

# *Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency*

## **Executive Director**

Herbert I. Nakasone

## **SARFPA GENERAL AGENCY MEETING**

## **Members**

City of Anaheim  
City of Buena Park  
City of Cypress  
City of Fountain Valley  
City of Fullerton  
City of Garden Grove  
City of Huntington Beach  
City of Irvine  
City of Newport Beach  
City of Orange  
City of Placentia  
City of Santa Ana  
City of Seal Beach  
City of Stanton  
City of Tustin  
City of Westminster  
City of Yorba Linda  
County of Orange  
Costa Mesa Sanitary District  
O C Sanitation District  
O C Flood Control District  
O C Water District

November 20, 2025, General Agency Meeting Minutes

## **Attendance/Attendees:**

Pat Burns, SARFPA Chairman, Director, Orange County Sanitation District and Mayor, City of Huntington Beach  
Art Perry, Director, Costa Mesa Sanitary District  
Jim Cunneen, Council Member, City of Fountain Valley  
Erik Weigand Council Member, City of Newport Beach  
Cesar Berrios, Deputy Public Works Director, City of Santa Ana  
Gracey Van Der Mark, Council Member, City of Huntington Beach  
Denis Bilodeau, Vice-Mayor, City of Orange  
Lee Fink, Council Member, City of Tustin  
James Tyler, Engineering Manager, Orange County Public Works  
Keith Linker, City Engineer, City of Anaheim  
Penny Lew, SARFPA Executive Director Candidate  
Herb Nakasone, Executive Director, Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency

## **Mailing Address**

P.O. Box 4048  
Santa Ana, CA 92702-4048

### **1. Call to Order – Chairman Pat Burns**

Chairman Pat Burns, Director, Orange County Sanitation District, called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

### **2. Pledge of Allegiance – Chairman Pat Burns**

Chairman Pat Burns requested Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Penny Lew, SARFPA Executive Director Candidate.

### **3. Approve Minutes of September 25, 2025, Chairman Pat Burns**

The Minutes were unanimously approved on Motion by Pat Burns, Director, Orange County Sanitation District and Second by Art Perry, Director, Costa Mesa Sanitary District.

### **4. Approve Penny Lew's Executive Director Employment Agreement – Executive Director**

Penny Lew's Executive Director Employment Agreement unanimously approved on Motion by Pat Burns, Director, Orange County Sanitation District and Second by James Tyler, Engineering Manager, OCPW and Alternate to County Supervisor Foley.

### **5. Santa Ana River Mainstem and Westminster Project Status – James Tyler**

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## **6. Santa Ana River Mainstem**

- a. James Tyler began by identifying the major features of the Santa Ana River Mainstem Project (SARP) as Seven Oaks Dam, Prado Dam, the Lower Santa Ana River Channel below Prado Dam in Orange County, including Santiago Creek. James reported the SARP is a cooperative Federal and local sponsor project with the U.S. Corps of Engineers as the federal partner and the Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD), Riverside County Flood Control District and San Bernardino County Flood Control Districts as the Local Sponsors.
- b. Besides the major features of the SARP described by James, the Riverside and San Bernardino Flood Control Districts had local flood control projects in their respective County as part of the SARP.
- c. James reported the Seven Oaks Dam located in San Bernardino County was the first major feature to be completed and the OCFCD is responsible for its gate operations and maintenance of the dam. The dam is located at the headwaters of the Santa Ana River and is designed to contain storm flows from the Santa Ana mountains including storm runoff from Big Bear Lake and below. The OCFCD utilizes the San Bernardino Flood Control District staff to physically perform the maintenance activities on the Seven Oaks Dam.
- d. As reported by James, the Prado Dam spillway improvements and Santiago Creek are the two remaining features of the SARP yet to be completed. The \$1.35 billion Prado Dam spillway is currently under design and scheduled for construction start in Fiscal Year 2027.
- e. James reported that the County of Orange has secured the property rights and agreements with private utility companies to relocate their utilities behind Prado Dam prior to the commencement of the Prado Dam Spillway construction.
- f. The Santiago Creek Project is being reviewed and a revised design is underway in response to concerns voiced by residents adjacent to the creek, regarding the removal of trees in the creek. The residents desired to preserve as much of the trees and vegetation as possible to maintain the natural features of the existing creek.
- g. During an annual inspection of the Santa Ana River by the USACE, James reported a levee segment of the Santa Ana River between the I-5 frwy and the 22 frwy was determined to have its levee height below the required height. This error is being corrected by the OCFCD, by raising the levee using a flood wall.

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## **Westminster East Garden Grove Project (WEGG)**

- a. James began his Westminster East Garden Grove (WEGG) Project by identifying the cities impacted by the floodplain of the East Garden Grove Wintersberg Channel. This is the deficient flood control channel, needing improvements by the proposed Project to reduce the current flood risk and remove the existing floodplain and the need for mandatory flood insurance.
- b. As a means of emphasizing the impact of the existing floodplain, James shared a slide identifying the number of flood insurance policies in each of the cities in the floodplain. For example, the City of Huntington Beach has the most at 2,677 policies, followed by Garden Grove at 823 policies.
- c. James reported that the Westminster East Garden Grove (WEGG) Project was authorized by Congress as part of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2020, and signed by the President, as part of the Omnibus Bill of December 2020.
- d. The desired cost share of federal to local share of federal projects is 35% local share and 65% federal share. The cost of the WEGG Project is \$1.27 billion, of which the current cost share as determined by the USACE National Economic Development (NED) Plan is 65% local share and 35% Federal share. According to James, this cost share arrangement is not agreeable to the County of Orange.
- e. The NED analysis or Benefit Cost Ratio as determined by the USACE on the WEGG is less than one. The Congress has determined a Benefit Cost Ratio analysis less than one does not allow for a 65% cost share on federal projects.
- f. Since the NED analysis on the Westminster Garden Grove Project authorized by Congress does not meet the County of Orange's desired cost share of 65% federal contribution, James reported the County of Orange is pursuing a reduced project scope on the Project that will meet the NED Cost to Benefit Ratio greater than one.
- g. James indicated the County is working with State Department of Water Resources on securing State Subvention Funds by adding the WEGG project to the States' list of projects eligible for the Program.
- h. At the same time, James reports that the County is pursuing a Design Agreement for preparation of the first set of PS&E for the East Garden Grove Channel from the Bolsa Bay Tide Gates to Graham Avenue.
- i. James also reports that the County Flood Control District continues construction on the East Garden Grove Wintersberg Channel by completing the construction of bridge improvements at Warner Avenue, Springdale and Edwards, along with channel improvements downstream of Warner Avenue Bridge at Huntington Harbor for Work-in-Kind Credit towards a federal project.

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## 6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Herb Nakasone announced November 20, 2025, Full Agency Meeting will be his last meeting serving as SARFPA's Executive Director and thanked the members for the opportunity to serve as its Executive Director.

## 7. Public and Representative Comments:

Members thanked Herb Nakasone for his service as the Executive Director.

## 8. Adjournment: Chairman Pat Burns adjourned the Meeting at 4:55 pm.

Prepared by Herb Nakasone, Executive Director  
Santa Ana River Flood Protection Agency