

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Thursday, November 21, 2024

2:00pm - 4:00pm

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

900 S Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Los Angeles Flood Control District (Agency)

Art Castro, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

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

Cathie Santo Domingo, Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (Agency)

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)

Jill Sohm, University of Southern California (Community)

Veronica Padilla-Campos, 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

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:

Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency)

Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)

Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

Edith de Guzman, University of California, Los Angeles (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 October 2, 2024

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from October 2, 2024. Chair Villegas motioned to approve the minutes from October 2, 2024, seconded by Member Koro Torossian. The WASC voted to approve the October 2, 2024, meeting minutes with 11 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 0 in abstention, and 1 absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex-parte communication disclosures.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The Fiscal Year 2023 - 2024 (FY 2023-24) Quarterly Report covering April to June was due on August 15. The FY 2023-24 Annual Report, covering July 2023 to June 2024, is due December 31.
- A Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting is scheduled for December 11 from 1:00pm to 3:30pm.
- The Municipal Program Reporting Module has been updated to streamline the renewal process for the Municipal Transfer Agreements. Safe Clean Water (SCW) Program Payments are generally available for disbursement by December 31, based on the timing of revenues collected by the Program. The Municipal Program is transferring to another team within Public Works.
- The SCW Program continues to launch a Credit Trading Program. The Procedures and Guidelines document was available for a 30-day public comment period, which ended November 18, 2024.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff confirmed that the WASC will continue to receive Municipal Program updates.

John Jones and Albert Arteaga (East Side Riders Bike Club) provided an update on the Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway Project, noting that the project's 50% design package is complete and has been submitted to the City of Los Angeles for review. Once comments are received from the City of Los Angeles, the project will progress towards 90% design. It is anticipated that the design phase will be complete by Quarter 2 (Q2) of 2025. The Project team is currently working with the construction contractor on required paperwork, and it is anticipated that construction will start in Q3 or Q4 of 2025.

Upon inquiry, Arteaga confirmed that Burns & McDonnell is the design consultant for the project. Additionally, Public Works staff confirmed with Arteaga that the Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway Project was funded by the 2022-2023 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP).

Member Veronica Padilla-Campos and Chair Villegas inquired about challenges the project had faced. Arteaga noted that the schedule was extended due to coordination with the project partners taking longer than expected. Additionally, Arteaga noted that the project required more funding than initially received, but that the recent receipt of SCW Program funding allowed the project to progress. Upon inquiry, Arteaga shared that the project received \$255,000 in its first round of funding, and recently received another \$250,000 in its second round of funding, which will cover project costs through the end of design. Arteaga added that additional funding would be needed for construction.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Alonso Garcia, Kristina Kreter, and Adi Liberman presented an overview of the Watershed Coordinator role and highlights of recent engagement within the Watershed Area. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry from Member Jill Sohm, Watershed Coordinators Liberman and Kreter clarified that the Watershed Coordinators frequently table at community events hosted by other organizations related to sustainability and infrastructure. For example, the Watershed Coordinators have engaged in events organized by Clockshop at the Bowtie Parcel or the Bike Hop event at Magic Johnson Park. Additionally,

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Watershed Coordinator Kreter mentioned that the Watershed Coordinators also host tours, such as a recent tour of Echo Park Lake.

6) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Watershed Planning Workshop

i. Watershed Planning Recap Phase 1

Watershed Planning staff within Public Works gave a recap of the SCW Program Watershed Planning Workshop 1 and the next steps for Watershed Planning. Key topics included the SCW Program Watershed Planning's initial watershed plans and tools, and the Initial Watershed Plan Framework. The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey was also developed to gather data to guide Watershed Planning efforts. Mike Antos (Stantec, Watershed Planning) gave an overview of strategies prioritized by the ULAR WASC and progress made since the last Watershed Planning workshop. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Chair Villegas suggested that Watershed Planning staff should refer to local government analyses on increasing tree canopy, such as the City of Los Angeles tree inventory, especially in areas that are densely populated or below poverty level. Antos also mentioned the Los Angeles County Community Forest Management Plan as a resource for tree canopy management.

Member Thuan Nguyen inquired how the Watershed Plan will affect Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) compliance. Antos clarified that permit holders are responsible for attaining MS4 compliance and that supporting permit holders' compliance efforts is a goal of the SCW Program.

Watershed Coordinator Kreter recommended that coordination with community-based organizations be emphasized in the Watershed Area Synthesis. Antos noted this comment and mentioned that the Watershed Area synthesis includes language on partnership targets that include community.

Watershed Coordinator Kreter inquired if the "open space" identified in the Program Wide Synthesis included both publicly owned and privately owned land. Antos noted that the Watershed Planning technical team will confirm the scope of "open space" and report back to the WASC.

ii. Initial Watershed Plan Framework and Next Steps

Watershed Planning staff presented on the Initial Watershed Plan Framework, draft outline of Initial Watershed Plans, and the Watershed Area Planning Tools. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Koro Torossian suggested that the Watershed Area Planning Map include additional data, such as flooding risk and soil hydrology, to better illustrate potential locations for stormwater capture. Additionally, Member Torossian expressed concern that Project Developers may be discouraged from applying to the SCW Program if their proposed project is not located in an opportunity area identified in the Watershed Area Planning Map. Public Works staff explained that Watershed Planning staff plan to develop multiple maps to depict geographic areas where different types of project benefits can be achieved, such as Water Quality Benefits and Water Supply Benefits.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that the Watershed Area Planning Tool was created using datasets from local agencies as well as datasets shared by committee members.

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Public Works staff shared that an information session will be held to go over the Watershed Area Plan and Tools with interested Project Developers once the Plan and Tools are finalized.

Antos presented an update on the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) and Watershed Planning staff presented a tentative SCW Program Adaptive Management timeline. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#). Chair Villegas confirmed with Antos that updates to the Watershed Plans and Tools will be shared with the SCW Program Committees.

Chair Villegas suggested that the Watershed Plan include examples of each project's costs. Antos clarified that the Initial Watershed Plan will not identify any individual projects because of the intricacies of California Environmental Quality Act requirements but explained that the Initial Watershed Plan can help Project Applicants design projects tailored to specific, clearly identified community priorities.

Member Torossian suggested that Watershed Planning staff encourage elected officials and community leaders to distribute the CSNA Survey results. Upon inquiry, Antos explained that data entered into the CSNA Dashboard will include metadata such as timestamps and noted that there will be opportunities for analyzing CSNA data over time.

Member Cathie Santo Domingo shared that the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (LA DPR) is planning to conduct an assessment on community park needs and inquired about opportunities for collaboration with the CSNA Survey. Antos expressed interest in exploring the synergies between the CSNA and LA DPR's needs assessment.

Watershed Coordinator Kreter inquired if the Watershed Area Planning Map and CSNA Dashboards will be integrated with each other. Antos clarified that the CSNA Dashboard will be integrated into the Spatial Data Library, while the Project Portal, SIP tool, and Watershed Area Planning Map will be in a different system. Public Works staff plan to eventually integrate all these Tools into one location.

7) Public Comment

Public Works staff compiled all public comments and uploaded them to the SCW Program website. Three public comment cards were received prior to the meeting. In-person, virtual, and call-in users were invited to provide public comments.

Pilar Renaldo (Public Member) expressed support for the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project, which intends to address water quality issues along the Arroyo Seco Channel in Pasadena and South Pasadena. Renaldo commented that benefits of the project include addressing pollution flowing from storm drains to the ocean, lowering potable water demands for irrigation, and habitat restoration.

Jens Jonason (Public Member) expressed support for the Arroyo Seco Water Reuse Project and shared a belief that more members of the public would support this Project as well but are unaware of the project benefits. Jonason suggested that this WASC conduct public outreach and education about the Project, since some community members may have misconceptions about the project's impact.

8) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, December 4, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. Items for the next agenda may include:

a) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentations

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- i. Cindy Montañez Natural Park Feasibility Study (Presented by the TreePeople)
- ii. La Cañada Town Center Stormwater Infiltration Galleries (Presented by the Foothill Municipal Water District)

b) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentation

- i. Street Sweeping Study (ULAR) (Presented by City of Los Angeles)
- Public Works staff noted that the Pickens and Halls Canyons Stormwater Infiltration Galleries TRP application was withdrawn.

9) Adjournment

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




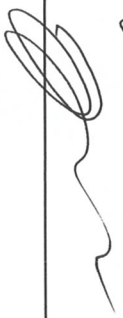



Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN

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	
Editth de Guzman	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Primary	



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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	HTG
Teresa Villegas	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Thuan Nguyen	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Primary	
Veronica Padilla- Campos	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Primary	Veri Padilla