

**Proposition O Citizens Oversight Advisory Committee (COAC)
Meeting Minutes
Monday, September 18, 2023
2:00 P.M.**

Committee Members

Adi Liberman (Chair)	Craig Perkins
Miguel Luna	Francine Diamond
Cynthia McClain Hill	

City Staff

Salyna Cun [City Administrative Officer (CAO)]
Jennifer Lau (CAO)
Rafael Prieto [Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA)]
Blayne Sutton-Willis (CLA)
Virginia Choi (City Attorney)
Christopher Johnson [Bureau of Engineering (BOE)]
Ida Meisami-Fard [Bureau of Sanitation (BOS)]
Nabih Akar III (BOS)

Bold indicates members or staff present.

Note: The minutes provided below outline the sequence of topics discussed in accordance with the meeting agenda. Commencing at 2:13 p.m., the meeting was convened. Initially, three members were present, and an additional member joined the proceedings at 2:36 p.m., as indicated by the bold text. It is noted that a quorum was not attained for the duration of the meeting.

1. **(Item #1)** Approval of Minutes from March 21, 2022, and April 19, 2021

ACTION: No action

2. **(Item #2)** Verbal update from CAO/CLA/COAC

Salyna Cun (CAO) provided the following updates:

- Since the previous COAC meeting in March 2022, the last significant meeting of the AOC occurred on March 31, 2022, to address matters considered by the COAC in March. Subsequent AOC sessions were held to determine the AB361 findings, allowing for continued virtual meetings. During the March meeting, the AOC approved all items except for Penmar Phase III, which saw no action taken.
- Regarding the Prop O Program Funding update, as of September 15, 2023, the cash balance stands at \$43 million, with \$60.5 million in forthcoming bond proceeds yet to be issued, totaling \$103.5 million.

- Of the \$103.5 million, \$101 million is earmarked for existing projects at their approved budget levels, leaving an available balance of \$2.5 million.
- \$4 million is returning to the general fund from the Taylor Yard project, facilitated by reimbursements from the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, alongside \$171,812 from the General Fund to reimburse the Prop O Program for incurred staff costs on the project, resulting in a running available balance of \$6.6 million.
- It is important to note potential cost increases for ongoing projects, alongside specific agenda items: a request for \$3.1 million in Prop O staffing appropriation (Item 5), a \$2.5 million budget decrease for the Penmar Water Quality Phase III project (Item 6), a \$1 million budget increase for the Ballona Creek TMDL project (Item 7), and a \$1 million decrease for the Public Right-of-Way Low Impact Development Project deletion (Item 8), leaving a remaining running balance of \$1.1 million.
- Additionally, in April 2021, the AOC approved \$8 million in available program funds for future funding needs: \$2 million for staffing costs, \$4 million for existing project cost increases, and \$2 million for program optimization.

ACTION: No action

3. **(Item #3)** Verbal update from BOE

Chris Johnson (BOE) provided updates on the following projects:

- The Aliso project (in Council District 12) is presently in the design phase, with anticipated completion by December 2023. Work is underway on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement.
- Hollenbeck project has secured partial Prop O funding, accounting for \$5 million out of a total construction cost of \$33 million.
- Lincoln Park Neighborhood Green Street network (Council Districts 1 and 14) is currently in the pre-design phase. With \$1.6 million allocated from Prop O out of a \$14 million construction budget, design completion is slated for May 2025, with construction concluding in March 2028.
- The Rory Shaw Strathern Wetland Park project (located in Council District 6) is undergoing design, with construction projected for completion by September 2028. This project comprises three phases: demolition and site preparation (completed in 2017), earthwork phase (to be awarded by the end of 2024), and phase three (above-ground construction) anticipated to conclude by 2029.
- Taylor Yard is currently in pre-design, with the Project Development Report (PDR) expected to be finalized in the coming months. Remediation efforts are planned for the site, with construction scheduled for completion by January 2028.
- Argo Drain Sub-basin Facility completed construction several years ago and is currently in the commissioning phase. Project closeout will follow the completion of commissioning.

- Ballona Creek Water Quality Improvements (situated in Council District 11) have received partial Prop O funding totaling \$11,431,369 out of a project cost of \$52,874,900. Construction is currently 38% completed, with full completion anticipated by May 2025.
- Machado Lake Ecosystem Restoration Optimization (in Council District 15) carries a cost of \$4,180,000 and is expected to conclude in November 2023.
- Westwood SCADA (in Council District 5), with construction costs amounting to \$400,000, is nearing the completion of its design phase. An on-call contractor will conduct subsequent construction, with completion targeted for December 2024.

During the meeting, Adi Liberman (Chair) raised questions regarding specific projects:

- Regarding the Taylor Yard project's cleanup, Chris Johnson highlighted concerns about cost escalation and noted challenges in establishing a comprehensive response plan from the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC).
- Inquiring about issues with equipment at the Westwood Greenway Project, Chris Johnson mentioned ongoing repairs to pumps by the BOS team. Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) elaborated on the operational status of the project, indicating upgrades and repairs are being made as necessary, with the site currently not open to the public but anticipated to be accessible soon.
- Regarding the Harbor City Greenway's impact during the pandemic, Ida Meisami-Fard assured that BOS is actively monitoring the site, addressing concerns related to the unhoused population.

ACTION: No action

4. **(Item #4)** Report from BOE relative to Prop O Master Schedule

Chris Johnson (BOE) provided updates on several projects:

- Changes to the Baseline Master Schedule for FY 23-24 were noted, affecting four projects (Aliso, Argo, Rory Shaw, and Taylor Yard).
- Additionally, several projects were added to the schedule, including Ballona Creek TMDL, Hollenbeck Park Lake, Lincoln Park Neighborhood Green Street Network, Machado Lake Ecosystem Restoration Optimization, and Westwood Neighborhood SCADA.
- Six projects were reported as completed: Ben and Victory Green Stormwater Infrastructure, Catch Basin Insert Opening Screen Phase IV, Machado Lake Ecosystem Restoration Optimization (mentioned twice), Mar Vista Recreation Center Stormwater BMP, Vermont Ave Stormwater Capture, and Westwood Neighborhood Greenway.

During the meeting, Salyna Cun (CAO), announced Cynthia McClain-Hill's attendance. Adi Liberman, the Chair, inquired about public comments. Salyna Cun then provided instructions for members of the public to make comments. Adi Liberman noted the

absence of public comments and indicated that action could not be taken due to the lack of a quorum. Adi Liberman pledged to report any follow-up items to the AOC.

ACTION: No action by Committee

5. **(Item #5)** Report from BOE relative to Prop O Staffing Appropriation for FY 23-24

Chris Johnson (BOE) provided the following project updates:

- Recommendation to approve \$3,073,425.00 to continue Prop O staffing costs (Bureau of Contract Administration, Engineering, and Sanitation) to continue to sustain project implementation from available Prop O funds. Currently, there were five active projects; and,
- Requested funding would help in hiring twelve full-time staff - 2 FTEs \$493,510 (BCA), 5 FTEs \$1,250,360 (BOE), 5 FTEs \$1,329,555 (BOS).

ACTION: No action by Committee

6. **(Item #6)** Report from BOE relative to Penmar Phase III Project deletion

Chris Johnson, representing BOE, presented the following report:

- A request was made to authorize the deletion of the Penmar Phase II project from Prop O, reducing project appropriations from \$2,541,451 to \$0 million due to project cancellation.
- In May 2019, a \$2.5 million grant was awarded for the project to upgrade Phase II capture and use treatment, with a completion deadline of 2022.
- A design-build delivery mechanism was chosen to meet the aggressive completion timeline.
- The City Engineer's estimate was significantly lower than the lowest bid received.
- No additional funds have been identified for the project at present.

Adi Liberman, the Chair, sought clarification on the Phase III project. Chris Johnson explained that Phase III aimed to reuse water on site but faced cost challenges. Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS), added that the project initially complied with 2016 LA County Department of Public Health requirements. However, changes to requirements occurred after Phase II completion, and the project was not exempted under the updated regulations.

ACTION: No action by Committee.

7. **(Item #7)** Report from BOS relative to Ballona Creek TMDL Project Funding Request

Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) provided the following project updates:

- A budget increase of \$1 million for the Ballona Creek TMDL project is requested from \$11,431,269 to \$12,431,269.
- Prop O funding of \$5 million was approved by the City Council in May 2021.
- The project has reached 38% completion in construction.
- Most of the project funding comes from the Safe Clean Water program.
- In February 2022, the project was put out to bid with an estimated cost of \$55 million.
- However, actual bids returned with a total of \$75 million.
- This resulted in a \$10 million funding gap, which the Safe Clean Water Implementation Division has been actively addressing by securing additional funding through Memorandums of Understanding with other agencies, utilizing municipal funds from the Safe Clean Water program, and pursuing grant applications.

During the discussion, Adi Liberman, the Chair, sought clarification on the nature of the project. Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) explained that it involves a low-flow diversion system aimed at screening, clarifying, and diverting water away from Ballona Creek, specifically targeting the Sepulveda Channel and Ballona Creek estuary. She noted that the project would be situated upstream of existing equipment responsible for trash removal.

Craig Perkins expressed concern regarding the \$1 million budget increase and its impact, pointing out that there would still be a funding gap. In response, Ida Meisami-Fard reiterated the commitment of the Safe Clean Water Implementation Division to the project and their efforts to address the funding shortfall.

Francine Diamond inquired whether the additional \$1 million could facilitate securing further funding. Ida Meisami-Fard suggested that it could serve as initial funding to leverage additional grants.

Craig Perkins sought clarification on whether any action was required for the item. Salyna Cun (CAO) explained that while the Committee could express support to the AOC, no formal action could be taken due to the lack of a quorum.

Adi Liberman assured that the AOC would address the matter, with Craig Perkins expressing support for the \$1 million allocation to maintain project progress.

ACTION: No action by Committee

8. **(Item #8)** Report from BOS relative to PROW LID Project Deletion

Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) provided the following project updates:

- A request has been made to reduce the budget of the Public Right-of-Way Low Impact Development (PROW LID) Project from \$1 million to \$0.
- Prop O funding for the project was approved by the City Council in May 2021.
- Initially, the project was endorsed by Prop O to establish a dedicated funding source for implementing green stormwater infrastructure within the public right of way, aligning with project objectives.

- However, the City is committed to maintaining a development-friendly environment, and the associated project requirements could potentially hinder developers' progress in implementing improvements.
- Alternative and more efficient approaches to fulfill the project's objectives include mandating green stormwater infrastructure during the planning phase of projects and through the B-Permit process.
- The City has taken proactive steps toward standardizing the implementation of green stormwater infrastructure within the public right of way through collaborative efforts between BOS and BOE in developing green street standard plans.

Craig Perkins suggested that reallocating the funds from the PROW LID Project could be beneficial, as there are potentially better uses for the money. He proposed that the funds could be directed towards a broader pool of resources, which could then be optimized for various projects or utilized for staffing purposes. This reallocation could lead to more efficient and effective utilization of resources across different initiatives.

ACTION: No action by Committee

9. **(Item #9)** Verbal report from BOS on Project Sign Design Guidelines for Safe Clean Water Program

Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) provided the following project updates:

- In November 2022, the Safe Clean Water AOC approved the signage guidelines.
- On May 30, 2023, the City Council approved sign design guidelines.
- The Safe Clean Water Implementation Division plans to distribute the guidelines with a memo to the different departments utilizing Safe Clean Water funds for immediate use.

During the discussion, Adi Liberman, the Chair, raised concerns about staying informed and ensuring compliance with guidelines. Ida Meisami-Fard (BOS) highlighted that while the Safe Clean Water program is new, its guidelines serve as a solid foundation. She mentioned that BOS project managers will serve as liaisons with other bureaus implementing Safe Clean Water projects to ensure adherence to these guidelines.

Adi Liberman sought clarification on whether completed projects would also follow these guidelines. Ida Meisami-Fard explained that there is an opportunity for completed Prop O projects to be retrofitted with signage using Safe Clean Water funding, citing the example of the Westwood signage change due to a project name alteration.

Adi Liberman proposed extending this practice beyond the City of LA to the broader Safe Clean Water program. Ida Meisami-Fard agreed to take this suggestion into consideration and relay it accordingly.

Francine Diamond emphasized the importance of signage in informing the community about the use of their taxes, emphasizing its positive impact.

ACTION: No action by Committee

10. **(Item #10)** Adjournment

Salyna Cun (CAO) informed the attendees that the next AOC meeting is scheduled for the end of September (September 28). Adi Liberman, the Chair, agreed to convey any outstanding questions or matters to the AOC.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.