

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



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Wednesday, August 2, 2023

2:00pm - 4:00pm

LA County Public Works Headquarters, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor (Courtyard), Conference Room C

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)

Ida Meisami-Fard, LA Sanitation & Environment (Agency)

Ernesto Pantoja, Laborers Local 300 (Community) – Virtual attendee

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

Karo Torossian, Los Angeles (Municipal)

Mark Lombos, Los Angeles County (Municipal)

Adi Liberman, Environmental Outreach Strategies (Watershed Coordinator, non-voting member)

Carlos Moran, 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:

Cathie Santo Domingo, LA Recreation & Parks (Agency)

Rafael Prieto, Los Angeles (Municipal)

Kenneth Jones, San Fernando (Municipal)

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

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## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Teresa Villegas welcomed Committee Members, called the meeting to order, and reviewed today's agenda.

Los Angeles 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 facilitated the roll call of Committee Members and a quorum was established.

## **2. Approval of Meeting Minutes from June 7, 2023**

Chair Villegas motioned to approve the meeting minutes from June 7, 2023. The motion was seconded by Member Ernesto Pantoja. The WASC approved the meeting minutes with 11 members in favor, 2 in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

## **3. Ex Parte Communication Disclosures**

There were no ex parte communication disclosures.

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## 4. Committee Member and District Updates

District staff provided an update noting:

- The first term for WASC Community Stakeholder seats ended on June 30, 2023. Existing members are asked to continue to serve until new members are onboarded and should let District staff know if this will not be possible. District staff noted that Members will be informed as soon as there is clarity around expected dates and asked Members for patience as the procedures are finalized.
- The 9 Stormwater Improvement Plans (SIPs) are on the Board of Supervisor's agenda for final approval on August 8, 2023.
- Regional Program Quarterly Reports for FY22-23 Q3 were due on May 15th and Q4 is due on August 15th for Projects and Scientific Studies from Rounds 1 through 3. Quarterly Reports must be completed, even if there was no activity on the project or if the Transfer Agreement has not been executed.
- SCW Portal now has a "Bids and Schedule" section that includes the following provided by Regional Program Project developers and Municipal Program Projects in the Reporting Module:
  - "Potential Future Bid Opportunities," which features information on upcoming bid opportunities
  - "Project Schedules," which features information on construction schedules
- The Call for Projects application deadline was July 31.
  - For ULAR, there were 7 projects submitted to the Infrastructure Program, 3 scientific studies, and 1 project concept submitted to the Technical Resources Program.
  - Currently, the District is conducting a review of the submitted feasibility studies for completeness.
  - At the next meeting, the WASC will receive a presentation from the Watershed Coordinators on a summary of submitted Projects, scientific studies, and project concepts and vote to send all, some, or no Projects to the Scoring Committee for scoring.
  - The Scoring Committee will subsequently score all projects over the course of several meetings, tentatively between October and December.

### a) Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Regional Program Progress Report (WARPP)

District staff provided an update on the ULAR WARPP noting:

- The Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) shall biennially prepare a SCW Program Progress Report for the Board, which includes a summary of the progress of the Regional Program, Municipal Program, and the District Program.
- For the Regional Program, there will be 9 WARPP reports, one for each watershed area.
- The first ULAR WARPP report has been drafted and serves as a summary on the progress of Projects, scientific studies, and project concepts funded in previous SIPs. The WARPP report summarizes progress from completed Regional Program Quarterly Reports for Projects, scientific studies, and project concepts from the FY20-21 and FY21-22 SIPs. Additionally, the WARPP acknowledges projected benefits from Projects, scientific studies, and project concepts from the FY22-23 SIP and FY23-24 recommended SIP as Projects in the FY22-23 SIP have yet to complete or have their Quarterly Reports reviewed by the WASC and as the FY23-24 recommended SIP has yet to be voted on by the Board of Supervisors. The next WARPP report will include progress from FY22-23 and FY23-24 SIPs.
- The WARPP does not include new information or information that is not in the SCWP website, SCWP Portal.
- The ROC will review the 9 WARPPs during the ROC meeting on August 31, and the ROC will make recommendations, if any, for adjustments to the following year's SIPs.

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District staff noted that the WASC may provide comments on the WARPP before the ROC review period. The WARPP reports will be posted on the SCWP website once available and the WASC will be notified. District staff reiterated that the WARPP is being prepared by the District using data from the Quarterly Reports and the SCPW Portal. It also contains a narrative prepared by the Watershed Coordinators, in coordination with Stantec. District staff clarified that there are no recommendations made in the WARPP. The WARPP compiles existing data for the ROC and will serve as a resource to aid in creating recommendations and changes to the SCWP.

District staff clarified that the data shown in the “Bids and Schedule” section of the SCW Portal is information that the Regional Program Project developers and Municipalities reporting on Projects voluntarily share with the District through the Reporting Module. The level of detail provided by Regional Program Project developers and Municipalities reporting on Projects is at their discretion. The District checks only for completeness and SCWP goal alignment.

Committee Members brought to the District’s attention that information is missing in the “Bids and Schedule” section. The District noted that that Project developers will be reminded again to update the Reporting Module to have information shown in the “Bids and Schedule” section of the SCW Portal.

## 5. Watershed Coordinator Updates

### a) Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP) *Presentation by Watershed Coordinators*

Watershed Coordinators Adi Liberman, Kristina Kreter, and Carlos Moran shared a presentation on the ULAR Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan (SOEP). Watershed Coordinator Liberman presented on the SOEP’s objectives, process for development, and an overview of specific sections. Watershed Coordinator Kreter shared detailed updates made to the SOEP and Watershed Coordinator Moran highlighted strategies that have worked well in previous years. The presentation can be found on the SCWP website.

Watershed Coordinators further discussed unsuccessful strategies from previous years. The Watershed Coordinators described intake forms they designed in previous years for community members to submit project ideas. The form was discontinued due to low participation rate. The Watershed Coordinators noted that receiving project ideas from community members has been a challenge throughout the years. Watershed Coordinators noted that existing projects tend to receive the most successful engagement and participation. Watershed Coordinator Moran added that social media accounts have not been as successful as initially anticipated. Watershed Coordinator Moran additionally highlighted the ongoing effort of incorporating more external funding opportunities.

Watershed Coordinators shared about ongoing trust and relationship-building efforts with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). Watershed Coordinators highlighted a project with LA County, for which the Watershed Coordinators were able to connect the LA County Public Works Urban Planning Team to LAUSD facilities. For the past year, the Watershed Coordinator Team has had ongoing communication with LAUSD about the project, through which a school will be diverting water to a regional park. Watershed Coordinators also highlighted a project with LA Sanitation and LAUSD that is looking into leveraging Proposition O funding with the SCWP. Watershed Coordinators are hoping that these two projects will serve as models for how schools and municipalities can work together.

Upon inquiry, Watershed Coordinator Liberman noted that Watershed Coordinators across the different WASCs meet every month to review each WASC’s ongoing efforts and to promote knowledge transfer.

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Watershed Coordinator Liberman shared that the Watershed Coordinator Team seems to be on the same line when it comes to community events and engagement opportunities.

Member Veronica Padilla-Campos asked to learn more about the efforts being made to engage the community on a project-level. Watershed Coordinator Moran noted that the Watershed Coordinators' role, on a project-level, is to serve as connectors to the community, and it is impossible for Watershed Coordinators to lead the outreach efforts for every single project. Watershed Coordinator Moran explained the Watershed Coordinator Team is very intentional in community events and makes the recurring point of showing community members how to access the SCW Portal to increase awareness of the resource and its ability to show the projects that are happening in the area.

Member Karo Torossian commented that the number of documents and resources in the SCWP website may be overwhelming and suggested the District include contact information in all documents so community members can easily reach out with inquiries about the Program. Watershed Coordinators concurred and suggested incorporating a QR code in all documents and reports.

## **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.

One comment card was received by 5:00pm the day before the meeting. Jenny Newman (Assistant Executive Officer of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (Board)), provided a public comment reaffirming the Board's commitment to participate in the SCWP and to ensure that it implements the Regional MS4 Permit and associated TMDLs. Newman shared that the Board fully supports multi-benefit green projects and solutions. Additionally, Newman noted that the Board is available if there are any questions and invited the WASC to rely on work that has already been done to avoid reinventing the wheel.

Dr. Mehrad Kalamazare (California State Polytechnic University, Pomona), provided public comment and shared an update on recent tests performed on drive wells, noting that results will be shared in the upcoming weeks.

Chair Villegas expressed interest in seeing the results and data gathered by this study along with the results of all other Scientific Studies funded by the WASC. Chair Villegas requested District staff to provide a list of the Scientific Studies and a summary of the goals and objectives for each so that the WASC can select the ones they would like to hear an update from in a future meeting. District staff noted that Round 4 Scientific Studies will be going to the Board next week and will not receive funding until Transfer Agreements are executed. Therefore, Round 4 Scientific Studies will not be included in the subject list. Additionally, it was noted that Cal Poly Pomona has also submitted a proposal for a Scientific Study on dry well capacity for Round 5 Call for Projects. Dr. Kalamazare clarified that the proposal submitted for Round 5 is different from the one submitted for Round 4, which was focused more on contamination that could come from dry wells, rather than dry well capacities. The proposal changes are a product of conversations researchers had with various watersheds about topics that would be of most interest.

## **7. Presentations and Discussion Items**

### **a) Review of WASC Roles and Responsibilities (Presentation by Stantec)**

Mike Antos (Stantec, Regional Coordination) gave an overview of the WASC roles and responsibilities. The presentation is available on the SCWP website.

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Antos provided additional comments on the funding memo that is being prepared by the Regional Coordination team for each of the WASC and confirmed that it includes the competitiveness of different funding sources. Antos clarified that the memo will briefly summarize existing funding secured and list two to three funding opportunities aligned with the SCWP. Antos noted that the memo is designed to be supportive of conversation and decision-making. Additionally, Antos shared that the Regional Coordination team is currently developing and managing a funding database.

Antos noted that the Committee could ask for a thorough project evaluation to determine if previously documented project funding needs are still an accurate reflection of what is actually needed. Chair Villegas emphasized that the WASC can call back projects that are behind on project schedule and can refuse funding if necessary. Member Patrick DeChellis shared the importance of keeping track of budget changes submitted by Project developers and ensuring that project developers are following the original scope. District staff reminded the Committee that Quarterly Reports submitted by Project developers provide information on funding awarded to date, expenditures to date, cost share expenditures to date, and schedule delays.

District staff reminded the WASC that the Project Modification Request (PMR) guidelines and form will be released soon and noted that Project developers must submit a PMR form and go through the PMR process prior to implementing any modifications from their original scope. The WASC can then deliberate about approving or rejecting the proposed modifications to include in the SIP. Member DeChellis expressed concern about a lack of detailed Project supervision. District Staff noted that Project progress reports are checked for completeness and Project developers are responsible for being upfront about changes to their original scope. Additionally, District staff highlighted that post-performance reports are due for three years after a Project is operating for a year that ensures that the Project meets the established goals and benefits.

Antos clarified the differences in responsibilities between the District and the WASC. The District and a proponent have a Funds Transfer Agreement that sets the requirements for a proponent to deliver based on the funding awarded by a Board-approved SIP. The WASC remains responsible for deciding to recommend future funding allocations to continuing and new projects.

Upon inquiry, Antos clarified that it is not required for the WASC Member alternates to come to every meeting. Participation at WASC meetings can be arranged in partnership between the primary Committee Member and the alternate Committee Member. It is important that alternates are prepared when they attend meetings regarding the paths of communication. Antos reminded the WASC that meeting minutes are available for review following the meeting.

District staff and Antos provided a brief overview of the Alternate Water Supply Scoring Pilot for FY24-25 scoring. Upon request, District staff noted that Watershed Coordinators can share which submitted Projects will be using the alternate water supply pilot score. District staff will share an example of the different scoring rubrics (the original versus the pilot) during the next meeting.

Watershed Coordinator Moran noted that there is a Community Member seat open in the ULAR WASC and invited participants and listeners to apply if interested. District staff provided clarity on the election timeline, noting that new members should have enough time to get up to speed on project applications.

## **8. Public Comment Period**

There were no public comments.

## **9. Voting Items**

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**a) Approve the Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan**

Member Miguel Luna motioned to approve the Updated Upper Los Angeles River Watershed Area Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan. Member Torossian seconded the motion. The motion was approved with 13 votes in favor, 0 in abstention, and 0 opposed (approved, see vote tracking sheet).

**10. Items for Next Agenda**

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 4, 2:00pm – 4:00pm. There will not be a meeting in September due to lack of space availability. See the SCWP website for details. Items on the agenda include:

- a) Summary of submitted Infrastructure Program projects and Scientific Studies (Presentation by Watershed Coordinators)**

The WASC will have a vote on which Infrastructure Program projects submitted to send to the Scoring Committee for scoring.

- b) Selection of Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs**

**11. Adjournment**

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

**Upper Los Angeles River - August 2, 2023**

		Quorum Present				Voting Items	
Member Type	Position	Member	Voting/ Present?	Alternate	Voting/ Present?	Approve June 7, 2023 Meeting Minutes	Approve Updated ULAR Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan
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	x	Alfredo Magallanes		A	y
Agency	Open Space	Cathie Santo Domingo		Javier Solis			
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Ernesto Pantoja	x	Sergio Rascon		Y	y
Community Stakeholder	At Large	Miguel Luna	x			Y	y
Community Stakeholder	Environment						
Community Stakeholder	Business	Max Liles	x			Y	y
Community Stakeholder	EJ	Veronica Padilla-Campos	x	Roxy Rivas		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			Y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Karo Torossian	x			Y	y
Municipal Members	Los Angeles	Rafael Prieto					
Municipal Members	Los Angeles County	Mark Lombos	x	Thuan Nguyen		Y	y
Municipal Members	San Fernando / Calabasas	Kenneth Jones		Alex Farassati			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Adi Liberman	x				
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Carlos Moran	x	Jason Casanova			
Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)	Council for Watershed Health	Kristina Kreter	x				
Total Non-Vacant Seats		16			Yes (Y)	11	13
Total Voting Members Present		13			No (N)	0	0
Agency		4			Abstain (A)	2	0
Community Stakeholder		4			Total	13	13
Municipal Members		5				Approved	Approved

WebEx Webinar Attendees  
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Albert Kam  
Alonso  
Andrea Prado Iriarte  
Arlene  
Jeannette Sp Interpreter  
Billy Berler  
Carrie Morris

Jennifer Amaran  
Jenny Chau  
Johanna Chang  
Gabriela Gonzalez  
John Mendoza  
Jose Castro  
Lorena Matos

Nicholas Ryu  
Paige Bistromowitz  
Rafael Piamonte  
Ryanna Fossum Regional Coordination  
Seta  
Susie Santilena  
Thuan Nguyen

Darren  
De Vera, Alex  
Gina Liang  
Debby Reece  
Mark Hall GLAmosquito  
Mark Nguyen  
Haris Harouny - LACFCD



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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
John Huynh	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Karo Torossian	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Kenneth Jones	City of San Fernando	Municipal	Primary	
Kris Markarian	City of Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Kristina Kreter	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Mark Lombos	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Primary	
Max Liles	Michael Baker International	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Miguel Luna	Urban Semillas	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Patrick DeChellis	City of La Cañada Flintridge	Municipal	Primary	
Paul Shadmani	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Primary	
Rafael Prieto	City of Los Angeles	Agency	Primary	
Ramy Gindi	LA County Flood Control District	Agency	Alternate	

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Roxy Rivas	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Sergio Rascon	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Ted Gerber	City of South Pasadena	Municipal	Alternate	
Teresa Villegas	City of Los Angeles	Municipal	Primary	
Thuan Nguyen	Los Angeles County	Municipal	Alternate	
Veronica Padilla-Campos	Pacoima Beautiful	Community Stakeholder	Primary	<i>Veronica Padilla-Campos</i>
Yazdan Emrani	City of Glendale	Municipal	Primary	

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 COMMITTEE MEMBER AND ALTERNATE SIGN-IN



Member Name	Municipality/ Organization	Member Type	Role	Signature
Adi Liberman	Environmental Outreach Strategies	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Alex Farassati	City of Calabasas	Municipal	Alternate	
Alfredo Magallanes	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Alternate	
Art Castro	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Alternate	
Cathie Santo Domingo	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Agency	Primary	
Carlos Moran	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Delon Kwan	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	
Ernesto Pantoja	Laborers Local 300	Community Stakeholder	Primary	
Ida Meisami-Fard	LA Sanitation and Environment	Agency	Primary	
Javier Solis	Los Angeles Recreation & Parks	Community Stakeholder	Alternate	
Jason Casanova	Council for Watershed Health	Watershed Coordinator (Non-Voting Member)		
Jesus Gonzalez	Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Agency	Primary	

Richard B. Lewis, IV PSOMAS

richard.Lewis@psomas.com

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 PUBLIC SIGN-IN



First Name	Last Name	Municipality/Organization	Email Address
Jenny	Newman	LARWA & B	jennynewman@waterboards.ca.gov
Mike	Scaduto	City of LA - LASAM	michael.scaduto@lacity.org

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