

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, October 2, 2024
2:00pm - 4:00pm
LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1st Floor (Courtyard), Conference Room C
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Flood Control District (Agency)
Art Castro, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
John Huynh, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)
Jill Sohm, University of Southern California (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)
Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (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)

*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.

Member Jill Sohm made a self-introduction as a professor in the Department of Environmental Studies at the University of Southern California.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 4, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from September 4, 2024. Chair Villegas motioned to approve the minutes from September 4, 2024. The motion was seconded by Member Kenneth Jones. The

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WASC approved the meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 3 in abstention, and 4 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Member Roxy Rivas disclosed a conversation with members from the OurWaterLA Coalition during a ULAR WASC advocacy training.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- Public Works released a Request for Statement of Qualifications (RFSQ) for the On-Call Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Watershed Coordinator Services. The deadline to submit the Statement of Qualifications is October 31 at 5:30pm.
- The Fiscal Year (FY) 2023-24 Quarterly Report 4 was due on August 15. Project Developers should address comments and resubmit as soon as possible.
- FY 2023-24 Annual Reports are due on December 31. The Mid-Year Report covering July to December, previously known as Quarter 1 (Q1) & Quarter 2 (Q2) Reports, will be due on February 15, 2025.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) will be discussing Municipal Program Reporting at its upcoming meeting on October 9 from 1:00pm to 3:30pm. Meeting details and materials may be found on the [ROC events webpage](#).
- The Municipal Program Reporting Module has been updated to streamline the renewal process for the Municipal Transfer Agreements. SCW Program Payments are generally available for disbursement by December 31, based on the timing of revenues collected by the Program.
- The Municipal Program will be transferred to another team within Public Works in the coming months.
- The Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program formally launched on September 24. An online information session is scheduled for October 8 from 2:00pm to 3:00pm. Informal office hours sessions are scheduled for October 4 from 11:00am to 12:00pm and October 9 from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. More information can be found on the Water Foundations' website, which may be accessed through the SCW Program website by navigating to the [Community Engagement and Education](#) page.
- The SCW Program continues to work towards launching the Credit Trading Program. The Procedures and Guidelines document will be available for a 30-day Public Comment Period at the end of 2024. An online stakeholder workshop is scheduled for October 30 at 10:00am.

Public Works staff reminded the Committee that important updates on the Regional, Municipal, and District Programs are shared via the SCW Program Newsletter. Public Works staff recommended subscribing to receive email notifications by visiting the [SCW Program website](#).

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

- The Watershed Planning team has been engaging with interested stakeholders to learn perspectives related to the Watershed Planning effort. Meetings with OurWaterLA, County Water Plan's Nature-Based Solutions Blue Ribbon Panel and Watershed Coordinators have already taken place. Meetings with Los Angeles Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit Group, Rebuild SoCal Partnership, Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, ROC Water Quality and Community Investment Benefits Focused Groups are upcoming.

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- Analysis of relevant data and interested party feedback is being synthesized to develop the opportunity areas, priorities, targets, and watershed area characteristics that will shape the Initial Watershed Plans.
- The Watershed Planning consultant team has been developing the Initial Watershed Plan Framework which communicates the overall planning process and the key elements of the Initial Watershed Plans.
- The Community Strengths & Needs Assessment Survey is launching and will be used by the Watershed Coordinators to collect information about community needs and preferences for SCW Program projects. Data from the survey will be visible on an online dashboard and made accessible to the public.
- The second Watershed Planning Workshop is scheduled for the next ULAR WASC meeting to review the Initial Watershed Plans and tools that are being considered.
- Any questions regarding the ongoing Watershed Planning efforts may be directed towards the Watershed Planning Team via email at watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff noted that new Watershed Coordinator contracts would start at the beginning of 2026. The WASC will have an opportunity to interview candidates, including existing Watershed Coordinators.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman announced an upcoming community tour of Echo Park Lake on October 9, from 10:00am to 12:00pm. More information can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Watershed Coordinator Alonso Garcia provided an update about recent community engagement events, including the coastal cleanup event with Heal the Bay, and shared upcoming events, including a community celebration and habitat surveying at Elephant Hill. Watershed Coordinator Garcia added that the Council for Watershed Health is hosting the Water (R)evolution Symposium on October 15.

6) Presentations and Discussion Items

a. Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q1 and Q2

The Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY 2023-24 Q1 and Q2 is posted on the [SCW Program website](#). Public Works staff shared that Project Developers can answer questions and elaborate on project updates, activity delays, or concerns noted in the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary. Public Works staff reminded the WASC that full Quarterly Reports are available in the Reporting Repository within the [SCW Program website](#).

Public Works staff displayed the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary on screen and noted that the summary reflects project reports from Rounds 1 through 3, covering activities from June to December 2023. A summary of activities from 2024 will be provided in 2025. Public Works staff reiterated that the summary is pulled directly from the information submitted by Project Developers.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that the Metro Orange Line A Water Infiltration and Quality Project is included in the summary because the Board has not yet voted to approve the FY 2024-25 SIP in which that project was removed. Public Works staff noted an error in the funds received to date reported in the Regional Quarterly Report Summary table for Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project and will revise the error.

Member Jones shared that the City of San Fernando Regional Park Infiltration Project has been completed and that the post-completion monitoring has showed no issues. Member Jones noted that the activity delay

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flagged on the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary was a result of the heavy rains received at the end of last year.

Peter Tonthat (City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP)) provided an update on LADWP's six projects: Fernangeles Park Stormwater Capture Project, Strathern Park North Stormwater Capture Project, Valley Village Park Stormwater Capture Project, David M. Gonzales Recreation Center Stormwater Capture Project, Valley Plaza Park Stormwater Capture Project, and Whitsett Fields Park North Stormwater Capture Project. Tonthat noted that there were no delays reported in Q1, but all projects experienced delays reported in Q2 due to various permitting processes taking longer than anticipated, resulting in a six-month delay for all six projects. Tonthat noted that discussions with the community outreach team has been initiated for the David M. Gonzales Recreation Center Stormwater Capture Project and that the community engagement plan is currently being developed. Tonthat explained that construction of each project should take 18 to 20 months, but 24 months has been budgeted to be conservative.

Member Cathie Santo Domingo asked if there is any flexibility in the schedule of the David M. Gonzales Recreation Center Stormwater Capture Project, noting that the construction may impact ongoing recreational activities. Tonthat explained that the construction timeline was developed utilizing feedback gathered related to existing sports leagues and the park's programming schedule.

Giselle Ramirez (Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment) noted that the schedule delay reported for Lankershim Boulevard Local Area Urban Flow Management Network Project in Q2 was due to an additional site investigation into hazardous materials found within the site. The project modification request was discussed and approved by the WASC during the previous SIP deliberation. Ramirez added that the schedule delay reported for Lincoln Park Neighborhood Green Street Network Project was due to the findings from the geotechnical investigation, which reported high groundwater levels and poor infiltration rates in the area originally selected. Ramirez added that further geotechnical investigations are being conducted to identify better locations for the drywells while remaining within the original site extent. The project bidding is currently scheduled for January 1, 2025.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that if the "Report Status" in the Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary is marked as "Not Started," then Project Developers have not reported any activities related to the project during the specified quarter. The "Activity Delay/Concern" column reflects whether Project Developers have reported a delay or concern for a particular project.

The Committee encouraged projects with a "not started" report status, including Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project and Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project, to submit reports as soon as possible to avoid risk of funding reallocation.

Ryanna Fossum (Stantec, Regional Coordination) shared that Amigos de los Rios, the Project Developer for both Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project and Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project, has had technical difficulties with the Reporting Module. Fossum noted that Amigos de los Rios has been working with Public Works staff to resolve the issue.

Member Santo Domingo noted that since project delays are self-reported, there may be hesitancy in reporting significant delays. Member Santo Domingo recommended having a system where Project Developers that have not completed a report for longer than a set number of months (i.e., six months) are automatically flagged and followed up on by Public Works staff. Public Works staff will further explore how to best contact Project Developers that have not provided updates.

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Donna Bautista (Los Angeles County Flood Control District) provided an update on the status of Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project. Bautista noted that the design plans are completed, and that Project Developers are actively pursuing loans from the State Revolving Fund and other sources. Upon inquiry, Bautista clarified that the project has been awarded \$10 million, has been approved for \$8 million, and has received \$4 million to date. Bautista shared that Project Developers are working on updating the project timeline.

Member Edith de Guzman asked if there are any complications associated with the plan to send water to Sun Valley Park and if any dependencies between the two projects are of concern. Bautista noted that the two projects are directly associated and that discussions have been held regarding the projects' flows and capacity requirements.

Gina Liang (StreetsLA) provided an update about the Broadway-Manchester Multi-Modal Green Streets project noting that although there have been staffing issues with the environmental review, the California Environmental Quality Act document (CEQA) has been approved. Liang explained that the Q2 delay was due to additional studies required on the Manchester corridor. Liang noted that final approval of the design package is anticipated by the end of 2024, and construction is expected to begin at the end of the 2025. Liang noted that the first round of disbursement has been received.

Project Developers for the Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway Project were not present to provide an update. Member Isa Meisami-Fard noted that the project is in active design and shared that Project Developers have not started the permitting process. Chair Villegas requested a formal status update from the Project Developers.

Chair Villegas requested an update from missing Project Developers. Watershed Coordinator Kirstina Kreter shared plans to coordinate updates from Amigos de los Rios.

Chair Villegas noted that an update was requested from the Los Angeles Community Garden Council on the Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation Scientific Study (SS). Public Works staff noted that the SS is complete, and that Project Developers can be invited to present on the results. Chair Villegas recommended that since a Watershed Planning Workshop is scheduled for the next WASC meeting, a presentation on the Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation SS should be included in the agenda for the December WASC meeting.

b. Summary of submitted Scientific Studies and Technical Resources Project concepts

Watershed Coordinators Liberman, Garcia, and Kreter presented on the new SS and Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project Concept applications submitted for consideration in the FY 2025-26 SIP. Watershed Coordinators reminded the WASC that the SCW Program did not solicit Infrastructure Program (IP) projects in Round 6. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon clarification, Watershed Coordinator Liberman noted that the presentation was an opportunity to introduce the projects, and that Project Applicants will be invited to provide in-depth presentations at a future meeting.

Committee Members discussed the Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) SS application's claim of benefitting Los Angeles County widely by producing a low-cost planning tool to efficiently site and estimate the benefits of distributed stormwater capture and filtration projects.

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The Committee noted that the Street Sweeping study was funded in two other WASCs in Round 5 and suggested the WASC hear from the Project Applicants about the study's industry-wide practices when they present.

7) Public Comment

Public Works staff did not receive any public comment cards prior to the meeting. In-person, virtual, and call-in users were invited to provide public comments.

Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios) provided an update on the Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project and the Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project. Robinson noted that portions of the campus implementing the Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project are operating and providing benefits to students. Robinson added that the next step of the project involves street infrastructure. Robinson said that the Quarterly Report is nearing completion and should be available for viewing within a day. Regarding the Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project, Robinson noted that the Quarterly Report is in progress and should be completed by October 4. Robinson added that current project work involves CEQA permitting and design. Robinson noted that project timelines have shifted, and Public Works staff will be asked for guidance on the required reporting processes for project delays.

8) Items for Next Agenda

a. Watershed Planning Workshop 2

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, November 21, 2024, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. Items for the next agenda include the second Watershed Planning Workshop.

9) 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 September 4, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Ernesto Rivera	x	Seta Marjanian		Y
Agency	Water Agency	Art Castro	x	Conor Mossavi		A
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	John Huynh	x	Cara Campbell		Y
Agency	Sanitation	Ida Meisami-Fard	x			Y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Gary Lam		
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna				
Community Stakeholder	Environment	Jill Sohm	x			A
Community Stakeholder	Business	Edith de Guzman	x	Gregory Pierce		A
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos		Roxy Rivas	x	Y
Municipal Members	Pasadena	Kris Markarian		Brent Maue	x	Y
Municipal Members	La Cañada Flintridge / South Pasadena	Ted Gerber	x	Anteneh Tesfaye		
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x			Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Karo Torossian	x	Blayne Sutton-Wills		Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto	x			
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Thuan Nguyen	x	Kara Plourde		Y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones	x	Alex Farassati		Y
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		17			Yes (Y)	9
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	3
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	12
Municipal Members		7				Approved

WebEx Webinar Attendees
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Adam Taing LARWQCB
Ali Sharbat Cal Poly
Alonso
Amanda Nidelian
Anabelle Del Valle
Anabelle's OtterPilot
Andrea Prado Iriarte
Arlene
Austine Racelis - LA County Public Works
Brian Baldauf
Brianna Datti
Cara Campbell
Carlos Rodriguez
Carmen Andrade

Chris Lee
Christopher Vong
Conor Mossavi
Donna Bautista
Dustin Herrmann TreePeople
Haris Harouny
Jason Casanova, CWH
Jennifer Amarant
Jenny Chau
Johanna Chang
Johanna Chang
John Bodenchak
JonPaul Sarro
Jose Castro - LACPW

Julia Lindner
Juliann Rooke
Justin Jones
Kara Plourde
Le Nguyen
Marina Erfle
Mark Hall GLAmosquito
Mark Nguyen
Mayra Cabrera - LA County Public Works
Natalie Ouwersloot
Natalie Ouwersloot
Nayda Cantabrana
Rebecca Correa
Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination

Safe, Clean Water
Safe, Clean Water - Presenter
Somer Sherwood-White
Sp. Interpreter - Marc Gutierrez
Stephanie Luu
Susie Santilena
Turner Lott
Vicki Friesen
claire robinson
jennifer amarant

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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	
Alonso Garcia	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Alonso Garcia</i>
Anteneh Tesfaye	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Arlene Guzman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	<i>Art Castro</i>
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>Cathie Santo Domingo</i>
Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Edith de Guzman	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>Edith de Guzman</i>

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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	
Gregory Pierce	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Primary	
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Jill Sohm	University of Southern California	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
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	

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Kristina Kreter	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas	Community Stakeholder	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	Primary	HTB
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
Peter Tonthat	Tonthat	LADWP	peter.Tonthat@ladwp.com
Leigh	Jerrard	Greywater Corps	leigh@greywatercorps.com
Carla	Dillon	CVWD	cdillon@cvwd.com
Miller	Zou	LASAN	millier.zou@lacity.org

*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public