

# Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



---

Tuesday, April 28, 2026  
1:00pm – 3:00pm  
Progress Park Auditorium/Plaza West  
15500 Downey Ave  
Paramount, CA 90723  
WebEx Meeting

## Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Flood Control District (Agency)  
Jenn Swart, Water Replenishment District (Agency)  
Francisco Guerrero, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts (Agency)  
Danielle Lewis, City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation (Agency)  
\*Maria Madrigal, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)  
\*Arturo Gonzalez, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)  
Manny Gonez, TreePeople (Community), Co-Chair  
\*Dylan Porter, Port of Long Beach (Community)  
Candice Dickens-Russell, Friends of the Los Angeles River (Community)  
\*Natalie Rivera-Estrada, Bell Gardens (Municipal)  
\*Matt Robertson, Downey (Municipal)  
Alexa Reasoner, Long Beach (Municipal)  
Joseph Venzon, Los Angeles County (Municipal), Co-Chair  
Azucena Ramirez, SGA (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

## Committee Members Not Present:

Madeline Chen, Central Basin (Agency)  
Freddie Agyin, Vernon (Municipal)  
Adriana Figueroa, Paramount (Municipal)  
Gladis Deras, City of South Gate (Municipal)

\*Committee Member Alternate

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

---

## **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Manny Gonez, Co-Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed all Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works) staff facilitated a roll call, conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx, and provided an overview of meeting guidelines and participation instructions for any participants joining online. A quorum was established. Public Works staff shared a reminder of the attendance policy with WASC members.

Public Works staff reminded attendees that Spanish interpretation services are provided at the WASC meeting.

## **2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 24, 2026**

Public Works staff presented the minutes from the previous meeting. Co-Chair Joseph Venzon motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Jenn Swart. The Committee voted to approve the February 24, 2026 LLAR WASC meeting minutes with 10 votes in favor, 0 opposed, 2 in abstention, and 1 absent at the time of vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

# Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Co-Chair Gonez reminded WASC Members that Article V, Section C of the WASC Operating Guidelines states that the absence of more than three meetings in one year will be considered a failure to attend meetings. This will make the Committee Member eligible for removal.

### 3) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided an update on various SCW Program activities:

- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to approve the 2026 Biennial Progress Report for submission to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) on March 8, 2026.
- As of April 28, 2026, eight WASCs have recommended a Fiscal Year 2026-2027 (FY26-27) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP). The Rio Hondo (RH) WASC is the one remaining.
- Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program staff will prepare the SIP Transmittal Reports for the ROC on behalf of the WASCs. This year, the SIP Transmittal Report is being updated based on prior feedback and will begin incorporating the released Initial Watershed Plans.
- The ROC is scheduled to discuss the recommended FY26-27 SIPs on June 10 and July 8, 2026.
- On March 12, 2026, SCW Program staff reminded Regional Program Project Developers to submit 12-month lapsed funding extension requests per the conditions of the Regional Program Transfer Agreement.
- The recording of the November 2025 Science Symposium has been posted on the [Science Symposium event webpage](#). The next Symposium is anticipated to be held in April 2027.
- All twelve Watershed Coordinator contractors are now fully executed. The contracts will end on December 31, 2026, with the option to renew for up to four one-year terms and six month-to-month extensions, for a maximum total contract term of five years and six months.
- The Quarter 3 (Q3) 2026 Funding Report has been posted to the [SCW Program website](#) under the Resources tab.
- To keep up with Program Updates as they are shared, the public can subscribe to receive email notifications on the SCW Program website. Implementation Updates are also located in the [News and Updates webpage](#) on the SCW Program website.

### 4) Watershed Coordinator Update

Watershed Coordinator Azucena Ramirez provided an update on Watershed Coordinator activities from March through April. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

### 5) Discussion Items

#### a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

#### b) Key Areas of Interest for 2026 Call for Projects

Emily Ng (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented on the Round 8 (FY27-28) Call for Projects WASC Priorities. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Ng requested that Committee Members share priorities for future applicants to consider. Member Candice Dickens-Russell emphasized the integration and understanding of nature-based solutions (NBS) and referenced the Los Angeles County Water Plan Nature-based Solutions Task Force.

Member Arturo Gonzalez highlighted the State budget deficit, encouraged applicants to pursue Proposition 1 and Proposition 4 funding, and summarized two potential projects. Member Gonzalez mentioned the Gage & Heliotrope Pocket Park Project and explained that the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy has discussed purchase of property on Atlantic Boulevard in the City of Vernon. Member Gonzalez also highlighted the LLAR Technical Assistance Program and school greening efforts.

# Lower Los Angeles River

## Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

### Meeting Minutes

---



Co-Chair Venzon emphasized the importance of conducting early engagement with community-based organizations (CBOs) and of achieving some percentage of leveraged funding. Ng inquired whether the WASC intended to hold smaller projects, or those led by non-governmental organizations, to the same leveraged funding standard as larger projects. Co-Chair Venzon remarked that the WASC does not expect smaller projects to secure as much leveraged funding as municipalities but does expect smaller projects to have high engagement with CBOs. The WASC did not indicate a specific leverage funding percentage.

Co-Chair Gopez proposed prioritizing Infrastructure Program (IP) projects with leveraged funding in future SIP cycles.

Member Gonzalez explained that small CBOs are growing quickly in the LLAR Watershed Area, but a disconnect exists between these organizations and larger entities like municipalities. Member Gonzalez emphasized Co-Chair Venzon's comments on CBO engagement.

Ng asked if Committee Members intended to prioritize addressing specific geographic areas or gaps in services based on community feedback, Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) responses, or best management practice (BMP) type. Member Ernesto Rivera emphasized use of the Watershed Planning Tool to locate key project areas.

Watershed Coordinator Azucena Ramirez summarized CSNA responses, noting that 88% of projects in the LLAR Watershed Area provide Disadvantaged Community Benefits and elevated CSNA survey responses on community members' top concerns. Watershed Coordinator Ramirez emphasized the importance of community engagement and urged WASC Members to prioritize greening school campuses.

When referencing the Watershed Planning Tool, Member Dylan Porter highlighted an area lacking projects between Long Beach and Downey. Member Porter remarked that schools nearby may be opportune for greening projects. Co-Chair Gopez shared about TreePeople's Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Living Schoolyard Study.

Strategic Advancement staff, formerly the Watershed Planning Section, noted discussions on recreation and enhancement at schools. Strategic Advancement staff also explained multiple applications of the Watershed Planning Tool, such as distinguishing which cities fall within the LLAR Watershed Area and overlaying geographic areas with custom composite layers, like Disadvantaged Community status and green spaces.

Co-Chair Venzon remarked that many Scientific Studies (SS) in the FY26-27 SIP cycle applied to multiple WASCs and inquired whether Committee Members would prefer to prioritize studies with watershed-specific benefits. Member Porter noted advantages of both options and explained that regionwide projects still benefit the City of Long Beach, since the City is located on the southern end of the watershed. Member Porter also expressed support for projects that directly benefit local communities.

Member Danielle Lewis stated that the LLAR WASC often prioritizes regional projects, in contrast with other WASCs, and emphasized the importance of evaluating applications within the context of other WASCs' decisions. Co-Chair Venzon inquired if the Strategic Advancement staff could include a layer in the Watershed Planning Tool to signify whether past projects have region-wide or solely watershed-specific benefits. Strategic Planning staff explained that opportunity areas will be reassessed as SIPS are approved.

Member Ernesto Rivera expressed hope that regional projects would incorporate and achieve the goals of smaller ones, although collaboration may be a challenge.

Ng inquired if WASC Members would prioritize any potential areas of science, technical study, and data gaps in future applications. Member Porter noted that the LLAR WASC has funded multiple SS but only one has been completed. Member Porter and Co-Chair Venzon commented that the WASC should prioritize IP projects over SS, prioritizing IP projects with tangible benefits. Co-Chair Venzon stated that applicants

# Lower Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes

---



should be reminded to engage with their Water Replenishment District (WRD) to determine the feasibility of infiltration alternatives early on.

Upon inquiry, Ng confirmed that the funding allocations should equal a 5-year rolling average with at least 85% of total funding allocated to IPs, no more than 10% to TRPs, and no more than 5% to SS.

Member Francisco Guerrero highlighted the requirement that SS account for no more than 5% of the total budget based on annual revenue generated over a five-year period. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that the WASC is not required to reach the 5% cap, only not to exceed it. Member Guerrero remarked that the requirement does not account for past allocations' effect on past approvals. Public Works staff explained that allocation caps have been calculated by the same method since the SCW Program's inception. Member Guerrero requested a review of previous allocations to ensure that the LLAR WASC is not over-allocating funds. Public Works staff noted this request as under consideration.

Ng requested the Committee Members' input on the use of the SIP Deliberation Workbooks. Member Swart expressed a preference for digital copies due to sustainability concerns and feasibility of transporting materials for multiple WASCs. Member Swart also echoed the importance of engaging project stakeholders early in the project cycle. Member Porter stated that both print and digital copies of the Workbook are beneficial since some Committee Members do not bring computers to meetings.

Ng performed a straw poll to gauge how many Committee Members used the Workbook.

Member Swart suggested the use of an additional screen at WASC meetings to benefit Committee Members who do not attend with a laptop.

Co-Chair Venzon proposed surveying Committee Members for their preference for a physical versus digital copy and distributing digital copies of the Workbook in advance of WASC meetings.

## **6) General Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

## **7) Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

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

The next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 26, 2026, from 1:00pm to 3:00pm. See the [SCW Program website](#) for meeting details. Items on the next agenda include:

- a) Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

Co-Chair Gonez requested that Public Works staff include a presentation from TreePeople regarding the LAUSD Living Schoolyard Study on the next meeting's agenda.

## **9) Adjournment**

Co-Chair Gonez thanked WASC Members, Public Works staff, and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

LLAR WASC - April 28, 2026

LLAR WASC - April 28, 2026							
			Quorum Present				
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve February 28, 2026 Meeting Minutes	
Agency	District	Ernesto Rivera	x	Enrique Baul		y	
Agency	Central Basin	Madeline Chen		Braden Yu			
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Jenn Swart	x			y	
Agency	LA County Sanitation Districts	Francisco Guerrero	x	Alysha Chan		a	
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreat	Danielle Lewis	x	Todd Leland		a	
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Isabelle Campiformio		Maria Madrigal	x	y	
Community Stakeholder	Rivers & Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Arturo Gonzalez	x	not present at vote	
Community Stakeholder	TreePeople	Manny Gonez*	x	Mary Hillemeier		y	
Community Stakeholder	Port of Long Beach	James Vernon		Dylan Porter	x	y	
Community Stakeholder	Friends of the Los Angeles River	Candice Dickens-Russell	x	Ryan Mayeda		y	
Municipal Members	City of Bell Gardens	Bernardo Iniguez		Natalie Rivera-Estrada	x	y	
Municipal Members	City of Downey	Dan Mueller		Matt Robertson	x	y	
Municipal Members	City of Long Beach	Alexa Reasoner	x	Wataru Kumagai		y	
Municipal Members	City of Vernon	Freddie Agyin					
Municipal Members	City of Paramount	Adriana Figueroa		Michelle Tse			
Municipal Members	County of Los Angeles	Joseph Venzon*	x	Fred Gonzalez		y	
Municipal Members	City of South Gate	Gladis Deras					
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	SGA Marketing	Azucena Ramirez	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	10	0
Total Voting Members Present		13			No (N)	0	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	2	0
Community Stakeholder		5			Total	12	0
Municipal Members		4				Approved	Not Approved

**Attendees**  
**Lower Los Angeles River WASC Meeting**  
**April 28, 2026**

Andrew Kim

Aric M

David Coghiel

David Lee

Emily Ng (Regional Coordination)

Fred Gonzalez - LACPW

James Carpenter - SCWP

Jason Jade Pepito

Jenny Chau

JonPaul Sarro

Justin Jones

Kristina

LLAR AV

Lauren Anderson

Linet Khechatoorian

Luis Perez (SWPD)

Michelle Kim

Oliver Galang (Craftwater)

SCWP Staff - Anthony Barreras

SCWP Staff - Larry Tran

SCWP Staff - Timothy Lim

Spanish Interpreter-Alejandra

Wataru Kumagai

Lower Los Angeles River  
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Ernesto Rivera	FCD	[REDACTED]	P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Enrique Baul	FCD		A	
Madeline Chen	Central Basin		P	
Braden Yu	Central Basin		A	
Jenn Swart	Water Replenishment District		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Shannon Bishop	LA County Sanitation Districts		P	
Alysha Chan	LA County Sanitation Districts		A	
Danielle Lewis	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Todd Leland	City of Long Beach Parks & Recreation		A	
Isabelle Campiformio	Conservation Corps of Long Beach		P	
Maria Madrigal	Conservation Corps of Long Beach		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Mark Stanley	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy		P	
Arturo Gonzalez	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Manny Gonez	TreePeople		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Mary Hillemeier	TreePeople	A		

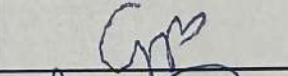

Lower Los Angeles River  
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
James Vernon	Port of Long Beach	[REDACTED]	P	
Dylan Porter	Port of Long Beach		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Candice Dickens-Russell	Friends of the Los Angeles River		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Ryan Mayeda	Friends of the Los Angeles River		A	
Bernardo Iniguez	Bell Gardens		P	
Natalie Rivera-Estrada	Bell Gardens		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Dan Mueller	Downey		P	
Matt Robertson	Downey		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Alexa Reasoner	Long Beach		P	<i>[Signature]</i>
Wataru Kumagai	Long Beach		A	
Freddie Agyin	Vernon		P	
Adriana Figueroa	Paramount		A	
Michelle Tse	Paramount		P	
Joseph Venzon	County of Los Angeles		A	<i>[Signature]</i>
Fred Gonzalez	County of Los Angeles		P	

Lower Los Angeles River  
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address		Signature
Gladis Deras	South Gate	[REDACTED]	P	
Tara Dales	SGA Marketing		P	
Clint Herrera	South Gate		A	
Azucena Ramirez	SGA Marketing			
FRANCISCO GUERRERO	LACSD		P	

Lower Los Angeles River  
 Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Ali	Rahmani	LA Regional Water Board	[Redacted]
AISHA	GAMA	Tree People	
Azuencia	Ramirez	SGA	
Michelle	Müller	Paramount	

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