

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, January 7, 2025

1:00pm - 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)
John Huynh, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency), Vice Chair
Cathie Santa Domingo, Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)
*Julia Linder, Tataviam Land Conservancy (Community)
Jill Sohm, University of Southern California (Community)
Edith de Guzman, University of California, Los Angeles (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
Marc David, City of Glendale (Municipal)
Michael Vartanians, City of South Pasadena (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)
Karo Torossian, City of Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
*Kara Plourde, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Dawn Petschauer, City of Pasadena (Municipal)
Alonso Garcia, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Attending Virtually:

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

Committee Members Absent:

Art Castro, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Ida Meisami-Fard, Vice-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 and announced that a Spanish interpreter is available in the online meeting. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members, and a quorum was established.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from December 3, 2025

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from December 3, 2025. Member Ernesto Pantoja motioned to approve the December 3 meeting minutes, seconded by Member Edith de Guzman. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 9 votes in favor, 5 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 1 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Member Kara Plourde disclosed involvement in the project planning team for the Franklin D. Roosevelt Park Regional Stormwater Capture Operation and Maintenance Project as part of Los Angeles County Public Works.

Member Michael Vartanians disclosed involvement in developing the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project within the City of South Pasadena.

Member Dawn Petschauer disclosed involvement in the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region Scientific Study (SS) within the City of Pasadena.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The Board of Supervisors approved the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY25-26) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) on November 4, 2025.
- Public Works staff conducted completeness checks of all Project Applications in the Call for Projects. The Scoring Committee met six times between September and December 2025 to score Infrastructure Program (IP) projects. Program-wide, three IP projects did not pass the scoring threshold, and three SSs were deemed ineligible for funding. All three IP projects that applied to the ULAR WASC scored above the threshold score and were sent to the WASC for consideration in the FY26-27 SIP. In total, the ULAR WASC received three IPs, seven SSs and one TRP application.
- Public Works staff are engaging in discussions with the City of Pasadena and Amigos de los Rios about partnering on workforce development efforts.
- The deadline for submitting a Project Modification Request (PMR) for consideration in the FY26-27 SIP was October 31, 2025. Public Works staff is in the process of reviewing submitted PMRs. The ULAR WASC received 17 PMRs, of which only one PMR included a request for additional funding.
- The Scientific Symposium was held on November 12, 2025 at Los Angeles County Public Works Headquarters.
- The previous Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) scheduled in December was cancelled due to not meeting quorum. The upcoming ROC meeting is scheduled for January 14 at 1:00pm where the ROC will discuss the Draft Biennial Progress Report, open the 30-day Public Comment Period.
- Public Works staff encouraged WASC Members to avoid using their position on the WASC to advocate for Project applicants from their home organizations.
- To keep up with SCW Program updates as they are shared, please subscribe to receive email notifications. The SCW Program newsletter provides important updates on the Regional, Municipal, and District Programs, designed to help our community stay informed and engaged.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) distributed materials to all WASC Members to assist with SIP deliberations and encouraged any WASC members to reach out to the Regional Coordination team with any questions.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Kristina Kreter shared that the Watershed Coordinators began a new 5-year contract in January 2026 and are focusing on developing a new Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan in the first quarter of 2026.

Watershed Coordinators Kreter summarized how the Council for Watershed Health supported Project applicants in December 2025, including by supporting the City of South Pasadena in strengthening their

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community engagement strategy for the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project, supporting Pacoima Beautiful in preparing an application for a letter of non-objection from the City of Los Angeles for a stormwater project concept, and supporting Save Elephant Hill on the Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study TRP.

Watershed Coordinator Alonso Garcia shared that Council for Watershed Health is coordinating with The Nature Conservancy to schedule a tour of the Bowtie Demonstration Project and with Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority to schedule a tour of Active Transportation Rail to River Corridor Project: Segment A. Council for Watershed Health will also attend a tour hosted by Willowbrook Inclusion Network at Compton Creek on February 7, and a stormwater education event hosted by Black Women for Wellness on February 17.

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman summarized Environmental Outreach Strategies' activities in December 2025, including meeting with Resource Conservation District of Santa Monica Mountains about a potential SS and meeting with former Calabasas mayor Dennis Washburn about a potential stormwater capture and irrigation project at a cemetery near the confluence of the Arroyo Calabasas and the Los Angeles River. Watershed Coordinator Liberman will present to Resource Conservation District of Santa Monica Mountains about the SCW Program on January 26. Environmental Outreach Strategies is also coordinating with the Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority to schedule a tour of the Caballero Creek Park project.

6) Watershed Planning Update

There were no Watershed Planning updates.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Infrastructure Program Presentations

i. Franklin D. Roosevelt Park Regional Stormwater Capture Operation and Maintenance Project

Chris Lee (Public Works, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Park Regional Stormwater Capture Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Project. This IP project involves O&M of various stormwater infrastructure components in Franklin D. Roosevelt Park to ensure infrastructure improves water quality. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Lee clarified that the project has been operating for five years and was one of Public Work's first stormwater capture projects. Lee shared that Public Works has applied lessons learned from this project to improve O&M at subsequent projects and plans to retrofit some BMPs at Franklin D. Roosevelt Park to require less maintenance.

In response to a question from the ROC, Lee clarified that Public Works staff within the Stormwater Maintenance Division perform most maintenance on this project, but Public Works also hires a consultant to perform some O&M activities that Public Works staff do not have the proper expertise and equipment to perform.

Lee shared that based on the latest water quality monitoring results, the project reduced measured contaminants from 36% reduction to 80% reduction. Lee also clarified that the project has not experienced flooding during recent rain events.

Upon inquiry, Lee clarified that the project includes three dry wells that are approximately 70 feet deep and that drywell maintenance involves CCTV inspection.

Upon inquiry, Lee shared that Los Angeles County has committed leveraged funding to cover half of the project's O&M costs for the requested five-year timeframe.

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The WASC discussed the project's use of artificial turf. Lee clarified that artificial turf and all other above-ground components of the project are maintained by Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, while below ground components are maintained by Public Works. Lee confirmed that SCW Program funds were not used to install artificial turf during construction and was unaware of any plans to replace the artificial turf in the immediate future. Upon inquiry, Lee shared that monitoring results have not revealed any water quality issues or infiltration challenges caused by artificial turf.

ii. Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project

Anteneh Tesfaye (City of South Pasadena, Project applicant) and Gurjot Kohli (Stantec, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project. This IP project proposes an underground infiltration gallery located underneath a soccer field at Arroyo Park and is the second phase to the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project. The project aims to capture and/or treat stormwater runoff and dry weather flows, enhance Water Supply through groundwater recharge, and provide Community Investment Benefits such as enhanced park space and native landscaping. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

In response to questions, Kohli shared that no decisions have been made about tree removal at the project site yet. Kohli noted that the Project applicant started conducting community outreach for this project in 2021 and plans to continue conducting robust outreach and develop a phasing plan to minimize disruptions to community use of Arroyo Park during construction.

Upon inquiry, Kohli explained that the City of South Pasadena received a letter of commitment from Caltrans to contribute \$3 million towards the project's construction, since the project will receive runoff from a Caltrans storm drain. Kohli noted that while the City of South Pasadena has not secured leveraged funding for the design phase, the City of South Pasadena is open to exploring leveraged funding opportunities.

When asked, Kohli clarified that the project is located entirely in the City of South Pasadena. Kohli further noted that while the project is not located in a disadvantaged community, there are disadvantaged communities less than a mile from the project site.

Upon inquiry, Kohli explained that though this project intends to receive treated flow from the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, this project could proceed independently from the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project since it also would capture runoff from a Caltrans storm drain.

iii. Calles Verdes at Workman Street Project

Katie Harrel (CWE, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Calles Verdes at Work Street Project. This IP project was developed through the TRP process and would implement structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) for capture and infiltration within the City of San Fernando's right-of-way. The project aims to capture, pretreat, and infiltrate wet-weather runoff to enhance Water Quality, mitigate flood risks, and increase Water Supply, while also providing other benefits such as surface improvements, public education and nature-based solutions. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Harrel shared that during the TRP process, the Project applicant found that bioswales could not be implemented at the project site since they would create a tripping hazard for pedestrians. Harrel noted that the Project applicant has not yet considered utilizing heat-mitigating pavement.

Member Petschauer commented that the estimated number of annual full-time equivalent jobs created by the project appears unrealistically high. Harrel clarified that this number was calculated by a formula built into the SCW Program module. Public Works staff noted that this formula will be refined in the future.

Upon inquiry, Harrel clarified that while the project would capture stormwater, the volume of stormwater captured does not meet the threshold required under the SCW Program scoring framework to earn points for Water Supply Benefits.

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b) Scientific Studies Program Presentation

i. Stormwater BMP O&M Needs Assessment, Guidance Document, and Implementation Materials Scientific Study

Rebecca Dugopolski and Kate Forester (Herrera Environmental Consultants, Project applicant) and Elizabeth Fassman-Beck (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Stormwater BMP O&M Needs Assessment, Guidance Document, and Implementation Materials Scientific Study (SS). This SS aims to gather information on common BMPs, O&M practices, and barriers to O&M. The SS would also prioritize barriers and needs, develop solutions and measure the impact of improved O&M practices. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

WASC Members requested additional information on training programs that would be developed by this SS. Dugopolski and Forester clarified that the Project applicant would collaborate with the ULAR WASC to tailor trainings to specific local needs and make trainings available to interested parties. Dugopolski elaborated that training could be hosted in-person or virtually and could either be free or low cost for participants.

Upon inquiry, Fassman-Beck clarified that the Project applicant plans to install sensors in selected BMPs to measure flow and sediment. The collected data would be analyzed to evaluate whether the BMP is performing as designed or is experiencing a maintenance issue.

In response to a question, Fassman-Beck clarified that the Project applicant would select which BMPs to evaluate based on the ULAR WASC's priorities, and the logistics of installing and operating sensors in BMPs will also be considered. Dugopolski shared that the Project applicant will form a Technical Advisory Group with WASC Members, maintenance staff, landscape contractors, and other experts to inform BMP selection.

Chair Torossian commented that the results of this SS would help future Project applicants design IP projects with lower O&M costs.

Member de Guzman inquired how the SS would account for variations in BMP design on a case-by-case basis. Forester acknowledged that BMPs are often retrofitted after construction to better achieve performance goals, and noted that there is an opportunity to develop tools to support O&M staff to share feedback with designers on BMP performance issues and potential retrofits.

c) Technical Resource Program Presentation

i. La Cañada Flintridge Country Club Dry Weather Diversion Project Concept

Pamela Dreyfuss and Randy Dreyfuss (La Cañada Flintridge Country Club, Project applicant) and Cameron Castillo and Ian Adam (Fusco Engineering, Project applicant) presented an overview of the La Cañada Flintridge Country Club TRP Project Concept. This TRP Project Concept would explore dry weather runoff diversion to Los Angeles County Sanitation District (LACSD) wastewater reclamation plant for treatment and reuse for golf course irrigation. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

8) Public Comment Period

Jeff Khun (City of Pasadena) commented that maintenance staff in the City of Pasadena and many other local municipalities lack training to properly maintain green infrastructure, leading to recurring infrastructure performance issues. Khun shared that the City of Pasadena committed to working with local partners, including Public Works, to further green infrastructure workforce development in the region.

Jessica Rivas (City of Pasadena) shared that the City of Pasadena developed the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS to address the urgent regional need for a trained workforce to maintain new green infrastructure projects. Rivas commented that this SS was designed to advance SCW

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Program goals of ensuring long-term maintenance and creating green job pathways. Rivas noted that the City of Pasadena has committed \$500,000 of local returns to the SS and encouraged interested parties to connect with the City of Pasadena.

Christina Monde (City of Pasadena) shared that the City of Pasadena presented the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS to the Central Santa Monica Bay WASC in October 2025, but Public Works staff later deemed the SS as ineligible. Monde commented that SCW Program guidance on studies related to workforce development is vague. Monde emphasized that the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS is ready to begin if funding can be secured.

Katie Evers (Center for Watershed Protection) commented that skilled maintenance is essential for the long-term performance of green infrastructure. Evers shared that the Center for Watershed Protection is partnered with the City of Pasadena on the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS to offer the Clean Water Certificate Program in Los Angeles County. Evers explained that the Clean Water Certificate Program is an entry-level pathway for participants to learn skills and gain employment as stormwater maintenance professionals.

A member of the public expressed support for City of Pasadena's Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS.

Due to technical difficulties with the virtual raise-hand function, virtual participants were instructed to message SCW staff directly if they wished to provide public comment. Chair Torossian encouraged members of the public who wish to make a public comment at future WASC meetings to submit a comment card prior to the meeting to ensure that the WASC will receive their comment even if there are technical difficulties.

9) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 4 from 1:30pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. Items on the next agenda include:

- a) Workforce Development Presentation by Public Works
- b) Regional Program FY24-25 Annual Report Summary
- c) FY26-27 Scientific Studies Peer Review Summary
- d) Project Modification Requests for WASC Discussions

Member Villegas inquired whether the WASC can receive a presentation from the City of Pasadena about the Building a Green Infrastructure Workforce in the Region SS despite it being deemed ineligible. Public Works staff acknowledged this request and indicated they will update the WASC after SIP deliberations.

10) Adjournment

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