

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, September 2, 2026

1:30pm - 4:00pm

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

900 S Fremont Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Ernesto Rivera, Los Angeles County 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 Santo Domingo, 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)

Michael Vartanians, City of South Pasadena (Municipal)

Teresa Villegas, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)

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

*Josafat Flores, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

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)

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

Committee Members Not Present:

Marc David, City of Glendale (Municipal)

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-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 July 1, 2026

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from July 1, 2026. Member Ernesto Pantoja motioned to approve, seconded by Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard. The WASC approved with 6 votes in favor, 6 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 3 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Art Castro confirmed with Public Works staff that the July 1 meeting minutes were updated to incorporate a comment from Member Castro's Committee Member Alternate.

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3) Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

4) Committee Member and Program Updates

Public Works staff provided updates, noting:

- The current Community Stakeholder terms are set to expire on December 31st. Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program staff are working with the Board of Supervisors to recommend reappointments for all Community Stakeholders in good standing with their attendance. Any community stakeholders not interested in reappointment are asked to communicate that to SCW Program staff as soon as possible.
- In alignment with the 2026 Biennial Progress Report, the SCW Program is updating the 2019 WASC Operating Guidelines to clarify existing procedures, improve consistency across the Regional Program, and incorporate lessons learned from implementation. The proposed amendments were shared with all Committee Members on July 28, and Committee Members were asked to provide feedback on the proposed changes. SCW Program staff will address feedback as able, and the updated WASC Operating Guidelines are anticipated to be adopted this Fall. A summary of the main proposed changes are as follows:
 - ARTICLE IV, Section 5: Primary and alternates to represent the same geographic or subject matter interests (rather than being from the same organization).
 - ARTICLE VI, Section 5: Quorum based on one member from each category of members (i.e., Municipalities, Agencies, and Community Stakeholders) (rather than two).
 - ARTICLE VI, Section 7: Reference the Conflict of Interest Guidance on the SCW website (rather than providing language directly in the WASC Operating Guidelines). Note the COI Guidance is currently under development.
- All 9 Fiscal Year 2026 – 2027 (FY26-27) Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) have been recommended by approval by the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) at their June and July meetings. The SIPs are anticipated to go to the Board of Supervisors for their approval in the Fall.
- The 2026 Call for Projects for the FY27-28 Stormwater Investment Plan ended on July 31st, 2026. The SCW Program received applications for 29 Infrastructure Program (IP) Projects, 7 Technical Resources Program (TRP) Project concepts, and 12 unique Scientific Studies (SS). ULAR received 7 IP Projects, 4 TRP concepts, and 7 SS applications for FY27-28.
- The deadline to submit a Project Modification Request (PMR) for consideration in the FY27-28 Stormwater Investment Plan is October 31, 2026. Starting last year, SCW Program transitioned the PMR form to an online version that will allow direct submittal through the Reporting Module.
- Post-Construction Monitoring Guidance is now available on the [SCW Program website](#). The guidance provides a flexible and consistent framework for post-construction monitoring and maintenance of SCW Program projects, covering Water Quality Benefits, Water Supply Benefits, and Operations & Maintenance. It also outlines practical triggers, recommended actions, and long-term adaptive management strategies to support sustained project performance and the achievement of intended project benefits over time.
- 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 Coordinators Alonso Garcia and Kristina Kreter presented on Council for Watershed Health's outreach activities in 2026 to date and announced upcoming tours, including a tour of Metro's Rail to Ride Project on September 10 and a tour of South LA Wetlands Park on September 16. Watershed Coordinator

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Adi Liberman presented on the outreach and educational events that Environmental Outreach Strategies hosted and attended in 2026 to date. Additionally, Watershed Coordinator Kreter summarized LA Waterkeeper's Beyond Watershed Planning Report, which makes recommendations for how the SCW Program can improve watershed planning efforts. LA Waterkeeper received funding from the SCW Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program to develop this report. Presentation slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

6) Watershed Planning Updates

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

- Revisions to Feasibility Study guidelines and Scoring Criteria are underway. Public Works gathered input on the Guidelines and Criteria through the SCW Program 2027 Scoring Revisions Survey, which closed on July 19.
- The Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey has received over 2,200 new responses since it launched. 559 responses were collected in the ULAR Watershed Area.
- The Public Works Strategic Advancement Section is available to answer any questions at watershedplanning@pw.lacounty.gov.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) presented highlights of the SCW Program, watershed planning efforts, ULAR Watershed Area priorities, funded projects in the ULAR Watershed Area, SIP process, and more topics related to WASC roles and responsibilities. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Antos clarified that the SCW Program is in its seventh year and 77 SCW-funded projects and programs are underway in the ULAR Watershed Area.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that changes in a project's schedule require a PMR if the changes would push the start date or end date of construction to a different fiscal year.

Member Teresa Villegas inquired whether the results from completed Scientific Studies funded by the SCW Program are posted on the SCW Program website once they are published. Antos explained that published Scientific Studies are saved in the Reporting Repository. Public Works staff also mentioned that SS developers complete close-out reports after they have completed their SS.

Member Edith de Guzman asked how the SCW Program tracks IP Project benefits. Antos explained that project developers quantify their proposed IP Project benefits in the Program application itself. The Scoring Committee verifies the proposed benefits before projects are included in the SIP. Antos shared that the SCW Program highlights included in the slides are based on benefits reported in project applications and verified by the Scoring Committee. Antos clarified that in the future, the SCW Program will collect monitoring data from constructed projects to quantify the realized project benefits. Member de Guzman emphasized the importance of reporting accurate data on SCW Program benefits.

b) Summary of Submitted Infrastructure Program Projects for FY27-28

Watershed Coordinator Kreter presented a summary of the Regional Program project application review process. Watershed Coordinators Liberman and Garcia summarized the applications received in the ULAR Watershed Area for FY27-28. Slides are available on the [SCW Program website](#).

Upon inquiry, Robin Mark (SALT Landscape Architects, Project Applicant) confirmed that the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project requested \$4.1 million for design only. Mark explained that the design fee is high because it includes coordination with Caltrans and MetroLink and environmental oversight due to the

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Project's location on Los Angeles County Flood Control District right-of-way. Mark clarified that the total leveraged funding for the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project located within the ULAR Watershed Area is less than \$5 million.

c) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

Chair Torossian and Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard thanked the WASC for the opportunity to serve as Chair and Vice-Chair in the past year. Chair Torossian expressed interest in serving as Chair for the next year. Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard also expressed interest in continuing to serve as Vice Chair.

8) Public Comment

Public Works staff invited in-person, virtual, and call-in attendees to provide public comment. Comment cards are available on the [SCW website](#).

Claudia Gonzalez (Pacoima Beautiful) expressed support for the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project and encouraged the WASC to continue to invest in the community through the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project. Gonzalez's comment was interpreted into English for the Committee.

Augustina Rodriguez (Pacoima Beautiful) commented in support of the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project, asking the WASC to continue to invest in the community and fund the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project. Rodriguez's comment was interpreted into English for the Committee.

Guadalupe Flores (Pacoima Beautiful) commented that the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project would be transformative for the community of Pacoima and provide more much-needed trees and shade. Flores's comment was interpreted into English for the Committee.

Robin Mark (Salt Landscape Architects) commented in support of the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project. Mark shared that Pacoima Beautiful is leading the Project's development and has engaged with local community members regarding this Project for over 17 years. Pacoima Beautiful developed the Project to serve local residents' needs. Mark commented that Pacoima lacks access to open space, shade, and safe outdoor spaces. Mark also shared that the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project has secured millions of dollars in grants and philanthropic funding.

Bety Guzman (Pacoima Beautiful) expressed support for the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project, emphasized that Pacoima deserves more investment, and asked the WASC to fund the Pacoima Wash Greenway Project and similar projects in the area. Guzman's comment was interpreted into English for the Committee.

Following the Public Comment Period, Member Veronica Padilla-Campos, confirmed by Member Theresa Villegas, informed the WASC that the in-meeting interpretation into English of public comments made in Spanish did not capture the full meaning and weight of the public comments. Member Padilla-Campos emphasized that full English translations of the comments were submitted in advance and provided to the WASC by Public Works. Staff confirmed that the submitted cards will be attached to the minutes and made available on the SCW website for Members.

9) Voting Items

Member Villegas motioned to send all completed feasibility studies to the Scoring Committee, seconded by Member Dawn Petschauer. The WASC approved the motion with 15 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 0 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

Member Pantoja motioned to approve Karo Torossian as Chair and Ida Meisami-Fard as Vice-Chair for the ULAR WASC, seconded by Member Padilla-Campos. The WASC approved with 15 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 0 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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10) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7 from 1:30pm-4:00pm at Public Works Headquarters. More information is available on the [SCW Program website](#). Items on the next agenda include:

- a) CSNA Annual Report Presentation
- b) FY27-28 Submitted Application Presentations

11) Adjournment

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