

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



Tuesday, September 2, 2025
1:00pm – 3:30pm
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 Metropolitan Water District (Agency)
Art Castro, Los Angeles City Water & Power (Agency)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles City Sanitation and Environment (Agency), Co-Chair
Rita Kampalath, Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability (Community), Co-Chair
Ion Cretu, PSOMAS (Community)
Gloria Medina, SCOPE (Community)
Bruce Reznik, Los Angeles Waterkeeper (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)
*Virginia Wei, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Joshua Carvalho, Santa Monica/Inglewood (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:

Cathie Santo Domingo, Los Angeles City Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Co-Chair Susie Santilena 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 and explained rules for Committee Members attending virtually under Assembly Bill 2449. A quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 3, 2025

Co-Chair Rita Kampalath motioned to approve meeting minutes from June 3, 2025, seconded by Co-Chair Santilena. The Committee voted to approve June 3, 2025, minutes, with 10 votes in favor, 3 votes in abstention, and 2 Members absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tacking sheet attached).

3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member Marcela Benavides and Co-Chair Santilena had a conversation regarding the Co-Chair position.

Member Augustine Han disclosed that on June 24, a meeting took place with the Project Organizers of the Los Angeles Community College Campus Project.

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



Member Reznik disclosed that Los Angeles Waterkeeper is a partner on the UCLA Campus-Connects Project.

4) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

5) Presentation and Discussion Items

a. Regional Program Mid-Year Report Summary for FY24-25

Public Works shared a presentation on the Regional Program Mid-Year Report Summary for Fiscal Year 2024–2025 (FY24-25). The presentation slides and reports, including Municipal Program Reports, are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Melanie Rivera (HDR) reported that there are 14 Infrastructure Program (IP) projects and 5 Scientific Study (SS) projects for FY 2024–2025. To date, three IP projects and one SS project has been completed. Highlighted accomplishments included Los Angeles Sanitation and Environment (LASAN) projects, the City of Beverly Hills Burton Greenway Street and Water Efficient Landscape Project, and the Edward Vincent Jr. Stormwater Improvement Project. Critical issues remain with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) completion for the MacArthur Lake Rehabilitation Project and Slauson Connect Clean Water projects.

Member Benavides clarified with Rivera that the presentation slides reflect the current phase of each project as of the end of the prior reporting period.

Co-Chair Santilena acknowledged the milestone of completed projects, noting the significance of three projects constructed and one SS finalized. Reporting requirements for completed projects and post-construction monitoring were discussed with Public Works staff confirming that monitoring and reporting results would continue to be made available.

Member Bruce Reznik emphasized the opportunity to strengthen communication with the public about SCW Program accomplishments as more projects are completed. Member Reznik suggested developing a clearer compilation of results for the SCW Program website to highlight benefits and demonstrate the value of funding. Member Reznik also noted navigation challenges on the SCW Program website when looking for project information.

Member Benavides inquired about the Ballona Creek TMDL Project and requested construction status. Wendy Dinh (LASAN, Project Developer) reported that the project is almost complete, with a total project cost of \$77 million, including \$22 million awarded from the SCW Program, with remaining funds provided through leveraged funding and agency Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs). Member Benavides clarified with Brenda Ponton (Woodard and Curran, Project Developer) that the Edward Vincent Jr. Park Stormwater Improvements project is fully funded for design only and currently in the design phase.

Member Joshua Carvalho requested information regarding feedback from the Board of Supervisors on critical projects. Public Works staff indicated that no additional information is available at this time.

Raymond Lam (LASAN, Project Developer) reported that the MacArthur Lake Rehabilitation Park project is expected to finalize CEQA documentation by the end of the year, with design completion anticipated and construction scheduled to begin in summer 2026.

Kevin Reilly (Corvias Infrastructure Solutions, Project Developer) reported that the Slauson Connect Clean Water Project received CEQA approval one month ago and is currently completing the design phase.

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



Public Works staff reminded the WASC that Project Developers are invited to WASC meetings to provide updates and receive feedback.

b. Review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) shared a presentation on WASC Roles and Responsibilities. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#). Antos emphasized the importance of revisiting the WASC handbook, noting that absence from two consecutive WASC meetings or missing more than three meetings in one year can result in removal from the WASC.

Antos noted that Initial Watershed Plans and Tools are currently out for a Public Review Period. Member Reznik noted that the WASCs were expected to play a key role in Watershed Planning and requested a future meeting to provide feedback on the Initial Watershed Plans. Member Reznik also inquired about the priority goals established by the WASCs and whether these goals are clearly identified in the Watershed Plans. Antos clarified that the SCW Program has 14 goals described in its Ordinance that are of equal priority, and that the WASC prioritized strategies appropriate for achieving those goals in the CSMB watershed area that are included in Chapter 5 of each of the Initial Watershed Plans. Member Reznik expressed a desire for the WASC to have a more active role in providing feedback. Public Works' Watershed Planning staff will meet with the CSMB WASC in November to present on the Initial Watershed Plans.

c. Summary of Submitted Infrastructure Program Projects, Scientific Studies and Technical Resources Program Project

Watershed Coordinators Vanessa Boudreau and Stephanie Gebhardt Rath provided an overview of the projects submitted to the CSMB WASC. The presentation included 14 applications with a total of \$59.7-million in requested funding, encompassing four SS, nine IP projects, and one TRP project. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff noted that links to the submitted applications and instructions for creating an account for the Project Module would be sent to all Committee Members. Watershed Coordinators noted that filtering by Watershed Area, Project Type, and Submission is the most effective way to find and review projects within that tool.

Member Roberto Perez asked if the WASC will receive Water Supply and Water Quality Benefit metrics, as discussed in a prior meeting, before voting to approve projects to send to the Scoring Committee. Public Works staff clarified that because the Initial Watershed Plans are still in draft form, those connections will not be available until later in the process. Antos stated that the SIP Tool is planned to have Watershed Tool integration, and Public Works staff confirmed that a scenario function will be added to the tool for future rounds to evaluate project impacts.

Co-Chair Santilena noted the importance of evaluating projects across drainage areas and understanding how project benefits intersect, even without the Watershed Planning tools currently available. Co-Chair Santilena also noted that scores from the Scoring Committee are helpful and that upcoming Project Proponent presentations will assist with evaluating project components. Co-Chair Santilena expressed enthusiasm for the future availability of Watershed Planning tools to assess how drainage areas and project benefits connect.

Member Geremew Amenu confirmed with Public Works staff that the SIP funding allocation of 85% IP, 10% WC, and 5% TRP is calculated across five years. Upon inquiry, Watershed Coordinators added that the current round reflects a more diverse group of applicants, with municipalities and agencies demonstrating stronger community engagement compared to earlier rounds of the SCW Program. Project Applicants are increasingly demonstrating workshops, meetings, and incorporation of community feedback. Watershed Coordinators also noted that the increase in Project Applications this year may be attributed to the pause

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



on IPs submittals in the prior year and commented that the higher number of submissions demonstrates the inclusive and expanding nature of the SCW Program.

Member Reznik commented that the Scoring Committee has encouraged the creation of a separate design phase pathway, since many applicants are not ready to proceed directly into construction. Co-Chair Santilena added that O&M and Construction have already been separated into distinct applications and that the development of a design-only track represents progress in the right direction.

d. Discussion to send, some or all completed feasibility studies to Scoring Committee for consideration

Member Han commented that it was unclear if the total funding request shown on the presentation slides reflected the upcoming SIP request or the total project request and noted that distinguishing this information would be helpful in the future. Member Descalzo agreed and requested a summary of how many projects have matching funds and how many provide direct benefits to Disadvantaged Communities. Antos stated that this information is included in a funding memo prepared after projects are deemed eligible. Antos also noted that Watershed Coordinators review project claims related to Disadvantaged Communities and share this information with the WASC at a future meeting.

Member Sean Singletary asked whether missing information in Project Applications would prevent projects from advancing. Public Works staff explained that final completeness checks are underway; incomplete projects will not move to the Scoring Committee, and missing information is addressed directly with Project Applicants. Co-Chair Kampalath noted that historically, the WASC has sent all projects due to limited information and suggested that additional details would allow for more meaningful discussion. Member Descalzo confirmed with Public Works staff that projects can be assumed to pass completeness check, and that Public Works staff would alert if any red flags were identified. Also, Public Works noted that an independent review will occur for SS Applications, and the results will be shared with the WASC during the early months of 2026.

e. Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

The WASC had a discussion regarding Co-Chair nominations and leadership structure. Co-Chair Santilena expressed a willingness to allow another Committee Member to serve and remained available if needed. Member Marcela Benavides expressed interest in being a Co-Chair. Member Gloria Medina expressed support for the Co-Chair model as opposed to the Chair/Vice-Chair model and suggested that the longest-serving Co-Chair could step down. Member Perez asked whether the Co-Chairs had discussed who would step down, and Co-Chair Kampalath shared willingness to step down.

6) Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

7) Voting Items

a. Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chair

Member Reznik made a motion to appoint Susie Santilena and Marcela Benavides as Co-Chairs of the Central Santa Monica Bay WASC, seconded by Member Amenu. The Committee voted to approve the motion, with 15 votes in favor, 0 abstentions, and 0 absent at the time of the vote. The motion was approved (see vote tracking sheet attached).

b. Send None, Some, or All completed Infrastructure Program Projects to the Scoring Committee

Central Santa Monica Bay

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Member Delgado made a motion to send all completed feasibility studies to the Scoring Committee for consideration, seconded by Member Benavides. The Committee voted with 15 in favor, 0 abstentions, and 0 absent at the time of the vote. The motion was approved (see vote tracking sheet attached).

8) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff shared updates, including:

- Draft Initial Watershed Plans for each of the nine Watershed Areas are posted on the SCW Program's [Watershed Planning webpage](#). The public comment period is open from August 14 through September 28 for review of both the Plans and the companion online Planning Tool. Comments may be submitted online at the above webpage.
- PMRs are due by October 31 to be considered for this round of projects.
- The Water Foundation, in partnership with the Los Angeles County Flood Control District, administers the SCW Program's Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program. All three rounds of grants have been announced, and CSMB received several awards, which are posted on the [Water Foundation website](#).
- On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, there is an invitation to collaborate on Community-Proposed Projects funded by the SCW Program and the associated City of Los Angeles' Policies and Procedures for Community-Proposed SCW Program Projects. These projects would apply during Round 8 (FY27-28). Please ask the Watershed Coordinators for more information.

9) Items for Future Agenda

Co-Chair Santilena shared that the WASC will receive presentations on the SS projects at the October WASC meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2025.

10) Adjournment

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