

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



Wednesday, March 18, 2026
12:00pm – 3:00pm
Torrance Civic Center, Human Resources Department
3231 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

CJ Caluag, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)
Jenn Swart, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
*Christopher Lapaz, 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, Carson (Municipal)
Susie Santilena, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Geremew Amenu, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Joshua Soliz, Torrance (Municipal)
Douglas Krauss, EWMP: Beach Cities (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Vanessa Hevener, EWMP: Peninsula (Municipal)
Nancy Shrodes, Heal the Bay (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Attending Virtually:

Matthew Veeh, West Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)

Committee Members Not Present:

Miller Zhou, EWMP: Dominguez (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Craig Cadwallader, Chair 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 and established quorum. Public Works staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial and instructions on public comment submissions.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2026

Chair Cadwallader presented the SSMB WASC meeting minutes from February 18, 2026. Member Susie Santilena requested a correction to Discussion Item B-iii, clarifying that the statement concerned the “reviewer’s reservations” rather than any reservation held by Member Santilena. Vice Chair Douglas Krauss motioned to approve the meeting minutes with the revision, seconded by Member Susie Santilena. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 11 votes in favor, 2 in abstention, 0 opposed and 2 Members absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

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3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Chair Cadwallader and Watershed Coordinator Shrodes attended the groundbreaking ceremony for the South Santa Monica Bay Water Quality Enhancement: 28th Street Storm Drain Infiltration Project (28th Street Project) and shared enthusiasm regarding the Project's progress.

Member Caroline Orija reported coordination with State Parks on a forthcoming groundbreaking event for Slauson Park. The event is scheduled for March 28. Member Orija noted that an email with additional details will be provided to Public Works.

Public Works staff provided Program Updates:

- The public comment period for the Biennial Progress Report closed on February 14. The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to submit the report to the County Board of Supervisors on March 11.
- Mid-Year Reports were due February 15, 2026 for Infrastructure Program (IP) Project and Scientific Study (SS) developers.
- All twelve Watershed Coordinator contracts are fully executed and active. The Watershed Coordinators are continuing to provide services under the new agreements.
- The Los Angeles County Flood Control District has officially launched the Safe, Clean Water K–12 Education and Schoolyard Transformation Program in partnership with Brown and Caldwell. The program will include benchmarking and stakeholder workshops, the development of Schoolyard Transformation Design Guidelines, and the creation of a Safe, Clean Water Program Education Vision Document. This program is aimed at helping school communities navigate challenges while keeping projects aligned with program goals. A kickoff meeting was held in February 2026, and work is officially underway

Public Works staff provided Watershed Planning Updates:

- The Initial Watershed Plans and companion Online Planning Tool are live on the [Safe, Clean Water \(SCW\) Program website](#).
- A Watershed Planning Project Developer Information Session was held virtually on March 18. The session included information and examples to help Project Developers align applications with the Watershed Planning as part of the new requirement of the Feasibility Study Guidelines. More information is available on the [SCW Program website](#).
- Since its launch, the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) has collected 1,300 new responses. The CSNA has received 136 responses for the SSMB Watershed Area.
- Public Works staff are available to answer questions at watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

4) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Member Geremew Amenu disclosed being a team member on the West Carson Stormwater Improvements Project, a County-led Project under consideration for inclusion in this year's Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP).

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Nancy Shrodes reported that the Heal The Bay (HTB) Aquarium at the Santa Monica Pier experienced severe flooding during recent storms but has been remediated. The HTB Aquarium successfully reopened to the public last weekend with a free admission day, incorporating educational programming about the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes assisted with the release of a giant black sea bass, Gordita, attended meetings with the Sacred Places

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Institute, and participated in the Schools and Stormwater Working Group. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes conducted a site visit to the Gardena Willows Wetlands and explored potential Best Management Practices (BMP) for the site. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes also held the 8th Urban Watershed Working Group Meeting, presenting on the Initial Watershed Plans and leverage funding opportunities with the Baldwin Hills Conservancy and Proposition 4 funding. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes also held discussions on utilizing new software and data visualization tools to support project development, strategize opportunities, and track efficacy. The tool will be showcased at the next Urban Watershed Working Group meeting, which will likely be held at Los Angeles Trade Tech.

Work continues on the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan for the current contract year.

Additional engagements include attending the Water Foundation convening for Education and Engagement grantees and a future presentation to the Palos Verdes School District Wellness and Sustainability Committee. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes noted work planning the BioBlitz event scheduled for April 25 in partnership with the Heal the Bay Foundation, South Bay Audubon, and the City of Manhattan Beach; registration for this event is live on [the SCW Program calendar](#).

Upcoming outreach includes tabling at the Gardena Equinox Fair on March 21, participation in the South Bay Eco Event on April 18, and the Cal State Dominguez Hills Earth Day event on April 18.

6) Public Comment Period

Two public comment cards were submitted to Public Works before 5pm on the day prior to the meeting. Public comment cards can be found on the [SCW Program website](#).

Win Cowger (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research) shared updates on the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds Scientific Study, noting that the SS was included in the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) WASC's SIP. Cowger commented that the Study could achieve strong regional coordination if included in the SSMB WASC's SIP as well. Cowger noted having solicited input from all nine WASCs and emphasized that trash removal is a priority for Disadvantaged Communities. Cowger stated that the SS presents an opportunity to advance both trash removal efforts and the supporting science.

Joyann Sofio (Our Water Los Angeles (OWLA) shared OWLA's recommendation that the project approval process consider true Nature-based Solutions (NBS), robust community engagement, meaningful investment, and promotion of green jobs. Sofio noted a lack of NBS in current project submittals and highlighted projects with strong community engagement. Sofio also emphasized OWLA's desire for increased tribal engagement and partnerships, citing the Reimagining La Brea Tar Pits Project as a good example.

7) Discussion

a) Stormwater Investment Plan Deliberation Overview Presentations

i) Stormwater Investment Plan Programming Guidelines

Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination) provided an overview of the Stormwater Investment Plan Programming Guidelines. [Slides are available on the SCW Program website](#).

Chair Cadwallader inquired whether the Safe, Clean Water Program: Initial Watershed Plans Developer Info Session would be recorded and posted. Fossum confirmed that the meeting recording is available on the Watershed Plans section of the [SCW Program website](#).

ii) Disadvantaged Community Benefits and Community Support

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Watershed Coordinator Shrodes presented on Disadvantaged Community Benefits and Community Support, highlighting the definition of a Disadvantaged Community, Disadvantaged Community Benefits, and the Disadvantaged Community Policy requirement specific to the SSMB region. Under the requirement, 31% of funds are required to be invested in Disadvantaged Communities; the SSMB WASC is currently exceeding this requirement by approximately \$2 million. Of the 15 IP Projects previously funded, five are located within Disadvantaged Communities, five are not in Disadvantaged Communities and provide no Disadvantaged Community Benefits, and five are not in Disadvantaged Communities but do claim Disadvantaged Community Benefits. Of the eight funded Technical Resource Program (TRP) Project Concepts, two are within Disadvantaged Communities, two are not in Disadvantaged Communities and would provide no Disadvantaged Community benefits, and four are not in Disadvantaged Communities but do claim Disadvantaged Community benefits. For FY26–27, two IPs and three TRP Project Concepts are planned. The full presentation is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Amenu noted that one TRP Project Concept, the West Carson Stormwater Improvement Project, is a County-led project and that the lead was listed incorrectly in the presentation.

b) South Santa Monica Bay Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Stormwater Investment Plan

Public Works provided an overview and demonstration of the SIP tool, which is available on the SCW Program website. Public Works presented a baseline scenario showing 80% of the budget allocated, with approximately \$4.7 million available for allocation in FY26–27. Member Santilena inquired about the suggested margin of error to account for in the current budget year of FY26-27, which was noted to be \$200,000–\$300,000 below anticipated revenue. Chair Cadwallader expressed a preference to maintain the 80% allocation in all budget years, noting concerns about exceeding this threshold due to funding uncertainty and potential shortfalls.

Chair Cadwallader noted the Project Modification Requests (PMRs) include a \$3 million additional funding request and opened the floor for discussion.

Member CJ Caluag agreed with maintaining the 80% threshold as a safeguard and confirmed that this recommendation applies to projected future years and not the FY26-27 budgeted year. Member Amenu clarified that the PMR request of \$3 million is for one year. Chair Cadwallader confirmed that construction of the 28th Street Project would not be stopped by an absence or reduction in WASC funding. Eduardo Pech (28th Street Project Developer), noted that construction add-ons could be funded in phases or with a reduction if necessary. Public Works asked the applicant to propose a funding scenario for input into the SIP tool. The applicant proposed \$1 million in the first year and \$2 million in the second year, which resulted in a first-year allocation of 92% but less than 80% for future years.

Public Works shared the project ranking survey results. Member Jenn Swart noted that accepting all three SS, three TRPs, and two IPs would push allocations over the current budget. Member Santilena confirmed that funding all considered projects would not exceed the 5% maximum allotment for SS.

Member Elizabeth Sala expressed concerns about leveraging additional funding and requested that applicants explore further funding options. Watershed Coordinator Shrodes reported that the 28th Street Project had secured \$13.6 million in leverage funding. Katie Harrel (CWE) confirmed that the City of Manhattan Beach had obtained additional funding from other sources. Member Sala emphasized that the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS is a high community priority, and that the WASC should consider including it in the SIP.

The WASC considered the submitted TRP and SS applications. Member Caluag highlighted the community support for TRP Project Concepts and recommended including all three. Member Santilena noted that the

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WASC previously approved only one project for the City of Carson and supported the city's funding request. The Committee discussed potential future construction costs for the Victoria Park Stormwater Capture Project Concept, and the need for leveraged funding and cost-sharing in the future.

David Mercier (Michael Baker International), representing the City of Carson, provided additional context on costs for the Victoria Park Stormwater Capture Project Concept. Mercier noted that projected costs are based on the City of Carson's master planning effort, which incorporated historical SCW Program costs and derived unit costs per acre-foot of water captured. Costs reflect anticipated management of the water, including infiltration, sewer diversion, or onsite use. The estimates are rough and scaled at the master planning level, emphasizing the importance of advancing the Project Concept through the TRP process to refine cost projections, explore phasing options, and better understand actual expenditures. The park has a large footprint and substantial access to water flowing from a smaller tributary channel before joining the main branch.

Regarding potential cost-sharing, Mercier noted that total funding requirements are still to be determined. Mercier noted that the City of Carson intends to pursue additional grant opportunities, including leveraging local active transportation grants, and coordination with Caltrans for potential partnerships to capture runoff from the larger surrounding area. Members agreed that even if the WASC funds a TRP Project Concept, the Committee is not obligated to fund resulting phases in the future.

The Committee discussed IP priorities. Member Amenu requested more information on the funding request for the Los Angeles Harbor College Stormwater Projects. Daniel Apt (Olaunu) shared that the Project has leveraged funds for 50% of costs.

Member Santilena raised questions about potential over-design and whether the Darby Park Multi-Benefit Project would be appropriately scaled during design. Brenda Ponton (Woodard & Curran) confirmed that the Project design will ensure sizing is appropriate to modeled flow, and assessment of sizing will be incorporated as part of the design process.

The Committee returned to the Los Angeles Harbor College Stormwater Project. Member Swart commented that the Project is a strong candidate because it has completed CEQA. The Project includes a 50/50 cost share, and operations and maintenance costs are fully covered by the applicant. Public Works noted that funding was not requested for FY26–27, with all funding planned for FY27–28 and FY 28-29. Questions arose regarding the Transfer Agreement for a \$0 initial year; Public Works staff confirmed that the Transfer Agreement would only be initiated in the year funding is requested, and reminded the Committee that first-year funding is secured, while funding for subsequent years is earmarked but not yet finalized. Apt confirmed flexibility with the funding schedule and noted that the funding request was structured based on the available SIP budget. Members discussed the potential to move some funding to the first year while maintaining a buffer of approximately \$300,000.

Member Santilena requested an update on the Disadvantaged Community benefit status of projects in the SIP. Public Works staff confirmed that SSMB exceeded the Disadvantaged Community investment ratio requirement in all scenarios reviewed.

8) Public Comment Period

Win Cowger (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research) noted that the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds Scientific Study may not be funded within the current SIP cycle, given the Committee's indication that addressing trash on roadways is not its highest priority. The WASC suggested that trash within stream channels is a higher priority. Cowger indicated that this feedback would be incorporated into the next proposal for consideration in the following SIP cycle. Cowger also highlighted a potential

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improvement to the SS review process. IP Projects are required to assess Community Benefits, while SS currently are not. The proposed Study includes unique elements that would incorporate Community Benefits; Cowger recommended that future review processes for SS include evaluation of community impacts. Cowger emphasized that agency benefits are important, but that the ultimate goal of agency work is to serve communities.

9) Voting Items

- a) Approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Stormwater Investment Plan recommendations for the SSMB Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and submit to the Regional Oversight Committee for review (funding scenario "Final – 3/18/26")

Vice Chair Krauss moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 Stormwater Investment Plan for the SSMB Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the ROC for review (funding scenario "Final – 3/18/26"). Member Orija seconded the motion. The WASC approved the motion with 15 in favor, 0 abstentions, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

10) Items for Next Agenda

- a) South Santa Monica Bay Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2026-27 Stormwater Investment Plan (if needed)

11) Adjournment

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

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 15, 2026

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

See [SCW website](#) for meeting details.

SSMB WASC - March 18, 2026							
Member Type	Organization	Member	Quorum Present			Voting Items	
			Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Approve the February 18, 2026 SSMB WASC Meeting Minutes with corrections discussed.	Approve the final Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Stormwater Investment Plan for the SSMB Watershed Area including Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the ROC for review (funding scenario "Final - 3/18/26")
Agency	LACFCD	CJ Caluag	X	Daniel Bradbury		Y	Y
Agency	West Basin MWD	Matthew Veeh	x	Tammy Hierlihy		Absent during vote	Y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Jenn Swart	X			Y	Y
Agency	LA County Sanitation District	Dave Pierce		Christopher Lapaz	X	A	Y
Agency	LA Recreation & Parks	Cathie Santo Domingo		Darryl Ford	X	Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Margie Hoyt	X			Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	<u>Craig Cadwallader</u>	X	Mary Simun		Y	Y
Community Stakeholder	Los Angeles County Department of Public Health	Caroline Orija	X			A	Y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Elizabeth Sala	X			Y	Y
Community Stakeholder							
Municipal Members	Carson	Gilbert Marquez		Roland Jen	X	Absent during vote	Y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Susie Santilena	X	Virginia Wei		Y	Y
Municipal Members	LA County Public Works	Geremew Amenu	X	Lara Awad		Y	Y
Municipal Members	Torrance	Shin Furukawa		Joshua Soliz	X	Y	Y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Beach Cities	Doug Krauss	X	Geraldine Trivedi		Y	Y
Municipal Members	EWMP: Dominguez	Miller Zou		Clifford Shum			
Municipal Members	EWMP: Peninsula	Vanessa Hevener	X	Jeannie Naughton		Y	Y
Watershed Coordinator	Heal the Bay	Nancy Shrodes	x				
		Total Non-Vacant Seats	16			Yay (Y)	15
		Total Voting Members Present	15			Nay (N)	0
		Agency	5			Abstain (A)	0
		Community Stakeholder	4			Total	15
		Municipal Members	6			Approved	Approved

Other Attendees

- Alexander Iglesias Rosale: Lara Awad
- Alexia Linet Khechatoorian
- Ali Sharbat Luis
- Ana Rivera (LASAN) Luis Perez (SWPD)
- Anthony Vidal Marisol Ibarra
- Aric M Mark Hall GLACVCD
- Ben O'Neal Matt Veeh
- Brenda Ponton Mehrad Kamalzare (CPP)
- Call-in User_1 Michelle Staffield
- Cas, CWH Naomi Diep
- Craig Doberstein Raymond Lam (LASAN)
- Daniel Apt Robyn
- David Mercier Robyn D
- Dylan Ahearn (Herrera) Rosie S
- Eduardo Pech Ryanna Fossum (Regional)
- Elizabeth Fassman-Beck SSMB AV
- Eric Bonilla Sabrina Yang
- Geraldine Trivedi Sophia Catalan
- Jenny Chau Win Cowger
- Jian Peng ashwini
- Joyann Sofio michael.scaduto@lacity.o
- Kathleen McGowan
- Katie Harrel (CWE)
- Kenny Khov
- Kristina

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
CJ Caluag	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Primary	<i>CJ Caluag</i>
Daniel Bradbury	Los Angeles County Flood Control District	Alternate	
Matthew Veeh	West Basin MWD	Primary	
Tammy Hierlihy	West Basin MWD	Alternate	
Jenn Swart	Water Replenishment District	Primary	<i>Jenn Swart</i>
		Alternate	
Dave Pierce	LA County Sanitation Districts	Primary	
Christopher Lapaz	LA County Sanitation Districts	Alternate	<i>Chris Lapaz</i>
Cathie Santo Domingo	LA Recreation & Parks	Primary	
Darryl Ford	LA Recreation & Parks	Alternate	
Margie Hoyt	Resident	Primary	<i>Margie A. Hoyt</i>
Craig Cadwallader	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	Primary	<i>Craig Cadwallader</i>
Mary Simun	Surfrider Foundation South Bay Chapter	Alternate	
Caroline Orija	LA County Public Health	Primary	<i>Caroline Orija</i>
Elizabeth Sala	Resident	Primary	<i>Elizabeth Sala</i>

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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization		Signature
Gilbert Marquez	Carson	Primary	
Roland Jen	Carson	Alternate	
Susie Santilena	Los Angeles	Primary	
Virginia Wei	Los Angeles	Alternate	
Geremew Amenu	Unincorporated County	Primary	
Lara Awad	Unincorporated County	Alternate	
Shin Furukawa	Torrance	Primary	
Joshua Soliz	Torrance	Alternate	
Doug Krauss	EWMP: Beach Cities	Primary	
Geraldine Trivedi	EWMP: Beach Cities	Alternate	
Miller Zou	EWMP: Dominguez	Primary	
Clifford Shum	EWMP: Dominguez	Alternate	
Vanessa Hevener	EWMP: Peninsula	Primary	
Jeannie Naughton	EWMP: Peninsula	Alternate	
Nancy Shrodes	Heal the Bay	Primary	

