

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



Tuesday, January 7, 2025
1:00pm – 3:00pm
Culver City Hall, Patacchia Room
9770 Culver Blvd, Culver City, CA 90230
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Marcela Benavides, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Augustine Han, West Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
*Conor Mossavi, Los Angeles City Water and Power (Agency)
Susie Santilena, LA City Sanitation and Environment (Agency), Co-Chair
*Darryl Ford, Los Angeles City Recreation and Parks (Agency)
Rita Kampalath, Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office (Community), Co-Chair
Ion Cretu, PSOMAS (Community)
Gloria Medina, SCOPE (Community)
*Maggie Gardner, Los Angeles Waterkeeper (Community)
Zoe Cunliffe, Black Women for Wellness (Community)
*Matthew Magener, Beverly Hills/West Hollywood (Municipal)
Sean Singletary, Culver City (Municipal)
*Blayne Sutton-Wills, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Joshua Carvalho, Santa Monica (Municipal)
Vanessa Boudreau, S. Groner Associates (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Stephanie Gebhardt Rath, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Absent:

Roberto Perez, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Michelle Barton, Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Susie Santilena, Co-Chair of the Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members, shared housekeeping items, and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. A quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 3, 2024

Member Maggie Gardner motioned to approve meeting minutes from December 3, 2024, seconded by Member Marcela Benavides. The Committee voted to approve the December 3, 2024 minutes, with 11 votes in favor and 3 votes in abstention, and 1 member not present at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3) Program Updates

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Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) Quarterly Report 4, covering April through June 2024, was due on August 15. Project Developers should address comments and resubmit as soon as possible.
- FY23-24 Annual Report covering July 2023 through June 2024 was due December 31st, 2024.
- The Mid-Year Report covering July 2024 through December 2024, previously known as the Quarter 1 (Q1) and Q2 Reports, will be due on February 15th, 2025.
- The upcoming Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2025, from 1:00pm to 3:30pm. The ROC invited WASC & Scoring Committee Chairs to provide updates and recommendations. The ROC will also discuss updates on SCW Program Adaptive Management. To view meeting details and materials, please visit the [ROC events webpage](#).
- The Watershed Area Regional Program Progress (WARPP) Report is intended to be an extension of the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP). The SIP is a 5-year plan allocating funding for projects, studies, and concepts. The WARPP follows the SIP where the WARPP report provides a summary on the progress of those projects, Scientific Studies, and project concepts based on the developers' previously submitted Quarterly and Annual Reports.
- This year's WARPP report summarizes progress in FY22-23 for Projects, Studies, and Project Concepts approved in the first three funding rounds. The WARPP does not include new information. All Project Developer reports are publicly accessible through the [SCW Reporting Repository](#). The ROC provided recommendations in November 2024 for adjustments to future WARPP Reports. The WARPP Report has been updated to align with the structure and format of the ROC Biennial Progress Report. For details, please refer to the Meeting Minutes from the November 13, 2024 ROC meeting which is available on the [SCW Program website](#). The next WARPP Report will cover FY23-24 and is anticipated to be released next year.
- The 2024 Municipal Transfer Agreements are being processed and executed by the SCW Program team. Disbursements were scheduled for the end of December. Cities will need to comply with all reporting requirements to receive the fifth disbursement.
- The Los Angeles County Flood Control District is partnering with the Water Foundation to administer the Safe, Clean Water Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program. The Program will support education and community engagement efforts related to stormwater and urban runoff capture within the LA County Flood Control District. Applicants may submit proposals from now until May 31, 2025. Proposals will be evaluated and awarded on a rolling basis. For more information and to apply, visit the Waters Foundation's website.
- The Watershed Plan Team has been developing key components for the Initial Watershed Plans. The methodology involves starting with the Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area to ensure consistency before applying the process to other Watershed Areas. Progress includes identifying Watershed Area characteristics, establishing a benefits baseline and forecasts for SCW Program projects, quantifying progress toward SCW Program Goals, and developing strategies to address needs.
- Development of the Watershed Planning Tool has begun. This interactive tool will include a GIS map and dashboard to illustrate progress toward indicators, performance measures, and targets, while also identifying needs and opportunity areas across Watershed Areas.
- The framework for the Watershed Plan process is available on the [SCW Program website](#) under "Adaptive Management." The framework describes key process elements and how resources can be utilized.
- The Community Strengths & Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey has launched and is available on the [SCW Program website](#), along with a Frequently Asked Questions document. The CSNA survey collects input on community needs and preferences. An online CSNA Dashboard will launch soon to display survey response trends.
- The WP team thanks participants for their interest and encourages questions via watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

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Co-Chair Santilena commented on how data that has been presented has not been incorporated into the WARPP Reports. Public Works staff explained that readily available data will be compiled into the ROC Biennial Report. Co-Chair Santilena emphasized the importance of including prior data, distinguishing between dry and wet acreage, and comparing results to broader CSMB Watershed Area goals. Public Works staff confirmed new metrics will soon be added to the SCW Program website.

Member Conor Mossavi clarified with Public Works staff that the source for the 7,000-acre-feet-per-year figure can be attributed to the SCW Program Dashboard. Member Mossavi questioned which projects were being counted as providing that volume of infiltration. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) clarified that metrics related to water supply are derived from projects that have been reviewed by the Scoring Committee and WASC as having a Water Supply Benefit, not simply including the volume of water infiltrated by all projects.

Co-Chair Santilena requested detailed project benefit data and suggested categorizing benefits into three key areas. She noted the WARPP Reports may overstate benefits by implying all captured water is useful. Public Works staff and Antos confirmed future reports will address these concerns. Member Geremew Amenu highlighted that leveraged funding in CSMB exceeds SCW Program awarded funds, and suggested this achievement be highlighted.

Co-Chair Santilena shared WASC updates that will be presented to the ROC, including collaboration and community focus. Co-Chair Santilena noted CSMB WASC's progress, including the WASC's readiness to accept new projects in the next round of Call for Projects. Watershed Coordinator Vanessa Boudreau stressed the importance of reaching disadvantaged communities, increasing awareness, and providing resources to align with SCW Program goals.

4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Boudreau and Stephanie Gebhardt Rath provided recent engagement highlights.

The Watershed Coordinators noted that a cost database was introduced this year to support Project Applicants in identifying grant opportunities.

5) Ex parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

6) Discussion

a. Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project Concept Presentation

i. Western Gage Green Alleys Project

Aleigh Lewis and Franci Levine-Grater (Los Angeles Neighborhood Initiative (LANI)) provided an overview of the Western Gage Green Alleys Project. Presentations slides can be found on the [SCW Program Website](#).

Several Committee Members asked the Project Applicants about project details. The Project Applicants shared that the TRP outlines improvements across four blocks, potentially incorporating drywells and water capture features on sidewalks. The TRP aims to evaluate how to capture water within the alleys. The Project Applicants explained that their existing relationship with the area was a driving factor for site selection and added that the site is identified as a location of significant need for open space.

Member Gloria Medina raised concerns about preventing dumping in the alleys. The Project Applicants acknowledged that maintenance is a recurring challenge due to limited city resources and emphasized that

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the sustainability of the project is a top priority and expressed the need for City of Los Angeles' Council office support.

Member Blayne Sutton-Wills asked about partnerships beyond the city. The Project Applicants highlighted a nearby library that served as a community survey site and noted ongoing efforts to build relationships with local schools. LANI is also initiating programming for a park currently under development, attending community council meetings, and working on a grant application.

Member Darryl Ford commended LANI's collaboration with the City of Los Angeles' Department of Parks and Recreation, noting the project's potential to connect open spaces. The Project Applicants emphasized the dual benefits of water capture and park connectivity, framing the project as a unique opportunity for comprehensive urban improvement.

b. Scientific Studies Presentations

i. Depave LA: Prioritizing Parking Lots for Green Retrofitting

Aileen Alduenda (Council for Watershed Health) and Craig Doberstein (Herrera) provided an overview of Depave LA: Prioritizing Parking Lots for Green Retrofitting. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Gardner asked whether the tool would remain effective if the size of the parking lot changes and whether the toolkit is focused solely on the SCW Program. The Project Applicants explained that the tool is designed to identify and prioritize projects within the SCW Program while also exploring opportunities to leverage other programs. The Project Applicant clarified that the toolkit aims to guide users through the SCW Program process specifically.

Member Mossavi confirmed with the Project Applicants that the tool will be accessible via the Council for Watershed Health website and the SCW Program website. The Project Applicants clarified that the tool is not being implemented in other Watershed Areas yet, as the current plan is to pilot the tool in a few Watershed Areas first.

Co-Chair Santilena asked whether the tool could capture and manage runoff onsite or transport runoff offsite. Doberstein noted that the tool could include a layer to address these considerations, and Alduenda emphasized starting with onsite management and to address offsite runoff as needed.

Upon inquiry, Alduenda shared that the tool would utilize Accelerate Los Angeles (ARLA) data and that the toolkit is designed to build upon ARLA's work and provide resources for identifying additional funding sources. Alduenda added that the toolkit aims to streamline processes and use community engagement to identify barriers, solutions, and the resources needed to overcome challenges.

Member Amenu asked about the approach for private versus public lots. The Project Applicants explained that the tool is designed to provide all stakeholders, including park departments and municipalities, with the resources to screen and prioritize layers effectively. The Project Applicants emphasized the goal of removing barriers and helping users identify focus areas. Additionally, the tool intends to foster community engagement by identifying interested stakeholders and providing future Project Proponents broader outreach to both public and private parking lot owners.

ii. Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County

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Natalie Ouwersloot (Foothill Municipal Water District) and Chris Tull (California Data Collaborative) provided an overview of the proposed Scientific Study. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Mossavi asked whether the team responsible for creating the DROPS application had been identified. The Project Applicants confirmed that the California Data Collaborative and Dr. Brianna Pagán of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are key contributors.

Co-Chair Santilena inquired about potential overlap of aquifer connection and sewer connection benefits. The Project Applicants noted that existing stormwater capture infrastructure could potentially be added to the tool but explained that the goal is primarily to utilize captured stormwater onsite for landscape irrigation, rather than as a source for other infrastructure. Co-Chair Santilena confirmed with Ouwersloot that it would be possible to incorporate the feasibility of sanitary sewer connections into the tool.

Upon inquiry, Ouwersloot clarified that the tool's target userbase is focused on water agencies but that the tool could benefit anyone interested in capturing onsite stormwater.

Upon inquiry, Tull explained that artificial intelligence was used to process remote sensing data, land-use classification, and interpolate soil data to generate feasibility studies and user-friendly language. Member Mossavi commented on the importance of addressing data gaps.

Co-Chair Santilena asked about the data sources that will be used in the tool and whether that data will include information on contamination and Superfund sites. Tull noted that a large volume of data is currently available and that although a comprehensive list is not yet finalized, the pilot project will be used to refine the tool's focus. Tull also emphasized that the tool aims to prioritize critical data to address key questions and simplify complex data for practical application.

c. FY24-25 Mid-Year Outreach Highlights

This item was moved to the next CSMB WASC meeting.

7) Public Comment Period

A public comment card was submitted and posted on the [SCW Program website](#).

8) Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will be February 4, 2025. The meeting will be hybrid, held in person at Culver City Hall and online via WebEx. See the [SCW Program website](#) for meeting details. Items on the next agenda may include:

- a) Project Modification Request (PMR) Overview Presentation
- b) FY24-25 Mid-Year Outreach Highlights

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff responded that SIP deliberations are tentatively scheduled for March 2025.

9) Adjournment

Co-Chair Santilena thanked WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

CENTRAL SANTA MONICA BAY WASC MEETING - January 7, 2025

		Quorum Present						Voting Items
Member Type	Organization	Primary Member	Attendance: In-person ("x" for present)	Attendance: Virtual (Brown Act Telc Rqts, "Just Cause" - audio & video, room disclosure) ("x" for present)	Alternate Member	Attendance: In-person ("x" for present)	Attendance: Virtual (Brown Act Tel Rqts, "Just Cause" - audio & video, room disclosure) ("x" for present)	Vote to approve December 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Agency	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Marcela Benavides	x		Daniel Bradbury			y
Agency	West Basin Municipal Water District	Matthew Veeh			Augustine Han	x		a
Agency	Los Angeles City Water & Power	Art Castro			Conor Mossavi	x		y
Agency	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	<u>Susie Santilena</u>	x		Hubertus Cox			a
Agency	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo			Darryl Ford	x		y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	<u>Rita Kampalath</u>	x		Rebecca Ferdman			Not present during vote
Community Stakeholder	PSOMAS / Business Sector	Ion Cretu	x					y
Community Stakeholder	SCOPE	Gloria Medina	x					y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	Bruce Reznik			Maggie Gardner	x		y
Community Stakeholder	Black Women for Wellness	Zoe Cunliffe	x		Tianna Shaw-Wakeman			a
Municipal Members	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	Josette Descalzo			Matthew Magener	x		y
Municipal Members	Culver City	Sean Singletery	x		Javier De La Cruz			y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Roberto Perez						
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto			Blayne Sutton-Wills	x		y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Michelle Barton			Ryan Jackson			
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Geremew Amenu	x		Lara Awad			y
Municipal Members	Santa Monica	Joshua Carvalho	x		Selim Eren			y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Stephanie Gebhardt Rath	x					
Watershed Coordinator	SGA Marketing	Vanessa Boudreau	x					
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17				Yay (Y)		11
Total Voting Members Present		15				Nay (N)		0
Agency		5				Abstain (A)		3
Community Stakeholder		5				Total		14
Municipal Members		5						Approved

Attendees
Central Santa Monica Bay WASC Meeting
January 7, 2025

Alexia Skrbic
Alonso Garcia
Angineh Shahnazarian
Brenda Ponton
Brett Perry
Carlos Preciado
Carlos Rodriguez
Christophe LaBelle
Mimi Ferrel
Daniel Bradbury

Drew Ready
Eric Bonilla
Gabriel Zavala Jr.
Gabriela G.
Jason Casanova
Jenny Chau
Josafat Flores
Kristina Kreter
Lara Awad
Lauren Amimoto

Luis Perez
Michael Scaduto
Marisol Ibarra
Mark Nguyen
Pearl Azizian
River Nguyen
Robyn Finley
Samantha Torres
Stacy Luell
Vicente Villasenor

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: January 7, 2025

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Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Agency	Marcela Benavides	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	P	<i>MB</i>
Agency	Daniel Bradbury	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	A	
Agency	Matthew Veeh	West Basin Metropolitan Water District	P	
Agency	Augustine Han	West Basin Metropolitan Water District	A	
Agency	Art Castro	Los Angeles City Water & Power	P	
Agency	Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles City Water & Power	A	<i>CM</i>
Agency	Susie Santilena	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	P	
Agency	Hubertus Cox	Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment	A	
Agency	Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	P	
Agency	Darryl Ford	Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks	A	<i>D Ford</i>
Community Stakeholder	Rita Kampalath	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	P	
Community Stakeholder	Rebecca Ferdman	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	A	
Community Stakeholder	Ion Cretu	PSOMAS / Business Sector	P	
Community Stakeholder	Cecilia Mokler	PSOMAS / Business Sector	A	
Community Stakeholder	Gloria Medina	The Solutions Project / SCOPE	P	<i>GM</i>
Community Stakeholder	Bruce Reznik	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	P	
Community Stakeholder	Maggie Gardner	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	A	<i>Maggie Gardner</i>
Community Stakeholder	Zoe Cunliffe	Black Women for Wellness	P	
Community Stakeholder	Tianna Shaw-Wakeman	Black Women for Wellness	A	
Municipal Member	Josette Descalzo	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	P	
Municipal Member	Matthew Magener	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	A	<i>MM</i>
Municipal Member	Sean Singletary	Culver City	P	<i>SS</i>
Municipal Member	Javier De La Cruz	Culver City	A	

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: January 7, 2025



Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Municipal Member	Roberto Perez	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Rafael Prieto	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Blayne Sutton-Wells	Los Angeles	A	<i>Blayne Sutton-Wells</i>
Municipal Member	Michelle Barton	Los Angeles	P	
Municipal Member	Ryan Jackson	Los Angeles	A	
Municipal Member	Geremew Amenu	Los Angeles County	P	<i>Geremew Amenu</i>
Municipal Member	Lara Awad	Los Angeles County	A	
Municipal Member	Joshua Carvalho	Santa Monica	P	<i>Joshua Carvalho</i>
Municipal Member	Selim Eren	Santa Monica	A	
Watershed Coordinator	Stephanie Gebhardt Rath	Heal the Bay	WC	<i>Stephanie Gebhardt Rath</i>
Watershed Coordinator	Vanessa Boudreau	SGA Marketing	WC	<i>Vanessa Boudreau</i>

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN: January 7, 2025



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Craig	Dobenstein	Herrera	cdobenstein@herrerainc.com
Robyn	Fanning	Grantec	
Christopher	Tull	CaDC	chris@theCaDC.org
Eileen	Arduenpa	CWIT	eileen@watershedhealth.org
Natalie	Ouwenslot	Foothill MUD	natalieo@fmud.com