

Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) Meeting Minutes



Tuesday, February 8, 2022
10:00am – 12:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
Alex Rojas, Central Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
*Aimee Zhao, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
*Quynh Tran, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
*Nancy Villaseñor, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
Adam Galia, Resident (Community)
*Joseph Gonzalez, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
Mike O'Grady, Cerritos (Municipal)
Delfino Consunji, Downey (Municipal)
Lisa Ann Rapp, Lakewood (Municipal), Vice Chair
Melissa You, Long Beach (Municipal), Chair
Bernie Iniguez, Bellflower (Municipal)
Marlin Munoz, La Mirada (Municipal)
Vicki Smith, Whittier (Municipal)
Kekoa Anderson, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Gabrielle Weeks, Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment (Community)

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Melissa You, Chair of the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) WASC, welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

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

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 11, 2022

The District presented meeting minutes from the previous meeting. Motion to approve the meeting minutes by Member Vicki Smith. Member Lisa Ann Rapp seconded the motion. The Committee voted to approve the January 11, 2022 meeting minutes (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no committee member updates.

District staff provided an update:

- On January 11, the Board of Supervisors voted to continue meeting virtually, acting under the authority of Assembly Bill 361 which authorizes public committees to meet without complying with

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all the teleconferencing requirements of the Brown Act when the situation warrants it. The Board is reviewing every 30 days and will act to cover all the commissions and committees under their authority. Board is meeting today to discuss continuation of virtual meetings.

- The District is continuing to process transfer agreements for Addendums for Year 1 projects and initial transfer agreements for Year 2 projects. Project developers should promptly provide the District with requested information.
- The LSGR WASC now has 5 Infrastructure Program projects and 5 Scientific Studies to consider for the Stormwater Investment Plan.
- The District sent a request for proposal (RFP) to a consultant to develop a Feasibility Study for the Technical Resource Program project concept approved in the Round 2 Stormwater Investment Plan.
- Under the Municipal Program, Annual Plans are due April 1 to the Safe, Clean Water Program. Annual Plans are required to receive the Municipal Program revenue. If any municipality has not submitted their Annual Plan, please do so promptly.
- Claims for the [Low-Income Senior-Owned Special Parcel Tax Exemption](#) and [general income-based tax reduction](#) are due May 1, 2022. More information can be found on the [Safe, Clean Water Program website](#).

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinators Kekoa Anderson and Grace Kast provided an update on Watershed Coordinator activities:

- Planning and coordinating workshops with stakeholders and community members.
- Submitted [quarterly report for Q4 2021](#), which is available on the LSGR WASC website..
 - A highlight was the first stakeholder workshop held on October 16.
- Updating Strategic Outreach and Education Plan
 - Plan was approved at the start of the last fiscal year. Watershed Coordinator Anderson suggested circulating the plan prior to the next meeting and presenting an overview at the next WASC meeting.
- Hosting a joint watershed coordinator meeting with the Lower Los Angeles River watershed coordinators in March. The event will facilitate continuity among the watersheds and will encourage information sharing.
- Hosting the Groundwater Festival in the early summer after being canceled last year due to COVID.
- Conducting Gateway Area Pathfinding (GAP) Analysis in order to better understand needs for projects.
- Holding a virtual workshop about the application process for SCWP funding on February 17. The lead from the Tree People consulting team will be involved.
- Identified five low-cost potential regional projects. Hoping to add more to the list of potential projects.

Member Delfino Consunji commented that the City of Downy is holding an open-house event with the police and fire departments at the beginning of May. The Member suggested that the Watershed Coordinators attend and collaborate. Member Consunji confirmed that they are the point of contact for the event. The event will be held in-person, at Independence Park. They are expecting attendance from a few hundred people. Watershed Coordinator Kast noted that they may coordinate with the Lower Los Angeles River watershed coordinators as well. Watershed Coordinator Anderson shared that they are working on getting water bottles and other items with their logo to distribute to members of the public.

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Vice Chair Lisa Ann Rapp shared that an Earth Walk event will be held on March 12. Prior to COVID, the event drew between 500 and 600 attendees. Watershed Coordinator Anderson committed to attending.

Vice Chair Rapp shared that their municipality, Lakewood, was going to submit a proposal through the Clean California Program but ultimately decided against it. Watershed Coordinator Anderson added that the Program's application process felt impersonal, and the forms made it hard to highlight project details. They are focusing on local programs that are likely to be rewarded funding.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

Vice Chair Rapp shared that they have been working with Accelerate Resilience LA throughout the last year. Vice Chair Rapp participated in briefings for the fourth and fifth Supervisorial District staff and for the League of California Cities.

6. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

7. Discussion

a. Review Preliminary Rankings of Infrastructure Program (IP) Projects

District staff presented the WASC's preliminary project rankings of the five projects that received passing scores from the Scoring Committee. Eleven out of 16 WASC members submitted preliminary rankings. The order, as a result of those preliminary rankings, is as follows:

1. York Field Stormwater Capture Project
2. Bellflower Simms Park Stormwater Capture Project
3. Lakewood Equestrian Center
4. Artesia Park Stormwater Capture Project
5. Heartwell Park at Clark Channel Stormwater Capture Project

District staff shared the scores awarded by the Scoring Committee and reminded the WASC that the Scoring Committee conducts a pass/fail assessment.

Member Knapp asked if the scores are self-scored by project applicants and then validated. District staff confirmed that applicants receive a preliminary score when they enter information into the project module, and then the Scoring Committee determines the project's final score. Vice Chair Rapp asked if the group could review which projects are asking for design money and which will ultimately ask for construction funding. District staff shared the SIP tool.

Member Consunji asked if the five members that did not provide rankings could provide rankings before the next meeting. District staff said they will follow up with WASC members so they can have scores from everyone at the next meeting.

Member Mike O'Grady observed that many projects seem to be concentrated in one area of the community and asked if anyone could speak on the results of the Path Finding study, as they would like to know which areas in the community are in need of projects. Member O'Grady noted that concentrating projects in one area is not as helpful as spreading them throughout the watershed.

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The Member is inclined to approve design funds now and discuss larger construction approvals after they have the results of the Path Finding study. Traci Gleason (Gateway Water Management Authority) said that the Path Finding study was part of the last SIP that was approved but are waiting for the approved transfer agreement and will issue NTP to consultant once the transfer agreement is received. Chair You asked District staff if a map of the approved projects is available. District staff presented the map on the SCW Portal.

Member Vicki Smith spoke on behalf of the York Field Stormwater Capture Project and observed that it is the only proposed project in that geographical area. The area is known to have subsidence and sediment issues. At Vice Chair Rapp's request, Member Smith confirmed the project is requesting design funds and will ask for additional funding for construction in fiscal year 2024-2025.

Member Quynh Tran from the Sanitation District asked if anyone from the York project reached out to the Sanitation District. John Hunter said they will reach out during the design phase. Oliver Galang said that the project relies on a downstream dry water diversion to Adventure Park, so coordination with the Sanitation District is not yet necessary and will be done during design phase. Member Tran asked if the Adventure Park project included potentially diverted stormwater in the sewer capacity analysis. Oliver Galang responded that yes, a dry weather capacity analysis was conducted. John Hunter noted that the Flood Control District specifically asked them not to divert dry weather flow because they need it at Adventure Park.

Vice Chair Rapp spoke on behalf of the Lakewood Equestrian Center Project, clarifying that they are requesting design funds and will have a 25% local match. When they eventually request construction funds, they will provide a local match. They are also looking for supplemental grant funds. Vice Chair Rapp mentioned the Scoring Committee Chair, Bruce Reznick, commented that the project's approach to community outreach and engagement was one of the most robust he had seen go through scoring. The Member believes the applicants have accurately understood what the community wants out of the project. The Conservation Corps of Long Beach led the community engagement effort.

Member Bernie Iniguez of the City of Bellflower spoke on behalf of the Bellflower Simms Park Stormwater Capture Project, sharing that the City set aside \$2 million for construction of the project, and is prepared to commit additional funds as a larger match. The project is located in an area of the city that needs updated park amenities. Member Gonzalez said the feasibility study showed that infiltration was not necessarily suitable, but in the diagrams and descriptions, it seems that the underground capture area does allow for subsurface infiltration. They asked if subsurface infiltration will occur. Oliver Galang said the design would not include infiltration but would incorporate filtration.

District staff noted that partial funding design guidelines are located on the SCWP website.

Member Gonzalez expressed support for the Lakewood Equestrian Center Project.

John Hunter noted that the Artesia Park Stormwater Capture Project is being submitted for design only.

Member Iniguez said that the design for the Bellflower project is anticipated to be complete by October 2022.

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The WASC called on Richard Watson (City of Long Beach) to speak on behalf of the Bellflower Simms Park Stormwater Capture Project and the Heartwell Park at Clark Channel Stormwater Capture Project. Watson commented that the Committee previously funded design for the Bellflower project. Now the project is being submitted as a three-year construction project. The Heartwell project is being submitted for either design-only or design and construction funding. Watson commented on the importance of both projects. Watson mentioned that funding design only for Heartwell Park at Clark gives them time and Long Beach needs to finish Skylinks Park which is in final design and will be in construction soon. Watson said funding is critical for the Simms Park Project because it has been designed and would like to have design funding of Heartwell Clark approved so they can start design and pursue outside funding as well.

Member Smith of the York Field project said they have a 25% match of local funds and a great deal of community support, particularly from baseball and softball groups.

Vice Chair Rapp asked about the status of the Bellflower project. Member Iniguez said they have 10% design completed and will have the full design with 100% plans by October.

Member Consunji asked for a review of current SCWP funding information for each city. District Staff said that they can provide a list of projects, cities, and allocations at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Rapp asked if the WASC should review the distribution of funding across the region. District staff said they would like to provide more guidance on that in the future. At this point, however, the WASC should focus on ensuring projects are generally distributed throughout the region.

Tori Klug (Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that ordinance language says that benefits rather than dollar amounts need to be distributed among municipalities.

District staff presented a map of approved stormwater projects. Member O'Grady said they would like to see a map that only shows projects that have been completed or have funding for construction. Only Operations & Maintenance projects have been completed at this point. District staff said that the map cannot filter that information at this point. Member Gonzalez noted that it would be helpful for map symbols to vary in size depending on award amounts. Member Alex Rojas asked if it would be possible to show completed projects and symbolize benefits on the SIP map. District Staff said they will look into incorporating those updates as applicable, but they do not expect it to be ready for this year's deliberations.

b. Lower San Gabriel River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan

District displayed the SIP tool to facilitate funding scenarios for SIP FY22-23.

District staff noted that under the proposed project funding scenario for only top two projects from the preliminary rankings, assuming construction costs, and not including scientific studies, years 2 and 3 would be over-allocated. The District noted that many applicants have shared that their schedules are subject to change and they are looking for funding elsewhere, meaning the applicants may not use all the funding they have requested from SCWP. Member Knapp added

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that the intention of the SCWP is not to fund all projects in their entirety – it is to leverage the funds against other sources. Vice Chair Rapp said they would need to review the status of all the WASC’s previously approved projects, as delays in transfer agreements can delay design work. The District identified the previously approved projects which are not requesting additional funds this year.

Member Knapp observed that most of the proposed projects require multiple millions of dollars, so the Committee cannot fully fund them. The Member asked if the Committee should prioritize funding smaller, more nature-based projects or if they should fund fewer, larger projects. District staff reminded the WASC that one of the goals of the program is to fund a distribution of projects that vary in size and scale. Vice Chair Rapp said they cannot make a determination until after they have the opportunity to consider the scientific studies for funding. The Vice Chair asked District staff when they would have an evaluation of the scientific studies. District Staff shared that they hope to have some or all of the evaluations by the next meeting. Vice Chair Rapp shared that the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) evaluations are necessary for the WASC’s deliberations and should be distributed in advance of the meetings. Chair You asked if the District could obtain a preliminary ranking of the scientific studies. District staff confirmed they would be able to, assuming everything is ready in time.

Member Rojas shared that approved funded projects may have to obtain additional outside funding and reduce amount needed from what was earmarked. With approval of projects and earmarked funds, less funding will be available for use in the future and the WASC could consider funding scientific studies or core aspects of projects first. Chair You added that they may consider awarding partial funding.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that some projects may discover they have cost overruns or savings. The WASC may consider setting aside a reserve of money for this scenario.

Member Consunji asked if they can cap funding approvals to minimize issues with overrun fundings. Member Knapp and Rojas echoed Member Consunji’s question. Vice Chair Rapp suggested refraining from funding construction until design is complete, because construction estimates are typically more reliable once plans are complete. The Vice Chair noted that the projects currently proposed are all municipality-led and highlighted that projects eventually submitted by non-governmental or community-based organizations (NGOs and CBOs) may find it more difficult to comply with funding caps. Antos reminded members that the WASC is committed to funding projects through completion, because they don’t want to commit money to a project that will not ultimately reach fruition.

Chair You voiced that two hours may not be enough time for SIP deliberation at a future meeting and asked District staff to clarify when they hope to send the approved SIP to the Regional Oversight Committee. District staff clarified that the goal is to have the SIP approved by the WASC in March or April.

8. Public Comment Period

John Hunter shared that Artesia has applied for a number of grants, but not having a “shovel-ready” project has been a barrier. They’re asking for design funds from the WASC to try to overcome that barrier.

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Richard Watson (Richard Watson & Associates) shared thoughts on several items discussed. First, Watson expressed a willingness to work with District staff to prepare a table or figure that enumerates the benefits accrued by both funded and proposed projects. With regards to small projects, Watershed Coordinators are now focused on fourth year projects and should be investing time in helping to develop small projects. Watson noted that SCCWRP coordinates a peer review of the scientific studies projects by researchers. Lastly, Watson shared their opinion that the five-year review of benefits by municipality should separate out funding acquired from sources other than the SCW Regional Program.

District staff noted that they may work with the LSGR Watershed Coordinator to create the requested maps of funded and proposed projects to inform discussions of project benefits.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

Chair You emphasized the importance of WASC members submitting their rankings for both Infrastructure Programs and Scientific Studies, and of having the SCCWRP review to inform SIP deliberations. Chair You also voiced support for making the next LSGR WASC meeting three hours in length, and noted that the Chair, Vice Chair, and District staff will coordinate to prepare the agenda.

The next meeting of the LSGR WASC is Tuesday March 8, 2022. See the SCWP website for meeting details, including timing and length.

Topics for the next agenda include:

- a) Lower San Gabriel River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan

11. Adjournment

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

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		Quorum Present				Voting Items
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve 1-11-2022 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Julian Juarez	x	Ramy Gindi		y
Agency	Central Basin	Alex Rojas	x			y
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Rob Beste		Aimee Zhao	x	a
Agency	Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell		Quynh Tran	x	y
Agency	City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation	Stephen Scott		Nancy Villaseñor	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Dan Knapp	x	Irene Lopez-Muro		y
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Adam Galia	x	Thalia Campos		y
Community Stakeholder	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Joseph Gonzalez	x	y
Community Stakeholder	Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment	Gabrielle Weeks				
Community Stakeholder						
Municipal Members	Cerritos	Mike O'Grady	x			y
Municipal Members	Downey	Delfino Consunji	x	Dan Mueller		y
Municipal Members	Lakewood	Lisa Ann Rapp	x	Konya Vivanti		y
Municipal Members	Long Beach	Melissa You	x	Wataru Kumagai		y
Municipal Members	Bellflower	Bernie Iniguez	x	Glen Kau		y
Municipal Members	La Mirada	Marlin Munoz	x			y
Municipal Members	Whittier	Vicki Smith	x	Kyle Cason		y
Watershed Coordinator Non-Voting Member	OhanaVets	Kekoa Anderson	x	Grace Kast	x	NA
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yes (Y)	14
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	15
Municipal Members		7				Approved

Attendance
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Adam Galia	kala anderson - OhanaVets, Inc.
Aimee Zhao - WRD	Kekoa Anderson
Alexander Iglesias - SCWP	Kyle Cason - City of Whittier
Andrew Kim	Lisa Rapp
Bernie Iniguez - City of Bellflower	Ionnie chung
Bryce Lee - John L. Hunter & Associates	Marlin Munoz - La Mirada
Burns & McDonnell Lurenana	Melanie Morita - LACFCD
Central Basin MWD Rojas - Central Basin Municipal Water District	Melissa You - Long Beach
City of Long Beach Public Works Salazar - City of Long Beach Public Works	Michelle Kim - John L Hunter and Associates
City of Long Beach Villasenor	Mike Antos (Regional Coord)
City of Whittier Smith - City of Whittier	Mike O'Grady - City of Cerritos
Dan Knapp - Conservation Corps of Long Beach	Oliver Galang - Craftwater Engineering Inc
Delfino Consunji - City of Downey	Quynh Tran
Elizabeth Lambe - Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust	Richard Watson
emily ramos - Stantec Consulting Services Inc.	Robert Gomez - LACFCD
Grace Kast	Sarai Jimenez - OurWaterLA (OWLA) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
I EC	Stephanie Tong - LACFCD - LACFCD
Jeff Atijera	Tori Klug (Regional Coord) - Regional Coordination (Stantec)
Joe Gonzalez - Rivers and Mountains Conservancy	Traci Gleason - OhanaVets
Joe Venzon - LA County	Wataru Kumagai - City of Long Beach
John Hunter	WRD Beste
Julian Juarez - Public Works	