Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 7, 2026
1:30pm - 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 County Flood Control District (Agency)
Art Castro, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Ida Meisami-Fard, Los Angeles Sanitation & Environment (Agency), 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)
Michael Vartanians, City of South Pasadena (Municipal)
*Virginia Wei, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)
Karo Torossian, City of Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Rafael Prieto, City of Los Angeles (Municipal)
*Josafat Flores, Los Angeles County (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:
John Huynh, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Marc David, City of Glendale (Municipal)
Dawn Petschauer, City of Pasadena (Municipal)

*Committee Member Alternate

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

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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 September 2, 2026

Public Works staff presented the meeting minutes from September 2, 2026. Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified the process for revising meeting minutes.

Member Edith de Guzman confirmed with Public Works staff that the SCW Program team is working to improve the accuracy of Spanish interpretation during future WASC meetings.

Vice-Chair Ida Meisami-Fard motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by Chair Torossian. The WASC approved the 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).

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.
- The deadline to submit a Project Modification Request (PMR) for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2027-2028 (FY27-28) Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) is October 31, 2026. Starting last year, the SCW Program transitioned the PMR form to an online version that will allow direct submittal through the Reporting Module.
- Project Developers must notify the SCW Program team at least 14 days in advance of events highlighting project accomplishments, such as groundbreaking or ribbon-cutting ceremonies, per the Transfer Agreement. If developers want to invite the Director of Los Angeles County Public Works or members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, please provide at least 30 days' advance notice. To notify the SCW Program team, email SafeCleanWaterLA@pw.lacounty.gov with a subject line that includes the project name, watershed area, and event type.
- The Quarter 1 (Q1) Fiscal Year 2027 (FY2027) Funding Report has been posted to the SCW Program website under the Resources tab. In support of Public Works, the Regional Coordination team prepares quarterly funding reports that include a high-level overview of recent funding policy highlights and a funding matrix that shares currently active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program projects. Public Works staff and the Regional Coordination team are actively tracking activity to better understand impacts to future funding.
- The Scoring Committee began scoring projects on September 28. To view meeting details, please visit the Scoring Committee events webpage on the SCW Program website.
- The SCW Program Municipal Program Team is offering project support services to all cities with an updated City Services Contract with Los Angeles County Public Works. Current available services are limited to initial project planning and project design. Cities interested in utilizing these services or seeking clarification can contact the SCW Municipal Program Email Address SCWPMunicipal@pw.lacounty.gov. Additional details on the scope and availability of future services will be shared in the coming months.
- 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 Alonso Garcia summarized Council for Watershed Health's recent outreach activities, including hosting a tour of the Active Transportation Rail to River Corridor Project, hosting a tour of the South Los Angeles Wetlands Park, and tabling at Heal the Bay's Coastal Cleanup Day at Lewis MacAdams Riverfront Park. Watershed Coordinator Garcia shared that Council for Watershed Health will

attend Friends of the LA River's Great LA River CleanUp on October 10 and the Sunday Funday event at Camp Bob Waldorf on November 8.

Watershed Coordinator Kristina Kreter summarized Council for Watershed Health's recent engagement with organizations interested in participating in the SCW Program, including two consulting firms. Council for Watershed Health also assisted Jewish Big Brothers and Big Sisters to obtain a Letter of Non-Objection from the City of Glendale for the Camp Bob Waldorf Campus Water Quality, Habitat, and Resilience Project Concept and assisted Amigos de los Rios in coordinating with Public Works on the Altadena Post-Fire Living Street Arterial Greenway Project Concept. Lastly, Council for Watershed Health developed a factsheet about the City of Los Angeles' invitation to collaborate on the process for non-municipal projects and another factsheet about the Project Modification Request (PMR) for SCW Program-funded projects.

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman summarized Environmental Outreach Strategies' recent activities, including tabling at a concert at Warner Center Park on September 27, attending the Los Angeles Business Council's Sustainability Summit on October 1, attending the Infrastructure Justice for Los Angeles Symposium on September 25, and engaging with three congressional offices. Additionally, Environmental Outreach Strategies assisted Valley Village Neighborhood Council and Forward Alliance of Los Angeles to obtain letters of nonobjection from the City of Los Angeles. Watershed Coordinator Liberman shared that Environmental Outreach Strategies' upcoming activities include arranging tours of the Tujunga Wash Greenway and Stream Restoration Project and the Caballero Creek Park, tabling at the Calabasas Pumpkin Festival on October 18, and presenting at BizFed's Water Resiliency Forum.

Member de Guzman asked the Watershed Coordinators for advice on engaging with the media about the SCW Program as it relates to the upcoming El Niño climate event. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) offered to coordinate with the Public Works team about the SCW Program's approach to public communication related to El Niño. Member Ernesto Rivera highlighted ready.lacounty.gov as a resource for communicating with the public about emergencies like flooding. Watershed Coordinator Kreter added that Council for Watershed Health can provide resources for emergency response in their monthly newsletters.

6) Public Comment

Public Works staff invited in-person, virtual, and call-in attendees to provide general public comment on the SCW Program. There were no public comments.

7) Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) Annual Report Presentation

Watershed Coordinators Kreter, Garcia, and Liberman presented a summary of the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) survey, highlighted responses and key findings of the CSNA survey, and shared CSNA resources available on the SCW Program website. Slides are available on the SCW Program website.

Upon inquiry, Antos clarified that the CSNA survey does not collect data on racial or ethnic identity but does collect data about home ownership and language spoken at home.

Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard noted that while flooding protection was ranked low on community priorities, there is currently significant public interest in and discussion around flooding due to the upcoming El Niño. Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard inquired whether the CSNA survey provides a definition of flooding protection. Antos clarified that the CSNA survey does not define terms or provide extensive educational material about the Program, thought it accompanies engagement resources on the website and via the Watershed Coordinators.

Member Jill Sohm noted that few CSNA survey responses have been collected in Burbank and asked if the Watershed Coordinators planned to collect more responses in that area. Watershed Coordinator Garcia confirmed that the Watershed Coordinates can reach out to the City of Burbank about tabling at local events. Watershed Coordinator Kreter added that Council for Watershed Health will be tabling at an event in Glendale in November.

b) Technical Resources Program (TRP) Presentation

i. Rain for Calabasas: Fire Cistern (ULAR) Project Concept

Tristan Leger (City of Calabasas, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Rain for Calabasas: Fire Cistern Project Concept, which was submitted to the ULAR WASC for Technical Resources Program (TRP) funding. The objective of the TRP Project is to determine the feasibility of building cisterns to capture stormwater and provide water supply for emergency fire response and non-potable landscape irrigation in the City of Calabasas. Slides are available on the SCW Program website.

Chair Torossian noted that the proposed catchment area is relatively small and asked if the Project applicant had considered incorporating the adjacent tennis courts and parking lots in the catchment area and increasing the cistern size. Leger shared that the catchment area only includes rooftops because it is easier to capture water from rooftops due to gravity flow.

Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard commented that implementing on-site water reuse for landscape irrigation would likely require a treatment system to meet non-potable reuse water quality standards. Vice-Chair Meisami-Fard encouraged the Project applicant to consider the costs of operating and maintaining a treatment system. Member Josafat Flores commented that storing runoff for a long period of time creates potential water quality and vector issues and encouraged the Project applicant to research public health guidance on water reuse and Title 22 requirements for non-potable reuse.

Member De Guzman inquired whether water stored in the cisterns would be distributed to fight fires outside of the catchment area. Leger shared that the TRP would investigate the use of captured stormwater for firefighting efforts local to the catchment area and clarified that the cistern locations were selected to be near public facilities where people could gather in a fire emergency. Leger noted that the Project team could evaluate the possibility of conveying captured stormwater.

Chair Torossian commented that the ULAR WASC tends to prioritize projects that have secured leveraged funding.

ii. Camp Bob Waldorf Campus Water Quality, Habitat, and Resilience Project Concept

Michael Berns (Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles, Project applicant) presented an overview of the Camp Bob Waldorf Campus Water Quality, Habitat, and Resilience Project Concept, which was submitted to the ULAR WASC for Technical Resources Program (TRP) funding. The objective of the TRP Project is to evaluate the feasibility of installing nature-based solutions for source control, stormwater capture, treatment, and/or groundwater recharge at Camp Bob Waldorf in Glendale. Slides are available on the SCW Program website.

c) Reselection of the ULAR Watershed Coordinators for the next term

Public Works staff announced that current contract terms with Council for Watershed Health and Environmental Outreach Strategies to provide Watershed Coordinator services for the ULAR Watershed Area will end on December 31, 2026 and the next term will begin on January 1, 2027. Public Works staff shared that Council for Watershed Health and Environmental Outreach Strategies were the only proposers for the Watershed Coordinator positions in the ULAR Watershed Area.

Upon inquiry, Public Works staff clarified that each Watershed Coordinator contract can be renewed for one year at a time for up to four years and then can be extended on a month-by-month basis for another six months for a total possible contract length of 66 months.

Member Sohm and Member Veronica Padilla-Campos expressed appreciation for the work Watershed Coordinators Garcia, Kreter and Liberman have done, noting particularly their success bringing in new organizations to apply for SCW Program funding.

8) Public Comment

Public Works staff invited in-person, virtual, and call-in attendees to provide public comments on the reselection of the ULAR Watershed Coordinators. Comment cards are available on the SCW website.

Matt Lamborn (Green Info Network) shared that when Green Info Network worked with Watershed Coordinator Liberman on a Scientific Study proposal for the SCW Program, Watershed Coordinator Liberman was resourceful, responsive, and generous with their time. Lamborn expressed support for renewing Environmental Outreach Strategies' Watershed Coordinator contract.

Steven Chavez (Topogram) shared that when Topogram reached out to Watershed Coordinator Liberman for advice on a project concept, Watershed Coordinator Liberman offered helpful advice and connected Topogram with the Valley Village Neighborhood Council to collaborate on a TRP Project application. Chavez expressed support for renewing Environmental Outreach Strategies' Watershed Coordinator contract.

Esther Feldman (Feldman Consulting) commented in support of renewing Environmental Outreach Strategies' Watershed Coordinator contract. Feldman noted that Watershed Coordinator Liberman has supported many organizations in navigating the complex process of developing and implementing a stormwater capture project.

Ginny Hatfield (Valley Village Neighborhood Council and Valley Village Residents Association) expressed appreciation for Watershed Coordinator Liberman's expertise and assistance in developing a stormwater capture project concept near the Tujunga Wash and preparing a TRP Project Application.

Randy Dreyfuss (La Cañada Flintridge Country Club) commented in support of renewing Environmental Outreach Strategies' Watershed Coordinator contractor. Dreyfuss shared that Watershed Coordinator Liberman assisted La Cañada Flintridge Country Club with a TRP Project application and helped plan a community outreach event for the TRP Project.

Brendan Loudermilk (public member) shared that Watershed Coordinators Garcia and Kreter assisted a community organization that Loudermilk belongs to with a TRP Project application for a project concept located in Altadena. Although the TRP Project ended up being in the Rio Hondo Watershed Area, Loudermilk noted that Watershed Coordinators Garcia and Kreter continued to support the community organization by answering questions about the SCW Program and technical stormwater solutions.

9) Voting Items

Member Ernesto Pantoja motioned to appoint Council for Watershed Health as Primary for two (2) Watershed Coordinators and Environmental Outreach Strategies as Primary for one (1) Watershed Coordinator, seconded by Member Padilla-Campos. The WASC approved the motion with 14 votes in favor, 0 votes in abstention, 0 votes opposed, and 0 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

10) Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 4 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) FY27-28 Submitted Application Presentations

11) Adjournment

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