

South Santa Monica Bay

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, May 21, 2025
1:00pm - 4:00pm
Edward C. Little Water Recycling Facility
1935 S Hughes Way, El Segundo, CA 90245
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Marcela Benavides-Aguilar, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)
Tammy Hierlihy*, West Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
Jenn Swart, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
Dave Pierce, Los Angeles County Sanitation District (Agency)
Darryl Ford*, Los Angeles Recreation and Parks (Agency)
Margie Hoyt, Resident (Community)
Craig Cadwallader, Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter (Community), Chair
Caroline Orija, Los Angeles Department of Public Health (Community)
Elizabeth Sala, Resident (Community)
Roland Jen*, City of Carson (Municipal)
Susie Santilena, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County Public Works (Municipal)
Shin Furukawa, City of Torrance (Municipal)
Douglas Krauss, EWMP: Beach Cities (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Miller Zou, EWMP: Dominguez (Municipal)
Vanessa Hevener, EWMP: Peninsula (Municipal)
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Craig Cadwallader and Vice-Chair Douglas Krauss of the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated Committee Member introductions. A quorum was established. Public Works staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial and instructions on public comment submissions.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from April 16, 2025

Chair Cadwallader presented the SSMB WASC meeting minutes from April 16, 2025. Vice-Chair Krauss motioned to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Member Elizabeth Sala. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 14 votes in favor, 2 in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided an update, noting:

- Applications for the Fiscal Year 2025 - 2026 (FY25-26) Low Income Senior Owned Exemptions and General Income Based Tax Reductions were due on May 1. For more information, see the Exemptions and Reductions section of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCW Program) [website](#).

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- The Call for Projects deadline for FY26-27 is July 31. Informational sessions were held virtually on May 21 from 9:00am to 11:00am and May 22 from 3:00pm to 5:00pm. Both sessions contained the same information. For proposed projects involving Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) infrastructure or facilities, the deadline to request a letter for conceptual approval from LACFCD was May 31.
- Mid-Year Reports covering July to December 2024, (previously separated as Quarter 1 (Q1) and Q2 Reports) were due in February. Project and Study Developers must address comments and resubmit as soon as possible, regardless of receiving funds, having expenditures or activities, or having executed the Funds Transfer Agreement.
- The upcoming Regional Oversight Committee meeting is scheduled for June 11, 2025 at 1:00pm. The ROC will receive updates on Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs). To view meeting details please visit the [ROC events website](#).
- FY25-26 Municipal Annual Plans were due on April 1, 2025.
- The 2024 Municipal Transfer Agreements are being processed and executed by Public Works. The fifth disbursements are ongoing. Cities will need to comply with all reporting requirements to receive the fifth disbursement.
- A Metrics & Measures section has been added as a section in the Municipal Program Reporting Module. This Metrics & Measures section collects data for performance metrics specific to Municipal Program activities to align with and inform the Watershed Planning efforts and SCW Program progress assessments. The SCW Program hosted a virtual workshop on Thursday, May 15, 2025 from 10:00am to 11:00am that provided an overview of the Reporting Module and the Metrics and Measures tile functionality. Municipalities received an email with instructions to fill out the section along with a link to the [workshop event page](#); the information should be filled out by June 16, 2025.
- The first round of Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program proposals were awarded at a total of approximately \$3.1 million. To see a list of approved proposals for Round 1 of the Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program, please visit the [Water Foundation Website](#). The final deadline for grant submissions was April 4, 2025 and is now closed.
- The Q4 2025 Funding Report has been posted to the SCW Program website under the [Resources tab](#). In support of Public Works, the Regional Coordination team prepares quarterly funding reports that include a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program projects. Public Works staff and Regional Coordination are actively tracking activity to better understand impacts to future funding.

4) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

There were no ex parte communications.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes shared an update. Highlights include:

- Attending the Open Space Advocacy Summit,
- Conducting outreach on potential leverage funding opportunities,
- Using the Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA) Living Infrastructure Field Kit, which was used by the Upper Los Angeles River WASC to secure SCW Program funding for Save Elephant Hill,
- Attending the Urban Watersheds working group meeting to learn about fires and watershed health,
- Conducting a "BioBlitz through the City Nature" Challenge,
- Meeting with recipients of the SCW Program Education Grants,

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- Training twelve new volunteers and engaging 992 people through presentations, 200 of those were engaged in the SSMB Watershed Area,
- Conducting outreach for Earth Day festivals and events,
- Disseminating the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey and subsequent dashboard to community members, and
- Planning for engaging more community members at the upcoming surf competitions in the watershed over the summer.

6) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Watershed Planning Phase 3

Public Works' Watershed Planning Team (Watershed Planning Team) gave a presentation on the Watershed Planning effort to date. For presentation slides that include an SSMB Watershed Planning snapshot, visit the SCW Program [website](#). Highlights from the presentation included:

- The Initial Watershed Plans in development will include targets, strategies, actions, and opportunities to address Watershed Area Needs and achieve the SCW Program's Goals. Needs are determined as the difference between targets and the benefit baselines of previously funded SCW Program projects. Strategies explain how to meet the Watershed Area Needs, actions outline what types of projects or programs to implement, and Opportunities identify where to implement projects for the highest impact.
- A companion to the Initial Watershed Plans, an online Watershed Planning Tool (Planning Tool) is in development that consists of a Planning Map and Dashboard, which will support visualization of Opportunities and track progress toward the established targets and WA Needs. Composite layers in the Planning Map will assist in identifying multi-benefit opportunities, which combine various Planning Themes (based on the SCW Program Goals) such as drought preparedness, public health improvement, nature-based solutions, and equitable benefit distribution; and
- The Draft Initial Watershed Plans will be available for a 30-day public review period in Fall 2025 and updated editions will be published in early 2026.

Member Susie Santilena asked about the Water Quality target presented, which aims for Total Maximum Daily Load compliance by 2038, and inquired if the target was for the whole county and how the 2038 target would be presented in the Initial Watershed Plans. The Watershed Planning Team explained that the 2038 target is directly tied to Water Quality goals in the Initial Watershed Plans.

Member Marcela Benavides-Aguilar asked about slide 6 in the presentation, requesting further explanation on baseline data and whether the numbers included projects that are also in the design phase. Member Benavides-Aguilar added that Project Modification Requests (PMRs) allow for baselines to change, expressing hesitancy to include design projects in the baseline data. The Watershed Planning Team shared that all projects funded to-date are included in the baseline data, and noted that the goal is to show project progress towards the SCW Program goals. The Watershed Planning Team shared that the Watershed Plans will continue to be refined over time, aligning with the Adaptive Management goal of the Safe, Clean Water Program.

Member Benavides-Aguilar noted the amount of effort required to reach its goals and inquired how projections were calculated to-date. The Watershed Planning Team shared that targets are currently aspirational, adding that many WASCs have already allocated current and future funds to projects. Public Works staff added that one strategy that was highlighted in all nine WASCs was to consider leverage funding, which is also a target that will be present in the Initial Watershed Plans. Public Works staff elaborated that some WASCs may ask proponents for 50% leveraged funding before applying to the SCW Program.

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Rebecca Kaliff (Paradigm, Watershed Planning) shared that the baseline data includes an average of contributions from projects funded to-date, with an emphasis on understanding that the first two years of funded projects may provide tangible benefits in the shorter term because those projects had been more developed and ready for implementation. Member Santilena commented that the WASC cannot expect a linear projection of benefits, as the SCW Program is one of the only regional Measures that funds Operation and Maintenance (O&M) for projects and over time, expects to see more funding allocated to the maintenance of existing projects rather than the creation of new projects.

Member Santilena asked whether the Watershed Planning Team can include observational data from completed projects outside of the SCW Program related to new water capture and potential capture scenarios in future iterations of the Watershed Plans. The Watershed Planning Team noted the idea and added that all data sources will be present in Initial Watershed Plan Appendices. Member Benavides-Aguilar commented that the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) spreading grounds could contribute to stormwater capture and would like to see that data integrated into the SCW Program targets. The Watershed Planning Team noted that all data considered would then contribute to the 300,000 acre-feet per year goal at the county scale. Kaliff confirmed that spreading ground operations are considered via modeling of the Watershed Management Plans (WMPs).

Upon inquiry, Public Works The Watershed Planning Team confirmed that the SSMB WASC will have a Watershed Area specific summary, but that the current presentation focuses on the Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area to present the standard methodology, adding that there will be a 30-day Public Review Period in September.

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes asked how enhanced green space is defined. Kaliff noted that the Parks Needs Assessment data is focused on the creation of park space, highlighting the difference between park creation versus parks enhancement or restoration. Kaliff added that the Watershed Area characteristics displayed in the presentation will help prioritize which parks can benefit from enhancements. Mike Antos (Stantec, Watershed Planning) added that there is conversation among the ROC's Community-Investment Benefit working group to discuss new versus enhanced open space benefits.

The Watershed Planning Team presented on the Watershed Planning Tool and Dashboard. Member Dave Pierce asked about the naming conventions and distinctions between "multiple benefits" and "multiple benefits that center Water Quality". Kaliff shared that the layers are in-progress and names are subject to change to be inclusive and accurate of each planning indicator and theme that was presented. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes confirmed with the Watershed Planning Team that the data will be updated automatically as part of the existing portal.

Antos asked the WASC for preferred uses of the tools presented.

Member Caroline Orija shared that multi-benefit opportunities in the Watershed Area can be better identified by using this tool. Antos noted that each Opportunity Area layer will accumulate the number of potential opportunities in an area, which will reveal whether a benefit already exists. Chair Cadwallader expressed gratitude towards the Watershed Planning Team for development of the Tool.

Antos shared that Project Developers may use the Tool to understand the current characteristics in an area and determine opportunities that can exist via a SCW Program project. Antos then introduced various planning tools, including the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey and dashboard, and noted that these resources are available to help strengthen project selection during SIP deliberations.

Chair Cadwallader clarified with Antos that the CSNA tool is only meant to be a starting point for engagement. Antos confirmed that the Regional Coordination team will reach out to cities, the Watershed Coordinators, and other community groups once patterns are noticed via reporting and outreach.

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Member Miller Zou confirmed with Public Works staff that the CSNA is live and accessible, and the Watershed Planning Team encouraged municipalities and Watershed Management Groups to use and share the tools. Member Shin Furukawa clarified with Public Works staff that the tools will remain online indefinitely. Member Geremew Amenu asked if the SCW Program intends to conduct a campaign to broadly share the tools, and the Watershed Planning Team noted that there is a Promotional Toolkit associated with the CSNA, and that Watershed Coordinators are actively conducting outreach with the tools. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes confirmed that the SSMB Watershed Coordination team is initiating a canvassing effort to center historically underserved community outreach via the CSNA.

The Watershed Planning Team encouraged WASC Members to track the Adaptive Management webpage on the SCW Program website for more information on Watershed Planning, and submit any questions to watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

7) Public Comment Period

Dr. Win Cowger (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research) noted trash load reduction was indicated as a primary pollutant and suggested the SCW Program refer to the Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research as a possible partner to quantify trash in future efforts.

Public Works thanked the public member and noted that the comment will be passed to the Watershed Planning team.

8) Items for next agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18, 2025 from 1:00pm - 3:00pm. Items on the next agenda include:

- Watershed Coordinator Capabilities and Qualifications Interviews and Selection

9) Adjournment

Chair Cadwallader thanked WASC Members and the public for their attendance and participation.

SSMB WASC - May 21, 2025						
		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Organization	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Approve the April 16, 2025 SSMB WASC Meeting Minutes
Agency	LACFCD	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	X	CJ Caluag		A
Agency	West Basin MWD	Matthew Veeh		Tammy Hierlihy	X	Y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Jenn Swart	X	Asha Kreiling		Y
Agency	LA County Sanitation District	Dave Pierce	X	Christopher Lapaz		Y
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	X	A
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Margie Hoyt	X			Y
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	<u>Craig Cadwallader</u>	X	Mary Simun		Y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	Caroline Orija	X			Y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Elizabeth Sala	X			Y
Community Stakeholder						
Municipal Members	Carson	Gilbert Marquez		Roland Jen	X	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	X	Ryan Jackson		Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Geremew Amenu	X	Lara Awad		Y
Municipal Members	Torrance	Shin Furukawa	X	Wilson Mendoza		Y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Doug Krauss	X	Geraldine Trivedi		Y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Miller Zou	X	Nick Petrevski		Y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Vanessa Hevener	X	David Wahba		Y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	X			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	14
Total Voting Members Present		16			Nay (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	2
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Other Attendees

Alexia Skrbic
 Aric M
 brett perry
 Bryan Igboke - LACP
 Bryant Alvarado
 Chris Lapaz
 CJ
 Curtis Fang
 Dave Mercier
 Deanna Fraley
 Eric Bonilla - LACPW
 Hayat Rasul
 Jenny Chau
 Jose Castro - LACPW
 Kenny Khov
 Lara Awad
 Linet Khechatoorian
 Luis
 Luis Perez SCW WP
 Mark Nguyen
 Michael Scaduto
 Mike Antos
 Paul Hartman

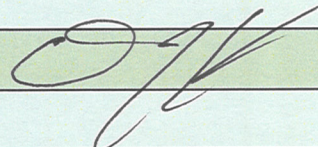
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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Agency	Marcela Benevides-Aguilar	LACFCD	P	<i>MB</i>
Agency	CJ Caluag	LACFCD	A	
Agency	Matthew Veeh	West Basin MWD	P	
Agency	Tammy Hierlihy	West Basin MWD	A	
Agency	Jenn Swart	Water Replenishment District	P	<i>Jenn Swart</i>
Agency	Asha Kreiling	Water Replenishment District	A	
Agency	Dave Pierce	LAC Sanitation Districts	P	<i>Dave Pierce</i>
Agency	Christopher Lapaz	LAC Sanitation Districts	A	
Agency	Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	P	
Agency	Darryl Ford	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	A	
Community Stakeholder	Margie Hoyt	Resident	P	<i>Margie A. Hoyt</i>
Community Stakeholder	Craig Cadwallader	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	P	<i>Craig Cadwallader</i>
Community Stakeholder	Mary Simun	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	A	
Community Stakeholder	Caroline Orija	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	P	<i>Caroline Orija</i>
Community Stakeholder	Elizabeth Sala	Resident	P	<i>Elizabeth Sala</i>
Community Stakeholder			A	
Municipal Member	Gilbert Marquez	Carson	P	
Municipal Member	Roland Jen	Carson	A	<i>Roland Jen</i>
Municipal Member	Susie Santilena	Los Angeles	P	

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COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Type	Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Role	Signature
Municipal Member	Ryan Jackson	Los Angeles	A	
Municipal Member	Geremew Amenu	Los Angeles County Public Works	P	
Municipal Member	Lara Awad	Los Angeles County Public Works	A	
Municipal Member	Shin Furukawa	Torrance	P	
Municipal Member	Wilson Mendoza	Torrance	A	
Municipal Member	Doug Krauss	EWMP: Beach Cities	P	
Municipal Member	Geraldine Trivedi	EWMP: Beach Cities	A	
Municipal Member	Miller Zou	EWMP: Dominguez	P	
Municipal Member	Nick Petrevski	EWMP: Dominguez	A	
Municipal Member	Vanessa Hevener	EWMP: Peninsula	P	
Municipal Member	David Wahba	EWMP: Peninsula	A	
Watershed Coordinator	Nancy Shrodes	Heal the Bay		