

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, December 4, 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)

*Cara Campbell, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

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

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (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)

Jill Sohm, University of Southern California (Community)

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

*Jennifer Amarant, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

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

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

Committee Members Absent:

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

Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)

Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (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 November 21, 2024

This agenda item was deferred to the next meeting. District staff noted that the meeting minutes from November 21, 2024, will be posted on the ULAR WASC webpage in the coming weeks.

3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

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There were no ex-parte communication disclosures.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

PW staff clarified that the SCW Municipal Program has been transferred to PW's Stormwater Quality Division. Member Thuan Nguyen disclosed that he will be involved in the new team handling the Municipal Program.

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The FY23-24 Annual Report, covering July 2023 to June 2024, is due December 31. A Mid-Year Report, covering July 2024 to December 2024, is due February 15, 2025.
- A Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meeting is scheduled for December 11 at 1:00pm to 3:30pm. The ROC will discuss Watershed Planning Framework, County Water Plan overview, Implementation Update, and Interconnectivity of Initiatives.
- The LA County Flood Control District is partnered 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 captures within the LA County Flood Control District. Applicants may submit proposals from now until May 31, 2025, on the Water Foundation's website. Proposals will be evaluated and awarded on a rolling basis.

Public Works' Watershed Planning staff provided updates, noting that the second Watershed Planning workshops were conducted with all nine WASCs and confirmed that WASC members perspectives shared during the first workshops were understood correctly and to solicit additional feedback. The Watershed Planning Framework is completed and available on the [SCW Program website](#). Additionally, the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment and a Frequently Asked Questions document were also launched, and are available on the [SCW Program website](#). For more information, Watershed Planning staff can be reached at watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

Chair Villegas clarified with Watershed Planning staff that the CSNA Survey was launched to solicit community responses, and that Watershed Coordinators are being trained on how to implement the survey at Watershed Coordinator events. Watershed Planning staff explained that Watershed Coordinators will be the first group of people to use the survey, and that a Tool Kit will be developed for other groups, such as nonprofit organizations, to utilize the survey at events as well. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) clarified that the CSNA Survey was built off existing Watershed Coordinator efforts.

5) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentations

i. Cindy Montañez Natural Park Feasibility Study

David Pineda (TreePeople, Project Applicant) presented on the Cindy Montañez Natural Park Feasibility Study application. The study intends to determine the feasibility to increase and enhance stormwater capture features at Cindy Montañez Natural Park. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Pineda shared descriptions of the park's current recreational features. Member Ernesto Rivera clarified with Pineda that the TRP study intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Best Management Practices (BMPs), as the park currently experiences flooding. Pineda noted that there are issues with the park's existing underground gallery filtering out debris and the park frequently overflows into

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Pacoima Wash. Pineda explained that the study intends to evaluate the underground gallery's current capacity and how new improvements can be complementary to the existing BMPs.

Watershed Coordinator Kristina Kreter confirmed with Pineda that TreePeople has engaged with the nearby Los Angeles Unified School District on a project related to grading improvements. Pineda explained that TreePeople intends to engage the local indigenous tribe as TreePeople wants to involve the tribe's current efforts in the area.

Upon inquiry, Pineda clarified that the park used to be called the Pacoima Wash Natural Park. Pineda also clarified that the City of San Fernando has provided a letter of support. Pineda explained that the original park was built in 2014 to convert a vacant lot into a park. This project's purpose is to improve stormwater capture at the park.

Vice Chair Karo Torossian inquired about the extent of the project and noted that a northern expansion of the park would be a service to the neighborhood. Pineda clarified that the nonprofit organization, Pacoima Beautiful, is assessing an expansion of the bike path north, but that the TRP study is not evaluating expansion of the park north.

Chair Villegas clarified with Pineda that the grade of the park is relatively flat, so water would be collected off site from the school down into the park. Member Ida Meisami-Fard suggested that the TRP investigate connecting to existing infrastructure and conveying water off site, since the existing park area seems constrained.

ii. La Cañada Town Center Stormwater Infiltration Galleries

Natalie Ouwersloot (Foothill Municipal Water District) presented on the La Cañada Town Center Stormwater Infiltration Galleries TRP application. The study intends to determine the feasibility of infiltrating storm flows from the Angeles Crest Highway into the groundwater basin at the La Cañada Town Center. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Vice Chair Torossian inquired how the project partners are contributing to the study, and if the Project Applicant has identified other sources of funding. Ouwersloot clarified that the feasibility study would be funded by this WASC through the TRP, and if the project moves forward to design and construction, Foothill Municipal Water District plans to seek other sources of funding in addition to the SCW Program, such as partnerships with local agencies.

Member Nguyen clarified with Ouwersloot that although there is not currently a high demand for landscaping irrigation in the area, the project would likely use drip irrigation to water native species installed at the project.

Member Nguyen suggested that the study involve a drainage investigation to quantify the volume of water that the project could capture.

Member Brent Maue clarified with Ouwersloot that the downstream outfall is the Flint Wash.

Member de Guzman inquired if the Project Applicant has estimated the size of the catchment area and volume of water that the project may infiltrate. Ouwersloot shared that 230 acre-ft of water is estimated to flow down the Angeles Crest, while the existing sump holds only 15 acre-ft released slowly over time. Ouwersloot noted that the feasibility study intends to provide more information on the volume of water the project may be able to infiltrate.

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Member Meisami-Fard inquired how significantly this project will raise groundwater levels in the Raymond Basin. Ouwersloot clarified that this project would be one part of the solution to increase groundwater levels and would be a pilot for future efforts. Ouwersloot mentioned that agencies with water rights to the Raymond Basin have voluntarily reduced pumping by 24% to stabilize groundwater levels.

Upon inquiry, Antos explained that the TRP funding limit was recently increased from \$300,000 to \$400,000 to account for sufficient geotechnical investigations and community engagement in scopes of work assigned to Technical Assistance Teams.

Upon inquiry, Ouwersloot confirmed that a portion of the proposed project site is owned by a private company, while the remaining area included in the proposed site is owned by the City of La Cañada Flintridge. Ouwersloot elaborated that the project could be accomplished without use of the privately owned land if necessary.

Upon inquiry, Ouwersloot confirmed that the project's preliminary scope involves planting more trees to reduce the heat island effect. Ouwersloot added that the project would not remove parking spots.

b) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentation

i. Street Sweeping Study

Jon Ball (City of Los Angeles) presented on the Street Sweeping Study proposal. The study plans to gather data to identify potential enhancements to the City of Los Angeles' Street Sweeping Program to ultimately increase water quality benefits. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Ted Gerber suggested that the Project Applicant could include recommendations for street configurations that improve pollutant control. For example, Member Gerber mentioned that the study could include analyses of how bike lanes, curb extensions, and parking restriction impact the effectiveness of street sweeping.

Member Maue clarified with Ball that all funds requested from this WASC will be used for consultant fees, and the funding request will not go towards LASAN staff working on the study.

Member de Guzman inquired how the study would tailor results from the three overall study questions to the ULAR Watershed Area, since the study also received funding from two other WASCs last year. Ball explained that the study has already addressed one of the questions of how to sweep using the City of Los Angeles' own funding, and these results would be helpful for all Watershed Areas. Ball elaborated that most of the work funded by the ULAR WASC would be used to analyze street dirt from different areas of the City of Los Angeles for copper, zinc, and other pollutants. Upon further inquiry, Ball clarified that the study would evaluate how land use generally affects pollutant rate, as well as consider unique aspects of the Watershed Areas.

Vice Chair Torossian and Chair Villegas suggested that the study consider street sweeping at off-street parking lots, which could be sources of pollution. Upon inquiry, Ball clarified that the study team has proposed several sampling sites in collaboration with Streets Services, but a complete list of sampling sites has not been finalized yet.

6) 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. There were no public comments.

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7) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, January 16, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. Items for the next agenda may include:

a) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentations

- i. Crescenta Valley Park Stormwater Capture Project (Presented by Crescenta Valley Water District)

b) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentation



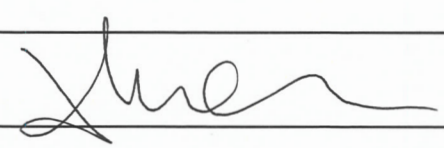
- i. Data-Driven Resource Optimization and Planning System (DROPS) for Los Angeles County (Presented by Foothill Municipal Water District)
- ii. Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture (Presented by San Gabriel Council of Governments)

8) Adjournment

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

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



| Member Name | Municipality/ Organization | Member Type | Role | Signature |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--|
| 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 |  |
| 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 |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Jennifer | Amarant | Watershed Coordinator | jennifer@eoscal.com |
| Jon Ball | Ball | City of LA / LASAN | jon.ball@lacity.org |
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*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public