

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



Wednesday, June 7, 2023
2:00pm - 4:00pm
WebEx Meeting

Committee Members Present:

Paul Shadmani, LA County Flood Control District (Agency)
*Art Castro, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
*John Huynh, LA Department of Water and Power (Agency)
*Alfredo Magallanes, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)
Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)
Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community) – Virtual attendee
Miguel Luna, Urban Semillas (Community)
Max Liles, Michael Baker International (Community)
Yazdan Emrani, Glendale (Municipal)
Patrick DeChellis, La Cañada Flintridge (Municipal)
Teresa Villegas, Los Angeles (Municipal), Chair
Karo Torossian, Los Angeles (Municipal)
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)
Kristina Kreter, Council for Watershed Health (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

*Committee Member Alternate

Committee Members Absent:

Veronica Padilla-Campos, Pacoima Beautiful (Community)

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.

To comply with hybrid teleconferencing requirements, Member Ernesto Pantoja disclosed that two adults were present in the room with the member and shared the general nature of each person's relationship (wife and son).

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from February 16, 2023 and February 28, 2023

Member Yazdan Emrani motioned to approve meeting minutes from February 16, 2023 and February 28, 2023. The motion was seconded by Member Patrick DeChellis. The WASC approved the meeting minutes with 11 members in favor, 2 in abstention, 0 opposed, and 2 members absent at the time of the vote (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

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3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures

There were no ex parte communication disclosures shared.

4. Committee Member and District Updates

There were no updates from Committee Members.

District staff provided an update:

- WASC Community Stakeholders seats are up for reappointment by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisor's Commission Services Division in August 2023, under Article 4, Section 5 of the WASC Operating Guidelines. Those interested in serving or continuing to serve should consider that future WASC meetings will be held in person. Individuals interested in serving as a Community Stakeholder for a 3-year term should submit the Interest to Serve Form, [available here](#). Current Community Stakeholders interested in continuing to serve are not required to submit the Interest to Serve Form but are asked to inform the District.
- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) voted to advance all 9 Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) to the Board of Supervisors for funding. District staff is preparing the Board Letter package for final submission later this summer. The ROC's comments on the ULAR SIP will be outlined in the Board Letter package and will be included in the ROC's meeting minutes, which are available on the ROC's webpage on the SCWP website.
- Regional Program Quarterly Reports are required by project developers even if there is no project activity and even if the Transfer Agreement has not been executed. FY22-23 Quarter 3 reports were due on May 15 and Quarter 4 reports are due on August 15.
- District staff hosted information sessions for FY24-25 (Round 5) Call for Project Applicants on May 24 and May 25. The application deadline for Round 5 is July 31, 2023. Project applicants may refer to the Call for Projects webpage on the SCWP website for application details.

Chair Villegas shared a summary of the ROC discussion as it related to the ULAR FY23-24 SIP. The ROC discussions involved the Scientific Study, Groundwater Quality Monitoring: Studying Pollution Removal in Stormwater Drywells and Monitoring the Spatial and Temporal Effects of Stormwater Drywells on Local Groundwater Quality (Cal Poly Pomona), as well as partial funding for the Infrastructure Program Project, Bowtie Demonstration Project (The Nature Conservancy). Chair Villegas mentioned that the proponents from Cal Poly Pomona were in attendance and shared public comments supporting the Scientific Study. Chair Villegas noted that the WASC has funded a previous Cal Poly Pomona scientific study. The ROC recommends the District continue engaging with the proponents from Cal Poly Pomona.

As a response to comments from the ROC meeting, Chair Villegas maintained that the WASC did not rush the SIP deliberation and acknowledged that each WASC member spends valuable time at the ULAR WASC meetings and in preparing for the ULAR WASC meetings. Regarding the Bowtie Demonstration Project, Chair Villegas explained that the ULAR WASC did not initiate the partial funding process, after discussion decided not to move forward with partial funding, and is encouraged to apply for the next round of funding.

5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

Watershed Coordinator Adi Liberman shared a presentation on Watershed Coordinator updates and introduced Kristina Kreter from the Council for Watershed Health as a new member of the Watershed Coordinator team for this WASC. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

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Member Miguel Luna asked how the Watershed Coordinators have been approaching project applicants given the limited funding available in this WASC. The Watershed Coordinators explained that some project applicants are engaged through the typical application process and some projects originate from the Watershed Coordinators' discussions with different organizations.

The Watershed Coordinators explained that many community and nonprofit organizations are overwhelmed by the SCWP module and that applications require a lot of work and resources that smaller organizations do not have. The Watershed Coordinators encourage organizations to submit applications to the Technical Resources Program (TRP), while simultaneously sharing information about other funding sources, such as State grants.

Member Luna shared appreciation for the Watershed Coordinators' management of expectations and suggested that the Regional Coordination team prepare a presentation on additional funding sources. Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) noted that the Regional Coordination scope has been amended for the upcoming Round of Projects to include leverage funding memorandums for each Infrastructure Program (IP) project that receives a score from the Scoring Committee. More about the funding memoranda will be shared with the WASC at future meetings.

The Watershed Coordinators will share a draft of the updated Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) with Committee Members for review and comments prior to the next meeting, where the Committee will vote to approve the updated SOEP.

In response to a question from Member Kenneth Jones about the average number of agency-led construction projects that get fully funded, the Watershed Coordinators will investigate the statistics from previous rounds and follow up. Antos noted that partial funding is a separate process that has not been commonly pursued in the past—most projects receive all or none of the funding requested. Chair Villegas noted that project applicants are typically asked to conduct the relevant assessments required before applying for construction funds.

Chair Villegas suggested inviting representatives of elected members of government, including the California State Assembly and Senate, to the tours and events that the Watershed Coordinators conduct. The State Legislature is in recess during the fall, and it might be good to initiate communication now to prepare for discussions related to upcoming State grants.

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 and call-in users were also invited to provide public comment. No public comment cards were submitted beforehand.

Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios) is a proponent of two projects funded by the Regional Program within the ULAR Watershed Area, the Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project and the Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project. Both projects are located in unincorporated areas managed by the County. Robinson compared the SCWP with other public grant programs—the SCWP application itself is long and often requires hiring an outside engineer. Both Fund Transfer Agreements are delayed due to CEQA issues. There is a lot of time between each phase of the project that may delay the project. With that, Robinson acknowledges that SCWP is in its early stages, but assistance from the District to move these projects along is still needed.

Member Luna suggested to District staff that surveying project developers would be helpful to identify improvements to make the process easier. Many nonprofit organizations need to hire outside engineering

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resources and may not have enough funds to extend contracts when faced with unexpected project delays that result from government processes that are not designed for nonprofit organizations.

Chair Villegas acknowledged Robinson's comments and noted that District staff is also in a continual process of learning to manage the Program across 9 watershed areas.

7. Presentations and Discussion Items

a. Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary for FY22-23 Q1 and Q2

A summary sheet of completed quarterly reports from FY22-23 Q1 and Q2 (July – December 2022) was shown onscreen that lists Projects and Scientific Studies funded by the WASC in FY20-21 and FY21-22 Stormwater Investment Plans, with activity concerns highlighted in red. Project developers were invited to the meeting to address the user-inputted delays, modifications, and concerns. District staff shared onscreen a demonstration of the different options to access the quarterly reports from the Project Portal (Dashboard and Map) on the SCWP website.

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) shared that the WASC's purpose in reviewing the quarterly reports is to both verify that funded projects are on track to deliver the benefits claimed and use the reviews to evaluate ongoing projects that will need to be included in the current year Stormwater Investment Plan. The ROC is informed of the WASCs' evaluation of the quarterly reports. District staff explained the process of checking the quarterly reports for completeness and sharing the summary with the WASC, who is responsible for advising the District when a project may not be progressing appropriately or is considering changes in scope that would be contrary to the goals of the SCWP or contrary to the SCWP goals indicated in their original application.

Member Kenneth Jones clarified with District staff that the individual project quarterly reports also reflect activity concerns. Project developers self-report modifications to scope or schedule when submitting quarterly reports. Project developers are notified by District staff that a summary of quarterly reports will be shared with the WASC. Member Karo Torossian confirmed with District staff that there is not currently a place on the SCWP website that shows all the quarterly reports in one place; quarterly reports must be individually accessed from each project's link in the SCW Projects Portal (Dashboard and Map) on the SCWP website. The meeting provides time for the Committee members to ask project developers to address specific activity concerns or modifications rather than have Committee members investigate each activity concern by navigating to each quarterly report onscreen. District staff explained that the activity concerns encompass a wide range of reasons and are not always due to funding shortages. General causes for a delay include increases in construction costs, permitting, contractual agreements, and more. Committee members are informed via email of the available Regional Program Quarterly Report Summary prior to the meeting and expected to review prior to the meeting.

The Committee confirmed with District staff that once a project is complete, the project will continue to report for a minimum of three years. There are monitoring requirements for completed projects to demonstrate the benefits claimed are produced. A post-performance report will be developed. Member Luna requested that District staff ensure that future agenda items include completed projects' progress so the WASC can see how SCWP funds were used.

Chair Villegas brought up the possibility that funded projects may require more funding than originally requested and asked District staff how that would be handled. District staff shared that the District is still developing guidelines for exact pathways for the situation Chair Villegas described.

The Committee requested to hear updates from project developers. The following project developers shared updates:

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- Echo Park Lake Rehabilitation, Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment

Gordon Haines (Project developer) explained that this is an O&M project. The actual rehabilitation was completed in 2013 using the City's Prop O funds. The activity concern highlighted in the quarterly report summary is due to schedule changes—the original application had an untenable date for project completion. Due to contract delays, permitting questions, and delays in receiving funding, an extension was requested to complete the work by next year.

- Rory M. Shaw Wetlands Park Project, Los Angeles County Flood Control District

Donna Bautista (Project Manager) explained that the project had updates in the client estimate and engineers estimate, but the project is still expected to go to advertisement next year. The activity concern was reported since specifications were taking longer than anticipated.

- Oro Vista Local Area Urban Flow Management Project, Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment

Lorena Matos (Project Manager) explained that funds originally earmarked for FY23-24 were reallocated for FY25-26. The revised schedule is due to contractual delays with project setup since the project was funded in Round 1 (FY20-21 SIP). The consultant was given the notice to proceed in September 2022 and are currently finalizing pre-design work to start on environmental assessments soon.

- Recalculation of Wet Weather Zinc Criterion, Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment

Jon Ball (Project developer) flagged a schedule change due to delays in securing funding and a consultant team. The project is currently making good progress.

Michael Scaduto, Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment Safe, Clean Water Implementation Officer, mentioned that many of the projects funded in Round 1 were packaged within an accelerated time frame. At the time, pre-pandemic cost escalation factors were used, however the City's Bureau of Engineering's new guidance for true escalation rates are much higher. Thus, many projects are experiencing increases in costs and subsequent delays in schedule. Many Pre-Design Reports are wrapping up this financial quarter and the City is working with the District to understand what the process will be for submitting requests for additional funding. Projects will still conduct due diligence in exploring Municipal funds or other grants. Scaduto cautions the Committee to understand it is not just Los Angeles Bureau of Sanitation and the Environment projects that are experiencing funding shortages and that there may be other project developers suffering from pandemic cost impacts. When the WASC deliberates on Round 5 projects (FY24-25 SIP), there should be a discussion on how to prioritize funding for existing projects versus new projects.

Chair Villegas clarified with District staff that this agenda item is for the WASC to discuss project progress and for Committee Members to ask project developers specific questions related to activity concerns flagged in the summary.

Member Torossian opened the floor for any project developers to share activity concerns other than funding that may put the project at risk.

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Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios) shared concerns related to the delay of the Altadena Mariposa Green Street Demonstration Project and the Jackson Elementary School Campus Greening and Stormwater Quality Improvement Project. Robinson has been in communication with the SCWP and other County Public Works staff to move the projects forward, but Robinson was not able to receive County permits for project concepts that included pervious pavement, an integral component of Amigos de los Rios' projects. Robinson expressed uncertainty on why she was unable to receive permits while the SCWP encourages the use of pervious pavement in projects. Amigos de los Rios understands that it is uncommon for a nonprofit organization to develop a project in an unincorporated street managed by the County, but believes better communication needs to occur between the SCWP and other County Public Works division(s) responsible for CEQA approvals for a clear path towards resolution.

District staff is in communication with Robinson regarding these topics and will share the proposed resolution with the Watershed Coordinators to prevent these challenges from being repeated with other nonprofit organizations. Chair Villegas acknowledged the financial burdens faced by these nonprofit organizations due to these challenges. Chair Villegas shared appreciation for Robinson's comments, and noted it is important for the Committee to understand the challenges nonprofits face when working with government to make improvements to the SCWP.

8. Public Comment Period

Claire Robinson (Amigos de los Rios) expressed appreciation towards District staff for their assistance. Robinson believes the challenges Amigos de los Rios has faced are systematic and the projects approved in Round 1 (FY20-21 SIP) will naturally face issues. Robinson welcomes suggestions and will provide updates at the next meeting.

9. Voting Items

There were no voting items.

10. Items for Next Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 2, 2:00pm – 4:00pm. See the SCWP website for details. Items on the agenda include:

- a) Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) (Presentation by Watershed Coordinators)
- b) Review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities (Presentation by Regional Coordination team)
- c) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs

Chair Villegas requested that the Stantec presentation be made available to the WASC before the next meeting to provide ample time to review.

11. 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 02-16-2023 Meeting Minutes	Approve 02-28-2023 Meeting Minutes
Agency	FCD	Paul Shadmani	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		Alfredo Magallanes	x	a	a
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo	x	Javier Solis		y	y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon			
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	x	Yvette Lopez-Ledesma		y	y
Community Stakeholder	Environment						
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	x			y	y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos		Felipe Escobar			
Municipal Members	Glendale / Pasadena	Yazdan Emrani	x	Kris Markarian		y	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	Karo Torossian	x			a	a
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			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x				
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran		Jason Casanova	x		
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Kristina Kreter	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yes (Y)	11	11
Total Voting Members Present		15			No (N)	0	0
Agency		5			Abstain (A)	2	2
Community Stakeholder		3			Total	13	13
Municipal Members		7				Approved	Approved

WebEx Webinar Attendees
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Alonso
Johanna Chang
Claire Robinson
Gus Orozco
Dr. Mehrad Kamalzare (CPP)
Ali Sharbat
Ben O'Neal
Mark Wissa
Mark Hall GLAмосquito
sean phan (LASAN)
John Mendoza
Karely Dorado
Thuan Nguyen
Aghakhani, Ryan
Justin Jones
Guerrero, Jonathan
Ana Rivera
Alyson Mello
Lorena Matos

Charlotte Derby
Amanda
Ted Gerber
Mark Nguyen
Larry Tran - LACFCD
John Mendoza
Nercessian, Anthony
Shirley Fontanie
Brad Wardynski
Anh Ta
Tonthat, Peter
Giselle
Arlene
Paige Bistromowitz
gabriela gonzalez
Johanna Chang
Ida Meisami (LASAN)
Alexis Rendon-StreetsLA
Call-in User_2

Brianna Datti
Carlos Moran- ULAR Watershed Coordinator
Alexis Rendon
Mark Wissa - StreetsLA
Rafael Piamonte
Daniel Apt
Kara Plourde
Arlene
Maggie Gardner
Susie Santilena
Christine McLeod
Christopher Vong
Albert Kam
Ernesto Pantoja
Jessica Medina
Dustin Herrmann (TreePeople)
M. Scaduto
Mike
Call-in User_3

Matt Rich
Nicholas Ryu
Serena Zhu
Jennifer Amarant
Robyn Finley
Donna Bautista
Le, Noel
Jenny Chau
Billy Berler
Mike Antos
Gina Liang
Gordon Haines
Melania Gaboyan
Giselle Franco
Jeannette
Uriel Cobian - LACFCD
Jon Ball

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Signature
Alex Farassati	City of Calabasas	Alternate	
Alfredo Magallanes	LA Sanitation and Environment	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Barbara Romero	City of Los Angeles	Alternate	
Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Delon Kwan	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Primary	
Ernesto Pantoja	Laborers Local 300	Primary	
Felipe Escobar	Pacoima Beautiful	Alternate	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Primary	
Javier Solis	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Alternate	
Jesus Gonzalez	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Primary	
John Huynh	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Karo Torossian	City of Los Angeles	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Kenneth Jones	City of San Fernando	Primary	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>
Kris Markarian	City of Pasadena	Alternate	<i>[Handwritten Signature]</i>

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Signature
Mark Lombos	Los Angeles County	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Max Liles	Michael Baker International	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Patrick DeChellis	City of La Cañada Flintridge	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Paul Shadmani	FCD	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Rafael Prieto	City of Los Angeles	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Ramy Gindi	FCD	Alternate	
Sergio Rascon	Laborers Local 300	Alternate	
Ted Gerber	City of South Pasadena	Alternate	
Teresa Vilelga	City of Los Angeles	Primary	
Thuan Nguyen	Los Angeles County	Alternate	
Veronica Padilla-Campos	Pacoima Beautiful	Primary	
Yazdan Emrani	City of Glendale	Primary	<i>[Signature]</i>
Yvette Lopez-Ledesma	Urban Semillas	Alternate	
Adi Liberman	Environmental		

Kristina Kreter Outreach Strategist
 Council for Watershed Health
 Jason Casanova NGO CW4H - WC

[Signature]
[Signature]

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Carmen	Andrade	LASAN	Carmen.andrade@lacity.org
Williams	Beatty	OES	williams@oescg.org

*Signing or completing this form is voluntary for members of the public