

# Safe, Clean Water Program

Lower Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



## Meeting Minutes:

Tuesday, March 10, 2020

1:00pm – 3:00pm

Paramount Progress Park, Progress Plaza Auditorium  
15500 Downey Ave, Paramount, CA 90723

## Attendees

### Committee Members

Dan Sharp (District)

Lyndsey Bloxom\* (Water Replenishment District)

Kristen Ruffell (LA County – Sanitation)

Meredith Reynolds\* (Long Beach Parks & Recreation)

James Vernon (Port of Long Beach)

Gladis Deras (South Gate)

Cindy Montanez (TreePeople)

Melissa Bahmanpour (River in Action)

Dan Mueller (Downey)

Alvin Papa\* (Long Beach)

Gina Nila (Commerce)

Adriana Figueroa (Paramount)

Kelli Tunnicliff (Signal Hill)

### Committee Members Not Present:

Kevin Wattier (Central Basin)

Laura Ochoa (Lynwood)

Nick Jiles (Conservation Corps of Long Beach)

Mark Stanley (Rivers Mountains Conservancy)

\*Committee Member Alternate

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. James Vernon, the Chair of the Lower Los Angeles River WASC, called the meeting to order.

All committee members made self-introductions and quorum was established.

## 2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 25, 2020

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Vernon asked the committee members for comments or revisions.

**With no comments or objections, the Chair on behalf of the Committee approved the meeting minutes from February 25, 2020** (Ms. Adriana Figueroa and Ms. Kelli Tunnicliff abstained as neither was present at the February 25, 2020 WASC meeting).

## 3. Committee Member and District Updates

Mr. CJ Caluag (District) referred the Committee to the WASC review sheet handout for their use should it have questions or need further information about each project seeking SCW funding.

## 4. Public Comment Period

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Ms. Robin Mark from the Trust for Public Land agency stated that State Parks recently allocated Proposition 68 funding and that many applicants did not receive funding, so the SCW program can expect these applicants to apply for open space and recreational project funding.

#### 5. Discussion Items

##### a) Ex Parte Communication Disclosure

Ms. Kristen Ruffell expressed that she sits on a number of WASC groups and stated that her votes will be influenced by opinions shared at the various WASC meetings. Many members of the Lower LA River WASC agreed with this statement from Ms. Ruffell.

##### b) SIP Programming Guidelines

Mr. Caluag began this discussion by stating to the WASC members that the group will first have an organic discussion while going over the tools which will help with project ranking and seeing budget allocations. Mr. Caluag referred the group to the SIP Programming Guidelines and Attachment A, which looks at the various potential funding scenarios. Ms. Tunncliff asked if the SIP is a 5-year funding plan, and the Committee affirmed that it is a 5-year funding plan. Ms. Bloxom reminded the group that no project can be partially funded, but that an adjusted amount can be allocated each year as long as the project applicant agrees to the adjustments stretching into future years. Mr. Mike Antos emphasized that the resources saved for future years are only earmarked and that each fiscal year, the Committee will be allocating funds again and this may mean funding other projects.

Ms. Tunncliff asked for clarification on being asked to allocate funding this year without being sure if the funding being allocated is available. Mr. Antos confirmed this is the case, but also reminded the Committee that they must look at projects which have leveraged funds if there is high uncertainty with funding allocations.

Mr. Vernon asked in a scenario where an applicant asked for \$30 million in year one, this Committee could work with the project applicant to fund the \$30 million over three or four years. Mr. Caluag confirmed this as correct, subject to developing a 5-year SIP and taking into account the other selected projects for funding.

Ms. Cindy Montanez asked what is the process for not allocating funding to a project if that project did not meet the Safe, Clean Water objectives. Mr. Caluag reminded the WASC that the Scoring Committee already awarded each project points on whether it meets the minimum threshold to be considered for infrastructure project funding and that the ultimate goal of the WASC is to select the best projects for this region and its priorities. Additionally, Ms. Tunncliff stated to the Committee that the group may commit this year to certain projects and a funding amount, but that the group can always reevaluate its decisions next year.

Ms. Tunncliff asked how an applicant proceeds with construction when the Committee endorses the project this year, but elects to not endorse the project in future years, and asked if there are steps the applicant can take to proceed with construction without funding assurances. Mr. Antos stated that this is a political process, that the Committee must make the best decisions possible, and that projects considered for funding in year one should be considered for future full funding as well.

Mr. Alvin Papa stated that if the WASC were to approve planning and design efforts from a specific funding allocation and then create a separate funding allocation for contingencies, this could be the

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way to go. For projects ready for construction, applicants will need to secure other funding sources. This process would help keep projects accountable and make it fair for applicants to apply, and the Committee could take other factors into account, such as whether a project requires right-of-way acquisition or not. Ms. Gina Nila noted that from this year's applications, this group has projects that are ready to commence construction.

Ms. Adriana Figueroa asked if the Committee can parse the funding out, and Mr. Vernon stated that the Committee would need to work with the project applicant.

Ms. Montanez stated that she liked what Mr. Papa stated earlier, and if we could have Mr. Papa's proposal written out. This would be a smart way to proceed for the Committee. Mr. Vernon agreed with Ms. Montanez' comments and asked if the District in future years could have the regional funding program set up according to what Mr. Papa proposed. Mr. Antos responded that the Committee does not have the necessary data to proceed as Mr. Papa proposed, and that there are limitations on the remaining time to get the SIP plan written and finalized before submitting it to the LA County Board of Supervisors for approval consideration. Further, Mr. Antos suggested that before the WASC proceed with Mr. Papa's idea, the WASC should first ask project applicants if the WASC can partially fund projects this year for only planning and design work. Finally, Mr. Antos reminded the WASC that a small allocation of funds to planning and design this year means that future years will mean higher funding allocations for construction efforts.

Mr. Papa stated for the WASC to be able to fund projects, the planning and design funds allow the WASC to do this while allowing project applicants to go after other funding sources, but Mr. Papa was not clear if there is a mechanism in place for this to work. Mr. Vernon stated that he does not believe there is a mechanism for this, unless the project applicant proposed to proceed as such. Ms. Bloxom stated that there is a breakdown of planning/design, construction and operation and maintenance costs per project applicant.

Ms. Tunncliff made note to the WASC that if the group chooses to fund a project now, the group is not truly clear on whether the project is feasible or not, and asked which projects are "shovel-ready." Mr. Vernon stated that he believes the group should not allocate more than 80 percent of the expected funds to the group. Ms. Tunncliff interprets this to mean only one project can be funded, and Ms. Nila believed there would be more flexibility with how projects could be awarded funding. Ms. Tunncliff believes project (mobilization, construction labor and material) costs will go up as projects are delayed with obtaining funding.

Ms. Montanez believes a discussion is necessary on what options the WASC has with necessary changes in future years to allocate funding to projects. Mr. Vernon asked if WASCs have the power to change the District guidelines written for WASCs. Mr. Caluag stated yes, but Ms. Ruffell quickly suggested instead that after the SIP submittal, the WASC can develop recommendations to the SCW program to improve the process.

#### **c) Ranking process and tool**

Mr. Caluag referred the group to the SIP ranking tool and demonstrated how projects can be selected and deselected. The table generally shows how much funding is allocated each year, and once projects are selected, the WASC can decide on funding amounts per fiscal year. Finally, a project ranking sheet shall be handed out today and we will utilize the project ranking tool developed by the District.

Mr. Dan Sharp asked if this process is only for discussion purposes, or for voting purposes. Mr. Caluag clarified that this process is only for discussion purposes, and Mr. Vernon stated that he

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will be giving each project applicant 5 minutes to go over their project and answer any questions the WASC may have.

#### **d) Projects and studies**

##### ***Infrastructure Projects***

###### Compton Et. At. Project (Thuan Nguyen)

Ms. Nila asked why L.A. County is involved with this project being that it is located in the City of Compton. Mr. Nguyen stated that the unincorporated areas drain to this park, and that the City of Compton is only involved with offsite improvements and that the agreement is being worked on at this time.

Ms. Montanez asked how the disadvantaged community (D.A.C.) benefits were quantified. Mr. Nguyen stated that in addition to the water quality improvements, the project will include road and transportation/community improvements and will restore the park and include tree and other vegetative installations.

Mr. Sharp asked if the \$8.4 million costs include the road improvement costs. Mr. Nguyen stated that the road improvement costs are not included as part of the \$8.4 million stormwater quality improvements.

###### Furman Park Stormwater Capture and Infiltration Project (John Hunter)

Ms. Melissa Bahmanpour asked to describe the D.A.C. benefits. Mr. Hunter stated that it is already a great park and it will be restored to a great park when the project is complete. The City of Downey has discussed looking into improving the tennis courts.

Mr. Sharp stated that it is important to note that water will be directed into a known aquifer, but the project is asking for \$14 million of the necessary \$16 million to fund the associated costs. Ms. Bloxom confirmed that the infiltration from this project would be into the local forebay.

###### John Anson Ford Infiltration Cistern (Chau Vu)

Ms. Bloxom asked what impact would be if the \$10 million sought was divided over 5 years and not issued in year 1. Ms. Vu informed the group that the funding is needed now to have the contractor on board and have the work completed faster and cheaper.

Ms. Tunnicliff asked if the project already had the contractor in place and Mr. Sharp asked if the project has already dug a hole. Mr. Vu confirmed that the project is already progressing and that this request is to add additional runoff capture and infiltration.

###### LB MUST (Alvin Papa)

Ms. Tunnicliff asked if the project has secured all necessary right-of-way, and if the current construction is preliminary work. Mr. Papa stated that the City owns all of the property, and that at this time, the preliminary work includes the proposed roadway alignment and utility relocation.

Ms. Bloxom stated that the project has huge capture volume, and asked for a further explanation of the project's final capture volume as either 2 million gallons (MG) or 4 MG. Mr. Papa explained that the facility's first phase is for 2 MG, and that the project can add additional water capture modules to a total of 4 MG.

Ms. Bahmanpour asked where exactly in Long Beach this project is located. Mr. Papa stated it is located off Magnolia Boulevard to the west.

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Mr. Vernon asked if the project is in a D.A.C., and Mr. Papa confirmed this project being located in a D.A.C.

#### Rancho Los Cerritos (Alison Bruesehoff)

Ms. Montanez asked what the type of community support is that this project has performed. Ms. Alison Bruesehoff stated that the project is partnering with the City of Long Beach, and has support from various school districts, and non-profit Water Matters – Long Beach.

Ms. Bahmanpour asked what are the D.A.C. benefits associated with this project. Ms. Bruesehoff mentioned that many schools from various school districts will be coming to visit, in line with each district's curriculum.

#### Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern (Gerry Greene)

No questions were asked.

#### Spane Park Regional Stormwater Project (John Hunter)

Ms. Montanez asked if there are any leveraged funds for this project. Mr. John Hunter responded that there are no leveraged funds, and that it is very difficult for a project located in a D.A.C. to obtain leveraged funds.

### ***Technical Resources Program***

#### 1931 Vernon

No questions were asked.

#### Hollydale Regional Park Green Infrastructure Development Project

No questions were asked.

#### Parque Dos Rios (Debbie Enos)

Ms. Nila asked if there is any partnership with Caltrans for this project. Ms. Debbie Enos stated that Caltrans owns an easement within the property and will be a vested stakeholder throughout the entire project.

Ms. Ruffell asked what community this project is located in and whether the project is part of the Lower L.A. River Enhanced Watershed Management Program (EWMP). Ms. Enos responded that the project is located within South Gate and that this project is already part of the Lower L.A. River EWMP.

Ms. Montanez asked how the public can access this parcel. Ms. Enos said the principal access is from the existing bike trail in the adjacent L.A. River.

#### Willow Springs Park Wetland Restoration Expansion (Meredith Reynolds)

Ms. Ruffell asked if this project is in the Lower L.A. River EWMP. Ms. Meredith Reynolds stated this project is part of the Greater L.A. Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP).

### ***Scientific Studies***

#### Bacteria BMP Prioritization Study (Rich Watson)

Mr. Papa asked what the plan was should the study not get all the necessary funding from each WASC. Mr. Rich Watson said the study is hoping to get 7 of the 9 WASCs to approve the study

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for funding, where if there are less than 5 WASCs that support the study, the study will not move forward.

Mr. Sharp asked if the Regional Board has bought off on this study. Mr. Watson stated that the Regional Board wants additional research and information before it considers changes to the existing standards, which is why this study is before you and the other WASC groups.

Ms. Montanez asked if the Scoring Committee (SC) reviewed this study. Mr. Watson said no, the SC only review infrastructure projects.

Ms. Ruffell informed this WASC group that the Santa Clara River WASC, which she is a part of, voted and approved approximately \$111,000 to support this study.

Ms. Tunncliff asked if the study received \$2 million in approved funding, what the deliverable would be. Mr. Watson stated that \$2 million would be less than 5 WASC groups approving the study, which would mean the study at that point would not move forward.

Ms. Gladis Deras stated that scientific studies are allocated no more than 5 percent of the regional program funds, and asked what the funding request is for this particular WASC. Mr. Watson referred to his presentation for the annual amounts for each WASC, which is approximately \$310,000 for this WASC.

Ms. Bahmanpour asked if the WASC is to rank all projects together. The WASC responded that yes, all projects will be ranked together.

Ms. Montanez asked who the client is for this study. Mr. Watson said the Gateway Authority is the lead agency that would sign the funding transfer agreement with the District.

*\*\*\* A 10 minute break was taken by the group at this time \*\*\**

#### **i) Disadvantaged Communities Benefit**

Mr. Vernon stated we can discuss whether a project has a D.A.C. benefit or not after the project ranking is completed by the WASC. Ms. Montanez stated that the D.A.C. benefit discussion should occur first. Ms. Ruffell asked to let TreePeople share on the D.A.C. benefit, and Mr. Vernon agreed.

Ms. Montanez stated that first, D.A.C. is a priority as defined in the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) program. D.A.C. is in the SCW objectives and was approved by the LA County Board of Supervisors. Ms. Montanez believes there are multiple ways to weigh D.A.C. benefits and believes that a project in a poor community should not be penalized because it was not able to secure leveraged funds. Finally, as the WASC evaluates these projects, the group needs to measure and evaluate the D.A.C. benefits.

Ms. Bahmanpour stated that the group must clearly see how D.A.C. benefits the community, and Mr. Papa agreed with these stated sentiments.

Mr. Caluag reminded the group that before we populate the SIP tool, the committee must confirm that the projects that are claiming a D.A.C benefit are warranted.

At this time, Mr. Vernon asked if the group agreed with moving into the project ranking. Ms. Adriana Figueroa stated that the D.A.C. discussion has to happen first, that there is not enough funding,



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and that the group needs more information. Ms. Ruffell stated that she believes the SIP submittal will be delayed if the projects are not ranked today.

Mr. Vernon proposed that the group fills out the ranking sheet ranking projects 1 through 12, with 1 being the preferred project and leaving a project blank if you do not support the project.

*\*\*\* At this time, the ranking sheets were passed out to the WASC. When the WASC completed its rankings, the rankings were input into the ranking tool. Not all committee members were present to for rankings \*\*\**

Ms. Tunncliff asked if this WASC is choosing what the D.A.C. benefits are. Mr. Antos responded that the WASC is tasked with allocating 110 percent to D.A.C. areas to benefit these communities. Ms. Ruffell added that it is up to the WASC to determine if a project's D.A.C. benefits are warranted or not.

Mr. Antos stated that the WASC will need to ask for D.A.C.s, is it the location, the jobs, or community that governs. Various available resources targeting D.A.C.s are all over the place with what governs for Federal, State, and local funding programs.

Ms. Bahmanpour stated that many parts of Long Beach are in a D.A.C. Mr. Vernon added that a lot of people from D.A.C.s come to the beach shoreline, and asked if projects at the beach benefit D.A.C.s. Mr. Antos stated that this is a political process. Ms. Ruffell stated that a local lense will be needed on D.A.C. benefits.

Ms. Montanez asked what projects are located in a D.A.C. and what the benefits are to the D.A.C.s. Ms. Ruffell stated that the D.A.C. information is tabulated. Ms. Montanez further stated that if projects are in a D.A.C., where is the WASC going, what are the priorities, and believes at minimum, the projects have to be in a D.A.C. Mr. Antos stated that just because a project is in a D.A.C. does not mean it will benefit the D.A.C. and reminded the WASC that the philosophy of the SCW program is that everyone benefits from the selected projects.

*\*\*\* At this time, the ranking tool preliminary results were shown on the projector screen. \*\*\**

Ms. Ruffell stated that in the Santa Clara River, the ranking and voting process was simple and that the same process can work for this WASC.

Ms. Tunncliff asked if the SIP tool could now be populated. Mr. Caluag mentioned this is possible, but Mr. Vernon said there is not enough time for this time to happen today and that the WASC will need project proponents to be present at the next WASC meeting.

#### **6. Break**

A break was taken by the group earlier.

#### **7. Voting Items**

There were no voting items.

#### **8. Items for the Next Agenda**

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The WASC will next focus on the SIP process. Presentations are complete, with the next meeting to focus on SIP development, meaning the WASC members need to think about voting and SIP criteria. It should be noted not all of the committee members were present during the ranking process.

Ms. Ruffell proposed that the group vote at the next meeting on how much (percent allocation) the WASC will allocate to the regional program. Mr. Caluag stated that this group will want to utilize the SIP tool, and highly recommended the group not utilize 100 percent of the allocated funding. At this time, \$12.8 million is the estimated budget allocated for this WASC, but it is just an estimate and this does not take into account credits, appeals and non-property tax payments. Mr. Caluag stated to the group to think about whether it wants to vote by show of hands, or by closed (paper) balloting.

#### **9. Adjournment**

Mr. Vernon thanked the committee members and public for their time and participation and adjourned the meeting.

#### **Next Meeting:**

**Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 1:00pm – 3:00pm (*cancelled, next meeting TBD*)**  
**Progress Park**  
**1500 Downey Ave, Paramount, CA 90723**

#### **Future Meetings:**

Next meeting TBD



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Watershed Area Steering Committee Meeting  
COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	Signature
Dan Sharp	FCD	DSHARP@dpw.lacounty.gov	
Carolina Hernandez	FCD	CHERNANDEZ@dpw.lacounty.gov	
Diane Gatzka	Water Replenishment District	dgateza@wrdd.org	
Lyndsey Bloxom	Water Replenishment District	lbloxom@wrdd.org	
Stephen Scott	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Stephen.Scott@longbeach.gov	
Meredith Reynolds	City of Long Beach, Parks, Recreation and Marine	Meredith.Reynolds@longbeach.gov	
Kristen Ruffell	Sanitation Districts	kruffell@lacsdsd.org	
Mike Sullivan	Sanitation Districts	msullivan@lacsdsd.org	
Kevin Wattier	Central Basin	kevinw@centralbasin.org	
Nick Jiles	Páo Strategies	nick@paostrategies.org	
Kedrin Hopkins	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	khopkins@cclb-corps.org	
Mark Stanley	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	mstanley@rmc.ca.gov	
Marybeth Vergara	Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	Mvergara@rmc.ca.gov	
James Vernon	Port of Long Beach	james.vernon@polb.com	
Dylan Porter	Port of Long Beach	dylan.porter@polb.com	

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### COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN




Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	Signature
Melissa Bahmanpour	River in Action	melbahmanpour@gmail.com	
Erica Maceda	River in Action	ericamaceda@gmail.com	
Cindy Montanez	TreePeople	CMontanez@treepeople.org	
Carlos Moran	TreePeople	cmoran@treepeople.org	
Gina Nila	Commerce	ginan@ci.commerce.ca.us	
Chau Vu	Bell Gardens	CVu@bellgardens.org	
Dan Mueller	Downey	dmueller@downeyca.org	
Delfino Consunji	Downey	dconsunji@downeyca.org	
Melissa You	Long Beach	Melissa.You@longbeach.gov	
Alvin Papa	Long Beach	Alvin.Papa@longbeach.gov	
Laura Ochoa	Lynwood	Lochoa@Lynwood.ca.us	
Noe Martinez	Lynwood	nmartinez@lynwood.ca.us	
Adriana Figueroa	Paramount	afigueroa@paramountcity.com	
Sarah Ho	Paramount	sho@paramountcity.com	
Kelli Tunnickliff	Signal Hill	ktunnickliff@cityofsignalhill.org	

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### COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Email Address	Signature
Cecil Looney	Signal Hill	clooney@cityofsignalhill.org	A
Gladis Deras	South Gate	gderas@sogate.org	P 
Clint Herrera	South Gate	cherrera@sogate.org	A

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Richard	Watson	RWA/LCC Ws Group	rwatson@rwaplanning.com
Thuan	Nguyen	LA County	
Kirk	<del>KELNER</del>	Studio III Rancho Los Cerritos	KIRK.KELNER@STUDIO-III.COM
Allison	Bruesehoff	Rancho Los Cerritos	Allison@rancholobscerritos.org
Akrista	Dixon	City West Park	
Greg	Alexander	PLS	greg.alexander@pdsinc.com
Bryce	Lee	JCHA	blee@jcha.net
Michelle	Kim	JCHA	mkim@jcha.net
John	Hunter	JCHA	JHunter@JCHA.net
Debbie Gibbs	Enos	WCA	denos@wca-ca.gov

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

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PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Veronica	Seydel	WSP	veronica.seydel@wsp.com
Mike	Antos	Stantec	Mike.Antos@stantec.com
Elisba	Back	Woodard and Curran	EBack@WoodardCurran.com
Gerry Green		CWE ULR	ggreen@cwe corp.com
Robin	Mark	TPL	robin.mark@tpl.org
Joseph	Gonzalez	EMC	Jgonzalez@emc-sa.gov
Uma		RLC	Uma@rajeccompany.com

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