

# Upper Los Angeles River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

### Meeting Minutes

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Wednesday, February 4, 2026

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)

Art Castro, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (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 Lindner, Tataviam Land Conservancy (Community)

\*Scott Applebaum, University of Southern California (Community)

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

\*Roxy Rivas, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)

Michael Vartanians, City of South Pasadena (Municipal)

\*Virginia Wei, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

Karo Torossian, City of Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair

Dawn Petschauer, City of Pasadena (Municipal)

Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

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

#### Committee Members Attending Virtually:

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

#### Committee Members Absent:

Marc David, City of Glendale (Municipal)

Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

\*Committee Member Alternate

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

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## **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-language 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 January 7, 2026**

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from January 7, 2026. Chair Karo Torossian motioned to approve the January 7 meeting minutes, seconded by Member John Huynh. The WASC voted to approve the meeting minutes with 8 votes in favor, 3 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 3 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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#### 3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Chair Torossian disclosed communication with a City of Los Angeles Councilmember on a Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program Project.

#### 4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- Public Works staff conducted completeness checks of all Project applications in the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (FY26027) Call for Projects. Staff reviewed Project applications for inclusion of all key information and consistency with SCW Program Goals and Purposes.
- Program-wide, three applications were deemed ineligible for the Scientific Studies (SS) Program through completeness checks. Two of the three SS were related to workforce development and did not meet the fullness of the technical analysis intent. Public Works acknowledges the importance of Workforce Development in the SCW Program.
- The Scientific Symposium hosted in November 2025 was intended to articulate the spirit and trajectory of the SS Program, the [recording](#) is available on the [SCW Program website](#). The District is also developing supplemental guidance to clarify some confusion during the application process and guide future submissions to the SS Program. The District and Project applicants of the workforce development proposals are engaged in ongoing discussions about collaborative solutions and partnerships to expand workforce development in the SCW Program. Public Works staff are continuing collaborative discussions with the City of Pasadena and Amigos de los Rios to explore partnership opportunities supporting workforce development efforts.
- The deadline for submitting a Project Modification Request (PMR) for consideration in the FY26-27 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) was October 31, 2025. Program-wide, 31 PMRs were received before the deadline. The ULAR WASC received 17 PMRs, of which four were not needed, ten were deemed consistent, and three were deemed inconsistent. Consistent PMRs did not have significant changes, while inconsistent PMRs have scope changes and/or additional funding requests.
- Mid-Year Reports are due on February 15, 2026 for Project and SS developers.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) met last month and opened the 30-day Public Comment Period for the Draft Biennial Progress Report. The Public Comment Period ends on February 14. The next ROC meeting is scheduled for February 11 and will cover Initial Watershed Plans to be published.
- Public Works highlighted the importance of transparent and fair communication regarding SCW Program duties and 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.

#### 5) Watershed Planning Updates

Public Works' Watershed Planning staff provided updates, noting:

- The Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tool will be released at the end of February.
- The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) received more than 1,300 new responses to-date, including 257 responses in the ULAR Watershed Area. A summary of responses can be viewed on the CSNA Dashboard, which is linked on the Community Engagement & Education page of the [SCW Program website](#).
- Within the SCW Program Project Application Module, the method for calculating the anticipated number of jobs created is being refined to produce more realistic projections.

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- To contact the Public Works' Watershed Planning Team, please reach out by email to [watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov](mailto:watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov).

Upon inquiry, Public Works' Watershed Planning staff shared that Public Works plans to host training sessions on using the Watershed Planning Tools.

#### **6) Presentations and Discussion Items**

##### **a) Workforce Development**

Jolene Guerrero (Public Works, Deputy Director of Water Resources) presented an update on Public Works' Workforce Development Program. The Workforce Development Program intends to grow the construction workforce and operations and maintenance (O&M) workforce for green infrastructure and water quality projects in Los Angeles County. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Deputy Director Guerrero shared that the training partnership in the construction industry will be launched in summer or fall 2026, while the partnership in the O&M workforce will follow.

Upon inquiry, Deputy Director Guerrero clarified that Public Works currently does not have vacancies for stormwater maintenance professionals, and one challenge of the Workforce Development Program has been identifying job vacancies in the green infrastructure construction and O&M industries. Deputy Director Guerrero noted that the intention of the Workforce Development Program is to not only train entry-level construction and O&M professionals, but also to match participants with job vacancies at municipalities in Los Angeles County for Projects funded by the SCW Program.

Upon inquiry, Deputy Director Guerrero suggested that individuals interested in participating in the Workforce Development Program can be connected to the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity.

Member Dawn Petschauer and Vice Chair Meisami-Fard expressed interest in sharing their home organizations' staffing needs with the Los Angeles Department of Economic Opportunity.

Member Ernesto Pantoja provided additional context on the motivation for establishing a workforce development program in the green infrastructure construction industry.

##### **b) FY26-27 SS Peer Review Summary**

SS Program Project applicants were invited to answer questions from the WASC on the SS Peer Review Summaries.

##### **i. A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Win Cowger (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research, Project applicant) explained that the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS intends to aggregate existing datasets on trash pollution from municipalities and assist municipalities in making this data publicly available.

Member Petschauer noted that because trash was the first Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) in this region, a lot of regional trash data is available; Member Petschauer expressed interest in examining the more than 30 years of trash data that has been collected. Cowger noted that the SS would aggregate trash data from municipalities to make it publicly available as a resource to municipalities that want to share their data, but are unable to do it by themselves.

Upon inquiry, Cowger clarified that previous scientific research has not quantified the proportion of trash in waterways that originates from roadways.

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#### **ii. Assessment and Treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs) SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Assessment and Treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Sam Ward (Stillwater Sciences, Project applicant) highlighted that the Assessment and Treatment of Contaminants of Emerging Concern SS would develop a methodology for collecting data in stormwater and rivers that prioritizes researchers' safety while still achieving the SS's objectives.

Nate Butler (Stillwater Sciences, Project Applicant) clarified that the Project applicant would evaluate the feasibility of collecting data to calculate Event Mean Concentrations (EMCs).

Upon inquiry, Butler clarified this SS's site selection process.

Upon inquiry, Butler clarified that the SS would evaluate Best Management Practice (BMP) effectiveness by measuring water quality at both the inlet and outlet of a BMP. Butler noted that the goal of this SS is not to identify the source of CECs.

#### **iii. Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Mitul Luhar (University of Southern California, Project applicant) clarified that the Characterizing and Optimizing the Water Quality Benefits of In-Channel Vegetation SS would utilize both in-situ monitoring equipment and handheld sensors. Luhar shared that as the first step of the SS, proponents would identify appropriate locations for in-situ monitoring equipment.

#### **iv. Climate Resistance and Resiliency: An Adaptive Framework for Stormwater Risk Management SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Climate Resistance and Resiliency: An Adaptive Framework for Stormwater Risk Management SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Brianna Datti (Craftwater, Project applicant) – clarified that the Climate Resistance and Resiliency: An Adaptive Framework for Stormwater Risk Management SS would leverage existing tools to evaluate the impact of disasters on stormwater quality and volume and on green infrastructure. Datti noted that local municipalities can utilize results of the SS to inform disaster preparedness and response plans.

#### **v. Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Brad Wardinsky (Craftwater, Project applicant) clarified that the Quantifying Community Flood Management Benefits of Watershed-Scale Stormwater Capture SS would develop a model that can be calibrated with existing long-term datasets.

#### **vi. Regional CECs and Pollutant EMCs in Stormwater Assessment SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Regional CECs and Pollutant EMCs in Stormwater Assessment SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

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Sanjay Mohanty (University of California Los Angeles, Project applicant) clarified that the Regional CECs and Pollutant EMCs in Stormwater Assessment SS intends to mitigate uncertainty of the monitoring system by collecting composite samples over three years.

Upon inquiry, Dylan Ahearn (Herrera Environmental, Project applicant) shared that the SS intends to focus on nine monitoring locations – three sites with industrial land use, three sites with commercial land use, and three sites with residential land use – so that the SS would be more feasible to implement, but so that future research could expand upon this SS's findings.

#### **vii. Stormwater BMP O&M Needs Assessment, Guidance Document, and Implementation Materials SS**

The SS Peer Review Summary of the Stormwater BMP O&M Needs Assessment, Guidance Document, and Implementation Materials SS is available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Craig Doberstein (Herrera Environmental, Project applicant) expressed the opinion that gathering input from a Technical Advisory Group would strengthen the Stormwater BMP O&M Needs Assessment, Guidance Document, and Implementation Materials SS by reducing bias. Member Petschauer expressed agreement.

Elizabeth Fassman-Beck (Southern California Coastal Water Research Project, Project applicant) clarified that one objective of the SS is to evaluate whether routine maintenance activities can restore BMP function and prevent the need for more involved restorative maintenance activities. Fassman-Beck commented that the SS was designed to evaluate multiple types of BMPs so that municipalities could apply findings broadly.

#### **c) PMRs for WASC Discussion**

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented an overview of PMRs, including the procedure for submitting a PMR, types of PMRs, PMR SIP deliberation, and PMRs received by the ULAR WASC for consideration in the FY26-27 SIP. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

The WASC discussed how to help Project Developers determine when a PMR is required. Public Works staff clarified that a PMR is not required if the Project's schedule is adjusted within the same Fiscal Year. Antos noted that the Project Modification Guidelines can be updated to clarify common misunderstandings. Antos also encouraged Project Developers to reach out to Public Works staff or Watershed Coordinators if there is uncertainty about whether a PMR is required.

Public Works staff shared that the Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project submitted a PMR requesting to split the project into two separate projects to help facilitate project permitting. After careful review, Public Works determined that the requested change extends beyond the WASC's current authority. Staff expressed their commitment to continuing to work collaboratively to identify a path forward. Watershed Coordinators Alonso Garcia and Kristina Kreter shared that Council for Watershed Health is coordinating with Los Angeles County and Amigos de los Rios to overcome challenges in the project permitting challenges related to project components both on campus and off campus.

Public Works staff shared that three PMRs submitted for consideration in the ULAR watershed area FY26-27 SIP were deemed inconsistent. Project Developers for the inconsistent PMRs were invited to present to the WASC and answer any questions. PMRs are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

#### **i. Green Street Demonstration Project on Main Street Project**

Katie Harrel (CWE, Project Developer) explained that a PMR was submitted for the Green Street Demonstration Project on Main Street to account for a change in the Project's scope. Harrel shared that

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the Project concept was revised to remove walking trails from the Main Street median, since the Project Developer determined that a walking path would be unsafe for pedestrians.

Upon inquiry, Harrel clarified that the revised Project concept does not impact the Project cost or the number of points the Project was awarded by the Scoring Committee.

#### **ii. Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project**

Enrique Baul (Public Works, Project Developer) noted that the Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project will convert a debris basin into a multi-benefit park with green infrastructure in Sun Valley. Baul explained that the Project will mitigate flooding and capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater. Baul shared that a PMR was submitted to correct an error in the Project application that incorrectly quantified water supply benefits.

Upon inquiry, Baul clarified that the PMR did not impact the Project schedule.

Chair Torossian commented that area around the Project site frequently experiences flooding during rain events and inquired if the Project Developer has considered a way to mitigate flood risk at the site before construction is scheduled to begin in 2028. Baul shared that the Project site requires remediation before stormwater can be captured on the site for infiltration.

#### **iii. Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway Project**

Aksel Palacios (City of Los Angeles, Project Developer) shared that a PMR was submitted for the Watts Civic Center Serenity Greenway Project to revise the amount of funding requested. Palacios noted that Project costs increased due to inflation, design changes to the proposed pump station, and the inclusion of additional permits.

Upon inquiry, Palacios shared that the Project has completed design and is currently in the permitting process.

Member Petschauer inquired whether the City of Los Angeles would consider waiving or reducing permitting fees for this Project. Palacios shared that the City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering has agreed to not charge the Project Developer for staff costs of reviewing permit applications.

#### **d) SIP Programming Guidance Presentation**

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented a summary of the SIP deliberation process, including guidance on reserving funds for future years and integration of the Watershed Planning Tool. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Antos shared that the ROC encourages the WASC to reserve 20% of projected future funding to provide a cushion against uncertainty.

Public Works will reach out to continuing Project Developers before the next ULAR WASC meeting about potentially delaying or accelerating their funding requests so that the WASC would have more flexibility in programming this and future SIP.

### **7) Public Comment Period**

Win Cowger (Moore Institute for Plastic Pollution Research) commented that the A Holistic Assessment of Trash in Watersheds SS received two letters of support – one from a community-based organization and one from a City of Long Beach Councilmember, that were submitted as attachments to a public comment card.

### **8) Items for Next Agenda**

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

- a) Regional Program FY24-25 Annual Report Summary
- b) FY26-27 SIP Deliberations

#### **9) Adjournment**

Vice Chair Meisami-Fard 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
Adi Liberman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Adi Liberman</i>
Alonso Garcia	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		<i>Alonso Garcia</i>
Anteneh Tesfaye	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Blayne Sutton-Wills	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Alternate	
Brent Maue	City of Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Cara Campbell	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Primary	<i>Cathie Santo Domingo</i>
Conor Mossavi	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Curtis Castle	City of Calabasas	Municipal	Alternate	
Dawn Petschauer	Pasadena	Municipal	Primary	
Edith de Guzman	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>Edith de Guzman</i>

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Ernesto Pantoja	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Ernesto Rivera	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Gary Lam	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Alternate	
Gregory Pierce	University of California, Los Angeles	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
<i>Scott Applebaum</i> Jill Sohm	University of Southern California	Community Stakeholder	Primary <i>Attendee</i>	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
John Huynh	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Julia Lindner	Tataviam Land Conservancy	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Kara Plourde	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Alternate	
Karo Torossian	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Kevin Ho	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Alternate	

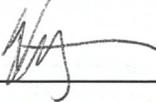
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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Kristina Kreter	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Marc David	City of Glendale	Municipal	Primary	
Michael Vartanians	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Primary	<i>M. Vartanians</i>
Miguel Luna	Fernandeño Tataviam Band of Mission Indians	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Rafael Prieto	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Roxy Rivas	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	<i>Roxy Rivas</i>
Satenig Marjanian	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Alternate	
Scott Applebaum	University of Southern California	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Sergio Rascon	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
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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Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Virginia Wei	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Alternate	

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Nate	Butler	Stillwater Sciences	nbutler@stillwatersci.com
SAM	WARD	Stillwater Sciences	sward@stillwatersci.com
Mitul	Luhar	USC	luhar@usc.edu
Carlyng	Mander	USC	mander@usc.edu
Joyce	Wang	Fluidion	j.wang@fluidion.com
Craig	Dobertier	Herrera	cdobertier@herrera.com
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DAI	Bei	LA Co DPW	DBUI@DPW.LACOUNTY.GOV
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RYAN	ONG	DPW	rong@dpw.lacounty.gov
Alexander	Robinson	USC	alex.robinso@usc.edu
CALVIN	TRAN	LACPW	CATRAN@PW-LACOUNTY.GOV
<del>BRADY</del>			

\*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public

WebEx Webinar Attendees  
Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - February 4, 2026

Aksel Palacios  
Alex Messina  
Angineh Shahnazarian  
Anthony Barreras  
Aric M  
Brad Wardynski  
Brenda Ponton  
Chris Lee  
Conf. Room Monitor  
Conor Mossavi  
Dan Angelescu  
Dylan Ahearn (Herrera)  
Gabriel Z

Henry Lopez  
Horacio Urias  
Jennifer Amarant (EOS)  
John Mendoza  
JonPaul Sarro  
Joyann Sofio  
Katie Harrel (CWE)  
Kristina Kreter  
Larry Tran - SCW Staff  
Latoya Waters  
Linet Khechatoorian  
Mackenzie Bolger - SGVCOG  
Marisela Velasquez

Michael Ku  
Pablo Forni  
Raymond Lam  
Rebecca Dugopolski, Herrera  
SPA INT/ Giselle Franco  
Taylor Paez  
Thomas Le  
Timothy Lim  
ULAR AV  
ULAR WASC - Presenter  
Victoria Friesen  
Wayne Lee - SCW Staff  
Win Cowger

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susie.santilena@lacity.org  
valeria