

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



Tuesday, February 4, 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 Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles 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)
Zoe Cunliffe, Black Women for Wellness (Community)
Josette Descalzo, Beverly Hills/West Hollywood (Municipal)
Sean Singletary, Culver City (Municipal)
Roberto Perez, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Joshua Carvalho, Santa Monica (Municipal)
Stephanie Gebhardt Rath, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Vanessa Boudreau, S. Groner Associates (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Absent:

Bruce Reznik, Los Angeles Waterkeeper (Community)
Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Michelle Barton, Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Rita Kampalath, 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 January 7, 2025

Co-Chair Susie Santilena motioned to approve meeting minutes from January 7, 2025, seconded by Member Darryl Ford. The Committee voted to approve the January 7, 2025 minutes, with 13 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, and 1 member absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3) Committee Member and Program Updates

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Public Works' Watershed Planning staff provided an update, noting:

- The Watershed Planning team is assessing how the acute impacts from climate whiplash and the recent fires throughout Los Angeles County can be integrated into the Initial Watershed Plans, including understanding changes to landscapes, water quality, and community needs along with refining strategies for fire-impacted areas and identifying opportunities to enhance climate resilience.
- The Watershed Planning team is making progress on developing the Initial Watershed Plans, focusing on identifying Watershed Area characteristics, assessing Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program project benefits, and quantifying progress toward SCW goals. The Watershed Planning Tool, which includes a GIS map and dashboard, is under development to track progress and identify needs.
- Additionally, the Community Strengths & Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey is live, and the dashboard will be launched soon to collect community feedback. For questions, contact watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The Safe, Clean Water Program staff is assessing how the impacts of the recent fires have affected funded projects and schedules and will provide updates as assessments are made on how to best adapt.
- The Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY23-24) Annual Report was due on December 31, 2024. Project and Study Developers should address comments and resubmit as soon as possible.
- The Mid-Year Report for July through December 2024 was launched in January and is typically due on February 15 but will be extended to February 28, 2025 for this report only. A new Metrics & Measures section is available in the Reporting Module for Project Developers to fill out by February 28, 2025.
- The Quarter 3 (Q3) 2025 Quarterly Funding Report & Matrix is available on the [SCW Program website](#). It includes funding policy highlights and a matrix of active and upcoming funding opportunities for SCW Program projects. The Regional Coordination team is monitoring federal funding opportunities.
- FY24-25 Transfer Agreements/Addendum Distribution began in December, with instructions sent to Project Developers on how to use the Transfer Agreement functionality within the Reporting Module. Project Developers are advised to upload supporting documents, such as Scope of Works (SOW), Authorization, and CEQA documents.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting on January 8, 2025 was canceled due to wildfire events in Los Angeles County. The next ROC meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2025, from 1:00pm to 5:00pm, where updates and discussions on SCW Program Adaptive Management will take place. WASC and Scoring Committee Chairs have been invited to provide updates and recommendations.
- The 2024 Municipal Transfer Agreements are being processed and executed by Public Works staff. The first batch has been executed and the second batch is in progress. The initial fifth disbursements were completed at the end of December 2024. Cities will need to comply with all reporting requirements to receive the fifth disbursement. Public Works staff is following up with pending municipalities.
- The Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program formally launched on September 24. The Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program, in collaboration with the Water Foundation, will support education and community engagement efforts related to stormwater and urban runoff capture. The deadline for Round 2 grant proposals was

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January 31, and proposals will be accepted until May 21 and be evaluated and awarded on a rolling basis. More information can be found on the [Water Foundation website](#).

- The SCW Program offers a newsletter subscription to receive email notifications about Regional, Municipal, and District Program updates. Implementation updates can also be viewed on the News and Updates page on the [SCW Program website](#).

Public Works staff shared an updated tentative schedule for upcoming CSMB WASC meetings through May 2025. The tentative schedule is attached to these meeting minutes.

Committee Members asked if Public Works staff would be flexible towards Project Proponents during the transition to the updated semi-annual Reporting Module. Public Works staff responded that the deadline was extended from February 15 to February 28, 2025 for Mid-Year Reports, and that Public Works staff will work with Project Proponents as necessary to navigate deadlines. Committee Members confirmed with Public Works staff that changes to the Round 7 Regional Program Project Application Portal are in progress, including separating Project Applications by project type. Co-Chair Santilena requested that Project Applicants be given at least a month to prepare applications, and Public Works staff confirmed that Project Applicant needs will be considered.

In preparation for SIP deliberations, Public Works staff will provide updated budget details, including allocated funds, to the WASC to ensure informed decision-making.

4) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Vanessa Boudreau and Stephanie Gebhardt Rath shared updates and noted that Q3 reports will be sent out to the WASC. The Watershed Coordinators met with the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Coordinator to discuss Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District's water safety projects and Santa Monica Great Park Coalition's concept of transforming part of the Santa Monica Airport into a park. Watershed Coordinators also met with Project Developers of the Blackwelder Tract Community Greenbelt BMPs and Landscape Improvement TRP regarding an outreach plan. The Watershed Coordinators have scheduled the fifth Urban Watershed Working Group for March 20, and plan to discuss the impacts of post-fire flows, school greening, and recycled water use.

Watershed Coordinator Gebhardt Rath shared progress on assessing the impacts of the Palisades Fire on the CSMB Watershed Area. Watershed Coordinators have joined a water quality task force with the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project to monitor water quality, focusing on heavy metals, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and other contaminants. An emergency community meeting was held before upcoming storms to reassess coordination efforts. Additionally, Watershed Coordinators shared that the City of Pasadena is re-directing funds from some SCW Program approved projects to support water quality testing in response to the Eaton Fire. Upon inquiry, Watershed Coordinators shared that monitoring efforts for fire-related water quality is in progress, involving groups such as the University of California Riverside, University of Southern California, and the Los Angeles County Department of Health. Testing for heavy metals has been prioritized, which requires rapid funding, and monitoring is expected to take place before and after rainstorms in affected areas and surrounding regions, including the Los Angeles River.

The Watershed Coordinators shared upcoming events, including an Open Space Advocate Summit at the end of February, a community visioning workshop with the Garden Schools Foundation in March, and community events during Earth Month in April. Watershed Coordinators are also actively encouraging requests for Earth Month engagements.

5) Ex parte Communication Disclosure

Co-Chair Santilena disclosed attendance at a Watershed Management Group meeting, where a park project was discussed.

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6) Discussion

a. Project Modification Request (PMR) Overview for WASC Presentation

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented an overview of PMRs. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#). Project Modification Guidelines are also available on the [SCW Program Website](#).

Member Josette Descalzo clarified with Antos that funding is allocated annually based on SIP approval. Antos summarized the SIP process and mentioned that scope changes or cost increases are evaluated qualitatively by WASCs rather than the quantitative process during scoring. Decisions on PMR requests are still under discussion, and the SIP Tool will be available to assess financial impacts. Public Works staff confirmed the SIP Tool would be shared in advance of deliberations.

b. Project Modification Requests (PMR) for WASC Discussion

Public Works staff provided an overview of the PMR forms submitted to the WASC, highlighting two projects that were deemed inconsistent. The corresponding PMR forms are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

The WASC will have the opportunity to review funding allocations using the updated SIP Tool during future deliberations, along with a summary document to assist the WASC in creating preliminary rankings for all projects, including new Project Applications and PMRs.

i. Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Improvements Project *City of Inglewood*

Brenda Ponton (City of Inglewood) presented the PMR, explaining a refinement to the volume for an 85th percentile storm and the removal of \$134,000 for preconstruction monitoring, which was deemed unnecessary.

Co-Chair Santilena clarified with Ponton that a water quality baseline would be determined without preconstruction monitoring by using pre- and post-BMP data, and that flows would be determined using previously identified data. Member Ford confirmed with Ponton that construction cost savings are not yet known. Member Descalzo confirmed with Ponton that the \$134,000 is not needed elsewhere in the project given the project is already at 60% completion. Member Conor Mossavi acknowledged the thoroughness of the PMR.

ii. Washington Boulevard Stormwater and Urban Runoff Diversion *Culver City*

Katie Harrel (CWE) and Javier De La Cruz (Culver City) presented on the PMR for the Washington Boulevard Stormwater and Urban Runoff Diversion project. This PMR was initiated after bids for the original design came in significantly higher than expected, with the lowest bid being 21 million dollars compared to the anticipated budget of 12-13 million dollars. To reduce costs, the design was modified from a storage and diversion system to a treat-and-release system that captures and treats stormwater flows using ultra-violet (UV) treatment, then discharges flows back to the storm drain. This revision reduces storage volume and decreases community impact during construction while still meeting Water Quality goals. The revised treatment system increases the captured drainage area from 38 acres to 56 acres and expects to increase Water Quality benefits. Although funding is still being sought to cover the project's \$16 million estimated cost, the City of Culver City has contributed a significant portion. The project's shift also changes the Water Supply benefits, as the project will no longer divert water to the sewer system, but still intends to capture runoff for irrigation. The City of Culver City is requesting an additional \$4 million from the SCW Program to cover the deficit, bringing the total request for this project to \$7.6 million.

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Watershed Coordinator Gebhardt Rath inquired about whether the project would reduce the benefits for Water Supply. Harrel explained that while the project would still capture runoff for irrigation, the diversion of runoff to the sewer was eliminated, leading to changes in benefits. The project now provides more Water Quality benefits but is uncertain whether the change represents a net positive or negative change for Water Supply benefits.

Several Committee Members asked for more detail on the changes in benefits, specifically comparing original versus revised metrics for Water Supply and Water Quality. Harrel agreed to provide the requested figures, including annual water retention for irrigation and how the changes impact the project's costs. Harrel noted that this information will be sent to Public Works staff to then distribute to the WASC.

Concerns were raised about the rising construction costs, with the original budget increasing from \$12 million to \$16 million, and actual bids coming in even higher. Harrel specified that the project design will be updated and will go back out to bid, and that the City of Culver City has covered the design costs associated with the updated design. The WASC discussed the possibility of adjusting the approach to construction approvals in light of rising costs, especially in the post-COVID economy, and Public Works staff agreed that this could be a future topic of discussion.

The WASC also highlighted the potential for revisiting project funding decisions, as each new SIP provides an opportunity to recommend or not recommend funding, and there was a suggestion to approve design projects separately from construction projects to accommodate changes in cost projections. Harrel and De La Cruz added that this project was modified to ensure the best cost-to-benefit ratio, as the original scope would have cost much more to achieve the same benefits.

Harrel commented that this project is crucial to reach compliance with bacterial Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) in the Marina del Rey watershed and noted how this project would address a key drainage area in Culver City.

c. FY25-26 Scientific Studies (SS) Peer Review Summary

The SS Peer Review Summary was distributed to the Committee Members and can be found on the SCW Program Website linked below. SS Proponents were invited to attend the meeting to answer any questions.

- i. [Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System \(DROPS\) for Los Angeles County Foothill Municipal Water District](#)

Co-Chair Santilena asked the Project Proponents whether the SS could incorporate any of the peer review suggestions. Christopher Tull (California Data Collaborative) agreed with the peer review feedback, particularly regarding the datasets, and clarified that most of the data would be published publicly, with the possibility of some data derived from public sources like remote sensing.

Member Geremew Amenu inquired how the peer review feedback about prioritizing projects in disadvantaged communities would be implemented. Tull explained that the tool would not give preferential access to any specific communities but would include socio-economic data to help identify potential project locations, and that the tool would be publicly available to ensure that all users could benefit.

- ii. [Depave LA: Prioritizing Parking Lots for Green Retrofitting](#)
Council for Watershed Health

Co-Chair Santilena asked the Project Proponents whether the SS could incorporate any of the peer review suggestions. Jason Casanova (Council for Watershed Health) explained that the main feedback concerns revolved around long-term maintenance and future upgrades. Casanova assured the Committee Members that maintenance would be provided on an ongoing basis by the Council for Watershed Health, similar to

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how other GIS services are already hosted. The data would also be made available in its raw format for transparency and further analysis. Future updates would be addressed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the site-specific needs.

Member Mossavi raised concerns about the scalability of the tool and Craig Doberstein responded that the tool would be scalable, with the current focus on five Watershed Areas. Doberstein noted that expanding the tool to include additional Watershed Areas or other features would not only be feasible but could make the tool more efficient. Expanding the tool would primarily require additional time and funding, but the framework for scalability is already in place. The SS Proponents reassured the group that the tool would be publicly available, with no preferential access to communities, and that long-term maintenance and scalability would be addressed.

d. FY24-25 Mid-Year Outreach Highlights

The Watershed Coordinators shared mid-year outreach highlights, specifically discussing Watershed Coordinator strategies. Presentation slides can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

7) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

8) Items for Future Agenda

The next meeting will be March 4, and 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) Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q3 and Q4
- b) Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the FY25-26 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP)

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff responded that SIP deliberations are scheduled for March 2025 and can extend as needed.

Co-Chair Santilena suggested that while the WASC only received two PMRs this round, a more visual approach, such as a comparison table, would be helpful for reviewing multiple PMRs.

9) Adjournment

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

CSMB WASC Meeting Tentative Look Ahead Schedule

November 12, 2024:

- Watershed Planning Workshop #2

December 3, 2024:

- Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q1 and Q2
- Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project Concept Presentations
 - Fox Hills Park Multi-Benefit Stormwater Capture
 - Lindberg Park Multi-Benefit Stormwater Capture
 - Hayden Tract Community Greenbelt

January 7, 2025:

- WARPP FY22-23
- Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project Concept Presentations
 - Western Gage Green Alleys Project
- Scientific Studies (SS) Presentations
 - Depave LA: Prioritizing Parking Lots for Green Retrofitting
 - Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County

February 4, 2025:

- Project Modification Request (PMR) Overview for WASC Presentation
- Project Modification Requests (PMRs) for WASC Discussion
- FY25-26 Scientific Studies (SS) Peer Review Summary
- FY24-25 Mid-Year Outreach Highlights

March 4, 2025:

- Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY23-24 Q3 and Q4
- Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the FY25-26 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP)

April 1, 2025:

- Watershed Coordinator Proposer Scope of Qualifications Presentation

May 6, 2025:

- Watershed Planning Workshop #3

CENTRAL SANTA MONICA BAY WASC MEETING - February 4, 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 January 7, 2025 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		y
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			y
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			y
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			
Community Stakeholder	Black Women for Wellness	Zoe Cunliffe	x		Tianna Shaw-Wakeman			y
Municipal Members	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	Josette Descalzo	x		Matthew Magener			y
Municipal Members	Culver City	Sean Singletary	x		Javier De La Cruz			y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Roberto Perez	x					Not present during vote
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto			Blayne Sutton-Wills			
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)		13
Total Voting Members Present		14				Nay (N)		0
Agency		5				Abstain (A)		0
Community Stakeholder		4				Total		13
Municipal Members		5						Approved

Attendees
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February 4, 2025

Alexia Skrbic	Erin Bergren	Marisela Velasquez
Angineh Shahnazarian	Jason Casanova	Marisol Ibarra
Bhetsua Tinoco Lima	Javier De La Cruz	Mark Nguyen
Brett Perry	Jenny Chau	Mason Lehman
Bryan Igboke	Josafat Flores	Mike Antos
Christopher Tull	Joyce Amaro	Nan Jia
Clara Dahl	Katie Harrel	Nathaly Moreno
Craig Doberstein	Lara Awad	Omar Abdelhadi
Curtis Fang	Larry Tran	Pearl Azizian
Daniel Bradbury	Lisa Jin Kim	Ryanna Fossum
Eric Bonilla	Luis Perez	Samantha Torres

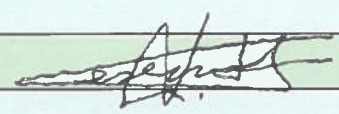
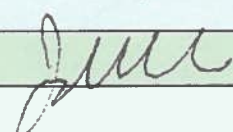


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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: **February 4, 2025**



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	<i>AH</i>
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>DF</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	<i>IC</i>
Community Stakeholder	Gloria Medina	SCOPE	P	<i>GM</i>
Community Stakeholder	Bruce Reznik	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	P	
Community Stakeholder	Maggie Gardner	Los Angeles Waterkeeper	A	
Community Stakeholder	Zoe Cunliffe	Black Women for Wellness	P	<i>ZC</i>
Community Stakeholder	Tianna Shaw-Wakeman	Black Women for Wellness	A	
Municipal Member	Josette Descalzo	Beverly Hills / West Hollywood	P	<i>JD</i>
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	
Municipal Member	Roberto Perez	Los Angeles	P	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN: February 4, 2025



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

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN: February 4, 2025



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Brenda	Panton	Woodard & Curran	bpanton@woodardcurran.com
Anna	Groehnert	City of Inglewood	agroehner@cityofinglewood.org