

Measure W - Safe, Clean Water Program Administrative Oversight Committee (AOC) Special Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April 16, 2026

Members Present: Jacob Wexler, City Administrative Officer, Chair
Matias Farfan, Chief Legislative Analyst

Staff Present: Jacqueline Vernon Wagner, CAO
Jessica Quach, CAO
Blayne Sutton-Wills, CLA

The meeting was called to order at 11:03 AM.

Public Comment – Held

1. Minutes of the September 25, 2025 Regular Meeting

Disposition: Approved 2-0.

2. Report from the Bureau of Sanitation (LASAN) on the Proposed Measure W – Safe, Clean Water Program 2025-26 Watershed Investment Strategic Plan

Susie Santilena, Assistant Division Manager of LASAN presented a powerpoint discussing the comprehensive report for the Proposed 2025-26 Watershed Investment Strategic Plan (WISP). Susie started with an overview of the WISP, focused on regulatory contexts, updates in the municipal and regional program, program collaborations and program implementation. Updates were also provided by Department program and project managers from Bureau of Street Services (BSS) and Department of Water and Power (LADWP) on their respective projects.

- *Regulatory Context* – The regulatory requirements in the City’s water quality regulations are the foundation of what the program is based on. The WISP notes the multiple stringent near-term requirements the City is subject to, including the 22 Total Maximum Daily Load requirements (TMDLs) and Watershed Management Programs that define the plan on how to accomplish compliance. The WISP also discusses the amount of water capture the City needs to target and the projected costs for that work. LASAN’s last regulatory topic was on the recent increased focus and emphasis by the Regional Water Quality Control Board on enforcement, as exemplified by the one Notice of Violation for Machado Lake for \$47,000. LASAN’s goal and preferred recommendations are to complete Measure W projects that achieve water quality goals rather than expend limited available funds on fines.

LASAN wants to put the City in a position to anticipate and be able to comply with more strict regulatory requirements, i.e. current priorities and effort on Dominguez Channel Bacteria. One way this is accomplished is through use of Special Studies that provide the scientific data and research necessary to ensure the data on which the City operates is grounded in fact and state of the science is up to date. Three such studies are underway, including a zinc recalculation study which aims to achieve compliance and ensure accurate science; a second is the street sweeping study which aims to study the effectiveness of removing pollutants.

- *Safe Clean Water Overview* – The Municipal program received its annual disbursement in January 2026, which is late in the fiscal year which has an impact on the ability to expend. LASAN has completed all corrective actions from the first Audit for this program three years ago and next year will begin the process of a new Audit, required to be completed in March 2027. The Regional Program includes adaptive management, improved emphasis on metrics to show program benefits, and biennial reporting, and watershed management and planning tools to assist applicants in ensuring their projects fit into the broader program goals and planning for the Region. District program level, various Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have received funding for community outreach and public education, including partners on City projects like MacArthur Lake and Westwood Neighborhood Greenway projects. Los Angeles County has created plans and started plans on efforts for workforce development, i.e. long-awaited green job training to operate and maintain Measure W projects.
- *Safe, Clean water Collaboration* – Internal collaboration on 12 infrastructure projects with BOE on delivery, plan review, and environmental planning. Interagency agreements for projects and special studies. LASAN received a lot of requests for projects from CBOs for projects proposed within the City's boundaries. The WISP has some discussion but no significant updates on LAUSD school greening.
- *Project Implementation* – City has secured funding for municipal, regional, and technical assistance. LASAN also secured \$120M leveraged funding enabling them to apply for additional funds. The total overall funding includes \$400M in projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, mitigating close to 100,000 acres in dry and wet weather drainage areas throughout the City.
- *Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)* – The completed projects include five low-flow diversion projects in the Upper Los Angeles River watershed (ULAR) and Haynes St Greenway Project. Two projects in Construction are close to completion, including Ballona Creek Watershed Improvement Project. Many projects are in design. One such project is the MacArthur Lake Project which is completing design and CEQA shortly. The Council Office will have an event to mark the end of the design phase. Many more projects are in pre-design including Lincoln Park Lake and Oro Vista Projects and will soon enter the design phase.

- **Street Services CIP Update –**
 - Brian Ahn, Project Manager for the Broadway Manchester project reported a \$16.2M shortfall on the project and in ongoing discussions with the Council Office for redesign and re-scoping of the Measure W elements.
 - Ricardo Acosta, Project Manager for the Eagle Rock Multimodal Storm Water Project, noted the stormwater design was at zero percent and the civil improvement design was at five percent. There are funding shortfalls for both the civil improvements (\$35M) and stormwater improvements (\$7.9M). There is discussion with CD 14 regarding removal of the stormwater component and return of the \$7.6M in approved regional funds. The department continues to look for other funding sources since an unsuccessful application in 2025 for Surface Transmission Block Grant.
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- **DWP CIP Updates-**
 - Art Castro, Program Manager for DWP Measure W projects, presented updates on DWP projects, noting the construction phase and sharing that projects were progressing toward the bid and award phase. The first project was awarded in February with a start date in early May, and other contracts were expected to be awarded in the coming months. Below is the status reported on each project.

LADWP Projects	Bid and Award Status
David M. Gonzales Recreation Center Stormwater Capture Project (CD 7)	Bid and Award 99%: Awarded: Feb 2, 2026
Fernangeles Park Stormwater Capture Project (CD 6)	Bid and Award 74%; <i>Anticipated: April 22, 2026</i>
Strathern Park North Stormwater Capture Project (CD 2)	Bid and Award 74%; <i>Anticipated: April 29, 2026</i>
Valley Village Park (North) Stormwater Capture Project (CD 2) late July	Bid and Award 58% <i>Anticipated: late July 2026</i>
Valley Plaza Park (South) Stormwater Capture Project (CD 2)	Bid and Award 55% <i>Anticipated: late June 2026</i>
Whitsett Fields Park North Stormwater Capture Project (CD 2)	Right of Way/Approvals 85%; Anticipated: late December 2026

- **Outlook for regional steering committees –** The City needs to consider what is available for award from the various Watersheds. Future funding is constrained due to the number of applications. Santa Monica Central Watershed will constrain funding for the next two rounds. WASCs are limiting funding to 80 percent of their annual funding.

- *Operation and Maintenance Obligations* – O&M obligations are ever increasing. New projects are nearing completion and legacy projects from Prop O were never funded for O&M. LASAN is encountering challenges on how to fund older projects. There is a need to coordinate with the County and CBOs. There is an effort at County level on workforce development. It was always expected O&M would increase over time.
- *Conclusions and Key Recommendations* – The City should prioritize current regional project needs before funding new projects. LASAN continually advocates for streamlined reporting, as it is very resource intensive with heavy administrative burden. They plan to streamline projects while staying transparent. They aim to prioritize O&M investment and partnerships, and pursue creative and opportunistic funding opportunities to continue leverage funding; The City also needs to update / increase the Stormwater Pollution Abatement Fee / fund.

Preview of Upcoming events – Next steps for the WISP if approved by the Committee is to send it to the City Council for approval. In May 2026, LASAN will return to present Round 8 applications to the Measure W AOC Committee which are due to the Regional Board by July 31, 2026. There are also a number of third party requests. All items are expected to be referred to the Energy and Environment Committee. LASAN also expects the Regional Board to approve Round 7 Transfer Agreements, (which were submitted in July 2025) to be approved in the fall. LASAN will begin utilizing the new tools for adaptive management and watershed planning.

Chair Wexler opened a discussion on the report and Mr. Farfan asked LASAN about the TMDL process. Ms. Santilena responded that TMDLs are adopted on a one-time basis, but are enforced through the stormwater permits, which are updated every 5-10 years. TMDLs are focused on milestones and deadlines. Mr. Mike Scaduto from LASAN added that when deadlines occur, LASAN may ask for a time schedule order, or extension. The last two requests by the City for extensions were denied. The board is being stringent with the requirements, including reducing exceedance days down to zero. Machado Lake was a test case. The cost could have been higher as the fines can be per day, but using existing projects as evidence of effort the City was able to negotiate a reduced fine. Mr. Scaduto added that the capital projects and special studies currently being proposed will inform the process and can help with compliance. The focus on enforcement and strict requirements is not expected to ease due to pressures from environmentalists.

Mr. Wexler asked to confirm that the Machado Lake fine was a penalty and asked about the process that results in the fine and what others may be in the future. Mr. Scaduto confirmed that the Regional Board can issue a Notice of Violation if the water is polluted and the deadline for compliance has passed. For Machado Lake, the Regional Board looked at the nutrient standards and limits, and quantified it and issued the fine to the watershed as a whole. The fine was our respective cost share after the final negotiated amount. The Regional Board denied LASAN's request for an extension for the Ballona Creek TMDL, but they have not yet

fined the City. The City expects the Measure W project in construction will comply. Most deadlines are coming due in the next year. Once the deadline passes, we can be fined for any pollution found. Mr. Scaduto also confirmed that the City paid the Machado Lake fine from SPA, and that the whole watershed is responsible for the total violation.

Mr. Farfan asked about the County's workforce development program and if the City has something similar. Mr. Scaduto said that the focus for now is on the County proposal, and that the City is evaluating its shortcomings for needed workforce. LASAN is also working with the Board of Public Works and Office of Community Beautification to expand existing City programs to include stormwater.

Mr. Wexler asked about the sources of leverage funding. Ms. Santilena noted that LASAN tries to be creative in using municipal funding to leverage regional funding. LASAN also pursues grant opportunities. Recently, LASAN applied for left over IRWMP project funding, has partnerships with other agencies such as Caltrans, and cost sharing agreements with other agencies within a watershed. Mr. Scaduto added that they also use Prop O funding and are looking to future Prop 4 funds.

Mr. Wexler asked about the plan to address shortfalls generally. Mr. Scaduto noted that LASAN prioritizes funding projects that are nearing design completion. Additionally, LASAN uses settlement funds to fill project funding gaps. They hope to reprioritize existing projects with smaller shortfalls. The City secured Measure W funds, but needs more matching funds. Working with the Bureau of Engineering, they estimate that the City can manage a CIP of \$200M to \$300M but it is currently \$400M annually. They are assessing how and when to apply for funding at the regional level. Their goal is to balance funding with what can realistically be delivered.

Mr. Wexler asked about requesting gap funding in future rounds. Mr. Scaduto responded that there is the opportunity to ask for additional funds. They have not requested project gap funding every round, but have done it in some cases. They are looking for municipal funding and leveraged funding.

Mr. Wexler asked about the gaps for the BSS' Broadway Manchester project. Mr. Ahn from BSS said they are re-scoping to reduce the shortfall, including considering removing the green water elements. They are currently discussing with the Council Office, but the decision on how to move forward is still pending.

Mr. Wexler asked LASAN if the \$8M was adequate for current operation and maintenance (O&M) needs for stormwater projects. Mr. Scaduto responded that the \$8M in Measure W funding is not adequate because the City has prior water quality projects built through Prop O, which had no O&M funding sources and must also cover those projects and the newer Measure W projects. There is a backlog and a need to hire more positions. LASAN is putting together a resource plan and cost estimate for existing projects and continues to plan for future resource needs as they develop new projects. LASAN hopes to have a better projection moving forward. The \$8M is the best estimate for short term O&M, but they are working to get a better number. Mr. Prieto from the CLA added O&M needs for Prop O projects were considered and included

in the creation of Measure W and are eligible for funding. Mr. Scaduto added that another consideration for O&M are third party projects where the default maintenance falls to LASAN on behalf of the City. It was noted that not all projects are focused on water quality and there may be other entities that could do the O&M. The higher long-term O&M costs are due to new projects coming online, increased pay for the workforce over time, and other inflationary costs. Mr. Farfan asked if they may need increased funding when equipment wears out or reaches the end of its lifecycle and Mr. Scaduto said, yes, as projects reach the end of their lifecycle, the City will need to consider if the repair work is a new project or O&M. The near-term O&M projections in the WISP will be in the next fiscal year's upcoming budget request and do not fully encompass the need, but the long-term estimates in the WISP are consistent with actual future needs.

Mr. Farfan asked about updating the Stormwater Pollution Abatement Fee. Mr. Scaduto said that it was last considered 10 years ago and requires voter approval by a 2/3 vote. The City has one of the lowest stormwater fees and LASAN is planning a fee study and to create a new rate structure proposal in fiscal year 2027-28. Mr. Prieto from the CLA added that there have been various instructions and attempts to update the SPA fee. In order for the City to move forward with a fee increase, a 2/3 vote of the citizens is required. Mr. Scaduto further noted that passage of the fee increase would not require the 2/3 vote, only a majority vote of the citizens, if the fee increase was led by voters or community-based organizations.

Mr. Scaduto read the report recommendation to approve and publish the 2025-26 WISP.

Disposition: Approved 2-0.

3. Other Committee organizational matters, as necessary

Chair Wexler announced that the April 30 meeting of the Measure W AOC Committee would be canceled due to the Council's deliberations on the budget and that the next regular meeting will be on May 28th.

Disposition: No action taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:56 PM.