

Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Wednesday, October 6, 2021
2:00pm - 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Genevieve Osmena, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Art Castro, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
*John Huynh, LA Dept. of Water and Power (Agency)
Alfredo Magallanes, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Agency)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
John Luker, Santa Susana Mountain Park Association (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
Yazdan Emrani, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Christine Peters, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
*Brent Maue, Pasadena (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Clarasophia Gust, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Carlos Moran, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Jacob Lipa, Lipa Consulting (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Teresa Villegas, Chair of the Upper Los Angeles River WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

All Committee Members made self-introductions and a quorum was established. The District conducted a brief tutorial on WebEx and facilitated the roll call of Committee Members. District Staff provided Spanish translation of tutorial.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from September 1st, 2021

The District provided a copy of the meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes, by Member Yazdan Emrani. Member Miguel Luna seconded the motion. The committee voted to approve the September 1st, 2021 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no committee member updates.

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District Staff provided an update:

- Board of Supervisors approved all nine 2021 Stormwater Investment Plans on September 15, 2021.
- Funds transfer process is initiated; currently setting up transfer agreements for the new projects
- This year, for ULAR area, there are 12 Infrastructure Program, 5 Scientific Studies, 2 Technical Resources Program submittals.
- The Scoring Committee has started reviewing projects.
- Reminded project proponents and watershed coordinators to submit quarterly reports, which will be summarized and presented to the WASC at upcoming meetings.
- As part of the municipal program, each municipality should have submitted the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Plan by April 1, 2021 to receive annual payment, which will be dispersed this month. They must also comply with documentation from prior year (including transfer agreement).
- Committee members who do not have alternates in the WASC meetings, were requested to work with District Staff to identify alternates.
- Regarding agenda item 9.a Voting Items: Direction was provided by the Board of Supervisors regarding the expiration of the Executive Order that allowed public meetings to be held virtually. A new bill (AB 361) was signed into law that was effective October 1, authorizing public committees to continue meeting without complying with all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act. The Board is reviewing this every 30 days and will take action, which will apply to all commissions and committees under their authority. Teleconferencing is allowed at this time and the committee will not need to act on this voting item.

In response to Member Veronica Padilla-Campos, District noted that for the ULAR WASC, an in-person meeting opportunity and hybrid model are being considered but a date is not confirmed for when it will be put in place.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Clarasophia Gust shared that since the last meeting the coordinators had finalized the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) and are now working on a project intake form to help the committee to keep track of projects. Meetings were held with the Nature Conservancy and Montecito Heights about SCWP projects. Coordinators participated in an Alhambra Green Streets workshop, Coastal Cleanup Day, engaged with students at Occidental College, and attended Scoring Committee meetings.

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman mentioned issues with interacting with Montecito Heights community leaders. He was contacted by community members, now putting them in touch with council office, who is organizing a meeting with the park's representatives. Voiced positive sentiments about collaboration with the larger community.

Watershed Coordinator Carlos Moran has focused on identifying project opportunities and connecting community to partnerships and identified ways to address community needs; conducted a site visit to Elmer Avenue Neighborhood Retrofit Green Street project with MSW intern; connected with the public to identify what the benefits are being seen with the projects; and been tracking parallel regional efforts (DACIP, subcommittees, etc.)

Chair Villegas recommended the coordinators maintain regular contact with the committee members to understand projects that are wanted or needed in the ULAR area.

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Member Luna asked whether the three coordinators are representing different areas of ULAR. Coordinator Liberman responded that may be based on outreach targets, geography; welcomed feedback. Coordinator Moran said they may prioritize based on geography, to ensure that there is dedicated contact for each region. Member Luna advised a geographical approach to have dedicated contacts and asked how the costs of coordinating the three coordinators are being accounted for.

Chair Villegas responded that watershed coordinators are paid out of the technical resources budget of the Stormwater Investment Plan.

Mike Antos (Stantec) noted that the Regional Coordination task includes supporting coordinators working across all watershed areas, but also within the two areas with multiple coordinators, so the three ULAR and the two Central Santa Monica Bay watershed coordinators receive coordination support.

Member Luna asked that the watershed coordinator update agenda items to provide time for the WASC to reflect on successful efforts and to allow the WASC to provide ongoing guidance to the coordinators.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

No ex parte communications were disclosed.

6. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments. See Meeting Minutes Attachments for submitted public comment cards.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items:

a) Watershed Coordinator Final Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

Coordinator Moran presented the final SOEP, which had minor changes after feedback from committee. Coordinator Gust mentioned that the SOEP will be updated on an annual basis.

Chair Villegas opened a public comment period for this agenda item to vote early to account for the scheduled early departure of some committee members.

8.a. Public Comment Period

Anushka Drescher (Public) asked who will be executing the SOEP. Coordinators Liberman and Moran responded that the plan was made by coordinators to share with WASC to show what the coordinators will be doing in the next year. The plan will primarily be executed by the coordinators and their support teams.

Member Padilla-Campos praised coordinators for the inclusion of community tours and asked if the community needs to reach out to coordinators to arrange tours or if coordinators will make the tours public. Coordinator Liberman responded that the community tours will be partially scheduled in partnership with elected leaders. Member Padilla-Campos appreciates the work with elected representatives but asked for more direct outreach with the community. Member Moran noted that direct outreach community is included in the scope of work and incorporated in the plan.

Member Padilla-Campos also asked whether there are any internship/mentorship opportunities available with the SOEP. Member Liberman said it was not addressed, but voiced interest in the idea and will ask the other watershed coordinators about internship opportunities they have provided. Noted that the coordinators will try to incorporate it.

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Member Max Podemski suggested reaching out to the parent committees in schools for stakeholder list. Also suggested mapping the projects to help with the evaluation of projects. Member Gust noted they are currently looking at available data sources and data bases to improve evaluation tools for the projects.

9. Voting Items:

a) Approve the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

This item was moved up in the agenda by Chair Villegas to account for the scheduled early departure of some committee members.

Member Luna made a motion to approve the Final SOEP, which was seconded by Member Padilla-Campos. The committee unanimously voted to approve the watershed coordinator's final SOEP (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

7. Presentations and Discussion Items (continued):

b) Scientific Studies Program (SS) Presentations

i) Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation

Presentation by Diana Campos Jimenez and Juan Diaz-Carreras. Community gardens can function as stormwater capture facilities. This study will investigate opportunities including conducting outreach.

Member Luna asked about the two watershed areas omitted from the study, and if the evaluation would consider opportunities to augment existing gardens or would develop new gardens. Diaz-Carreras noted that there were less than 10 possible opportunities in the two watershed areas; augmenting gardens is something that will be considered by the study.

Member Mark Lombos asked if the application would be more suited for the Technical Resource Program (TRP) than SS since the TRP will allow the ideas to be turned into a project. Diaz-Carreras noted the project is trying to perform an analysis on how community garden projects can fit into the SCW goals, so the project fits better in the SS Program.

Member Lombos noted that the investigations will focus on existing gardens, and the suggestions produced by the study won't be able to apply across locations. Diaz-Carreras said the project will try to develop a list of criteria that can be adopted for various sites using the scientific process.

Member Padilla-Campos praised the project for the idea of a garden helping the community as well as the watershed and thanked the guests for the presentation.

Member John Luker voiced appreciation and support for the project.

Coordinator Moran praised the community outreach portion of the project; asked if the study is testing the food if stormwater is being used in the gardens. Diaz-Carreras responded that the project will be not checking the food but will consider the relationship of available stormwater and what is known to be needed for irrigation. Diaz-Carreras said they will work closely with the coordinators.

ii) Regional Pathogen Reduction Study

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Presentation by Richard Watson. This study aims to use the latest available science to measure water-borne pathogens across watersheds. It will help identify key sources of human health risk and develop cost-effective protective strategies. Watson noted that the updates to the project specifically addressed the concerns of the waterboard and peer reviewers.

In response to Chair Villegas, Watson clarified financial values shared in the documents was for ULAR only but that he showed a slide that had the request for all nine watershed areas. Two WASCs approved the project last year, and the proponents are looking to increase the number of watershed areas within the study.

Chair Villegas asked if the methodology from previous application is same. Watson said it will be slightly changed due to evolving scientific methodology. Three outside national experts and a steering/stakeholder committee will make final decisions about methodology.

iii) Maximizing Impact of Minimum Control Measures

Presentation by Chad Helmle (Craftwater Engineering) and Brianna Datti (Craftwater Engineering). Develop tools to quantitatively estimate effectiveness and support optimization of Minimum Control Measures (MCMs).

Member Ernesto Pantoja noted that complaints from community members, particularly those in disadvantaged communities and minority groups, that the street sweepers don't come as often as they should, even though parking enforcement is more regular because of street sweeping signs. Asked how the project will reach out to community members. Helmle responded that the deliverable will be a guidance document rooted in analysis, which can include a robust engagement strategy to help with community outreach. Datti noted that engagement with NGOs will help them reach out to related community groups as well.

Member Alfredo Magallanes asked how these efforts will be different from previous efforts and how data will be normalized across the region? Helmle explained the effort is to integrate what is known about the MCM effectiveness into the modelling analyses and the compliance strategies; the project will take advantage of new data and new modelling technology to distinguish the project from past efforts.

iv) Additional Funding Request to Support the LRS Adaptation Addressing the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group

Presentation by Dawn Petschauer (LASAN) and Brianna Datti (Craftwater Engineering). LRS was completed, but this addition will be to advance successful implementation of the LRS Adaption. Support strategic risk-based monitoring and human waste source investigations to guide long-term pathogen reduction.

Chair Villegas encouraged committee members to take time to process the presentations and reach out to guests regarding questions.

Petschauer noted that they have been meeting with other regional boards to collect more data for the study.

Member Magallanes asked whether the committee is anticipating the infrastructure program projects to return to ask for more funding. District staff noted that IP projects are allowed to ask for more funding.

Member Magallanes also asked if funding reports for the funded projects are available; expressed concerns regarding available funding for projects that are requesting additional funding. District staff noted that project

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applicants will be providing updated quarterly reports to help WASC understand how much funding needs to be allocated.

Chair Villegas concurred that more information is needed to get a better picture of future funds that need to be allocated and noted to work with District.

8. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items:

a) Reconsideration of circumstances of the COVID-19 state of emergency as affecting the ability of the committee to meet safely in person.

On the recommendation of District Staff, this item was tabled.

b) Approve the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan

This item was performed earlier in the meeting, under agenda item 7.a.

10. Items for Next Agenda

- Presentations for 1 Scientific Studies Program, 2 Technical Resources Program projects
- Discussion on which projects to take and presentations to look at after receiving the scores from the scoring committee

Chair Villegas noted that 12 infrastructure projects will be reviewed starting December. District Staff noted to discuss strategy for reviewing projects in the next meeting as the scoring committee is still scoring the projects; mentioned a possibility of adding additional meetings to fit all the infrastructure projects.

11. Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked WASC members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting:
Wednesday, November 3, 2021
2:00PM – 4:00PM
See SCW website for meeting details

Upper Los Angeles River - October 6, 2021

		Quorum Present				Voting Items	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 9-1-2021 Meeting Minutes	Approve the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (Final SOEP)
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	x	Ramy Gindi		y	y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	x	y	y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	Paul Liu		John Huynh	x	y	y
Agency	Sanitation	Alfredo Magallanes	x	Michael Scaduto		y	y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Javier Solis		y	y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		y	y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	x	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Environment	John Luker	x	Wendi Gladstone		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Business	Jacob Lipa					
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Felipe Escobar		y	y
Municipal Members	Glendale	Yazdan Emrani	x	Edward Hitti		y	y
Municipal Members	La Canada Flintridge	Patrick DeChellis	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x	Barbara Romero		y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski	x	Ackley Padilla		y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Christine Peters	x	Rafael Prieto		y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	x	TJ Moon		a	y
Municipal Members	Pasadena	Kris Markarian		Brent Maue	x	y	y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x				
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Clarasophia Gust	x				
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yes (Y)	15	16
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	16	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved

Attendees

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Uriel Cobian - LACFCD	Fiona McHenry-Crutchfield	Richard Watson	Brianne Logasa
Cathie Santo Domingo	Brianna Datti	Rafael Piamonte	Mark Lombos
Michael Scaduto	Alfredo Magallanes	Diana CamposJimenez	Miguel Luna
Rafael Prieto	christine peters	Art Castro	CJ Caluag - LACFCD
Yaz Emrani	Genevieve Osmena	Pat DeChellis	Sarai Bhaga
Johanna Chang	john huynh	Carlos Moran	Alynn Sun
Larry Tran	nayiri vartanian	Elizabeth Orozco	Blake Whittington
Cordoba Corporation	Ernesto Pantoja	Trevor Davis	Brent Maue
Darin Son (NoteTaker)	Anushka Drescher	Michelle Kim	Carmen Andrade
Jon Ball	Veronica Padilla	Mayra Cabrera - LACFCD	Kevin Chang
Tanya Sullivan	Luis Garcia	Amanda Zeidner	Lorena Matos
Jennifer Amarant	H. Ted Gerber	Michela Catena	Chad Helmle
Max Podemski	Justin Jones - LACFCD	Conor Mossavi	Jason Casanova
Michael Drennan	Jeseny Maldonado	Teresa Villegas	Juan Diaz-Carreras
Adi Liberman	Michelle Struthers	Thuan Nguyen	Dawn Petschauer
Pablo Forni - LACFCD	Susie Santilena	Ryan Edgley	John Luker
Mike Antos	Mark Hall GLACVCD	Clarasophia Gust	
Wendi Gladstone	Yvana H	Napoleon Beraza	