitation has been extended to the public to encourage projects that align with the City's coordination efforts.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) added that Watershed Coordinators are available to help navigate the complexities of the SCW Program. Community members can engage at various stages of the process. Following the meeting, Antos and the Watershed Coordinators will engage with the attendees to help align their efforts.

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b) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

Member Rafael Prieto motioned to select Teresa Villegas as Chair of WASC. This motion was seconded by Member Rivas. The WASC voted to approve Teresa Villegas as Chair of the ULAR WASC with 14 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention, and 0 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Pantoja motioned to select Karo Torossian as Vice-Chair of WASC. This motion was seconded by Chair Villegas. The WASC voted to approve Karo Torossian as Vice-Chair of the ULAR WASC with 14 votes in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention, and 0 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

7) Presentations and Discussion Items (moved down on the agenda)

b) WASC Roles and Responsibilities

Antos presented on a review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Chair Villegas inquired about focusing on water quality and its impact on Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), given the large-scale water quality and supply benefits. Antos explained that the current [SCW Program Portal - Dashboard](#) includes metrics for anticipated outcomes upon project completion. Additional details will be available as the findings of the [Metrics and Monitoring Study \(MMS\)](#) are incorporated through the Watershed Planning effort. Antos shared that work is underway by SCW Program staff to enhance project progress and expenditure reporting and application submission tools to produce more comprehensive data on project achievements, including water quality. The [SCW Program Portal - Dashboard](#) will also feature details on water supply, including the volume of water captured by projects. Chair Villegas asked how the Water Supply Benefits are connected to opportunities for offsetting water use elsewhere, like the Colorado River. Antos indicated that broader offset impacts can be inferred, but evaluating those larger impacts will likely need to happen outside the SCW Program.

a) Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation Update (Presentation by Los Angeles Community Garden Council)

This item was deferred to a future meeting due to time constraints.

10) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2024 from 2:00 to 4:00pm. See the [SCW Program website](#) for details. Items on the next agenda include:

- a) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q1 and Q2
- b) Summary of submitted Scientific Studies and Technical Resources Program Project concepts

Public Works staff shared that the WASC will receive a summary of the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summaries and project developers will be invited to attend the next WASC meeting. Public Works added that all submitted projects will be available for review in the [SCW Program Portal - Dashboard](#). Vice-Chair Torossian requested that Project Developers attend the upcoming meeting in-person.

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11) Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked Committee Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

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		Quorum Present				Voting Items			
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve August 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes	Approve Chair (Teresa Villegas) for ULAR WASC	Approve Vice-Chair (Karo Torossian) for ULAR WASC	Approve Updated FY24-25 ULAR Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan
Agency	FCD	Ernesto Rivera	x	Seta Marjanian		Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Water Agency	Art Castro		Conor Mossavi	x	A	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	John Huynh	x	Cara Campbell		Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Sanitation	Ida Meisami-Fard	x	Alfredo Magallanes		Y	Y	Y	Y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Gary Lam		A	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna							
Community Stakeholder	Environment								
Community Stakeholder	Business	Edith de Guzman	x			Y	Y	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos		Roxy Rivas	x	Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Pasadena	Kris Markarian		Brent Maue	x	Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	La Cañada Flintridge / South Pasadena	Patrick DeChellis		Ted Gerber	x	A	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x			A	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Karo Torossian	x	Blayne Sutton-Wills		Y	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto	x				Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Thuan Nguyen	x	Kara Plourde		A	Y	Y	Y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones		Alex Farassati					
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x	Arlene Guzman					
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Alonso Garcia	x						
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Kristina Kreter	x	Jason Casanova					
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yes (Y)	8	14	14	14
Total Voting Members Present		14			No (N)	0	0	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	5	0	0	0
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	13	14	14	14
Municipal Members		6				Approved	Approved	Approved	Approved

WebEx Webinar Attendees
Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - September 4, 2024

Adam Taing LARWQCB
Albert Kam
Amanda Nidelian
Angineh Shahnazarian
Anthony Vargas
Arlene
Cara Campbell
ViewSonic Monitor

Carlos Rodriguez
Alex De Vera
Gabriela Gonzalez
Haris Harouny
Jennifer Amarant
Jenny Chau
Johanna Chang
Jose Castro - LACPW

Kara Plourde
Kayla Kelly-Slatten
Luis Perez SCW WP
M. Scaduto
Mark Hall GLAмосquito
Mayra Cabrera - Los Angeles County Public Works
Nayda Cantabrana
Pablo Forni

Paige Bistromowitz
Pearl Azizian
Rebecca Correa
Safe, Clean Water LA
Spanish Interpreter- Alejandra
Stacy
Susie Santilena
Uriel Cobian
Caroline Monroy
lyannie

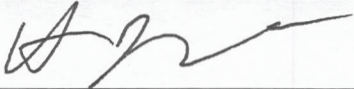


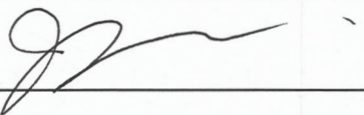
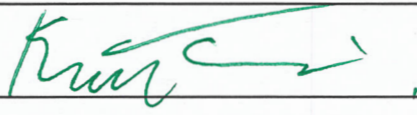
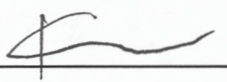
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Adi Liberman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Adi Liberman</i>
Alex Farassati	City of Calabasas	Municipal	Alternate	
Alfredo Magallanes	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Alternate	
Alonso Garcia	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Alonso Garcia</i>
Arlene Guzman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Blayne Sutton-Wills	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Alternate	
Brent Maue	City of Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Cara Campbell	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Primary	<i>C Santo Domingo</i>
Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	<i>Conor Mossavi</i>
Edith de Guzman	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>Edith de Guzman</i>

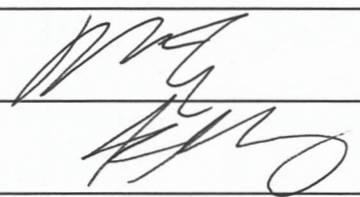
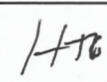
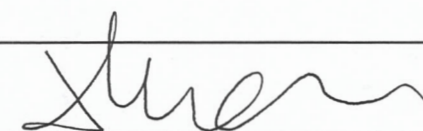
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Ernesto Pantoja	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Ernesto Rivera	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Primary	
Gary Lam	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Alternate	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Primary	
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
John Huynh	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Kara Plourde	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Alternate	
Karo Torossian	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Kenneth Jones	City of San Fernando	Municipal	Primary	
Kris Markarian	City of Pasadena	Municipal	Primary	
Kristina Kreter	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas	Community Stakeholder	Primary	

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Patrick DeChellis	La Cañada Flintridge	Municipal	Primary	
Rafael Prieto	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Roxy Rivas	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Satenig Marjanian	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Alternate	
Sergio Rascon	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ted Gerber	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Teresa Villegas	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Thuan Nguyen	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Primary	
Veronica Padilla- Campos	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Primary	

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Natalie	Dumersloot	Foothill Municipal Water	natalieo@fmwd.com
Clara Solis	Solis	San Pascual Arroyo Seco Wildlife Project	Clara.m.Solis@earthlink.net
Yael PARDESS	PARDESS	SAVE SAN PASCUAL	YITELP33@ICLOUD.COM