

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, July 1, 2026

2:00pm - 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1st Floor (Courtyard), Alhambra Room

900 S Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

*Conor Mossavi, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

*Cara Campbell, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)

Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency), Alternate Vice Chair

*Gary Lam, Los Angeles Recreation & Parks (Agency)

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)

*Julia Lindner, 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)

Teresa Villegas, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

Thuan Nguyen, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

*Brent Maue, 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 Not Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Los Angeles County Flood Control District (Agency)

Marc David, City of Glendale (Municipal)

Michael Vartanians, City of South Pasadena (Municipal)

Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1) Welcome and Introductions

Karo Torossian, 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 was available in the online meeting. Public Works staff facilitated the roll call of Committee Members and established a quorum.

2) Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 6, 2026

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from May 6, 2026. Member Teresa Villegas motioned to approve, seconded by Member Edith de Guzman. The WASC approved with 4 votes in favor, 6 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 3 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

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4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Chair Torossian shared that the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) approved the ULAR Fiscal Year 2026 – 2027 (FY26-27) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) last month. Chair Torossian noted that there was significant public comment about a project located along the Arroyo Seco. Chair Torossian encouraged the Project applicant for the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project to attend the Board of Supervisors meeting in which the Board will vote on the ULAR SIP, so that the developer can clarify potential confusion on the project. Chair Torossian also summarized the ROC's discussion about streamlining the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program's approach to Scientific Studies.

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- ULAR's FY26-27 SIP Transmittal report was reviewed and approved at the June 10th ROC Meeting.
- During the June 10th ROC meeting, there were many public comments both supporting and opposing the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project. Public Works staff clarified that there are two Arroyo Projects: the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, which is the one receiving significant public input, and the Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery, a newly recommended project this year, which is located downstream of the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project. In the FY26-27 SIP, the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project is not projected to receive SCWP Regional Program funding for this 5-year SIP period (FY26-27 to FY30-31). The WASC noted the public feedback for the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Project. When the new Arroyo Park Infiltration Gallery Project was first presented to WASC, members asked whether the new project could be implemented independently of the Arroyo Seco - San Rafael Wetlands Project. Per the January 2026 meeting minutes: "Upon inquiry, [the proponent] 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."
- The 2026 Call for Projects for the FY27-28 Stormwater Investment Plan is currently accepting applications, with a submission deadline of July 31st, 2026. Call for Projects Info Sessions were held on May 13th and 14th. For more information and updated guidance, please visit the [Call for Projects webpage](#) on the SCW Program website.
- As of today, nine WASCs have recommended a FY26-27 SIP. Similar to previous years, SCW Program staff will prepare the SIP Transmittal Reports to the ROC on behalf of WASCs. This year, the SIP Transmittal Report was updated based on prior feedback and will start incorporating the released Initial Watershed Plans to better communicate SCW Program Progress. The ROC discussed the four FY26-27 SIPs at its June 10 meeting and is scheduled to discuss the remaining 5 SIPs for its July 8 meeting. The ULAR SIP was recommended to the Board during the June 10th ROC meeting.
- 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.

5) Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman summarized Environmental Outreach Strategies' recent activities, including organizing a panel at the VerdeXchange Conference and a forum with BizFed in Los Angeles County. Upcoming events include a community tour of the Los Angeles Groundwater Replenishment Project at D.C. Tillman Water Reclamation Plant on July 23 and a community tour of Tujunga Wash Greenway Project. Watershed Coordination Liberman is supporting multiple organizations, including Valley Village Neighborhood Council, Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District, GreenInfo

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Network, and La Cañada Flintridge Sustainability and Resilience Commission, with developing potential projects and Scientific Studies.

Watershed Coordinator Alonso Garcia summarized Council for Watershed Health's recent activities, which included presenting to Los Angeles County Youth Climate Commission on the Nogales Park Project, hosting a tour of the Bowtie Demonstration Project, supporting Pacoima Beautiful with their 2026 Agua University course, and attending Los Angeles County Equity in Infrastructure Summit, Los Angeles County Water Resiliency Summit, LA Waterkeeper's Recharge LA Conference, and the groundbreaking for Winery Canyon Channel and Descanso Gardens Stormwater Capture and Reuse Project. Upcoming outreach activities include attending Friends of the LA River's RiverFest on August 9 and hosting a tour of the South Los Angeles Wetlands Park, bike tour of the Active Transportation Rail to River Corridor Project, and a language justice workshop on July 16. Additionally, Council for Watershed Health plans to conduct targeted outreach in neighborhoods within the ULAR Watershed Area that have lower engagement in the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey. Lastly, Council for Watershed Health met with multiple potential Project Applicants, including the City of Monterey Park, a community group in Altadena, Odyssey Charter School in Pasadena, and Tataviam Tribal Conservation Corps, to discuss project opportunities.

6) Watershed Planning Updates

Public Works Strategic Advancement staff provided updates on watershed planning, noting:

- Public Works hosted a Watershed Planning Project Developer Info Session on March 18. A recording of the info session is available on the [SCW Program website](#).
- Revisions to Feasibility Study guidelines and scoring criteria are underway. Public Works is gathering feedback through the [SCW Program 2027 Scoring Revisions Survey](#). The survey is available on the [Adaptive Management webpage](#) of the SCW Program website.
- [Post-Construction Monitoring Guidance](#) has been published. The reporting module is being updated to reflect the new guidance. The guidance is available on the [Adaptive Management webpage](#) of the SCW Program website.
- The CSNA survey has received over 1,900 new responses since it launched. 517 responses were collected in the ULAR Watershed Area.
- The Public Works Strategic Advancement team is available to answer any questions at watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Regional Program FY25-26 Mid-Year Report Summary

Nicole Wong (HDR, Regional Coordination) presented a summary of the FY25-26 Mid-Year Reports. Each project approved in FY20-21 through FY25-26 SIPs was required to submit a FY25-26 Mid-Year Report covering project progress and expenditures from July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

WASC Members made several suggestions for improving future Mid-Year Report summary presentations. Chair Torossian and Member Edith de Guzman requested that the WASC funding overview tables include information on project schedules and any delays and concerns. Members Jill Sohm and Thuan Nguyen suggested that the presentation include details on how long a project has been in its current phase, so the WASC can better understand which projects are not making sustained progress. Member Conor Mossavi commented that it may not be appropriate to characterize all delays as "critical issues".

Upon inquiry, Wong clarified that the LAUSD Living Schoolyards Program Pilot Study did not submit a FY25-26 Mid-Year Report, because the Project developer was waiting for guidance on a Project Modification Request (PMR). Wong confirmed that the SCW Program team has been in contact with the Project developer to support them in completing the next required report.

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Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that a given Project would complete an audit after its funded activities are completed. The SCW Program team is still working on the audit framework for the Regional Program, but it will likely be similar to the Municipal Program audit requirements.

WASC Members discussed their responsibility to provide proper oversight of progress and expenditure reports. Member Edith de Guzman commented that because the ULAR WASC has funded many projects, it is challenging to review each project's progress and expenditure reports in detail. Mike Antos (Regional Coordination) clarified that the WASC's main responsibility is to recommend a SIP each year. The WASC can evaluate information provided in progress and expenditure reports when deciding to fund continuing projects in the SIP.

WASC Members discussed the timing of expenditure and progress report deadlines. Vice Chair Ida Meisami-Fard suggested that Public Works streamline the reporting process, so the WASC has up-to-date information on continuing projects during SIP deliberations. Chair Torossian requested that the next presentation on progress and expenditure reports be given to the WASC before the PMR deadline on October 31 to ensure the WASC is aware of any project delays.

Member Villegas highlighted that a significant amount of awarded funds have not yet been spent due to project delays and commented that these unspent funds might provide more benefits if they were reallocated to other projects. Member Villegas suggested that Public Works provide the WASC with more context on why projects are delayed. Public Works staff clarified that in future expenditure and progress reports, project developers will be asked to summarize their activities during the reporting period in a couple of sentences. Chair Torossian suggested that project developers also be asked to explain any project delays in a one-sentence summary. Vice Chair Meisami-Fard noted that project delays are understandable but suggested that project developers make a commitment to spend awarded funds.

Public Works staff explained that lapsed funding guidelines require project developers to spend awarded funds within five years or request an extension. Public Works staff shared that many projects are delayed because project developers prefer to secure all construction funding before they go out to bid for construction.

Project developers were invited to answer questions from the WASC. Victor Cortes (City of Los Angeles Bureau of Street Services, project developer) shared that the Eagle Rock Boulevard Multi-Modal Stormwater Capture Project was unable to secure leveraged funding, so the Project developer is currently seeking an additional \$35 million in construction funding. Upon inquiry, Cortes clarified that the Project's construction timeline is unknown.

Mike Scaduto (City of Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and Environment, project developer) shared that although some of the Project developer's Projects have budget shortfalls, the developer is working to identify next steps for these Projects. Scaduto commented that the Project developer is aware of the potential for lapsed funds but will have a clearer path forward for their Projects ahead of the PMR deadline.

Member Brent Maue provided an update on the Arroyo Seco-San Rafael Treatment Wetlands Project, which was developed by the City of Pasadena in collaboration with the City of South Pasadena. Member Maue shared an acknowledgement of the public scrutiny concerning the Project's components in the City of South Pasadena, the Project developer is considering splitting the Project's components into two phases. Member Maue also shared that the Environmental Impact Report public comment period for the Project was extended by another 30 days.

b) Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Area Update Presentation

Mackenzie Bolger (San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments, Project developer), Brianna Datti (Craftwater, Project developer), Randall Wade (Craftwater, Project developer) and Luis de la Torre (WSP, Project developer) presented an update on the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Management Area

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Fire Effects Study. This Study was funded by the ULAR WASC and aimed to understand runoff flows and water quality impacts of wildfire in the ULAR Watershed Area. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Member Mossavi inquired what prospective Project developers could learn from the Study when considering proposing projects in high fire risk areas. Datti clarified that during the design phase, Project developers could consider whether a best management practice (BMP) should be designed to handle extreme conditions in the immediate aftermath of a fire. Datti added that once a project is constructed, Project developers could consider having an emergency maintenance plan in place to address additional maintenance needs after a fire.

Upon inquiry, Datti shared that the City of Pasadena created a public-facing story map about impacts of the Eaton Fire that includes findings from this Study.

Upon inquiry, Datti shared that the Project Developer used data collected after the Eaton Fire to build the model. De la Torre noted that post-fire monitoring was conducted after the fire had been contained and after some clean-up efforts had already commenced. De la Torre clarified that post-fire monitoring measured contaminants that are common in residential areas, including asbestos.

Member Mossavi suggested that the Fire Effects Study findings should be considered in future SCWP adaptive management efforts, particularly when developing operations and maintenance guidance for Regional Program projects.

8) Public Comment

Public Works staff invited in-person, virtual, and call-in attendees to provide public comments.

Elva Yanez (Save Elephant Hill) shared an update on the Elephant Hill Open Space and Stormwater Infrastructure Feasibility Study, which is receiving technical assistance through the SCW Program's Technical Resources Program. Yanez shared that Save Elephant Hill received grant funding from the Water Foundation to perform community outreach alongside the SCW Program Technical Assistance Team's work. Save Elephant Hill hosted a community workshop to coincide with the opening of new trails at Elephant Hill, and their next upcoming community event will be held at 2pm on Saturday, July 25 at El Sereno Senior Center. Yanez commented that community-based organizations face barriers in accessing SCW Program funding, since the application process is complex and requires technical expertise, and because Community Benefits score lower than Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits. Yanez suggested that the SCW Program create a separate funding program specifically for community-based organizations. Yanez shared that Save Elephant Hill plans to submit a project application for design funding in 2027.

9) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 2 from 1:30pm to 4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. More information is available on the [SCW Program website](#). Items on the next agenda include:

- a) WASC Roles & Responsibilities
- b) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs
- c) Summary of submitted Infrastructure Program Projects for FY27-28

10) Adjournment

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