

Safe, Clean Water Program

Upper Los Angeles River

Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



Meeting Minutes:

Thursday, April 30, 2020

2:00pm – 5:00pm

WebEx Meeting – See below or [SCW website](#) for WebEx meeting details

WebEx Meeting Details:

Committee members and members of the public may participate by joining the WebEx Meeting below. Please refer to the [Video Conferencing-Public Guidelines](#) available on the Safe, Clean Water website for additional information.

Join via WebEx (recommended)

Meeting number: 962 896 333

Password: iuV2FpBpy37

<https://lacountydpw.webex.com/lacountydpw/j.php?MTID=m082a93e80e7a51656f9d42467cc783e1>

Join by phone

+1-213-306-3065 United States Toll (Los Angeles)

Access code: 962 896 333

Public Comment:

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to SafeCleanWaterLA@pw.lacounty.gov. All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete the [Comment Card Form](#) available on the Safe, Clean Water website and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@pw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting.

Attendees:

Committee Members Present:

Paul Lui (LA Dept. of Water and Power)

Max Podemski* (Los Angeles)

Alfredo Magallanes (Los Angeles – Sanitation)

Delon Kwan (LA Dept. of Water and Power)

David Nahai (Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith)

Veronica Padilla-Campos (Pacoima Beautiful)

Teresa Villegas* (Los Angeles)

Patrick DeChellis (La Canada Flintridge)

Miguel Luna (Urban Semilla DakeLuna
Consultants)

Paul Alva (Los Angeles County Public Works)

Gary Hildebrand (Los Angeles County Flood
Control District)

Ernesto Pantoja (Laborers Local 300)

Kris Markarian (Pasadena)

Cathie Santo Domingo (LA Recreation & Parks)

John Luker (Santa Susana Mountain Park
Association)

Rafael Prieto* (Los Angeles)

Committee Members Not Present:

None

*Committee Member Alternate

See attachment for full list of attendees

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1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. CJ Caluag provided an overview of the WebEx interface and provided instructions for a member of the public to provide a comment during the Public Comment Period. He facilitated roll call voting for attendance and quorum was established.

Mr. David Nahai, the Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River WASC, called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 12, 2020

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Mr. Nahai asked the committee members for comments or revisions, there were none. Mr. Ernesto Pantoja and Ms. Kris Markarian abstained. The Committee did a roll call vote to approve the meeting minutes from March 12, 2020 (unanimous).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

Mr. Caluag gave updates on the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) timeline, including the Committee is to approve the SIP by late May and the Board approval is expected in August. The Regional Oversight Committee is scheduled to reconvene in May and, possibly, in June.

The public comment period for the draft Fund Transfer Agreement ended on April 21, 2020. District staff is reviewing the comments and will prepare the Board Letter early June. The Committee asked how the public will be ensured that their comments were reviewed. Mr. Caluag said that he will get back to the Committee with the response.

The Watershed Coordinator Request for Qualifications will be tentatively processed in June, then the Committee will review the potential applicants around August.

4. Public Comment Period

Mr. Caluag called on public members that submitted Public Comment Cards to the Safe, Clean Water prior to the meeting. He called on the OurWaterLA (OWLA) Core Team that submitted letters to the WASCs in March and April. Ms. Araceli Hernandez, Program Organizer with LA Nature for All, that is part of OWLA, gave an overview of the OWLA letters. See attachment for the letters and the Public Comment Cards. Ms. Hernandez expressed her views on the importance of the SIP meeting the goals of the Safe, Clean Water set forth on the ordinance, and expressed her support and opposition of some of the project applications.

5. Discussion Items

a) Ex Parte Communications

Ms. Cathie Santo Domingo disclosed that she is informed of the proposed projects in LA City parks as she is in LA Recreation and Parks.

b) Overview of SIP Programming Guidelines

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Mr. Caluag gave an overview of the SIP Programming Guidelines. He reminded the Committee that projects are to be funded as requested—the total funding request cannot be changed. When approving SIP, the Committee is also affirming the criteria set forth by the Safe, Clean Water Program procedures are met, such as, but not limited to: disadvantaged community benefits, Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer Systems (MS4) compliance, municipalities benefits, a spectrum of project types, and nature-based solutions.

During the previous meeting an 80 percent allocation funding target was discussed. Now it is recommended to aim for a more conservative percent this funding round due to the uncertainties with the pandemic. It is also recommended to consider the fact that there are delays in the Watershed Coordinator positions. On the other hand, the Committee may want to consider the value of investing Safe, Clean Water funds to stimulate the economy.

Mr. Nahai added that the Committee will vote on a percent allocation funding target during this meeting or an upcoming meeting.

The Committee confirmed that re-distributing funds over the years for a multi-year project is possible if the total funding request does not change.

c) Overview on ranking process and tools

Mr. Caluag provided an overview of the SIP Planning Tool that can be populated based on the rankings from the committee members for discussion purposes. District staff will initially populate those rankings into the Ranking Tool.

Mr. Mike Antos reminded the Committee the importance to fund projects appropriately now for the next five years while being aware of exemplary future projects.

d) Discussion of submitted projects

Mr. Nahai invited the committee members to discuss submitted projects and ask project-specific questions addressed to the project applicant. He asked that if a committee member poses a question, to first allow other committee members to discuss that project before the project applicant responds. The presentation slides can also be shared on the screen upon request.

Mr. Caluag reminded the Committee that during the last meeting project applicants had the opportunity to provide a pitch and allow questions from the Committee. Mr. Sarkis Oganessian from the City of Glendale did not have this opportunity, so he provided a pitch on The Distributed Drywell System Project. The Expenditures Summary showing the funding requested breakdown over the five years was shared on the screen and the Committee asked questions regarding the maintenance costs, past experience with drywells, and any anticipated delays. Sarkis noted that maintenance cost is being requested for the first three years after construction, then the City will fund maintenance costs in the subsequent years. The City has had positive experience with drywells and is on track with no delays.

The Committee asked if the Lankershim Boulevard Local Area Urban Flow Management Network Project and the Oro Vista Local Area Urban Flow Management Project funding requested can be extended over more than two years. Project applicant Mr. Shahram Kharaghani from the City of Los Angeles said that it is possible. Mr. Nahai suggested that this could be further discussed when discussing the SIP.

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Mr. Hildebrand initiated a discussion on combining scientific studies. He mentioned that the preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration and Coordinated Safe Clean Water Plans overlap within the ULAR watershed. Mr. Kharaghani said that the City of Los Angeles have discussed combining the studies but will have to get back to the Committee about extending the funding requested over more years.

Mr. Hildebrand also asked about combining the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution (Regional Scientific Study) and Load Reduction Strategy Adaptation to Address the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group (LRS Adaptation). Ms. Dawn Petschauer (LRS Adaptation) said the studies are relatable but independent. Mr. Rich Watson (Regional Scientific Study) agreed. The Committee asked if any WASCs have approved the Regional Scientific Study and Mr. Watson noted that the Santa Clara River WASC approved the study.

The Committee will have to approve a scientific study proposal based on the project submittal. Opportunity to combine studies will have to be re-submitted for a future funding round.

The Committee asked how they can assure that their approved SIP will meet the required 50 percent disadvantaged community benefit ratio over the five-year period. Mr. Caluag explained how the SIP Planning Tool accounts for the disadvantaged community benefit requirement and before approving the SIP, the Committee will vote to confirm that each project provides the benefit or not.

A break was taken at this time.

e) [Voting Item] – Assign Percent allocation target

This agenda item was discussed after the Public Comment Period (agenda item 5.f.)

Mr. Nahai initiated a discussion on re-considering the assigned percent allocation target from 80 percent to a more conservative percent due to the uncertainties with the pandemic. On the other hand, the committee may want to consider using the funds to stimulate the economy and finds it that it's the Committee's responsibility to spend the funds appropriately.

The Committee noted that there may be physical constraints during a project's construction activities due to social distancing orders. It was also noted that there were no Watershed Coordinators involved for this round to vouch for projects and that it may be another reason to be conservative for when the Watershed Coordinators are involved to vouch for projects.

The Committee discussed keeping the 80 percent allocation target because Los Angeles County is likely anticipating its revenue goal this round for Safe, Clean Water funds. It was also expressed that all 88 cities in the County still need to comply with water quality standards and delaying a project another year hinders those project applicants for future rounds.

There will need to be additional justification in the SIP when using 80 percent or more of the funds. Mr. Nahai made a motion for a 75 percent allocation funding target, noting that it provides a 5 percent buffer in case of shortfalls in the projected tax revenue but still supports the various goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program. Mr. Alva seconded the motion.

The Committee discussed waiting to vote on the percent allocation target after the project discussions. Mr. Podemski made the motion to wait to vote. Ms. Villegas seconded the motion. Mr. Nahai agreed and withdrew his motion.

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f) Public Comment Period

Mr. CJ Caluag shared the Public Comment Card from LA Nature for All on the screen. See attached for the Comment Card. Ms. Dorothy Wong, Organizer with LA Nature For All and Councilmember for Altadena, commented on the great potential for Safe, Clean Water Program-funded projects to improve local water resiliency. She shared the projects that she supports and projects requested that the Committee re-address some of the projects.

Mr. Vik Bapna from CWE commented on the type of projects he supports.

Ms. Claire Robinson from Amigos De Los Rios expressed the importance of keeping in mind the benefits to youth school district communities when improving infrastructure.

g) Rank Projects (*if time permits*)

There was not sufficient time to rank projects. This will be included in the next agenda.

h) [Voting Item] – Confirm Final Stormwater Investment Plan (*if time permits*)

There was not sufficient time to discuss the SIP. This will be included in the next agenda.

6. Break

The Committee took a break after agenda item 5.b.

7. Items for next agenda

The Committee discussed the ranking process for the next meeting. The Committee will submit their rankings to the District staff. District staff will populate the rankings into the Ranking Tool then share the ranking results to the Committee prior to the next meeting.

During the next meeting, District staff will populate the SIP Planning Tool based on the ranking results and then the Committee can have a discussion on the SIP. District staff will be able to toggle projects on and off according to the rankings. The voting process will follow Robert's Rule of Order where a Committee member can make a motion to approve the SIP, another member can second the motion, then there will be an opportunity for debate, then District staff can facilitate a roll-call vote to approve the SIP. The same voting process will occur when voting for the percent allocation funding target.

8. Adjournment

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

Next Meeting Date and Times:
Thursday, May 14, 2020, 2:00pm – 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting – See [SCW website](#) for meeting details

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Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC)



Tentative Meeting: Thursday, May 28, 2020

2:00pm – 4:00pm

WebEx Meeting – See SCW website for meeting details

Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - April 30, 2020

Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - April 30, 2020					
Quorum Present					Voting Items
Member Type	Member	Voting?	Alternate	Voting?	Meeting Minutes
Agency	Gary Hildebrand	x	Genevieve Osmena		y
Agency	Delon Kwan	x	Art Castro		y
Agency	Paul Liu	x	Rafael Villegas		y
Agency	Alfredo Magallanes	x	Ariel Flores		y
Agency	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Javier Solis		y
Community Stakeholder	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		
Community Stakeholder	Miguel Luna	x	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		y
Community Stakeholder	John Luker	x	Wendi Gladstone		y
Community Stakeholder	David Nahai	x	Jacob Lipa		y
Community Stakeholder	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Felipe Escobar		y
Municipal Members	Yazdan Emrani	x	Chris Chew		y
Municipal Members	Patrick DeChellis	x			y
Municipal Members	Barbara Romero		Teresa Villegas	x	y
Municipal Members	Ackley Padilla		Max Podemski	x	y
Municipal Members	Jeff Camp		Rafael Prieto	x	y
Municipal Members	Paul Alva	x	TJ Moon		y
Municipal Members	Kris Markarian	x	Sean Singletary		
Total Non-Vacant Seats	17			Yay (Y)	15
Total Voting Members Present	17			Nay (N)	0
Agency	5			Abstain (A)	0
Community Stakeholder	5			Total	15
Municipal Members	7				Approved

Attendees

Upper Los Angeles River WASC Meeting - April 30, 2020

cchew	Sheila Brice	PALVA	36389
BradWardynski	mark.seits@hdrinc.com	Antony Karongo	noel.le@ladwp.com
Chad Helmle	Javier Yescas	johanna	ilene
Jud Warren	latoya	Ann Bechtel	Patrick DeChellis
Max Podemski	KMarkarian	cchew	bbaldauf
John Luker	Brenda Ponton, Woodard & Curran	Jon Ball	Miguel Luna
John Luker	Cameron	Cantwella	Rafael Prieto
SOganesyan SOganesyan	Yazdan Emrani	Drew Ready	Committee-Gary Hildebrand(P)
Bryan Medina	CMcLeod	Dustin Bambic	Alvin Cruz
chowk	Antony Karongo	heather repenning	Carmen Andrade
Joe Bellomo	Dorothy Wong	Anthony	Ben Shorofsky
Shahram Kharaghani	ptonth	Shahid Abbas	test
ARIEL FLORES	Ariella Dahlin - Amigos de los Rios	Katie	Katie
Mel Winter	Hans Tremmel	kimberly.henry	27519
Jessica Quach	Drew Ready	DELLINGERAS	delon
Christine Wartman	David	srascon	27519
ChadHelmle	david nahai	Hugo Garcia (JLHA)	Wendi
Richard Watson	SOganesyan SOganesyan	Art	CJ Caluag - LACFCD
Celi	Promesa BH	Bill	Genevieve Osmena
Ryan	A Magallanes	Cathie Santo Domingo	Samantha Matthews (SGVCOG)
sc	J Amaro	Mike Antos (Stantec)	Joe Venzon
volunteer	Clint Boschen	Christina Zabalza	Martin Pastucha
Ackley	Joyce	Katie Harrel	pliu
Thuan Nguyen	William O'Braitis	Ernesto	Katie
A Magallanes	david nahai	VBapna	Mackenzie
CRobinson	300542	Gregor	Tracey Chavira
JAIME.SAYRE	Evan Rosenberg	Teresa Villegas	Brianna Datti
ANTHONY C	TJ Moon - LA County	Conor Mossavi - LADWP	Bronwyn
cchew	David Dolphin	Safe Clean Water LA	Dawn Petschauer
JLee	Diana Mahmud	Safe Clean Water LA	Joe Bellomo
53834	Lynda	Heather Repenning	
Deb Deets	Ariella Dahlin - Amigos de los Rios	Julian Lee	



Public Comment Form

Name*: Araceli Hernandez Organization*: LA Nature For All
Email*: Araceli@lanatureforall.org Phone*: 818-644-1935
Meeting: Upper LA River Watershed Area Date: 4/30/2020

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments

*Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak.

Phone participants and the public are encouraged to submit public comments (or a request to make a public comment) to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov. All public comments will become part of the official record.

Please complete this form and email to SafeCleanWaterLA@dpw.lacounty.gov by at least 5:00pm the day prior to the meeting with the following subject line: "Public Comment: [Watershed Area] [Meeting Date]" (ex. "Public Comment: USGR 4/8/20").

Comments

I would like to make a public comment at tomorrow's meeting.

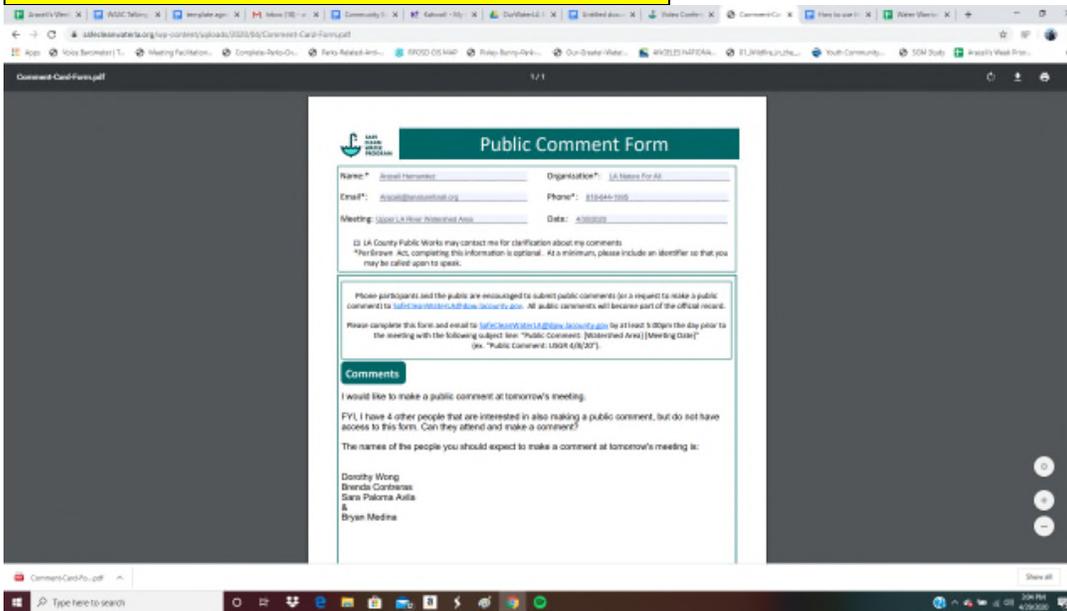
FYI, I have 4 other people that are interested in also making a public comment, but do not have access to this form. Can they attend and make a comment?

The names of the people you should expect to make a comment at tomorrow's meeting is:

Dorothy Wong
Brenda Contreras
Sara Paloma Avila
&
Bryan Medina

From: Araceli Hernandez <araceli@lanatureforall.org>
Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 3:39 PM
To: DPW-SafeCleanWaterLA
Subject: Public Comment: [Upper LA River Watershed Area] [April 30th,2020]
Attachments: Comment-Card-Form (1).pdf

CAUTION: External Email. Proceed Responsibly.



Name:* ___Araceli Hernandez_____

Organization*: ___LA Nature for All_____

Email*: ___Araceli@lanatureforall.org_____

Phone*: ___818-644-1935_____

Meeting: ___Upper LA River___

Date: ___April 30th_____

LA County Public Works may contact me for clarification about my comments *Per Brown Act, completing this information is optional. At a minimum, please include an identifier so that you may be called upon to speak:
___Yes_

Comments:

My name is Araceli and I am a Program Organizer with LA Nature for All, who is a part of the OurWaterLA Coalition. The stormwater investment plan must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance including the goals to improve water quality, prioritize nature-based solutions, foster community engagement, ensure the equitable distribution of funds, and provide local quality jobs.

I understand that resources are limited, and that is why I urge you to fund only the best of these projects; ones that truly exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program. Consider reserving the remainder of your funds for exemplary projects that may be proposed in the next few rounds of funding allocation.

I would like to express support for:

1. The Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project
 - a. It scored 96 points, and
 - b. It is a strong water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide significant water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
2. The Strathern North Stormwater Capture Project
 - a. It scored 89 points, and
 - b. It is a good water quality, nature-based elements and community benefits project that would benefit DAC communities and had

I am also here today to oppose the following two programs:

1. The Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution.
 - There are serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study
 - This study will not support many of the program goals
 - There are other potential funding sources that would be much more appropriate for a study like this.
 - Our funding should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.
- a.
3. The Recalculation of Wet Weather Zinc Criterion
 - This proposal is asking for \$500K to potentially weaken water quality objectives, rather than improving our water quality.
 - This study does not support the program goals.
 - There are other potential ways to achieve this type of recalculation, including working with the State Water Resources Control Board.
 - This money should instead be spent on multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.

Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program, and thank you for the opportunity to comment on the stormwater investment plan.

Best,

Araceli Hernandez (She/Her/Hers)

Program Organizer

Nature for All

[1817 Jackson Ave. \(Room 2\),](#)

[San Gabriel, CA 91776](#)

(818)724-7302



ANatureforall.org

*Protecting Each Other & Nature
Physical Distancing
Socially Connecting*



DATE: March 10, 2020

TO: WASC Chair & Members
CC: LAC SCWP Staff

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations Concerning the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is a diverse coalition that has engaged communities, businesses, and organizations across Los Angeles County, building support to reinvent and reinvest in our water future using nature based infrastructure that provides community health benefits, environmental health benefits, and economic benefits. OWLA recommends that funding priority be given to the projects that best exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP), and that consideration should be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR STORMWATER PROJECTS

The Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance (Attachment 1), including the goals to improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements, as well as multiple additional community investments such as prioritization of nature based solutions, community engagement, equity, and quality jobs. Our top issues are shown below in bullet point format and described more robustly in Attachment 1.

Nature Based Solutions

The prioritization of nature based solutions is a specific programmatic goal of the SCWP, and therefore must be reflected in the projects for the SIP.

Community Engagement

A plan for future community outreach is not sufficient for true community engagement in a project. Priority should be given to projects for which local community engagement, designed specifically for the proposed project, has already been initiated.

Equity

One of the most innovative aspects of the SCWP is the written requirements for the equitable distribution of community investments. When assessing the 110% benefit return on investments

for disadvantaged communities, it is important to clarify what type of benefits a project provides, and whether the proposed investments directly benefit the receiving community and verified by local community groups.

Quality Jobs

At a minimum, funding through the SCWP SIP must be contingent upon providing direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities.

We recommend that all of these programmatic goals be considered when selecting projects for full or partial funding for the 2019-2020 SIP, and that consideration be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects. One opportunity to reserve future funding is to fund projects in phases, to get projects through initial project development, such as project design.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

There have also been proposals for funding through the SCWP Scientific Studies Program. The purpose of the Scientific Studies Program is to provide funding for scientific and technical activities, including, but not limited to, scientific studies, technical studies, monitoring, and modeling related to *stormwater and urban runoff capture and pollution reduction*.

OWLA recommends that no funding be allocated for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study. It has no hypothesis or clear methodology, and no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, as is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible.

This proposal is asking for nearly \$10 million region-wide over the next five years to target a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and to potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the program goals, listed in Attachment 1. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for this study including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan. **This nearly \$10 million should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.**

Further, for those WASCs considering the Wet Weather Zinc study, this proposal is asking for \$500K to potentially weaken water quality objectives, rather than improving our water quality. Funds should instead be spent on multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. The Safe, Clean Water Program is not the right funding source for this study because this study does not support many of the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program or its Scientific Studies Program. There are other potential ways to achieve this type of recalculation, including working with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with each of you, with the County of Los Angeles, and with our communities to most efficiently and effectively reinvest in our water future. Many of us, including WASC members, recognize that this is a complex process, and we would be remiss not to stop and strongly re-evaluate the context for making these critically important funding recommendations. OWLA core team members want to work with you to be part of the solution for meeting water quality standards by implementing multi-benefit projects. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

OWLA Core Team

ATTACHMENT 1

Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
- H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.



DATE: April 24, 2020

TO: Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASC), Scoring and Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) Members
Los Angeles County Safe Clean Water Program Staff
Los Angeles County Board Public Works Deputies

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations - Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

On March 10, 2020 OurWaterLA (OWLA) submitted a memo for distribution to the WASC committees specifying our recommendations for the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plans (SIP) under consideration by the WASCs prior to the Safer at Home order. However, only a few of the WASC groups had the opportunity to review the memo. Given our new reality and the conditions under which extremely important decisions will be considered by the WASCs we wish to summarize and update the points we believe are extremely important to ensure that the decision-making process is transparent and results in only the best projects being funded during these unprecedented times.

The following are the major issues that we believe are critically important for your consideration as you deliberate on the recommendations you will be making for this first round of funding recommendations. Given the vast number of issues you will have to consider we are providing "bullet" points but encourage all members to review our more in-depth recommendations provided in the attached March 10, 2020 memo (Attachment 3). OWLA recommends the following:

Best Practices for Public Participation

- Notify the public of all meetings and hearings at least 72 hours in advance. Information on public meeting times, topics, and how public comments will be received should be easy to find on the SCWP website home page and within the meeting agendas (*currently not the case*). This information, as well as any additional accompanying meeting materials, should be translated into at least Spanish and Mandarin.

- Ensure language access needs are met by providing interpretation during public meetings. For remote meetings, use teleconference lines or audio channels.
- Consider participation barriers for members of the public that may not have access to the internet or a computer. Provide adequate telephone options, with interpretation, for virtual meetings and receiving public comments. Having multiple avenues to engage in a given meeting will ensure more robust dialogue and input.
- Use best practices for public comment periods in virtual hearings and meetings. This includes giving ample time for the public to submit comments prior to a meeting through multiple avenues and live during a meeting.
- Provide links to all materials including presentations at least 72 hours prior to each meeting.

Project Funding Recommendations

- Fund projects that best exemplify the goals (Attachment 2) of the SCWP. The best projects out of the 53 that are eligible for funding are listed in Attachment 1.
- No funding for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study.
- Fund projects in phases to get projects through initial project development, such as project design in order to preserve funds for future years.
- Require that all Technical Resources allocations include the development and implementation of a Community Engagement Plan.

Community Engagement, Equity, Community Investments & DAC Benefits

- Require that all project funding recommendations include a sustained community engagement element with the assistance of local experienced NGOs from design through construction and operations and maintenance.
- Require that all projects which claim points for Community Investments submit letters from local community groups verifying that the project includes tangible community investments.
- Those projects which claim that jobs will provide direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities must include documentation as to how they will achieve this goal.

ATTACHMENT 1

Projects Recommended for Funding

Project Name	WASC	Notes
MacArthur Lake Rehabilitation Project	Central Santa Monica Bay	<u>SCORE: 70</u> A strong water quality improvement project that uses nature-based solutions and provides DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Monteith Park and View Park Green Alley Stormwater Improvements Project	Central Santa Monica Bay	<u>SCORE: 80</u> A strong nature-based water quality improvement project that provides DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Salt Lake Park Infiltration Cistern	Lower Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 76</u> A strong nature-based water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds to provide DAC benefits and some additional community investment benefits.
Hermosillo Park Regional Stormwater Project	Lower San Gabriel River	<u>SCORE: 84</u> A good water quality improvement project which will provide additional community investment benefits.
East Los Angeles Sustainable Median Stormwater Capture Project	Rio Hondo	<u>SCORE: 83</u> A good water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide significant water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
Hasley Canyon Park Stormwater Improvements Project	Santa Clara	<u>SCORE: 63</u> A good water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide some additional community investment benefits.
Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project	Upper Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 96</u> Strong water quality improvement project that is leveraging funds and using nature-based solutions to provide significant water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
Strathern North Stormwater Capture Project	Upper Los Angeles River	<u>SCORE: 89</u> Good water quality, nature-based elements and community benefits project that would benefit DAC communities and had support letters from local groups.

Bassett High School Stormwater Capture Multi-Benefit Project	Upper San Gabriel River	<u>SCORE: 92</u> Strong water quality improvement project that leverages funds and uses nature-based solutions to provide some water supply benefits, DAC benefits, and some additional community investment benefits.
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Attachment 2

Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
- H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.

Attachment 3
March 10, 2020 Letter from OWLA to WASCs



DATE: March 10, 2020

TO: WASC Chair & Members
CC: LAC SCWP Staff

RE: **OurWaterLA Recommendations Concerning the Watershed Area Stormwater Investment Plan for 2019-2020**

OurWaterLA (OWLA) is a diverse coalition that has engaged communities, businesses, and organizations across Los Angeles County, building support to reinvent and reinvest in our water future using nature based infrastructure that provides community health benefits, environmental health benefits, and economic benefits. OWLA recommends that funding priority be given to the projects that best exemplify the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP), and that consideration should be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR STORMWATER PROJECTS

The Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) must achieve the fourteen programmatic goals clearly laid out in the SCWP Implementation Ordinance (Attachment 1), including the goals to improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements, as well as multiple additional community investments such as prioritization of nature based solutions, community engagement, equity, and quality jobs. Our top issues are shown below in bullet point format and described more robustly in Attachment 1.

Nature Based Solutions

The prioritization of nature based solutions is a specific programmatic goal of the SCWP, and therefore must be reflected in the projects for the SIP.

Community Engagement

A plan for future community outreach is not sufficient for true community engagement in a project. Priority should be given to projects for which local community engagement, designed specifically for the proposed project, has already been initiated.

Equity

One of the most innovative aspects of the SCWP is the written requirements for the equitable distribution of community investments. When assessing the 110% benefit return on investments

for disadvantaged communities, it is important to clarify what type of benefits a project provides, and whether the proposed investments directly benefit the receiving community and verified by local community groups.

Quality Jobs

At a minimum, funding through the SCWP SIP must be contingent upon providing direct community investments, such as high quality local job and training opportunities.

We recommend that all of these programmatic goals be considered when selecting projects for full or partial funding for the 2019-2020 SIP, and that consideration be given to reserving future funds for future exemplary projects. One opportunity to reserve future funding is to fund projects in phases, to get projects through initial project development, such as project design.

FUNDING ALLOCATION FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

There have also been proposals for funding through the SCWP Scientific Studies Program. The purpose of the Scientific Studies Program is to provide funding for scientific and technical activities, including, but not limited to, scientific studies, technical studies, monitoring, and modeling related to *stormwater and urban runoff capture and pollution reduction*.

OWLA recommends that no funding be allocated for the Regional Scientific Study to Support Protection of Human Health through Targeted Reduction of Bacteriological Pollution. We have serious concerns about the legitimacy of this proposed study. It has no hypothesis or clear methodology, and no scientific professionals were involved in the development of the study, as is required under the SCWP Scientific Studies Program when feasible.

This proposal is asking for nearly \$10 million region-wide over the next five years to target a specific source of a specific pollutant rather than providing multiple benefits, and to potentially weaken water quality objectives rather than improving our water quality. This proposed study will not support many of the program goals, listed in Attachment 1. Additionally, there are other potential funding sources for this study including the Stormwater Monitoring Coalition, which already has a similar study in its 5-year plan. **This nearly \$10 million should be spent to invest in our communities with multi-benefit stormwater capture projects.**

Further, for those WASCs considering the Wet Weather Zinc study, this proposal is asking for \$500K to potentially weaken water quality objectives, rather than improving our water quality. Funds should instead be spent on multi-benefit stormwater capture projects. The Safe, Clean Water Program is not the right funding source for this study because this study does not support many of the goals of the Safe, Clean Water Program or its Scientific Studies Program. There are other potential ways to achieve this type of recalculation, including working with the State Water Resources Control Board.

Thank you all for the considerable time and effort that you have contributed to the implementation of the Safe, Clean Water Program. We look forward to continuing our collaborative work with each of you, with the County of Los Angeles, and with our communities to most efficiently and effectively reinvest in our water future. Many of us, including WASC members, recognize that this is a complex process, and we would be remiss not to stop and strongly re-evaluate the context for making these critically important funding recommendations. OWLA core team members want to work with you to be part of the solution for meeting water quality standards by implementing multi-benefit projects. Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

Sincerely,

OWLA Core Team

ATTACHMENT 1

Safe, Clean Water Program Implementation Ordinance: Section 18.04 SCW Program Goals.

- A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
- B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
- C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
- D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCW Program Goals.
- E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
- F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
- G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
- H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
- I. Invest in independent scientific research.
- J. Provide DAC Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
- K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefiting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
- L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
- M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
- N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.