

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



Thursday, March 24, 2022

1:00pm - 3:00pm

WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Julian Juarez, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)

Tom Love and Alternate Patty Cortez, Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District (Agency)

*Christopher Lapaz, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)

*Clement Lau, LA County Parks & Recreation (Agency)

Drew Ready, Council for Watershed Health (Community)

Johnathan Perisho, Watershed Conservation Authority (Community)

*David Marquez, Urban Semillas (Community), Vice Chair

David Diaz, Active SGV (Community)

Kevin Kearney, Bradbury (Municipal)

Alison Sweet, Glendora (Municipal), Chair

Joshua Nelson, Industry (Municipal)

Fernando Villaluna, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

Julie Carver, Pomona (Municipal)

Lisa O'Brien, La Verne (Municipal)

Alfredo Camacho, Day One (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Not Present:

Kelly Gardner, Main San Gabriel Basin (Agency)

Bob Huff, Former CA State Senator (Community)

John Beshay, Baldwin Park (Municipal)

See attached sign-in sheet for full list of attendees

1. Welcome and Introductions

Alison Sweet, Chair of the Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) WASC, welcomed Committee members and called the meeting to order. District Staff facilitated the roll call of Committee members. A quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2022

District Staff presented the meeting minutes from the previous meeting.

Member Lisa O'Brien asked that the minutes be corrected on Page 7 to accurately reflect Member Joshua Nelson's comment. The minutes state Member Nelson commented on the Glendora Avenue Green Streets Project Application; however, this comment should be corrected to instead mention the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group Pelota Park and Marchant Park Projects.

Motion to approve the corrected January 27, 2022 meeting minutes by Member Julie Carver, seconded by Member Tom Love. The WASC voted to approve the corrected meeting minutes. (Approved, see Vote Tracker sheet).

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



3. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no Committee member updates.

District Staff provided the following update:

- On March 1, 2022, 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 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.
- Under the Municipal Program, Annual Plans are due April 1 to the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). Annual Plans are required to receive the Municipal Program revenue. If any municipality has not submitted their Annual Plan, please do so promptly. The reporting module has been updated to add functionality and streamline the Annual Plan process. The District hosted an information session on March 7. The recording and FAQ has been posted on the Safe Clean Water website.
- The SCWP Interim Guidance document is available for public review on the website. The public review period has been extended to March 27, 2022.
- WASC members should complete their Annual Statement of Economic Interest, Form 700, by April 1. Late statements are subject to a fee of \$10 per day, up to \$100. WASC members should have received a reminder email about this.
- The Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) tool has been updated to accurately reflect rollover funds, including unused Technical Resources Program (TRP) funding, and operations and maintenance projections.
- The District reminded the Committee members that it is important for the WASC and the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair. These principles are built into the Safe, Clean Water Program and are represented by the *ex parte* disclosures on each agenda. WASC members whose job connects them to specific projects should ask colleagues or consultants to attend WASC meetings to share about or advocate for those projects during SIP deliberations and should avoid using their position as WASC members to advocate for projects from their home entities. Not all projects are connected to a WASC member's full-time job and must advocate for their inclusion during the managed opportunities (the application itself, presentation(s), questions from the WASC, and the public comment period). Ensuring each project gets treated fairly during discussion and voting agenda items and that all proponents have equal access to engage in the WASC discussion needs to be part of how the WASC manages itself.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Alfredo Camacho provided an update on recent activities:

- Connected with all 10 Infrastructure Program (IP) project applicants.
- Hosted or participated in 28 engagement events throughout the watershed area.
- Collaborated with neighboring watershed coordinator and elected officials/staff to maximize impact and reach.

Watershed Coordinator Camacho also provided an update on IP projects funded in Rounds 1 and 2.

Member Johnathon Perisho asked how the watershed coordinators intend to use the survey responses.

Watershed Coordinator Camacho answered that the survey responses will guide outreach, contribute to a

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



better understanding of the community's desires, and help to identify potential projects and community organizations to engage.

Member Drew Ready asked if Watershed Coordinator Camacho could provide details on the outreach to municipalities for funded projects. Watershed Coordinator Camacho answered that all project applicants have been willing to conduct community engagement. The Barnes Park Project will conduct outreach in mid-2022. Watershed Coordinator Camacho said they email project applicants on a regular basis and offer to help with the community outreach process in numerous ways (e.g., canvassing).

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

6. Public Comment Period

Nora Garcia (City of Pomona) submitted a public comment letter in support of re-selecting Day One for the Watershed Coordinator position of the USGR Watershed. The public comment will be included in the meeting minutes.

Shari Garwick (Director, City of San Dimas) spoke on behalf of the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group. Garwick stated that the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group contributed approximately 24% of the total regional program funds for the USGR Watershed Area, and that the group has only received about 3% of the regional SCWP funds guaranteed to construction funding and design. Garwick stated that, as a small community, the SCWP funds play a critical role in allowing the watershed to meet the Regional Water Quality Control Board's requirements. Garwick said that funding is directly tied to the realization of community benefits. Garwick cited Section 18.07.B.2.D of LA County Flood Control District Code, stating that benefits should be distributed equitably based on contributions. Garwick stated that since the WASC has already allocated over 80% of the WASC funds throughout for the watershed for the first six years, the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group has been left behind. Garwick said that they believe they have a responsibility as public servants to deliver what voters intended when voting for Measure W. Garwick encouraged the WASC to fund both the Marchant Park and Pelota Park Projects, highlighting the importance of the projects for the city. Garwick said that the Marchant Park project is directly adjacent to an elementary school, where 60% of the students participate in the Free or Reduced Lunch program. Garwick wrapped up their public comment by emphasizing the importance of the project in helping the watershed meet water quality requirements.

Laura Santos (Bassett Community member) expressed gratitude for Watershed Coordinator Camacho and their help in their community. Santos reminded the WASC that there is a pond restoration project that needs to be completed in the 6-acre, vacant area along Walnut Creek. Santos said the project will not likely break ground for many years, which allows time for community outreach and education. Santos reiterated their gratitude for Watershed Coordinator Camacho's assistance in Santos' community.

Richard Watson expressed gratitude to the USGR WASC for funding the Pathogen Reduction Study last year. Watson updated that four WASCs (USGR, South Santa Monica Bay, Lower Los Angeles River, and Santa Clara River) have agreed to fund the project this year. Watson shared that the study plans to move forward this year. Watson said that the Regional Board expressed their support for the study on March 10, though the Regional Board did not commit to any changes to standards. Watson is available to answer any questions.

Member Ready requested District Staff respond to the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management letter. Member Ready noted that the Fairplex Project, funded in previous rounds, had a total budget of

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



around \$30 million. Member Ready asked how that contribution affected the content of the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management letter. District Staff stated they would have to look more closely at the request. The District added that the ordinance language specifically references the distribution of municipality benefits, not necessarily investment of dollars. District Staff noted that it is up to the WASC's discretion to determine the best distribution of benefits across the region. Committee members should consider the 14 SCWP goals when evaluating projects, and they should prioritize those which deliver multiple benefits. The District hopes to have more guidance in the future, following the completion of the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS).

7. Presentation and Discussion Items

a) Selection of the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator for the next term

District Staff said that the Day One contract is almost over and the WASC has the option of extending the contract. Chair Sweet expressed their support for renewing Day One's contract.

b) Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)

District Staff shared the intention behind SCCWRP's independent, rapid reviews. SCCWRP created a standardized review template, organized an expert review panel, distributed the review template, and pulled together the report, which was sent to the Committee members. District Staff noted the reviews should be used as a resource for WASC decision-making and that project proponents are available to answer any questions or concerns that arose from comments in the review.

c) Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan. SCW Portal & USGR Scoring Rubric

- i. Infrastructure Program (IP)
 - (1) Glendora Avenue Green Streets - City of Glendora
 - (2) Pelota Park - East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group
 - (3) Marchant Park - East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group
- ii. Scientific Studies (SS)
 - (1) Maximizing Impact of Minimum Control Measures - San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments
 - (2) Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation - Los Angeles Community Garden Council

District Staff reviewed the resources available to Committee members for SIP decision-making. District Staff reminded the Committee members that, in general, partial funding without a clear path to project completion is discouraged. This is to ensure that the WASC fulfills its intent for projects to realize their benefits claimed and fund projects to completion. District Staff asked that the WASC account for future funding, including construction funds, when approving the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022-2023 SIP. District Staff stated that overages in the SIP would be flagged, and it would be up to the discretion of the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) and Board of Supervisors to approve the SIP.

Member David Diaz asked if the District or County understood or considered that funding design-only projects aided projects in acquiring other sources of funding. Member Diaz also asked if the WASC was obligated to fund future construction costs for projects approved for design-only in the SIP. District Staff stated that the intent of the program is to fund projects through completion to

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



ensure benefits claimed are realized. District Staff stated that they understood that once projects have gone through design, the projects may be more competitive for grant funding for construction costs. Member Diaz asked if the SIP tool includes estimated construction costs. District Staff confirmed that this was true in the scenario that was being presented.

Member O'Brien encouraged the WASC members to read the letter sent by the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed Management Group. The letter emphasizes that the realization of benefits is tightly tied to funding, and compares the benefits delivered to the East San Gabriel group to other cities and areas that have received SCWP funding. The letter also discusses drainage area, project storage capacity, annual stormwater capture, dry weather inflow, 85th percentile storm capture, and zinc concentrations, one of the controlling pollutants for the region. Member O'Brien stated that the letter included more than what was discussed during the Public Comment period and reiterated Garwick's reference to Section 18.07.B.2.D. Member O'Brien recommended the WASC members read the letter and added that at 3 pages in length, it is concise.

Chair Sweet asked District Staff to pull up the SIP with all previously funded projects. Overages were shown in FY 23-24 and FY 24-25, with a total five-year overage of 131%. Chair Sweet asked if awards could be shifted across years. District staff showed the approved Round 2 SIP, which did not include construction costs.

Member Carver noted that the Lone Hill Park and Fairplex projects planned to delay construction. District Staff shifted the construction costs for Lone Hill Park to FY 25-26 and the \$29 million of funding for Fairplex project was split equally across FY 25-26 and FY 26-27. Chair Sweet noted the Finkbiner project's construction funding could be shifted back by one year. District Staff reflected this suggestion in the SIP tool.

Member O'Brien suggested focusing on requested funding, instead of including assumed construction costs, stating that including the assumed construction costs was painting a dimmer picture than reality. Member O'Brien reiterated Member Diaz's previous comment, that design-only project applicants understand that construction costs may be delayed or not approved. District Staff displayed the scenario without assumed construction costs and clarified that the approved SIP would only include the requested funds and not the assumed construction costs; however, how the budget with assumed construction costs would be shown to the ROC to demonstrate how the WASC is considering future funding. District Staff noted that narrative could be included in this section, recognizing the assumed construction costs are estimates and that applicants are encouraged to work with the watershed coordinator to find other funding sources. Chair Sweet added that such a narrative could include details on how construction costs are likely to be delayed.

Chair Sweet noted that Curt Roth (Glendora Avenue Green Streets Project Consultant) said the Glendora Avenue Green Streets Project could spread its design funding across two years. Sweet suggested shifting \$150,000 from FY 22-23 to FY 24-25.

Member Diaz expressed support for all projects submitted and noted that they would like to see all the design-only projects and the scientific studies funded, so they can move forward. Member Diaz added that the SIP should include Watershed Coordinator costs as well. District Staff clarified that Watershed Coordinator costs are already included in the budget.

Chair Sweet asked if project proponents could speak, regarding redistributing funds across years. Member Carver pointed out that spreading the funds across fiscal years would not fix the overages. Member Carver suggested granting 2/3 of the funding request for the Glendora Park and Marchant Park projects in FY 22-23 and granting the remaining 1/3 in FY 23-24. Tori Klug

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



(Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that no funds could be added to FY 23-24 without overages.

Juan Diaz-Carreras (Community Garden Stormwater Capture Investigation study representative) thanked Member Diaz for their support and made themselves available for any questions. Diaz-Carreras reiterated the benefits of the study to the community and the gardeners.

Member O'Brien asked what the SIP would look like with the Glendora Avenue Project removed and the Pelota Park and the Marchant Park projects with funds as initially requested. District Staff created a new scenario in the SIP tool.

Member Diaz asked if funds requested for the FY 23-24 from projects previously approved for funding were up to date. District Staff confirmed that these funding requests were updated during the past WASC meeting and asked that project proponents notify District staff of any updates.

Per Member O'Brien's request, District Staff showed the scenario with projects as submitted, excluding the Glendora Avenue Project, which resulted in an allocation of 109% in FY 23-24. Member Carver asked to see the budget if the WASC asked for voluntary budget reduction. District Staff stated that project proponents would need to complete partial funding documentation to verify they could accomplish their original goals with reduced funds.

Member O'Brien asked if the WASC could request voluntary project budget reductions from previously submitted projects as well. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) responded that this may be possible, though it is unclear what the implications would be since it has not yet been done and doesn't support the program goal of realizing approved project benefits through completion. Antos acknowledged that the distribution of resource needs may be different from previous years. Member O'Brien recognized the uncharted nature of the suggestion.

Member O'Brien asked whether District Staff could display realized benefits in relation to each city or watershed group. Antos stated that one of the major outcomes of the MMS study addresses this request and is expected to be completed in mid-2023. Member O'Brien said that they understand that benefits are difficult to quantify and reiterated their concern that some areas were being left behind in terms of equitable distribution of benefits, as discussed in the East San Gabriel Valley Watershed letter. Member O'Brien underscored the importance of public trust and transparency by seeing equitable payback of benefits through the SCWP. Antos agreed that the WASC needs to prioritize competing interests and needs in the watershed and affirmed the value of this dialogue.

Member Chris Lapaz observed that funding any of the proposed projects for FY 22-23 would result in overages for FY 23-24. District Staff emphasized the importance of leaving space in future years' budget allocations to allow for the funding of future proposed projects.

District Staff stated that with the Marchant Park and Pelota Park Projects included in the SIP, there would be an overage of \$1.8 million across FY 22-23 and FY 23-24. District Staff also said that there is only \$1.9 million available to be allocated for FY 22-23. Member Joshua Nelson suggested that the only way to include these projects in the SIP may be to line them up for funding in future years.

Member Diaz asked to see the scenario for Glendora Avenue Project, Marchant Park Project, and the two scientific studies. District Staff showed this scenario. Member Diaz asked if the Glendora Avenue Project funds could be awarded to FY 22-23, and the scientific studies' second year of funding be moved to FY 24-25. The budget showed overages in FY 23-24 given this scenario.

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



Antos stated the FY 23-24 is dependent on rollover from FY 22-23 since the total amount allocated in previous SIPs exceeds the anticipated annual regional program funds collected. Member Johnathan Perisho expressed concern over allocating future funds this far in advance.

District Staff stated that all scenarios are saved on the SCWP website and wrapped up discussion. SIP funding should be approved in April or May. Chair Sweet suggested the next meeting be devoted to this discussion.

8. Public Comment Period

Shawn Igoe (City of La Verne) acknowledged the difficulty of the WASC's decision and asked that the group support Pelota Park Project. Igoe stated that the Pelota Park Project is ideal for the area since it provides water quality, water supply, and community investment benefits. Igoe reiterated the significant community and stormwater capture/reuse needs that would be met by the project. Igoe stated that the project would revitalize the flagship park and create local amenities for the community and school. The project will address the school's water discharge through rooftop downspout connection programs and will replace an impervious parking area with porous concrete. Igoe reiterated their support for the project's benefits and thanked the WASC for their time.

9. Voting Items

The following voting item was addressed:

- a) Reselect the current Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator for the next term

Watershed Coordinator Camacho left the meeting. Motion by Member Diaz to renew Day One's contract, seconded by Member Carver. The motion passed to renew Day One's contract as the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Coordinator for the next term.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting will include the following postponed voting item:

- a) Approve the final Fiscal Year 2022-23 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the USGR Watershed Area and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review (if needed)

Member Ready suggested adding an agenda item to the next meeting to review the distribution of benefits policies.

11. Adjournment

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