

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



Tuesday, February 28, 2023
10:00am – 1:00 pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present

Marcela Benavides-Aguilar, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Asha Kreiling, Water Replenishment District (Agency)
*Alysha Chan, LA County Sanitation Districts (Agency)
*Nancy Villaseñor, City of Long Beach Parks and Recreation (Agency)
*Madeline Chen, Central Basin Municipal Water District (Agency)
Dan Knapp, Conservation Corps of Long Beach (Community)
*Noya Wang, Resident (Community)
*Sally Gee, Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (Community)
Gabrielle Weeks, Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment (Community)
Mike O'Grady, Cerritos (Municipal)
Dan Mueller, Downey (Municipal)
Melissa You, Long Beach (Municipal), Chair
Bernie Iniguez, Bellflower (Municipal)
*Konya Vivanti, Lakewood (Municipal)
Vicki Smith, Whittier (Municipal)
*Joseph Venzon, Unincorporated areas of LA County (Municipal)
Kekoa Anderson, OhanaVets (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Committee Members Not Present

Lisa Ann Rapp, Resident (Community), Vice-Chair

*Committee Member Alternate

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

Melissa You, Chair of the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC), welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order. Los Angeles County Flood Control District (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 February 14, 2023

This Agenda Item was deferred to the next meeting.

3. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update, noting:

- The State of Emergency will be lifted February 28, 2023. Starting March 1, WASC meetings may not be conducted under the reduced teleconferencing requirements per AB 361. Rather, they will need to meet the teleconference requirements of the traditional Brown Act and/or AB 2449. The City of Lakewood Executive Boardroom has been reserved for future in-person meetings through June 2023. The District is exploring the option of including a hybrid element. District staff provided additional detail about Brown Act and AB 2449 teleconferencing requirements which can be found on the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) website.

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- The District released the Regional Program Process Funding Handbook (Handbook) which provides consolidated information on existing Regional Program requirements and guidance. The Handbook is available under the Regional Program Call for Projects tab on the SCWP website.
- Quarterly Reports for FY22-23 Quarter 2 (Q2) covering October to December of 2022 activities were due February 15, 2023 for Round 1 and Round 2 projects. Regional Program Quarterly Reports must be completed even if there was no activity done on the project or if the Transfer Agreements have not yet been executed. To view Quarterly Reports, visit the [SCW Project Dashboard](#), select a project, then select Project Reports.
- The District has started to execute Round 3 Transfer Agreements and Addendums and distribute funds to new and continuing projects. Details have been sent to the project developers.
- WASC Community Stakeholder seats are up for reappointment August 2023, under Article 4, Section 5 of the WASC operating guidelines. Individuals interested in serving the 3-year term as a Community Stakeholder should submit the Interest to Serve Form, available [here](#).
- Municipal Annual Plans are due on April 1, 2023.
- It is important for the WASC and the work of the Regional Program to remain transparent and fair. These principles are built into the SCWP and are represented by the ex parte disclosure item 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 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) deliberations and should avoid using their position as WASC members to advocate for projects from their home entities.

4. Watershed Coordinator Updates

This Agenda Item was deferred to the next meeting.

5. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures.

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00 pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. Call-in users were also invited to provide public comment.

Mark Stowell (City of La Mirada) provided public comment to clarify the funding timeline for the La Mirada Creek Park Project. Design will be complete in December 2023 and CEQA documentation is already complete. Upon revisiting the project details, the City has decided to keep the funding request within one year rather than splitting it over two years.

Christopher Rochfort (STAR Water) provided public comment in response to the WASC's previous request that they share information about the La Habra Heights Stormwater Treatment and Reuse System The Park Hacienda Road project (herein referred to as the La Habra Heights project) pollutant removal loadings. The loadings are attached in Rochfort's comment card.

7. Discussion

- a. **Summary of Scientific Studies from the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP)**

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District staff presented the summary of Scientific Studies prepared by the SCCWRP. Member Nancy Villaseñor called attention to the SCCWRP's critique of the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study which focused on its technical soundness.

Richard Watson (Richard Watson and Associates, Study Applicant) responded to the reviewers' concerns about the incomplete scope of work. The scope and workplan will be finalized in partnership with the stakeholder committee. Watson noted that this approach is in response to past experiences with similar projects in the LA River. Watson reported that LA Regional Water Quality Control Board supports moving forward with the study but did not commit to changing any standards. Watson emphasized that although reviewers had issues with the proposal, their reviews were overall positive.

b. Lower San Gabriel River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for Populating the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan ([SCW Portal](#) & [Summary of Resources](#))

Sixteen of seventeen WASC members responded to the survey to rank the five Infrastructure Program (IP) projects and the two Scientific Studies (SSs) under consideration. The preliminary rankings are as follows:

1. Progress Park Stormwater Capture Project (87)
2. Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project (79)
3. La Mirada Creek Park Project (79)
4. Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project (68)
5. La Habra Heights Stormwater Treatment and Reuse System The Park Hacienda Road (64)
6. Regional Pathogen Reduction Study (74)
7. Targeted Human Waste Source Reduction Strategy to Address Bacteria-Related Compliance Objectives for the Los Cerritos Channel (58)

The WASC first considered the SIP tool funding scenario for the top three IPs and two SSs. They found that the highest percent of budget allocated in any given year was 71% in FY23-24, which is within the healthy range for a SIP.

Member Dan Knapp suggested that the WASC should not consider assumed future construction costs during SIP deliberations. Member Knapp supports funding all projects since they have the funds to do so.

Member Sally Gee expressed concerns about both Scientific Studies, noting that the sampling points for the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study are concentrated outside of the Watershed Area and that the Targeted Human Waste Source Reduction Strategy to Address Bacteria Related-Compliance Objectives for the Los Cerritos Channel (herein referred to as Targeted Human Waste Source Reduction Study) may fall outside the scope of Measure W.

Upon request for clarification, District staff explained that the FY23-24 SIP only solidifies funds for this Fiscal Year. Considerations for future FY allocations discussed today are not final.

The WASC discussed the process for re-evaluating previously funded projects. The WASC may delay funding if a project is not moving forward as anticipated. Quarterly Report summaries offer an opportunity for the WASC to hold those discussions. Applicants of funded projects are invited to participate in SIP deliberations so that the WASC may ask questions or request progress updates.

Member Konya Vivanti shared support for the Scientific Studies, one of which is local and one regional. Member Vivanti urged the WASC to select the one that will yield the quickest results to help achieve bacteria requirements. District staff updated the rankings based on more recent responses that demonstrate increased support for the Scientific Studies.

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The WASC considered the SIP tool scenario for the top four IPs and two SSs as requested (not including assumed construction costs). The highest percent of budget allocated in any given year was 77% in FY23-24.

The WASC discussed the La Habra Heights project. The La Habra Heights project was considered for funding last year and has returned with leveraged funds as requested by the WASC. It is the only project under consideration which is physically located in a disadvantaged community. Members of the WASC expressed support for prioritizing projects that are either located in or provide benefits to disadvantaged communities.

The WASC added the La Habra Heights project to the existing SIP scenario (now inclusive of all projects with no assumed construction costs) and the highest percent of budget allocated in any given year was 78% in FY23-24.

Members of the WASC diverged on whether to include the Targeted Human Waste Source Reduction Study in the SIP.

Member Villaseñor recommended the WASC prioritize funding design projects, since those typically have a harder time getting funded. Member Villaseñor highlighted that it is easier for a project that has completed design to seek construction funds from other sources.

The WASC discussed the impact of approving all projects on future SIPs, particularly given that FY24-25 is 74% allocated. Members acknowledged the possibility of adjusting the amount allocated to funded projects in future years, given that future project requests are not yet known.

8. Public Comment Period

Richard Watson provided public comment in support of the WASC's decision to not limit their funding decisions based on anticipated future construction costs. Watson reflected that the WASC's recent funding choices represent diversity in size and complement one another well.

9. Voting Items

- a. **Approve the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the Lower San Gabriel River Watershed Area, including OhanaVets as Watershed Coordinator and approve submission to the Regional Oversight Committee for review.**

Member Vicki Smith motioned to approve the final FY23-24 LSGR Watershed Area SIP to include the Progress Park Stormwater Capture Project, Artesia Park Urban Runoff Capture Project, La Mirada Creek Park Project, Heartwell Park at Palo Verde Channel Stormwater Capture Project, La Habra Heights project, Regional Pathogen Reduction Study, and the Targeted Human Waste Source Reduction Study and to include OhanaVets as Watershed Coordinator, and submit the SIP to the Regional Oversight Committee for review. The motion was seconded by Member Knapp. The Committee approved the motion with 16 members in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 in abstention (approved, see vote tracking sheet attached).

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, March 14, 2023, has been cancelled. The next LSGR WASC meeting is tentatively scheduled to be in-person on Tuesday, April 11, 2023 at the Lakewood Executive Boardroom.

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11. Adjournment

Chair You thanked Committee Members and the public for their attendance and participation and adjourned the meeting.

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		Quorum Present					
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve Scenario "Final" as the final Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan funding recommendations for the LSGR Watershed Area, including OhanaVets as Watershed Coordinator and advance to the ROC for review.	
Agency	FCD	Marcela Benavides-Aguilar	x	Ramy Gindi		y	
Agency	Central Basin	Alex Rojas		Madeline Chen	x	y	
Agency	Water Replenishment District	Rob Beste		Asha Kreiling	x	y	
Agency	Sanitation Districts	Kristen Ruffell		Alysha Chan	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		Noya Wang	x	y	
Community Stakeholder	Rivers Mountains Conservancy	Mark Stanley		Sally Gee	x	y	
Community Stakeholder	Long Beach Coalition for a Safe Environment	Gabrielle Weeks	x			y	
Community Stakeholder	Resident	Lisa Ann Rapp					
Municipal	Bellflower	Bernie Iniguez	x	Len Gorecki		y	
Municipal	Cerritos	Mike O'Grady	x	Sergio Huizar		y	
Municipal	Downey	Dan Mueller	x			y	
Municipal	Lakewood	Kelli Pickler		Konya Vivanti	x	y	
Municipal	Long Beach	Melissa You	x	Wataru Kumagai		y	
Municipal	Unincorporated	Fernando Villaluna		Joseph Venzon	x	y	
Municipal	Whittier	Vicki Smith	x	Kyle Cason		y	
Non-Voting	Watershed Coordinator	Kekoa Anderson	x	Grace Kast			
Total Non-Vacant Seats		17			Yay (Y)	16	0
Total Voting Members Present		16			Nay (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	0	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	16	0
Municipal		7				Approved	Not Approved

Attendance

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Alexander Iglesias LACFCD
Alysha Chan
ANDREW KIM
Andrew Gray
Anna Philipp
Aric Martinez
Asha Kreiling
Bernie Iniguez
Brianna Datti
Christopher Rochfort
Dan Knapp
Dan Mueller
Donna Tran
Elizabeth Lambe
Gabrielle weeks
Gabrielle Weeks
grace kast
Haris Harouny
Jacqueline Mak
Joe Venzon - LA County
john hunter
Julie Millett
Kekoa Anderson
Kirk Allen
Konya Vivanti

Larry Tran
Larry Tortuya - CWE
Lori Wolfe
Madeline CHEN
Marcela Benavides (LACFCD)
Mark Rounds
Mark Stowell
Melissa You
Merrill Taylor
Michelle Kim
Mike O'Grady
Nancy Villasenor
Natalie Rivera-Estrada
Noya Wang
Oliver Galang
Priya Aggarwal
Richard Watson
Rob Beste
Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)
Sally Gee
Tori Klug (Regional Coord.)
Traci Gleason
Vicki Smith
Wataru Kumagai
Yisak Kim