

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



Thursday, February 16, 2023
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 Department of Water and Power (Agency)
Ida Meisami-Fard, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community)
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
Max Liles, Michael Baker International (Community)
Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)
*Kris Markarian, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Max Podemski, Los Angeles (Municipal), Vice-Chair
Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)
Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)
Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (Municipal)
Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Jason Casanova, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)
Carlos Moran, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

No Committee Members were absent.

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

1. Welcome and Introductions

LA County Flood Control District (District) staff provided a brief WebEx tutorial in both English and Spanish and announced that the meeting was being broadcast live in Spanish. District staff welcomed Committee Members and called the meeting to order.

District staff 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 1, 2023

Chair Villegas motioned to approve meeting minutes from February 1, 2023, seconded by Member Kenneth Jones. The WASC approved the February 1, 2023 meeting minutes with 14 in favor, 1 in abstention, 0 opposed, and 1 absent at the time of voting (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communications.

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4. Committee Member and District Updates

WASC 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 (<https://lacbos.jotform.com/223256471672054>). Applicants can request confirmation from the contact listed on the LACBOS website and follow up with District staff if no confirmation was received.

a) Future Governance Committee Meetings

District staff presented on updated guidelines for future governance committee meetings; the presentation can be found on the SCWP website (<https://safecleanwaterla.org/upper-los-angeles-river-watershed-area/>). The March 1, 2023 meeting has been rescheduled to February 28, 2023. Thursday March 16, 2023 would be the first in-person meeting, if the meeting is needed. The venue at the Los Angeles County Public Works Headquarters – Conference Room C in Alhambra is reserved through June.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

The Watershed Coordinators shared a review on the community engagement and project development activities completed within the last year; the presentation can be found on the SCWP website (<https://safecleanwaterla.org/upper-los-angeles-river-watershed-area/>). The presentation shows examples of the various in-person education and outreach events, regional coordination events with partner organizations, and project coordination and coordination efforts supported by the Watershed Coordinators.

Member Miguel Luna underscored the importance of the Watershed Coordinators conducting work within the ULAR watershed area communities.

6. Public Comment Period

District staff compiled all public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting, uploaded them to the SCWP website, and displayed them on-screen. Participants on the Spanish translation line were also invited to provide public comment. There were no public comment cards received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting or public comments during the meeting.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Selection of the Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Coordinators for the next term

The Watershed Coordinators were asked to leave the meeting during this discussion. District staff explained that the Committee may choose to reselect the current Watershed Coordinators or the Committee can extend the current contracts for 6 months in order to provide time for the WASC to review the pre-approved list of potential Watershed Coordinator organizations for a new selection. The Watershed Coordinator contracts are on an annual basis and confirmed that the contract would be for Year 3.

Member Luna commented that a multi-year contract for the Watershed Coordinators would be useful to promote long term efforts but understands if it is not in the purview of the committee to change. District staff explained that the Watershed Coordinator contracts are funded by previous year Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) budgets and is written in the Program for these roles to be on an annual contract. District staff will follow up on whether this issue can be amended after this contract to make the Watershed Coordinator contracts last multiple years.

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Committee Members, representing government entities and community organizations alike, commended the Watershed Coordinators years on creating connections between municipalities and local community organizations in the past few years.

8. Public Comment Period (moved up on the agenda)

This public comment period is for the reselection of the current Watershed Coordinators. There were no public comments.

9. Voting Items (moved up on the agenda)

a) Reselect the current ULAR Watershed Coordinators for the next term

Member Veronica Padilla-Campos motioned to reselect Environmental Outreach Strategies, Council for Watershed Health, and Council for Watershed Health as the ULAR Watershed Coordinators for the next term, seconded by Member Luna. The WASC approved the motion with 16 in favor, 0 in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

The Watershed Coordinators were invited back to the meeting.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items (continued)

b) Regional Program Quarterly Reporting Summary FY2021-22 Q3 (January – March 2022) and Q4 (April – June 2022)

District staff displayed a summary of the quarterly reports on the screen, which is also available on the SCWP website. District staff reminded the WASC that the reports are not the most recent updates due to the review period required to finalize the summary. District staff gave a summary of the projects with modifications or activity concerns. Project developers were invited to attend the meeting to discuss any questions the Committee had on the projects' updates.

Chair Villegas asked if any projects had any impacts on budget or would affect this year's SIP, and District staff noted that a confirmation of budget allocations will be gathered prior to this year's SIP deliberation. Budget reallocations were discussed and confirmed during the ULAR WASC meeting on November 2, 2022 under agenda item "WASC Responsibility and Authority to Review the Status and Progress of Continuing Projects and Confirm Financial Needs and Schedules". Although, this quarterly reporting summary is an opportunity for the WASC to meet with project developers to hear about modifications that may require changes in funding allocation from year to year.

Paul Shadmani (Project Developer) provided an update on the Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project. There are no funding changes anticipated but the schedule has been slightly delayed. There has been progress on the CEQA documentation, permits were acquired from City of Los Angeles in June 2022, and the team is working on geotechnical reports as of January 2023. Design plans are being finalized and are looking for different funding opportunities.

c) Southern California Coastal Water Research Project (SCCWRP) Reviews of Scientific Studies

District staff noted that the intention of this independent rapid review process is to aid the Committee in the decision-making process during SIP deliberation. The independent review of the two scientific studies in consideration this year are posted on the SCWP website and project applicants were invited to discuss any concerns or answer questions from the committee.

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d) preSIP: A Platform for Watershed Science and Project Collaboration Update (Presentation by San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments)

Brad Wardynski and Dawn Petschauer gave a presentation on the preSIP Scientific Study; the presentation is available on the SCWP website. This Scientific Study was created through engagement with ULAR Watershed Management Group (WMP) partners to create a tool to support project development by reconciling projects with overlapping objectives and proposals into a cohesive, collaborative, and cost-effective plan.

Member Rafael Prieto confirmed with the project developers that regulators were engaged early on in this study. The project developers explained that the compliance targets and tool development were also informed by choices made from other nearby WMPs. Compliance pathways prioritize pollution reduction rather than volume capture.

Watershed Coordinator Carlos Moran asked if there were any non-agency projects making their way into the tool. While there were no projects from non-agencies received during the pilot study, there have been discussions with Council for Watershed Health and other community organizations and the project developers welcome the addition of specific projects in addition to those engaged from the SCWP.

Chair Villegas confirmed that this study was awarded funding in Round 1 and those funds were distributed to the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' member agencies, which includes the City of Los Angeles. Chair Villegas also noted that it would be beneficial for the study to receive follow up from regulators because of the shift from using volume capture to pollution reduction as metric. The project developers noted that the study anticipates being finalized this year after pending transfer agreements are executed, and that the study is meant to be a planning tool to help regions plan projects to achieve pollution reduction compliance.

8. Public Comment Period (continued)

Richard Watson (Project applicant) provided a public comment regarding the SCCWRP review on the Regional Pathogen Reduction Study. Watson noted that the Study has been approved into five WASC SIPs so far and that the comments from SCCWRP cite issues regarding an incomplete workplan. The Study intentionally plans to finalize the workplan after a stakeholder group is created to ensure non-governmental organizations and community groups can provide input and influence the final workplan.

9. Voting Items (continued)

A separate public comment period and Voting Item 9a itself were moved up on the Agenda to follow Item 7a.

10. Items for Next Agenda

District staff shared that the SIP Tool (<https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/sip-tool/>) is ready to use for FY23-24 SIP deliberations and that the next meeting will be on February 28, 2023 from 2:00pm – 5:00pm. Agenda items include:

a) Upper Los Angeles River Project Prioritization and Selection Discussion for populating the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Stormwater Investment Plan ([SCW Portal & Summary of Resources](#))

District staff announced that funding scenarios have been created into the SIP Tool as a starting point, including a scenario named "All considered projects with previous project funding reallocations" to show

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the funding reallocations from continuing projects from previous SIPs as discussed during the ULAR WASC meeting on November 2, 2022.

Chair Villegas encouraged Committee Members to fill out the preliminary project ranking sheet sent via email and to look at the SIP Tool in preparation for next meeting.

District reminded the Committee Members that information on the project applications have been available in the SCW Portal since the close of call for projects and since the Scoring Committee scored the ULAR Infrastructure Program projects in October 2022 and rescored some of the projects in December 2022. The Watershed Coordinators also provided a summary of project applications during the ULAR WASC meeting in September 2022.

b) Adjournment

Chair Villegas thanked Committee 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 2-1-2023 Meeting Minutes	Reselect Environmental Outreach Strategies, Council for Watershed Health, Council for Watershed Health as the ULAR Watershed Coordinators for the next term
Agency	FCD	Genevieve Osmena	x	Ramy Gindi		y	y
Agency	Water Agency	Delon Kwan		Art Castro	x	y	y
Agency	Groundwater / Water Agency 2	Jesus Gonzalez		John Huynh	x	y	y
Agency	Sanitation	Ida Meisami-Fard	x	Alfredo Magallanes		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
Community Stakeholder	Environment						
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	x			y	y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Felipe Escobar		y	y
Municipal Members	Glendale / Pasadena	Yazdan Emrani		Kris Markarian	x	a	y
Municipal Members	La Cañada Flintridge / South Pasadena	Patrick DeChellis	x	Ted Gerber		y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Teresa Villegas	x	Barbara Romero		y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Max Podemski	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto	x			y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	x	Thuan Nguyen		y	y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones	x	Alex Farassati		y	y
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x				
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Jason Casanova	x	Clarasophia Gust			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yes (Y)	14	16
Total Voting Members Present		16			No (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	1	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	15	16
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved

Attendees

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Jenny Chau	Mara Luevano	Paul Shadmani	Albert Kam
Johanna Chang	Adi Liberman	Kris Markarian	Scott Kindred
Mehrad Kamalzare	Mark Lombos	Rafael Piamonte	Dawn Petschauer
Alonso Garcia	Eieen Alduenda	Mike	Jason Casanova
Cathie Santo Domingo	Haris Harouny - LACFCD	Michael Scaduto	Luis Garcia
Ryan A	john huynh	Shelly Backlar	Peter Tonthat
Justin Jones - LACFCD	Pat DeChellis	Seta Marjanian	Nicholas Ryu
Ida Meisami (LASAN)	Susie Santilena	Brittany Cardenas	Carlos Aldape
Donna Bautista	Mayra Cabrera - LACFCD	Castro, Art	kristina leyva
Brianne Logasa	Noel Le	Max Liles	Conor Mossavi
Ernesto Pantoja	Soheil Sheikhlar	Craig Doberstein	Isabelle Russell
Giselle Ramirez	Miguel Luna	Veronica Padilla	Christine McLeod
Stacy Luell	Sarai Bhaga	Serena Zhu	gabriela gonzalez
Nate Butler	Majid Sadeghi	Carlos Moran	Ali Sharbat
Drew Ready	Lidia Rlvera	Amanda Zeidner	Daniel Apt
Thuan Nguyen	Lorena Matos	Amanda	Rafael Prieto
Mark Hall GLAмосquito	Jennifer Amarant	Arlene Guzman	Miller Zou
Ryanna Fossum (Regional Coordination)	William OBraitis	Mark Nguyen	Richard Watson
Genevieve Osmena	Carmen Andrade	Max Podemski	Yamada, Robin
Anh Ta	Yen Pham	David Pohl	Robin Yamada
Thom Epps	Maggie Gardner	Kimberl Henry	Kara Plourde
H. Ted Gerber	Jon Ball	Brad Wardynski	
Ted Gerber	Teresa Villegas	Eber Navarrete	
Anthony Nercessian	brett perry	Kenneth Jones	