



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Committee Item INFORMATION

One Water and Adaptation Committee

1/12/2026 One Water and Adaptation Committee

1-A

Subject

Public Hearing on Metropolitan's Achievements in Conservation, Recycling, and Groundwater Storage and Replenishment

Executive Summary

Consistent with the Metropolitan Water District Act, this presentation will inform a public hearing to review Metropolitan's achievements in conservation, recycling, and groundwater recharge for fiscal year 2024/25.

Details and Background

Background

In 1999, the California state legislature passed Senate Bill 60 (Hayden), which amended the Metropolitan Water District Act to require the District to have "an increased emphasis in sustainable, environmentally sound, and cost-effective water conservation, recycling, and groundwater storage and replenishment measures." As part of this legislation, Metropolitan is required to conduct an annual public hearing and submit a progress report to the state legislature by February 1st, detailing its achievements in maintaining this goal.

The public hearing will consist of two parts:

1. Reviewing Metropolitan's 2020 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) for adequacy in achieving an increased emphasis on cost-effective conservation, recycling, and groundwater recharge, and the highlights of this year's draft progress report covering achievements from fiscal year 2024/25. Note that Metropolitan is currently preparing its 2025 UWMP, which will be adopted and submitted to the state by July 1, 2026.
2. Testimonies from knowledgeable individuals from the fields of water conservation and sustainability.

A draft version of the Achievement Report is attached. (**Attachment 1**)

26th Annual Report on Achievements In Conservation, Recycling & Groundwater Recharge

February 2026 Covering Fiscal Year 2024/25

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
of SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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On the cover: Metropolitan's first-ever mobile, immersive exhibit brings the love of California Friendly® and native flowers to community events across the Southland. Venues included the Cherry Blossom Festival in Monterey Park, Wango Tanga concert series in Huntington Beach, Long Beach Juneteenth celebration and Dodger stadium fan festival, among other high visibility events.

For more information about this report, contact Metropolitan's Legislative Office in Sacramento at 916.650.2600. Cover Photo: Interior of immersive "Bloom Box" exhibit showcasing the beauty of California Friendly® and native plants to promote the Turf Replacement Rebate Program.



Because of local resource production and continued conservation, water can remain in storage at Diamond Valley Lake, the Southland's largest reservoir, for future drought or emergencies.

About Metropolitan & This Report

Metropolitan is a public agency and regional water wholesaler. It is a voluntary cooperative of 26 member agencies that purchase some or all their water from Metropolitan. These member agencies directly or indirectly provide water for nearly 19 million people across six Southern California counties. Metropolitan is governed by a 38-member board of directors comprised of representatives from the member agencies. The mission of Metropolitan is to provide its 5,200 square-mile service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Assuming Anything but Normal

To plan for anything but normal requires creativity and a detour from the tried and true. Patterns are no longer predictors. Plans need to be adaptive. And prudent investments are measured by their ability to successfully address unexpected challenges. In the world of delivering water supplies, these challenges include the impact of climate change, uncertainty in demand and population, and weather extremes that swing from drought to atmospheric rivers in the span of weeks.

This is the landscape where Metropolitan finds itself today. We are proud of the investments we have made in demand management programs like conservation and recycling, and groundwater recharge and storage. These investments started a long time ago – on the heels of an extended drought in the 1980s. There came the realization that we needed to take a leadership role and maximize water use efficiency as a buffer to imported water shortfalls in years to come. These investments have paid off in measurable ways.

The extreme drought of 2020-2022 was followed by extremely wet conditions in 2023. Water supplies available to Metropolitan in 2023 exceeded demands for the first time since 2020, and operational priorities shifted to storing surplus water while continuing to meet our member agency needs. In 2024, even with a record-breaking heat wave in October, demands remained remarkably low due to continued water use efficiency practices coupled with above-average precipitation later and increased local supplies that carried over from the previous year's wet conditions.

Regional water use continues on the downward trajectory against upward growth in population, further defining the success of long-term plans, programs and policies that support conservation and are embraced by consumers who bring water-saving devices and a new mindset into their homes and businesses.

Water resources are never taken for granted. While the Urban Water Management Plan, required by the state and updated every five years, tests Metropolitan's reliability under a prescribed set of future conditions, it is the Integrated Water Resources Plan that guides Metropolitan's long-term resource planning. The IRP uses scenario planning to evaluate a wider range of plausible futures and inform strategic investments. In parallel, the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water provides a standardized framework to assess future climate adaptation projects and ensures that all of Metropolitan's planning processes consider the impacts of climate change.

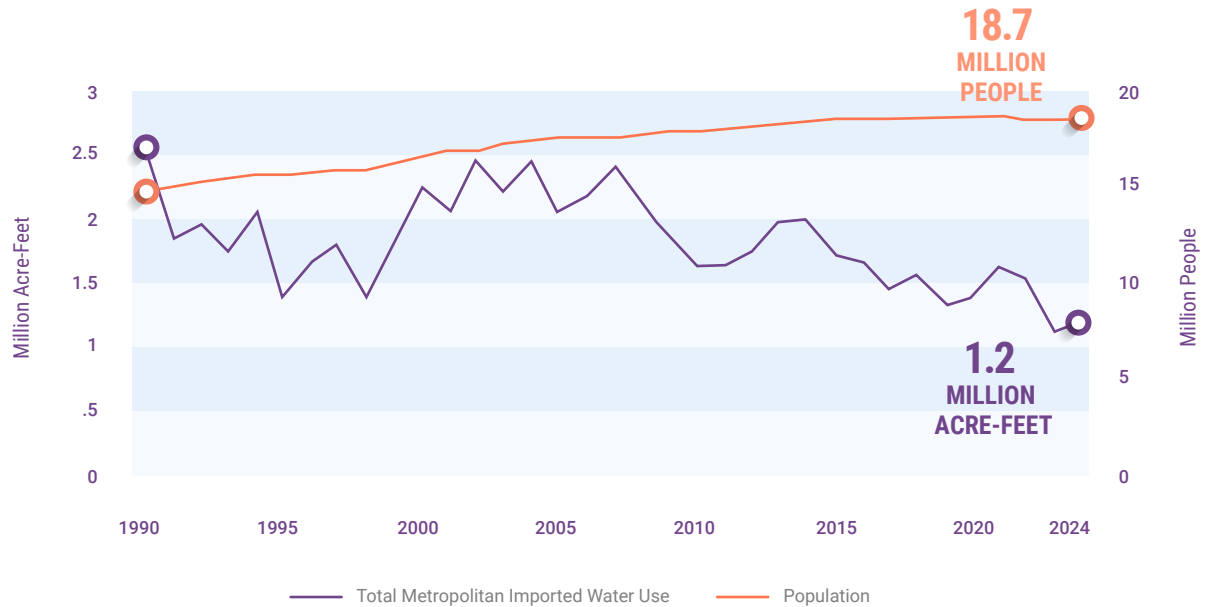
Just as investments in water use efficiency enhance our ability to withstand supply challenges, so too do our investments in local storage and resources. These investments are based on the assumption that conditions will be anything but normal and offer a pathway forward.

Key Accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2024/25

- Metropolitan estimates an annual water savings of about 1,210 acre-feet from our nearly 105,000 residential conservation device rebates. This number includes 10,400 water-saving high-efficiency sprinkler nozzle rebates.
- Nearly 2,200 high-efficiency toilets, 300 "smart" or weather-based irrigation controllers, 24,900 low-flow showerheads, and 16,600 faucet aerators were installed in 1,720 homes in underserved communities through a direct installation program in partnership with SoCalGas.
- Metropolitan's Turf Replacement Rebate Program provided rebates for residential sites to replace about 2 million square feet of lawn with drought tolerant landscaping, resulting in an estimated annual water savings of about 210 acre-feet.
- Metropolitan's Innovative Conservation Program, a joint program with SoCalGas, awarded \$275,000 to six recipients for research projects that look at ways to engage hotel chains in non-functional turf removal, how to identify links between leaks and water affordability, and evaluation of optimal mulch types for water conservation, among other topics.
- Metropolitan provided \$5 million in incentives to produce 40,000 acre-feet of recycled water for non-potable and indirect potable uses.
- Metropolitan signed an agreement with the City of Los Angeles for the Los Angeles Groundwater Replenishment Project that provides incentives for the project to produce up to 19,500 acre-feet annually.
- Metropolitan and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts released the Pure Water Southern California Program draft program environmental impact report on May 14, 2025. The Final EIR adoption and approval of the program is expected in early 2026.
- Metropolitan has integrated 20 ZEVs (zero-emission vehicles) into its fleet. A long-term capital project is underway to construct charging infrastructure for fleet, rideshare, and employee vehicles.



Population Growth vs Imported Water Use Metropolitan's Service Area Calendar Year 1990-2024



Notes about the graph:

1. Calendar year data.
2. Population based on the Department of Finance.
3. Total Imported Water Use includes municipal, industrial, and agricultural consumptive uses, as well as groundwater replenishment and seawater barrier uses.

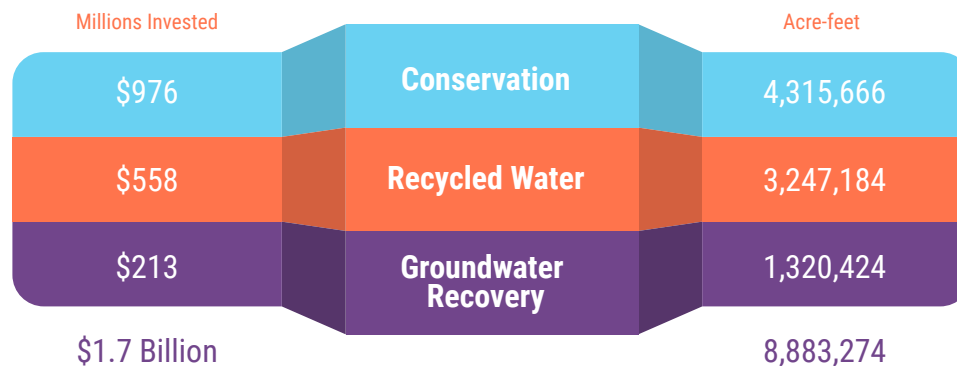
Theodore Payne Foundation's annual Native Garden Tour is an invitation to see first-hand the beauty of sustainable landscapes in neighborhoods across the Southland.



Achievement Scorecard

Conservation		
FY 2024/25 Total Water Saved¹	1,116,363 acre-feet	
New Water Saved From Metropolitan Conservation Credits Program²	3,908 acre-feet	
Water Saved From Existing Metropolitan Conservation Credits Program³	207,613 acre-feet	
FY 2024/25 Investment		
Metropolitan Conservation Credits Program Investment⁴	\$22 million	
Member Agency Conservation Investment⁵	\$7 million	
Metropolitan Outreach & Education	\$2 million	
Cumulative Savings Since 1990		
Water Saved From Metropolitan Conservation Credits Program Only⁶	4,315,666 acre-feet	
Metropolitan Conservation Investment (excluding funding by member agencies)⁷	\$976 million	
Recycled Water		
FY 2024/25 Production⁸	467,000 acre-feet	
Water Produced From Projects Receiving Metropolitan Funding	40,000 acre-feet	
Water Produced From Projects Without Metropolitan Funding (incl. Santa Ana River base flow)⁹	417,000 acre-feet	
FY 2024/25 Investment		
Metropolitan Funding	\$5 million	
Cumulative Production & Investment Since Inception¹⁰		
Production With Metropolitan Funding	3,247,184 acre-feet	
Metropolitan Investment	\$558 million	
Groundwater Recovery		
FY 2024/25 Production	117,000 acre-feet	
Water Produced From Projects Receiving Metropolitan Funding	53,000 acre-feet	
Water Produced From Projects Without Metropolitan Funding	74,000 acre-feet	
FY 2024/25 Investment		
Metropolitan Funding	\$8 million	
Cumulative Production & Investment Since Inception¹¹		
Production With Metropolitan Funding	1,320,424 acre-feet	
Metropolitan Investment	\$213 million	
Conjunctive Use Program¹²		
Metropolitan Cumulative Capital Investment	\$27 million	
Proposition 13 Grant Funds Administered by Metropolitan	\$45 million	
Water Stored Since Program Inception through June 2025	427,000 acre-feet	
Water Extracted Since Program Inception through June 2025	348,000 acre-feet	
Groundwater Replenishment¹³		
FY 2024/25 Delivery	179,000 acre-feet	
Cumulative Replenishment Delivery since 1984 through 2025	4,421,000 acre-feet	
Regional Summary		
	FY 2024/25	Cumulative
Metropolitan's Investment in Water Conservation, Recycled Water, and Groundwater Recovery¹⁴	\$35 million	\$1.7 billion
The numbers have been rounded to present a topline view of conservative achievement. More precise numbers are included in the report narrative. Cumulative investment is reported in nominal dollars.	301,000 AF	8,883,274 AF

Metropolitan's Cumulative Investment



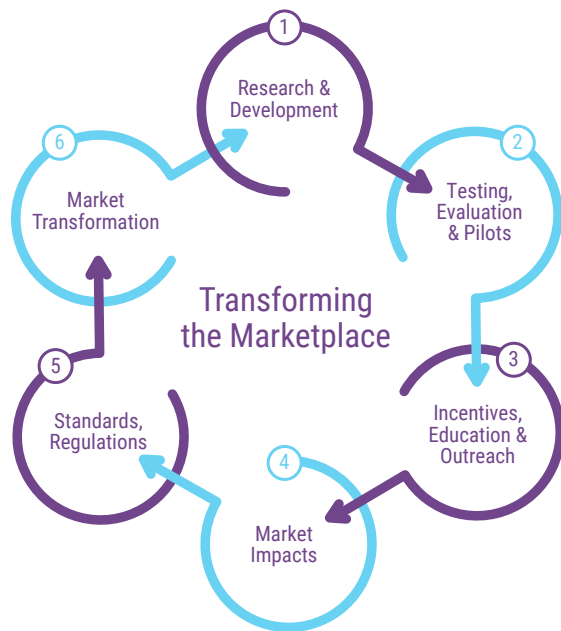
Footnotes for the Achievement Scorecard

Numbers are based on the best available information during the production of this report and are subject to revision for accounting reconciliation. All cumulative investment figures are in nominal dollars.

- Annual total savings include Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program, code-based conservation achieved through Metropolitan-sponsored legislation, building plumbing codes and ordinances, reduced consumption resulting from changes in water pricing, and pre-1990 device retrofits.
- The region achieved new water savings through Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program and member-agency-funded programs initiated in fiscal year 2024/25.
- Includes water savings initially achieved through Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program and maintained through plumbing codes.
- Active conservation investment includes administrative fees for contracted program vendors. The investment includes \$2.7 million for outreach budgeted through the Conservation Credits Program.
- In addition to Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program, member agencies and retailers implemented local water conservation programs within their respective service areas. Member agency investment figures include rebate funding beyond rebates already provided by Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program.
- Cumulative water savings since 1990 include water savings initially achieved through Metropolitan's Conservation Credits Program and maintained through plumbing codes.
- Metropolitan's cumulative conservation investment for fiscal year 2024/25 reflects a revision in total cumulative expenditures due to a reconciliation audit. The cumulative investment does not include outreach and education expenditures.
- Figures reflect actual and estimated deliveries for all Metropolitan-assisted projects and payments reported for fiscal year 2024/25; cumulative production and investment reflect accounting reconciliation as data become available; annual regional production for recycled water includes an estimated 76,323 acre-feet of treated wastewater discharged to the Santa Ana River base flow that percolates into downstream groundwater basins. The total may not be exact due to rounding.
- Some projects received funding at the outset through Metropolitan's Local Resources Program. Once the term of the funding agreement expires and the projects continue, further production is not factored into program totals.
- Metropolitan initiated its Local Resources Program in 1982 to encourage recycled water production for municipal purposes. Cumulative production and investment figures are subject to annual accounting reconciliation.
- Metropolitan initiated its Groundwater Recovery Program in 1991 to encourage the treatment and use of degraded groundwater for municipal purposes. Cumulative production and investment figures are subject to annual accounting reconciliation.
- Metropolitan completed the construction of the conjunctive use storage programs in 2008. Proposition 13 refers to Chapter 9 of the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection, and Flood Protection Bond Act of 2000. Water extracted since the program's inception includes losses.
- The figure is cumulative since 1984. Before 2013, Metropolitan provided replenishment water at a discounted rate to encourage long-term recharge and maintenance of groundwater basins and local reservoirs. Although Metropolitan ended the discounted replenishment rate on January 1, 2013, Metropolitan continues to provide water for replenishment purposes at full-service rates.
- Metropolitan's cumulative conservation investment for fiscal year 2024/25 reflects a revision in total cumulative expenditures due to a reconciliation audit. Cumulative conservation investment does not include outreach and education expenditures.

Conservation

With support from Metropolitan's nearly \$1 billion investment in conservation, Southern California was able to surpass the legislatively required (2009) 20 percent by 2020 reduction in urban per capita water use five years ahead of schedule and has sustained that progress for a decade since. Metropolitan's investment in efficiency has supported a culture of conservation that encourages waterwise practices.

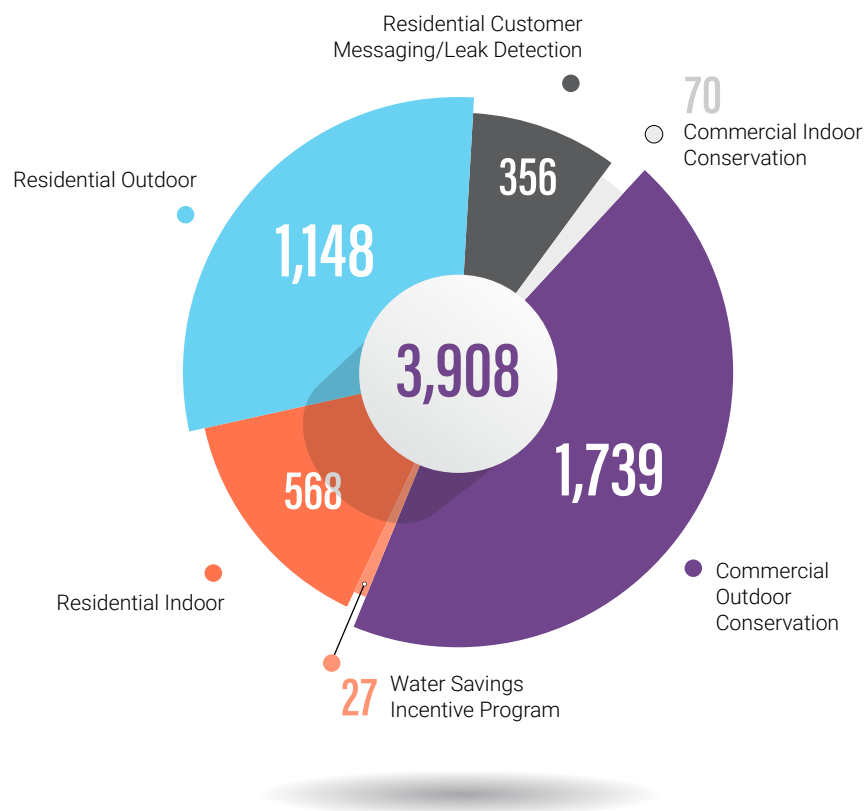


Metropolitan encourages water-use efficiency with a variety of resources that include rebates and grant programs, education, advertising, and outreach initiatives. Metropolitan also supports legislation, smart building codes, and device and appliance standards that ensure continued water savings over time. Metropolitan programs focus on market transformation, with specific activities illustrated in the figure to the left.

We promote innovation, support the development of new products, and influence consumer decision-making with catalysts like rebates, outreach and education, advocacy for new codes and standards, and fostering of new alliances. These efforts have brought positive and lasting change.

The first step towards transforming markets is being informed on the performance of new devices and technologies through research and development **(1)**. We test new technologies with promising potential to see if they work and how well they might perform in the marketplace and real-world applications. Ongoing testing, evaluation, and pilot programs are conducted through public-private collaborations that are cost-effective **(2)**. Once these technologies are in the hands of consumers, we continue to track water savings and gauge consumer satisfaction. Catalysts like incentive programs, education, and outreach bring new technologies to the attention of consumers **(3)**. Metropolitan offers rebates to incentivize the use of water-efficient technologies and processes. Education and outreach call attention to their availability. Targeted advertising in multiple languages and across diverse platforms brings the conservation message to a broader community. These catalysts accelerate impacts on the market **(4)**. Incentives also have the effect of increasing demand for new products and driving down production costs. Advocacy for new standards and regulations happens when products become more available in the marketplace to support sustained water savings **(5)**. New device standards and building and municipal codes also encourage research and development of next-generation water-saving technologies, processes, services, and designs. And finally, once catalysts like financial incentives have their intended effects to influence markets and consumer behaviors, they can be phased out to allow natural market dynamics to sustain changes **(6)**.

New Water Savings in Acre-feet Fiscal Year 2024/25



Since 1990, Metropolitan has invested \$976 million in conservation rebates and programs, of which approximately \$22 million was spent in fiscal year 2024/25. Metropolitan typically calculates rebates based on \$195 per acre-foot of water savings over the life of a device or program. Exceptions include the Turf Replacement Rebate Program, rain barrels, cisterns, and multi-family housing toilet replacements.

These measures are calculated differently to provide a greater incentive and therefore more participation, ultimately spurring market transformation. Metropolitan supplements its conservation programs using state and federal grant funds when available to help with market transformation efforts.



The Turf Replacement Rebate Program has resulted in the transformation of about two million square feet of lawn with sustainable landscaping just this fiscal year.

Metropolitan's Residential Conservation Programs

SoCal Water\$mart Residential & Member Agency Administered Residential Programs

Metropolitan funds regional conservation in two ways. Rebates are available through a regionally- administered program and available throughout Metropolitan's service area. Metropolitan also subsidizes its member agencies' programs to help increase water efficiency and resilience for their respective residential consumers.

Metropolitan's regional rebate program is administered through SoCal Water\$mart to encourage and support the use of water-efficient products across the Southland. Residential rebates offered in fiscal year 2024/25 included high-efficiency clothes washers and sprinkler nozzles, premium high-efficiency toilets, smart irrigation controllers, rain barrels, cisterns, and flow monitor or leak detection devices. Metropolitan estimates an annual water savings of about 1,210 acre-feet for fiscal year 2024/25 from nearly 105,000 residential conservation device rebates funded by Metropolitan. This includes 10,400 water-saving high-efficiency sprinkler nozzle rebates.

Funding from Metropolitan is provided to member agencies for locally-administered conservation programs. Qualifying residential projects include rain barrel distributions, turf replacement programs, sustainable landscape irrigation programs, residential leak detection, customer water-use messaging, and residential water surveys.

Metropolitan estimates water savings of about 2,100 acre-feet annually from all residential programs administered in fiscal year 2024/25.

Direct Installation Program with SoCalGas

Metropolitan also provided water-saving measures to underserved communities through a direct install program in partnership with SoCalGas. Metropolitan has collaborated with SoCalGas since 2014 when the agencies began to work together on joint water and energy efficiency incentive programs. In 2021, Metropolitan expanded the direct install program that initially provided new high-efficiency clothes washers to income-qualified residents in Metropolitan and SoCalGas service areas at no cost. The program expansion includes income-qualified homeowners and residents of disadvantaged communities, and offers new premium high-efficiency toilets, smart irrigation controllers, and high-efficiency showerheads and aerators installed by SoCalGas contractors free of charge.

The program is largely supported by grant funds and has received a total of \$9 million from the California Department of Water Resources and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. This has allowed the partners to expand the program and continue to target more homes for retrofitting. Approximately 8,900 homes have benefited from this program since December 2021. In fiscal year 2024/25, nearly 2,200 high-efficiency toilets, 300 “smart” or weather-based irrigation controllers, and 24,900 low-flow showerheads and 16,600 faucet aerators were installed in 1,720 homes.

Regional Turf Replacement Rebate Program

Metropolitan’s Turf Replacement Rebate Program provided rebates for residential sites to replace about 2 million square feet of lawn with drought tolerant landscaping in fiscal year 2024/25, resulting in an estimated annual water savings of about 210 acre-feet. These savings represent a decrease of 350 acre-feet compared to the previous fiscal year.

Food defrosting technology is a new addition to qualifying rebate devices.



Other Regional Incentives

High-Efficiency Clothes Washers

Metropolitan estimates water savings of about 260 acre-feet annually from clothes washer rebates in fiscal year 2024/25. High-efficiency clothes washers with an integrated water factor of 3.2 or less are eligible for rebates. The integrated water factor measures the amount of water used to wash a standard load of laundry. These washers can save over 10,000 gallons per year compared to a conventional top-loading clothes washer.

Smart Irrigation Controllers

Smart irrigation controllers save water by adjusting watering schedules based on weather, soil conditions, plant material, sun exposure, soil moisture, and slope. Metropolitan estimates water savings from regional and member agency incentive programs of about 540 acre-feet annually from smart controller rebates in fiscal year 2024/25.

Metropolitan’s Commercial Conservation Programs

Metropolitan’s commercial conservation programs provide financial incentives for water-saving devices and projects, including landscape transformation. Rebates are available for cooling towers, medical/dental equipment, and commercial kitchen devices, including newly added high-efficiency food defrosting technology. Qualifying commercial projects include turf replacement, centralized irrigation control, and high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles. Metropolitan estimates about 1,100 acre-feet of annual commercial water savings from more than 35,000 conservation device incentives and 4.3 million square feet of turf replacement in fiscal year 2024/25.

In May 2023, Metropolitan established the One Water Awards Program, an annual event to showcase innovative and forward-thinking sustainability projects implemented by local businesses and municipalities, which credit their water and financial savings to their participation in Metropolitan incentive programs like the Water Savings Incentive Program and Turf Replacement Rebate Program. The program continues to grow with 14 total recipients having received the award to date.

Commercial Turf Replacement Program

Metropolitan is focused on opportunities for turf removal in response to the passage of Assembly Bill 1572 (2023), which bans the use of potable water to irrigate non-function turf in commercial, industrial, and institutional locations, as well as Homeowner Association spaces. The legislation has a phased implementation beginning January 1, 2027. To assist with this transition, both DWR and USBR together have committed \$125 million dollars to incentivize turf replacement; \$30 million and \$95 million, respectively. DWR funds are available until the end of 2026, and USBR funds are available through 2031.

Water Savings Incentive Program

The Water Savings Incentive Program is a regional pay-for-performance initiative. It is open to all commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, and large landscape consumers with qualifying projects within Metropolitan's service area. Financial incentives are available for customized water- efficiency projects, including installing commercial or industrial high-efficiency equipment, industrial process improvements, agricultural and landscape water efficiency improvements, and water management services. Incentives are based on the water saved and capped at 50 percent of eligible project costs. In fiscal year 2024/25, Metropolitan estimates savings of about 82 acre-feet of water from new projects. The annual water savings for fiscal year 2024/25 from all WSIP projects is estimated at 4,045 acre-feet.

Inspiring before and after photos of an office park landscape renovation in Redondo Beach supported by Turf Rebate Program funds for commercial properties.

Before



**After**

Research & Development

Innovative Conservation Program

Metropolitan's Innovative Conservation Program provides funding for research that will document the water savings and reliability of innovative devices, technologies, and strategies. A joint program with SoCalGas awarded \$275,000 to six recipients.

A selection committee made up of internal staff and outside representatives received and evaluated 22 project proposals from diverse applicants that included universities, entrepreneurs, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. The committee selected six projects and awarded them up to \$50,000 each in funding. Project topics include large scale polyculture landscaping, engaging hotel chains in non-functional turf removal, quantifying outdoor irrigation in CII mixed-used meters, identifying links between leaks and water affordability, the impact of soil regeneration on water use and avocado yield, and evaluating optimal mulch types for water conservation. The projects started in August 2025 with the final reports anticipated by September 2026. Past projects are posted on mwdh2o.com/ICP.

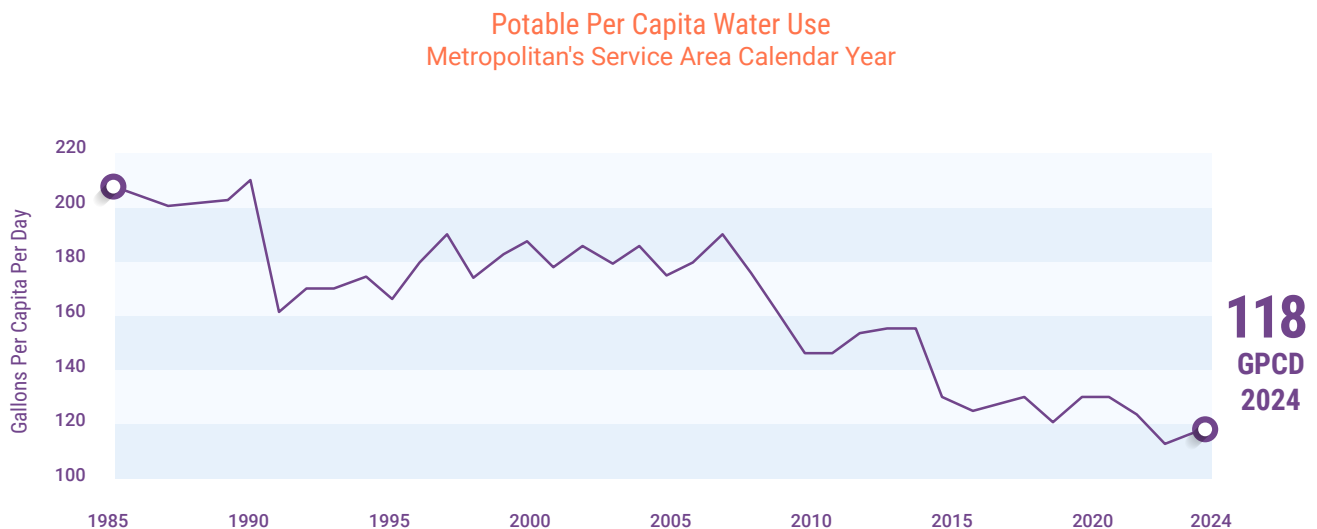
Long-Term Studies

In addition to the Innovative Conservation Program, Metropolitan pursued other research projects, many of them long-term studies. They include:

- Continued evaluation of the water-saving potential of leak detection for distribution system processes in collaboration with multiple member agencies.
- Conducting comprehensive research into CII attitudes toward outdoor water use and landscaping practices, in collaboration with Metropolitan's External Affairs Group and the California Water Efficiency Partnership. Results will inform outreach strategies to engage the CII sector in anticipation of AB 1572 compliance.

Regional Water-Use Efficiency

Increasing regional water-use efficiency is a key component of Metropolitan's water reliability strategy. Since 1990, Metropolitan's estimated regional potable water use declined from 209 gallons per capita per day, or GPCD, to 118 GPCD in calendar year 2024. Extraordinarily cool and wet hydrologic conditions, along with water conservation from the previous drought, led to the sharp decline in GPCD observed in 2023 and was largely sustained in 2024. The long-term continued decline in potable GPCD is attributed to Metropolitan's regional investments in conservation programs, legislation, and long-term conservation program investments. Further advances in water-use efficiency will be driven by regional investments in conservation programs, new state and local laws, and education and outreach campaigns that promote a strong water-use efficiency ethic.



Notes about the graph:

1. Calendar year data.
2. 2024 GPCD based on best available data (as of August 2025) and is subject to reconciliation. Data is received in 2025 for the previous calendar year.

Example of commercial property embracing the California Friendly® landscape aesthetic.
Pictured: How's it going to end? coffee shop and garden, on the former site of Regal Cleaners in Montrose.



Local Resources

Local water sources play a vital role in ensuring supply reliability, meeting half of the region's annual water demand. Like imported supplies, these resources are stressed by changing precipitation patterns that veer from one extreme to another brought by climate change and challenges in source water quality.

Metropolitan has long recognized the importance of investing in local resource development and sustaining groundwater basins. There have been ongoing programs dating nearly 50 years to put water into aquifers, nature's below-ground reservoirs, when supply conditions are favorable. To complement Metropolitan's Local Resources Program, which launched in 1980, Metropolitan has supported enduring change with onsite retrofit programs that provide financial incentives to replace non-potable irrigation systems with those that can tap into recycled water sources. Programs and projects include recycled water system conversions, treatment of degraded groundwater for reuse, and seawater desalination. Looking to the future, Metropolitan is exploring the viability of a regional recycling program with Pure Water Southern California, as well as the possibility of a local supply exchange framework that would allow member agencies to shift supplies to meet demand where needed and when supplies are available.



Inside the Fallbrook
Groundwater Desalter project.

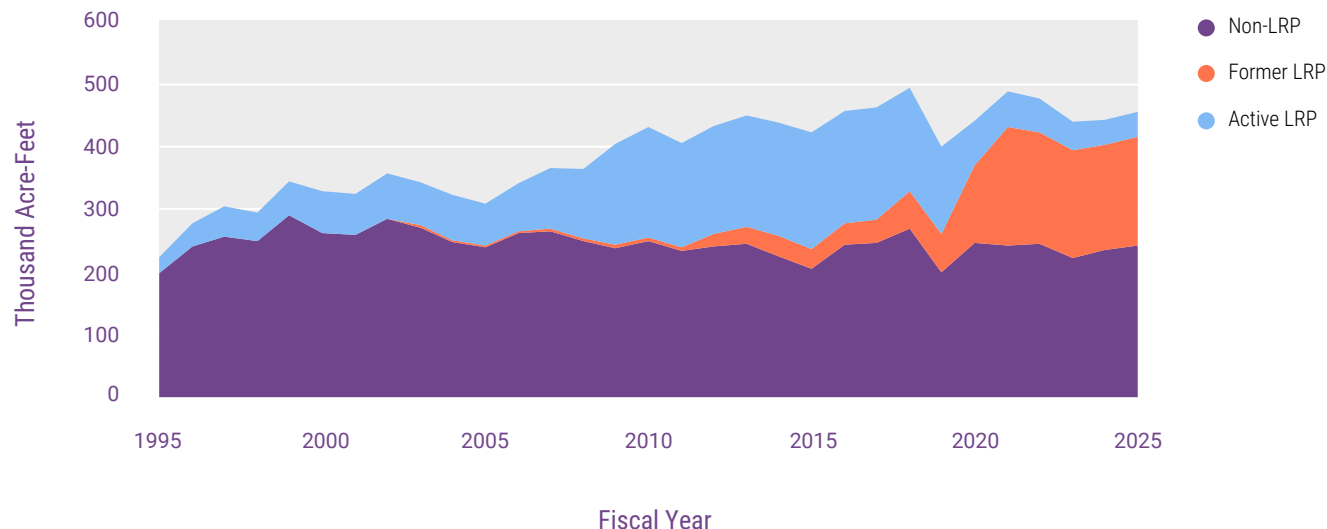
Extending Water Resources through Reuse

Local Resources Program - Recycled Water

In fiscal year 2024/25, Metropolitan provided \$5 million in incentives to produce 40,000 acre-feet of recycled water for non-potable and indirect potable uses. During the fiscal year, Metropolitan signed an LRP agreement with the City of Los Angeles for the Los Angeles Groundwater Replenishment Project. The agreement would provide LRP incentives for the project to produce up to 19,500 acre-feet annually. In addition, two projects commenced operations. The Las Flores Recycled Water System Expansion Project, located in Municipal Water District of Orange County's service area, was placed into operation in October 2024 and began receiving LRP incentive payments. The Escondido Membrane Filtration Reverse Osmosis Facility, located in San Diego County, was placed into operation in June 2025 and likewise became eligible for LRP incentive payments. Collectively, these projects are projected to augment regional recycled water supply by up to 359 acre-feet per year.

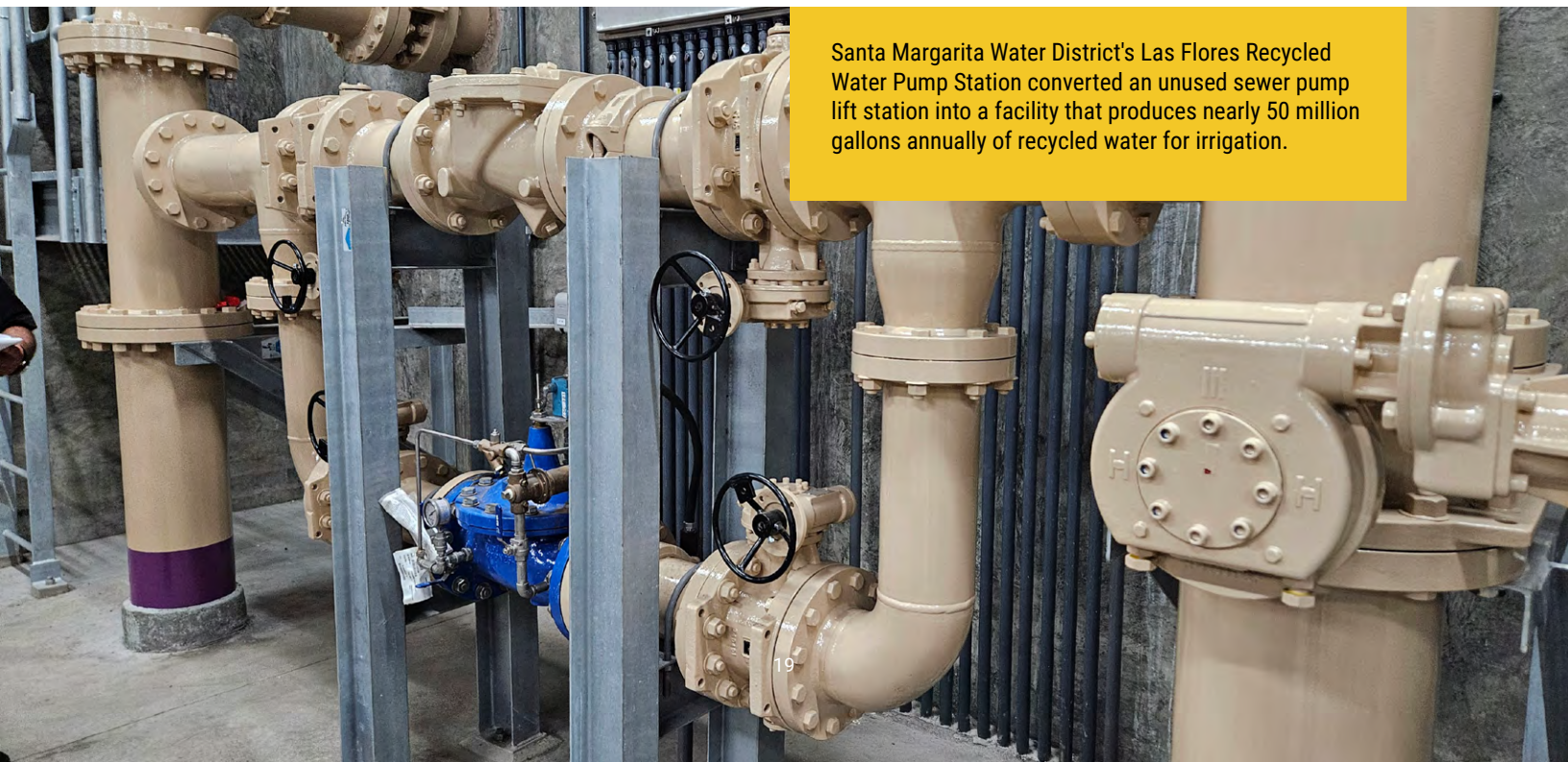
Without direct financial support from Metropolitan, local agencies produced 417,000 acre-feet of recycled water, including wastewater discharged to the Santa Ana River that percolates into downstream groundwater basins.

Recycled Water Production



On-site Retrofit Program

With an annual budget of \$3 million, Metropolitan's On-site Retrofit Program provides financial incentives for converting potable irrigation and industrial systems to recycled water. As of fiscal year 2024/25, the program has funded 550 sites, replacing 15,360 acre-feet of potable water with recycled water per year. Metropolitan works continuously with member and retail agencies, as well as organizations like WaterReuse, to promote and gather feedback that ultimately reshapes the program. Metropolitan maintains a program website (bewaterwise.com/onsite-retrofit) where up-to-date information can be accessed, including a link to the application, terms and conditions, frequently asked questions, and program publications.



Santa Margarita Water District's Las Flores Recycled Water Pump Station converted an unused sewer pump lift station into a facility that produces nearly 50 million gallons annually of recycled water for irrigation.

Pure Water Southern California

Pure Water Southern California is a new approach to resource development, with Metropolitan directly funding the creation of a local water supply with regional benefits. The program is a partnership between Metropolitan and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, which have worked together on this effort since 2009. It has strong legislative, financial, and regional backing, including 2022 legislation to accelerate construction, major funding from DWR, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and other interstate partners, and an extensive network of agencies that have committed support through letters of intent and funding agreements.

Since 2019, the onsite Grace F. Napolitano Innovation Center has tested an innovative process for purification that uses membrane bioreactors followed by reverse osmosis and ultraviolet light/advanced oxidation. If approved by regulators, it could be applied throughout California to advance water reuse statewide. The facility also provides data to optimize operations, identify costs, and support planning for a full-scale facility. The center offers public tours, community events, and workshops.

If the project moves forward, Pure Water Southern California can produce and deliver up to 150 million gallons per day of purified water—enough for 500,000 homes. The program would include a new advanced water treatment facility at the Sanitation Districts' A.K. Warren Water Resource Facility in Carson and a new conveyance system, over 60 miles long, to deliver water to groundwater basins within Metropolitan's service area. The purified water would replace imported water used to replenish the basins, freeing imported supplies for other purposes. Initially, purified water would be used for indirect potable reuse, with the potential for future direct potable reuse at two Metropolitan water treatment plants.

The Escondido Membrane Filtration Reverse Osmosis Facility, recipient of LRP funding, is located in San Diego County and began operations in June 2025. It is a first-of-its-kind facility to treat wastewater for agricultural use. Photos courtesy City of Escondido.

Recent Milestones and Next Steps

Metropolitan and the Sanitation Districts released the Pure Water Program draft program environmental impact report on May 14, 2025. The Final EIR adoption and approval of the program is expected in early 2026. If approved, the first water could be delivered as early as 2035.

In February 2024, Metropolitan and its member agencies began a collaborative process to reach consensus on a term sheet that would ultimately lead to an agreement to purchase water from Pure Water Southern California. Agreement execution is expected in spring 2026.

Metropolitan has also been engaged in developing an exchange agreement with the Colorado River states, including Southern Nevada Water Authority, Central Arizona Project, and Arizona Department of Water Resources. SNWA and the Arizona parties would invest in Pure Water in exchange for Colorado River supplies from Metropolitan. Final agreements are expected in spring 2026.

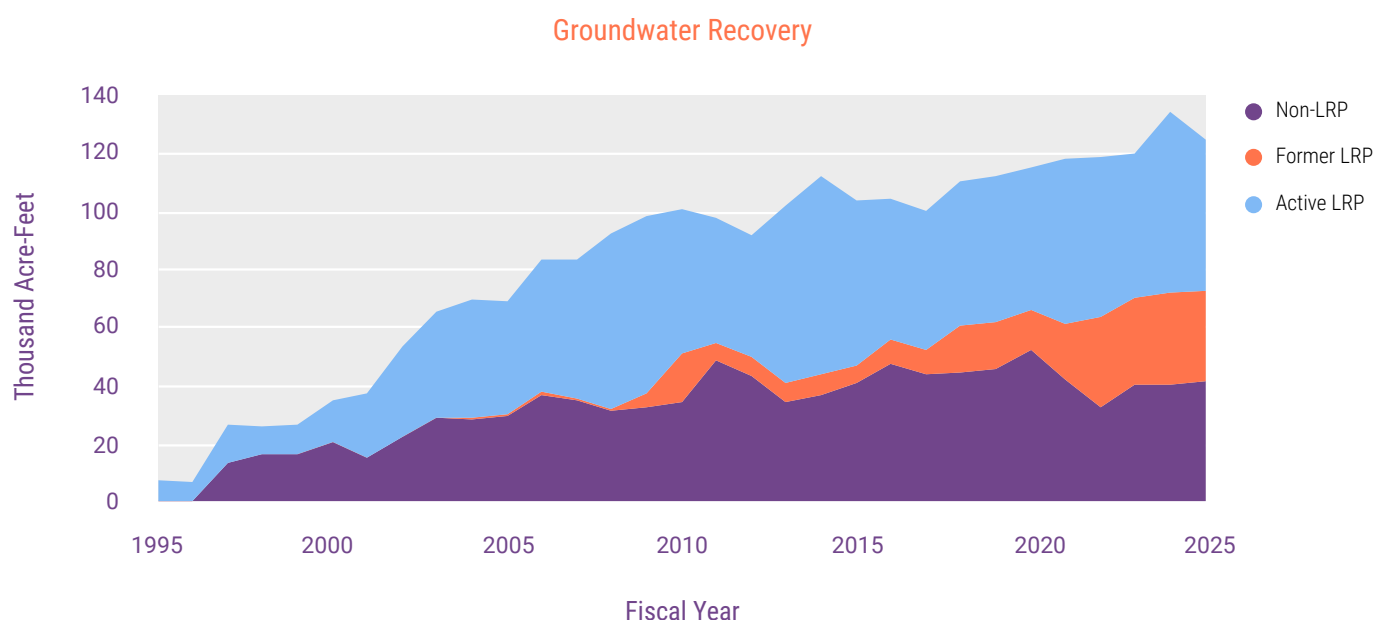
State Water Project contractor San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District also is working on an agreement to cover the delivery and purchase of Pure Water, repurposing the San Gabriel Valley MWD's Azusa pipeline, and transfer of San Gabriel Valley MWD's State Water Project Table A allocation to Metropolitan. It is expected that this agreement will be executed in spring 2026.



Recharging and Enhancing Local Groundwater Basins

Groundwater Replenishment Deliveries

Imported water plays a vital role in replenishing the region's groundwater basins and maintaining seawater barriers along the coast. When available, imported water is used to recharge aquifers and stabilize groundwater levels. Along the coast, replenishment is especially critical to sustain barriers protecting freshwater supplies from seawater intrusion. Over the past several decades, local agencies have invested heavily in recycled water projects that use advanced treated wastewater to offset imported replenishment demand. The projects can collectively provide up to 200,000 acre-feet per year of advanced treated recycled water for replenishment, with several having previously participated in Metropolitan's LRP.



Local Resources Program - Recycled Water for Replenishment Groundwater Recovery

In fiscal year 2024/25, Metropolitan provided \$8 million in LRP incentives to produce 53,000 acre-feet of recovered groundwater. In November 2024, the Santa Monica Sustainable Water Supply Project located in the City of Santa Monica, began operation and started receiving LRP incentive payments. The project is expected to recover up to 2,300 acre-feet per year of groundwater. Without direct financial support from Metropolitan, local agencies produced 74,000 acre-feet of recovered groundwater.

Conjunctive Use Program

Metropolitan partners with local agencies to store imported surface water in groundwater basins for use in times of shortage under conjunctive-use agreements. There are currently three storage programs with nearly 115,000 acre-feet of storage capacity. They allow Metropolitan annually to store up to 28,750 acre-feet and withdraw up to 38,000 acre-feet during periods of shortage. In 2025, Metropolitan elected to terminate six conjunctive use programs that were inactive for a variety of reasons or nearing agreement expiration. The program reduction decreased total storage capacity, and the maximum annual storage and extraction capacity.

Favorable hydrologic conditions in early calendar year 2024 allowed Metropolitan to maintain its request for supply storage and asked participating agencies to store about 38,000 acre-feet of water by the end of the calendar year. In fiscal year 2024/25, 19,690 acre-feet of groundwater was stored through June 30, 2025 into the conjunctive use accounts with Chino Basin Watermaster and Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District to supplement the region's water supplies during future droughts.

Cyclic Program

Under the Cyclic Program, Metropolitan can capture surplus imported water supplies that cannot be stored in existing facilities or through participation in other storage programs. Metropolitan and participating member agencies enter into 10-year agreements to establish regional cyclic accounts. In coordination with the agencies, Metropolitan delivers water to the cyclic accounts and allows the agencies to pay for these deliveries over an established schedule.

Metropolitan can capture up to 601,500 acre-feet into existing cyclic accounts. In fiscal year 2024/25, Metropolitan delivered an estimated 143,159 acre-feet into the cyclic accounts with Upper San Gabriel Valley Municipal Water District, Three Valleys Municipal Water District, and the City of Burbank.

In years when Metropolitan's General Manager determines that available supplies are expected to exceed available management actions, Metropolitan may offer its member agencies the Cyclic Cost-Offset Program to reduce costs incurred by agencies that are taking extraordinary actions to capture surplus supplies at Metropolitan's request. This program was established by the Metropolitan board in 2019 and revised in 2023 to provide a credit of up to \$354 per acre-foot, escalated annually by the Consumer Price Index. Metropolitan did not provide agencies with Cyclic Cost-Offset Program credits in fiscal year 2024/25 since the General Manager did not initiate the Cyclic Cost-Offset Program that fiscal year.



The city of Anaheim conducted a study, "A Regional Assessment of Stormwater Capture, Treatment, and Infiltration for Groundwater Enhancement," with funds from Metropolitan's Future Supply Action grant program.



Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project, rendering courtesy of the City of Santa Monica.

Stormwater Pilot Program and Studies

Metropolitan authorized \$12.5 million for direct use and recharge stormwater pilot programs in 2019. These pilot programs encourage developing, monitoring, and studying new and existing stormwater projects by providing financial incentives for construction, retrofit, monitoring, and reporting costs. The pilots help evaluate stormwater capture projects' potential water supply benefits and provide a basis for future funding approaches. Six projects have been authorized by the board and are still ongoing.

In addition to the pilot programs, Metropolitan has been involved in technical studies with other agencies including the Los Angeles Department of Public Works and the Southern California Water Coalition to advance the understanding of stormwater in the service area. Metropolitan is currently partnering with Las Virgenes Municipal Water District to explore how stormwater runoff and dry weather flow can help wastewater agencies increase water available for recycling.



Long Beach Utilities Groundwater Augmentation, Collection System and New Wells Site Study, an FSA grant recipient, will evaluate the impacts of using recycled water to augment groundwater resources in the Central and West Coast Basins.

Future Supply Actions

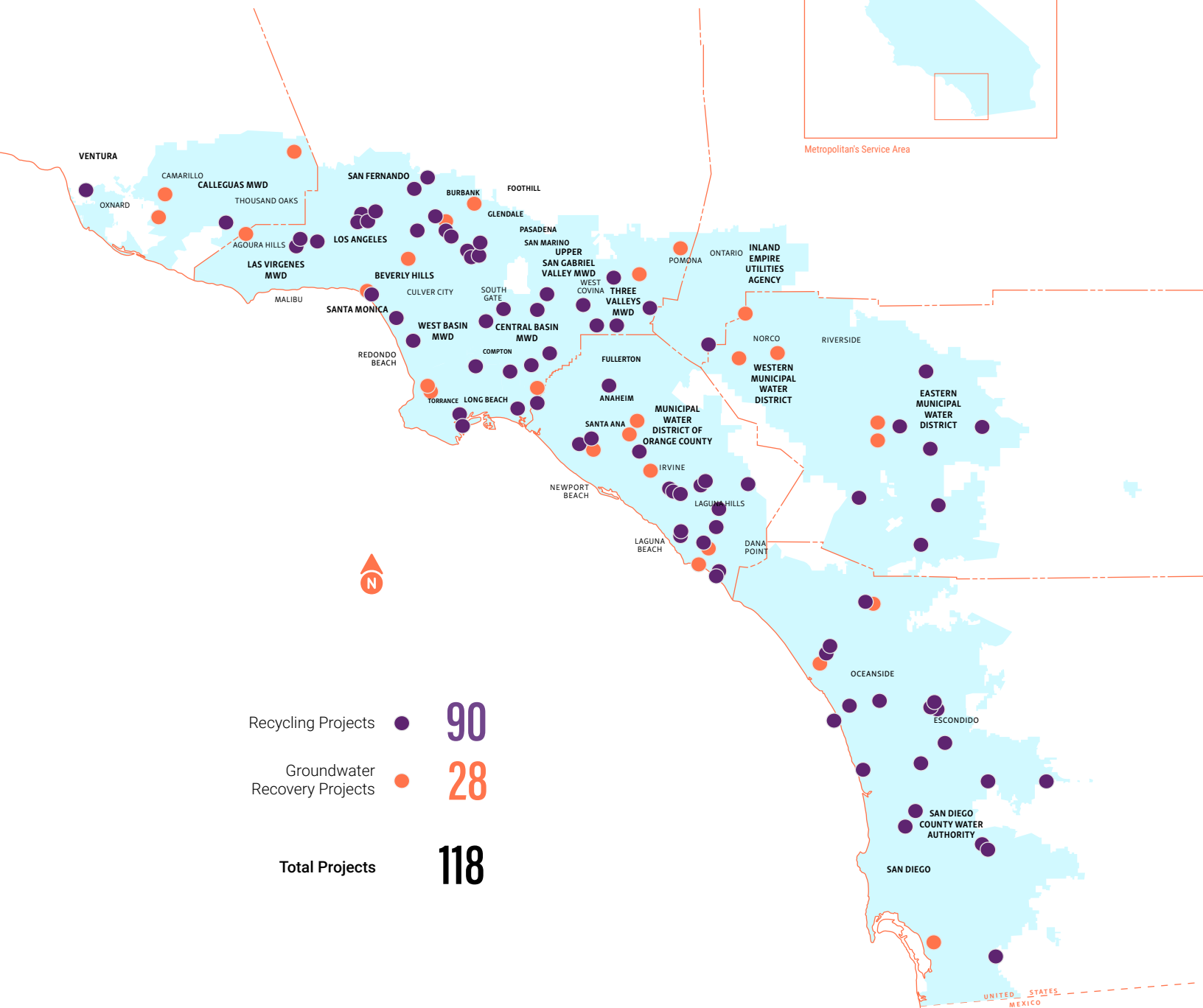
Metropolitan supports the development of local supplies through its Future Supply Actions Funding Program, a funding source for member agency studies to address challenges for groundwater, recycled water, stormwater, and seawater desalination supplies. The program is one avenue for Metropolitan to promote sustainable approaches to local supply development. Metropolitan established the FSA in 2010 as part of the Integrated Water Resources Plan to promote low-cost, low-risk investments to address technological, regulatory, and institutional barriers to new supplies. The vision of the FSA is for Southern California agencies to be able to accelerate new local supplies in the future when needed.

Program goals include:

- Reducing barriers to future resource production
- Providing results that are unique yet transferable to other areas in the region
- Advancing the field of knowledge for stormwater, recycled water, groundwater, and desalination
- Targeting critical paths to water resource implementation

The program is currently in the third round of funding. A total of seven selected studies will be conducted between 2024 and 2027. The first round was funded in 2013 and the second in 2018. Metropolitan has co-funded 32 pilot tests, demonstration studies, and white papers since 2013. To highlight the success of the studies, Metropolitan has conducted webinars covering topics ranging from percolation optimization for stormwater basins to virus log removal in potable reuse in the past but will be returning to a symposium format for the next round. All completed FSA study reports, presentations, and webinars are available at mwdh2o.com/fsa.

Metropolitan's Local Resources Program Projects*



*This map represents projects undertaken from 1981 through June 2024.

Communications & Outreach

Metropolitan's investments in conservation and local resources are only impactful if communities are made aware of opportunities to save both money and water, and contribute to a more sustainable, shared water supply future. To engage with customers, Metropolitan's in-house teams create outreach campaigns in multiple languages, promote key initiatives through the news media and events, and provide no-cost educational curriculum and learning programs for grades kindergarten through college. These efforts support the spirit of local resource development, initially required by the state legislature and expanded decades later to include a suite of programs and incentives that have made Metropolitan a leader in demand management.

Advertising & Outreach Campaign

With improved water supply conditions, record reserves and an enhanced focus on long-term sustainable solutions, conservation messaging continued to highlight the region's ongoing commitment to ensuring a reliable water future for all Southern Californians, a key part of our agency mission. Ongoing conservation efforts and continued investments in water use efficiency shaped outreach messaging and communication strategies, particularly as summer 2024 marked the hottest season on record.

While the Summer 2024 Olympics Games were in full swing, staff developed a digital campaign where creative design bridged water conservation with team sportsmanship, underscoring a collective water-saving effort. To remain cost-conscious, staff leveraged online marketing tools that help reach millions while keeping costs low. The campaign ran through September 2024, where the second half of the flight focused on sustainable and water-efficient landscapes to promote the district's Turf Replacement Rebate Program. The English and Spanish-language advertisements were featured on premier publisher websites, including Southern California News Group publications, garnering over 2 million impressions.



**Save water with a CA Friendly®
& native plant landscape instead.**

bewaterwise.com® + You

Following the record-breaking summer weather, staff launched the “Goodbye Grass” campaign in fall 2024 as an ode to the beauty and environmental benefits of California Friendly® and native landscapes. Carefully crafted messages were paired with striking visuals of blooming water-saving plants contrasted by parched, thirsty lawns. Advertisements were translated into seven languages and featured on digital, radio and outdoor platforms through winter 2024, generating over 160 million impressions combined.

The “Goodbye Grass” campaign creative, aimed at promoting the Turf Replacement Rebate Program, evolved in the spring 2025 media plan, informed by member water agency feedback as the region grappled with the devastating impact of the January 2025 wildfires. To help foster direct, memorable community engagement, staff created the Bloom Box mobile exhibit in collaboration with iHeartMedia to showcase an immersive California Friendly® plant experience complete with a sound bath recorded in-house and real examples of sustainable gardens. Over 30,000 people interacted with the Bloom Box at events like KIIS FM’s Wango Tango and Long Beach’s Juneteenth celebration.

Spanish-language mini billboards at popular Latino grocery stores like Superior and Vallarta, and mobile billboards at key commuter and commercial zones throughout Ventura County, were also part of the media strategy. A partnership with Dodgers Radio, in what would become their World Series championship run, spread the conservation message to new audiences during game casts. Translated messaging was featured in ethnic publications throughout the region. These efforts generated over 150 million total impressions.

A focused outreach strategy is underway to help reach CII customers ahead of the enactment of AB 1572, which prohibits irrigation of non-functional turf with potable water starting in phases beginning January 2027. Metropolitan plans to pursue a comprehensive research-informed communications approach targeting industry decision-makers, associations, and business groups.

Metropolitan's Press Office drew attention to the One Water Awards, an annual celebration of inspiring water-saving projects in the business sector.



The conservation message and legacy of Metropolitan's vision was shared by social media influencers guitarist and composer Jeff Parker, artist Tim Biskup, and LA in a Minute's Evan Lovett.

Media

Metropolitan's Press Office continued to play a vital role in advancing public awareness and support for water conservation, local water supplies, and regional resiliency. With sustained media interest in California's water outlook and the ways in which water agencies are adapting to climate change, the team leveraged timely news moments, data releases, and program updates to elevate the conversation around long-term solutions to water scarcity challenges, including water efficiency.

Throughout the year, Metropolitan's leadership and technical experts conducted interviews with journalists from across the state and nation. These included appearances on radio, television, print, and digital platforms, helping to frame Metropolitan's conservation initiatives and regional planning efforts for broad audiences. Collectively, this media coverage reached an audience of nearly 400 million, representing an estimated publicity value of about \$2 million.

The Press Office issued a series of press releases that highlighted the importance of water conservation in a time of climate uncertainty, and the value of conservation. They recognized key milestones, like the historic drop in per capita water use across Southern California and the region's strong water storage heading into the new water year, thanks in part to increased water efficiency.

One of the year's most impactful media announcements centered on the increase in turf replacement incentives for commercial, industrial, and public agency customers. Aided by a \$30 million grant from DWR, Metropolitan raised its base rebate to \$3 per square foot for businesses and \$4 for public agencies, encouraging even greater participation in the shift to sustainable landscaping. The Press Office spotlighted this boost through a dedicated release and outreach campaign, resulting in media coverage and heightened public interest.

In support of climate resilience, the media team also promoted the Board's adoption of the new Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water framework — a methodology to evaluate future investments in projects that will ensure the region has reliable water supplies amid a changing climate. Press materials emphasized how CAMP4W integrates smart water supply planning with affordability and environmental co-benefits.

Additional outreach efforts included a media release on Metropolitan's One Water Awards — an annual recognition of innovative, high-impact water-saving projects across Metropolitan's service area. These awardees served as compelling local examples of what's possible when communities embrace conservation.

Media coverage also focused on state legislation and policy. Staff continued to secure interviews and placements around the passage of AB 1572, which Metropolitan co-sponsored in the prior year.

Seasonal updates — such as snowpack surveys and water supply allocations — were also used as key opportunities to thank Southern Californians for their ongoing water-saving efforts, reinforcing that individual and collective action continues to support water-supply reliability in the region.

Lastly, the team helped keep a spotlight on Pure Water Southern California, by communicating the project's progress and funding wins. Through these efforts, the Press Office advanced public understanding of recycled water and the value of Metropolitan's broader diversification strategy.

Across all efforts, the Press Office remained committed to keeping water conservation in the public dialogue — not just as a response to scarcity, but as a foundation for long-term sustainability.

The New York Times

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

For the Future of Water
Conservation, Look to ...
Los Angeles?



Community Outreach

Metropolitan's Community Partnering Program sponsored 45 water education events and programs throughout Southern California, including the Bob Baker Marionette Theater. Metropolitan worked with this non-profit organization with deep ties to the Southland, to create an interactive puppet live-stage experience weaving indigenous knowledge about the importance of water. More than 20,000 diverse and multi-generational guests attended the free performance.

Bob Baker marionettes bring the story of water to life.



Education Programs

Metropolitan collaborated with more than 50 partner agencies, school districts, county offices of education, non-profits, parents, and formal and informal educators to deliver water-focused Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math curriculum, sponsorships, and outreach programs. Together, these programs demonstrate Metropolitan's ongoing commitment to educating the next generation of water stewards, innovators, employees, and water advocacy leaders across Southern California about the importance of conservation and sustainable water supplies.

Partners included DWR, California Environmental Education Foundation, Compton Unified School District, Pando Populus, Strategic Energy Innovations, Agriculture in the Classroom, Water Education Foundation, Project WET, Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, Water Replenishment District of Southern California, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Orange County Department of Education, Cal Poly Pomona, University of La Verne, University of Southern California, TreePeople, and Long Beach City College.

An engaging water lesson at Gates Street Elementary School is one of many in-person learning activities that brings Metropolitan people and resources to our Southland students and educators.



In addition to schools and community agencies, Metropolitan staff collaborated with member and retail agencies, reaching more than 15,000 students, teachers, parents, and participants through in-person field trips, virtual programming, career awareness events, teacher institutes, social media, and curriculum resources.

Highlights of educational efforts:

- In partnership with Edison International and Strategic Energy Innovations, Metropolitan hosted Earth Day Challenge 2025, a virtual competition for secondary schools. Students explored conservation, stewardship, and climate change.
- Staff co-facilitated seven professional learning sessions. Teachers created lesson plans on drought, conservation, water and energy initiatives, and climate change.
- Water Engineering 4 Good, a virtual STEAM challenge, continued into its third year. Teams designed conservation devices using only recycled or upcycled materials. Students developed engineering proposals, technical drawings, prototypes, social media campaigns, and professional presentations. Metropolitan engineers served as judges, providing real-world feedback and mentorship.
- Metropolitan staff served as board members and hosted two semi-annual meetings of the California Regional Environmental Education Community Network, a group of community-based organizations providing education focused on conservation and sustainability.
- Metropolitan supported a \$9 million career awareness grant through participation on the Long Beach City College Water Industry Advisory Council and will assist with curriculum development and career technical education coursework.
- Hundreds of students were engaged through Discover Diamond Valley Lake field trips and the Water Journeys program.
- More than 8,000 copies of the "Being Water Wise Is..." student art calendar were distributed featuring K-12 student artwork promoting water conservation. The traveling art gallery provided in-person and online social media engagement for local residents, who enjoyed the creative water-wise messages.
- In partnership with San Diego County Water Authority, Metropolitan co-hosted a regional tour of the Hydro Station, Linda Vista Innovation Center, and the Conservation Garden at Cuyamaca College for the Water Energy Education Alliance. Forty secondary and college teachers and industry leaders attended.
- In partnership with Coro Southern California, Metropolitan hosted three Youth Fellows as part of a summer leadership experience. Fellows conducted research projects on raising awareness of water quality, recycled water, and water careers. The program cultivated civic leadership, critical thinking, and teamwork skills, preparing Los Angeles area students for college, career, and community impact.
- Metropolitan staff participated in numerous additional activities including co-development of the Tap Water Teacher Toolkit for K-12 schools, career awareness events, the Orange County Children's Water Festival and Earth Day, and World Water Day celebrations.

CORO Southern California Youth Fellows extended their learning time at Metropolitan with a trip to the Pure Water facility with Metropolitan staff.



Climate & Watershed Initiatives

An essential focus of Metropolitan's mission is to ensure water supply reliability and quality in an environmentally responsible way. This involves watershed health, stormwater collection, salinity management, and habitat restoration and preservation. All of these areas are impacted by climate change. While information about these programs is not a requirement of this report, they are reflective of Metropolitan's holistic view of water supply reliability. The recognition that all sources of water are entwined – whether imported or locally developed – guides our decision making and encourages innovative approaches to protect and extend our resources. CAMP4W has a standardized framework developed to evaluate prospective climate adaptation projects and programs.

Metropolitan is taking significant steps to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions through its comprehensive Climate Action Plan, adopted by the Board of Directors in 2022. The CAP serves as a blueprint for cost-effectively reducing emissions from Metropolitan's operations, including the conveyance, storage, treatment, and delivery of water through the Colorado River Aqueduct and other facilities.

The plan establishes a pathway to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045, with an interim target of reducing GHG emissions 40 percent by 2030. To meet these goals, the CAP identifies 42 measures addressing energy use, fleet operations, and facility improvements.

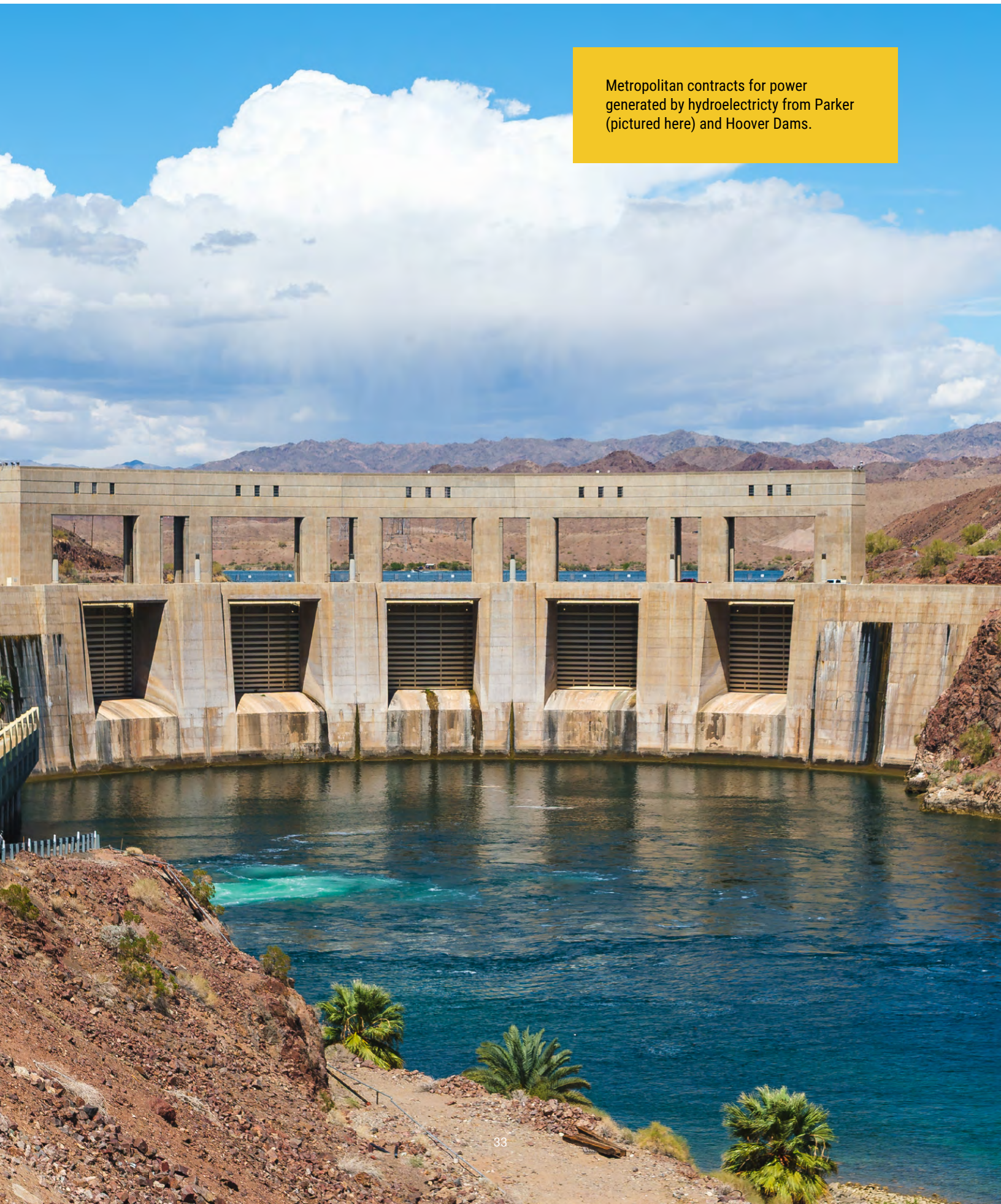
Each year, Metropolitan publishes a CAP Progress Report in alignment with Earth Day. The report documents progress toward the plan's actions, updates the agency's GHG inventory, and tracks the carbon budget. The 2024 Progress Report released in April 2025 highlighted achievements such as turf replacement programs, expanded telecommuting, the transition to renewable diesel, and progress toward fleet electrification, alongside many other initiatives gaining momentum.

Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency

Electricity use represents the largest source of GHG emissions from Metropolitan's operations. To address this, the agency has significantly reduced emissions associated with both retail and wholesale electricity consumption. Strategies include shifting accounts to prioritize renewable energy and implementing efficiency upgrades such as LED lighting.

Metropolitan also invests in renewable energy generation. In addition to procuring carbon-free power from Parker and Hoover Dams, the agency has 15 in-stream hydroelectric plants with a combined capacity of about 130 megawatts. Photovoltaic solar panels at Metropolitan facilities generate an additional 5.5 megawatts. To maximize the benefits of renewable energy, Metropolitan is adding Battery Energy Storage Systems at the Weymouth, Jensen, and Skinner Water Treatment Plants. The Weymouth system and others are scheduled to come online in the near future. These systems will store renewable energy during off-peak periods for use when demand and costs are higher.

Metropolitan contracts for power generated by hydroelectricity from Parker (pictured here) and Hoover Dams.



Currently, Metropolitan procures 65 percent carbon-free electricity for its retail accounts by leveraging green tariff options where cost-effective. Nearly all interior and exterior lighting has been retrofitted to LEDs across half of Metropolitan's facilities, ahead of schedule.

In 2024, Metropolitan advanced its renewable energy goals further by migrating its high-performance IT systems to a vendor-operated, off-site data center powered entirely by green energy. This transition reduced GHG emissions, lowered costs, and improved efficiency. The facility also offers environmental benefits such as 100% renewable energy use, a closed-loop water recycling system that returns double the cooling water to local resources, and shared efficiencies from multi-tenant operations.

Zero Emission Vehicle Task Force

Metropolitan is also committed to reducing the carbon footprint of its vehicle fleet. The agency's Zero Emission Vehicle Task Force meets regularly to evaluate strategies for transitioning away from fossil fuel vehicles in line with both the CAP and California Air Resources Board's Advanced Clean Fleets regulation.

The Task Force is addressing challenges related to charging infrastructure, vehicle replacement schedules, operational protocols, and financial planning to ensure a smooth transition.

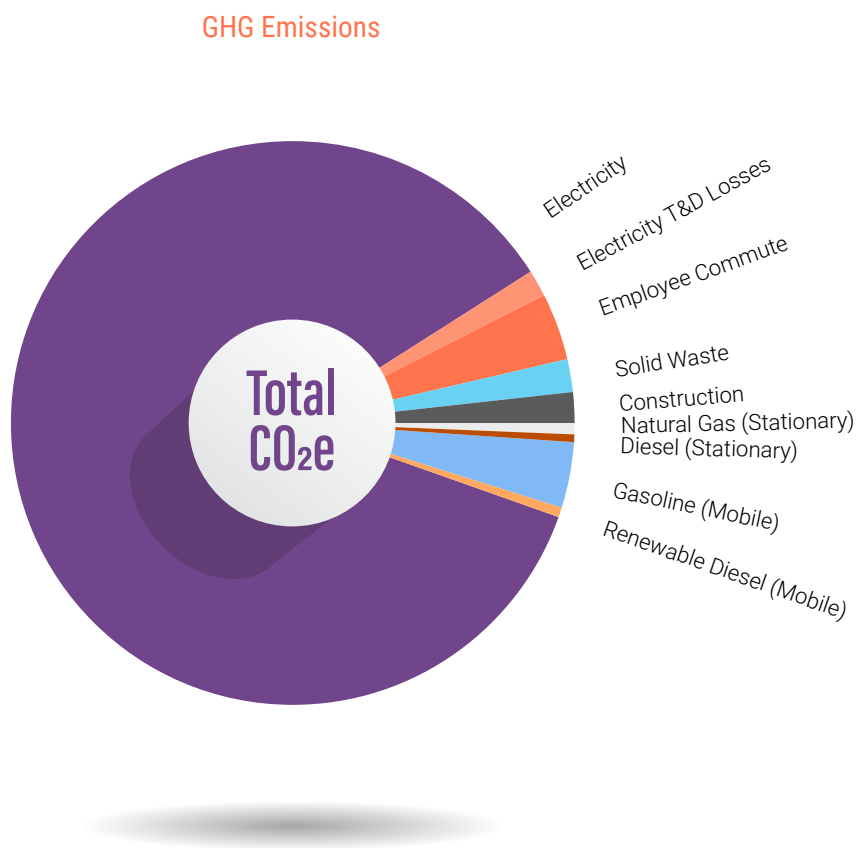
Members of Metroplitan's ZEV task force at the F.E. Weymouth Water Treatment Plant campus.



GHG Tracking Protocol

Metropolitan reports its GHG inventory to The Climate Registry and undergoes third party verification annually. This inventory includes both Scope 1 (vehicle fleet and other combustion emission sources) and Scope 2 (electricity consumption) emissions. Metropolitan uses CAPDash™, a web-based tool that allows the public to view progress toward our GHG emission reduction targets and demonstrate our commitment to transparency. Data is grouped into strategy-defined categories and presented in interactive charts and graphics. The Dashboard is available to view at https://cap.rinconconsultants.com/Metropolitan_Water_District.

Metropolitan's GHG emissions vary due to the amount of water pumped from the Colorado River to meet the demands of Southern California. Higher Colorado River pumping correlates to dry years with low State Water Project allocations. Metropolitan had a carbon budget of 9.89 million carbon dioxide equivalents or CO₂e, which are the measurement for the effect of GHGs on the climate. Staying within its carbon budget will help Metropolitan achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.



Local Watersheds

The programs in this section reflect Metropolitan's commitment to environmental stewardship. We actively participate on planning boards and organizations focused on source water quality protection.

Southern California Water Coalition

Metropolitan remains actively involved in the Southern California Water Coalition Stormwater Task Force, created in 2020 to provide a forum to discuss recycled water issues in the region.

Southern California Salinity Coalition

The Southern California Salinity Coalition promotes research and outreach activities to address the need to control or reduce salinity in drinking water, wastewater, groundwater, and recycled water. The Coalition coordinates regional salinity management strategies and programs, including research projects, student fellowships, and salinity summits. In addition to water agencies, local wastewater, groundwater, and watershed management agencies also participate in the SCSC. Metropolitan is a founding member and holds a position on SCSC's board. Recent SCSC accomplishments include:

- Completing a study documenting how Carlsbad's Bud Lewis Desalination Plant benefits potable water distribution system infrastructure in San Diego County, and a second study investigating ocean discharge requirements for potable reuse brines.
- Initiating a project to develop a professional "Communications Toolbox" that allows SCSC members to share information, engage with stakeholders, and foster public awareness of the impacts of salinity in water.
- Awarding a fellowship to a UC Riverside student researching a novel technique for accelerating PFAS degradation under UV irradiation in desalination brines.
- Formalizing the SCSC's agreement with the National Water Research Institute to better align with SCSC's long-term goals.





Multi-Species Habitat Protection and Preservation

Four multi-species reserves encompassing about 30,000 acres are the cornerstone of Metropolitan's environmental conservation and stewardship investments. These reserves mitigate the impacts of Metropolitan's infrastructure project construction, and provide watershed protection around reservoirs, and habitat protection for native species. The reserves also offer opportunities for education and research as well as trails for bicycling, hiking, and horseback riding.

Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve

This reserve comprises nearly 13,500 acres surrounding Diamond Valley Lake and Lake Skinner and includes the Dr. Roy E. Shipley Reserve located between the reservoirs. The reserve is home to at least eight types of natural habitat and many sensitive bird, animal, and plant species.

Metropolitan partners with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperatively manage the reserve. The reserve's management incorporates provisions to protect the Diamond Valley Lake and Lake Skinner watersheds, including the appropriate siting of public access points and vegetation management tools.

Management accomplishments for fiscal year 2024/25 include conducting native species planting on 10.5 acres, approximately 150 acres of grassland mowing to enhance habitat for the reserve's covered species and to reduce wildfire risk, approximately 15 acres of invasive plant species removal, various sensitive faunal and floral species surveys, and environmental education programs, including bird watching and interpreter-led hikes.

Upper Salt Creek Wetland Preserve

The Upper Salt Creek Wetland Preserve is a 40-acre parcel of land purchased as mitigation for the Eastside Pipeline. The preserve protects unique vernal pool habitats and rare plants in perpetuity from future development and prevents public access.

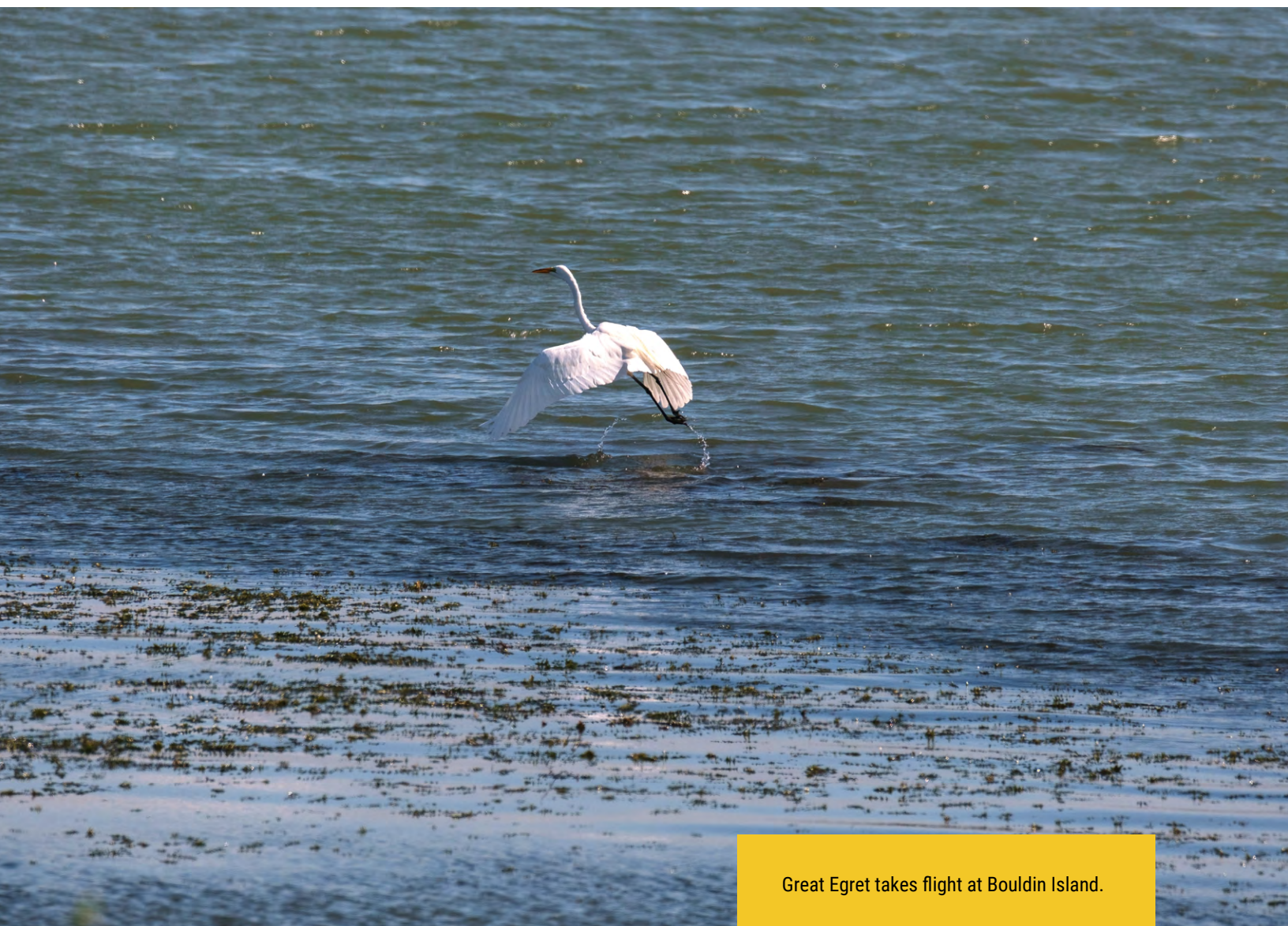
Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve

The nearly 10,000-acre Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve is home to several endangered, threatened, or rare animals and plants, including a species of fairy shrimp that exists nowhere else on Earth. The reserve, established as partial mitigation for the construction of Diamond Valley Lake, protects some of California's most unique chaparral, grassland, oak, and vernal pool habitats.

Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve

Metropolitan partners with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, and United States Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperatively manage the 5,100-acre reserve surrounding Lake Mathews. The reserve protects native habitat and sensitive plant and animal species, including the endangered Stephens' kangaroo rat and coastal California gnatcatcher. Habitat management tools and strategies on the reserve, such as grazing and prescribed burns, are critically evaluated for their potential effects on water quality in Lake Mathews. The lake is an important bird resting and feeding site, especially in winter, when ducks, double-crested cormorants, grebes, and eagles visit.

Management accomplishments for fiscal year 2024/25 include conducting prescribed burns on 369 acres to reduce wildfire risk, implementing goat grazing on approximately 2,000 acres to remove fuels and improve habitat, performing mowing operations on 51 acres to reduce weeds and thatch, and controlling non-native plant species on nearly 38 acres.



Great Egret takes flight at Bouldin Island.

Colorado River Watershed

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program

This program is a comprehensive restoration effort along the Colorado River, including Arizona, Nevada, and California. It targets restoring natural habitat communities once prevalent along the river corridor—riparian forests, marshes, and backwaters. The benefits of restoring natural communities go beyond providing habitat for native aquatic and terrestrial species. With Metropolitan's support as the largest non-federal contributor and its federal and state partners, the program continued to greatly advance the restoration of native habitats and natural processes along the lower Colorado River from the full pool of Lake Mead to the southern international boundary with Mexico. A total of 7,520 acres of land cover habitat has been established, and approximately 593,000 native fish have been stocked and reintroduced into the lower Colorado River through fiscal year 2024/25. With partial financial support from the State of California, the Program acquired an additional 1,971 acres of land and associated water rights in the Palo Verde Valley, California. This site is designated as a future conservation area and will be developed to include all required land cover types. Upon completion, it will serve as an expansion of the Palo Verde Ecological Reserve.

Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum

The Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Forum is an organization of the seven Colorado River Basin states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The Forum coordinates salinity control efforts among the states, collaborates with federal agencies on implementing the CRB Salinity Control Program, and works with Congress on CRB SCP authorization and funding. The Forum funds efforts to reduce salt loading to the Colorado River and provides information on salinity control.

Metropolitan holds the chair positions for both the Forum and the Forum's technical workgroup. The Forum's salinity control measures remove more than 1.33 million tons of salt from the Colorado River annually. This salt removal translates to a salinity reduction of over 100 milligrams per liter from the Colorado River's Lower Basin and Metropolitan's Colorado River Aqueduct supplies.

USBR operates the Paradox Valley Unit, the largest salinity control project in the CRB, which extracts concentrated brine from the Dolores River and injects it two miles underground through a deep injection well. Because the well may be nearing the end of useful service, in fiscal year 2024/25, the Forum continued to work with USBR to find a long-term alternative to the PVU deep-injection well. Despite these efforts, a long-term alternative remains undefined.

In December 2022, USBR completed a six-month test of the existing PVU deep-injection well, which had been mostly non-operational since March 2019 due to ongoing concern over a magnitude 4.5 seismic event in the Paradox Valley linked with the operation of the well. After the test, USBR spent two months analyzing seismic and well-head pressure data and determined it would be appropriate to continue operating the well at two-thirds capacity in an ongoing series of six-month tests until completion of seismic hazard and risk studies, which are still outstanding. Those studies will determine whether the injection well can safely operate more permanently until a long-term alternative is implemented. In fiscal year 2024/25, well-head pressure and seismic activity remained at levels that allowed the ongoing six-month tests to continue.

In fiscal year 2024/25, the Forum advanced a partial solution to the recent financial challenges of the SCP. Funding for the SCP includes federal money and state cost-share dollars as a percentage of federal funding. Over the past two decades, federal Environmental Quality Incentives Program funding for on-farm salinity control projects has increased substantially, increasing the required state cost share in absolute terms. Lower Basin state cost share revenues have declined since they derive from Hoover Dam power revenue, which has dropped due to declining reservoir levels. Together, these two factors have led to financial instability in the program. The Forum's partial solution to this funding challenge was to reduce the required state cost-share percentage on EQIP funding and the operation and maintenance costs associated with several of the earliest salinity control projects in the Basin. Members of Congress from the seven Basin States introduced federal legislation to this effect, the Salinity Control Fix Act, which was presented at a hearing of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries in May 2024. The Salinity Control Fix Act was signed into law by President Biden on December 23, 2024.

Finally, in fiscal year 2024/25, the Forum's technical workgroup continued work on the 2026 Review of Water Quality Standards for Salinity in the Colorado River System. This document is required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every three years to ensure that salinity standards continue to protect beneficial uses of the Colorado River.

Multi-State Salinity Coalition

The Multi-State Salinity Coalition is a consortium of water agencies nationwide promoting information exchange on salinity management and desalination issues. Metropolitan serves on the MSSC's Board of Directors as a founding member. MSSC promotes stakeholder collaboration through an annual summit covering various topics, including salinity and concentrate management, watershed sustainability, international projects, revenue stability, potable reuse, and innovative technologies. MSSC also awards scholarships for students working on topics related to salinity management issues. MSSC hosts meetings throughout the year for members to highlight salinity management case studies. Metropolitan sponsored MSSC's 2025 Conference, participated in discussion panels, and helped plan the event.

Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

Municipal Water Quality Investigations Program

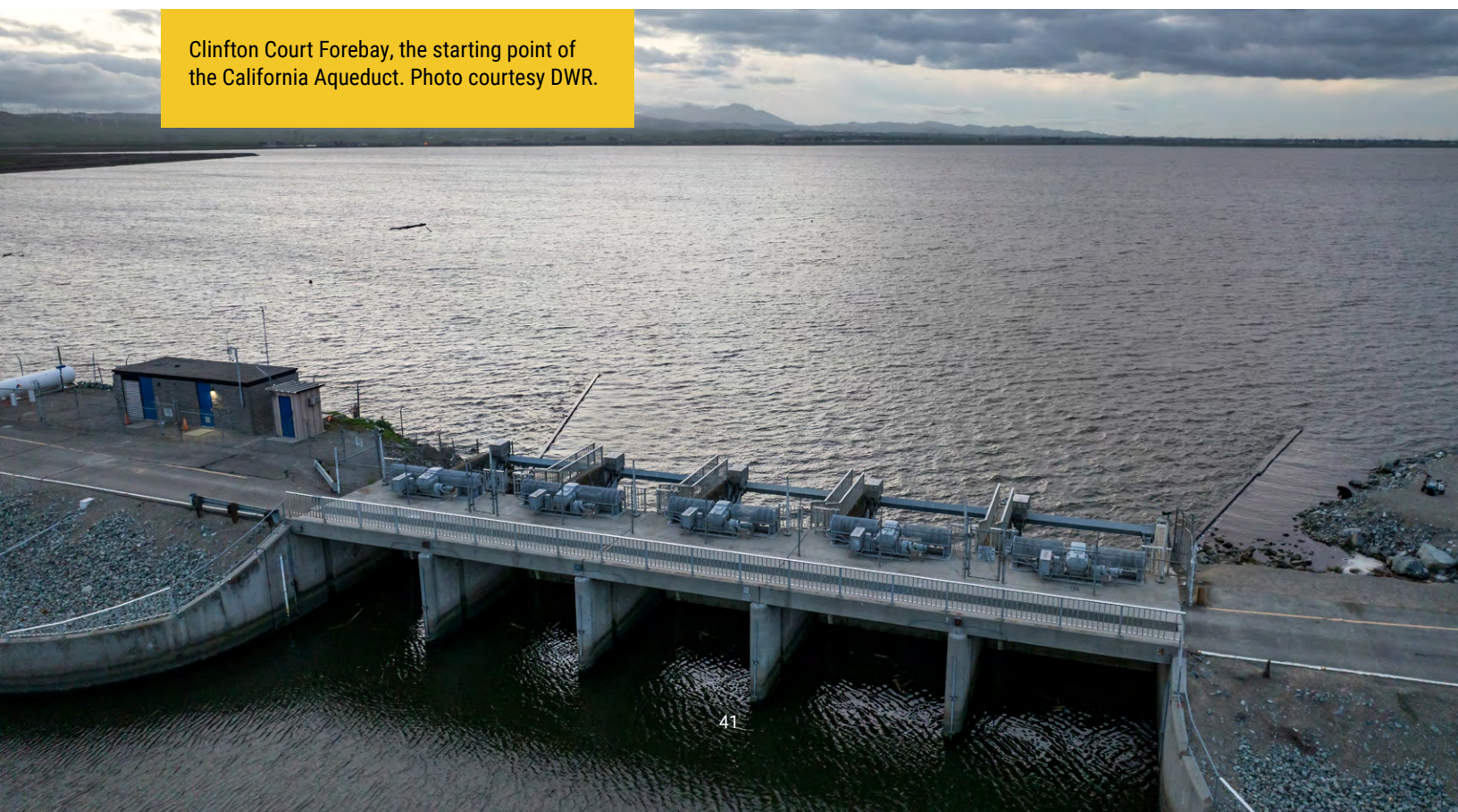
Metropolitan continues to support and participate in DWR's Municipal Water Quality Investigations Program, responsible for water quality monitoring and modeling studies in the Delta and the State Water Project facilities. In fiscal year 2024/25, this program conducted routine water quality monitoring for drinking water quality constituents throughout the Delta, operated five real-time water quality monitoring stations, completed 3-week water quality forecasts, and continued a monitoring study to evaluate the degradation of an herbicide used to treat aquatic weeds in Clifton Court Forebay and O'Neill Forebay.

In 2024, a new project was initiated to evaluate historical trends in taste and odor compounds at Clifton Court, Banks, and O'Neill Forebay. Samples are also being collected and evaluated using a molecular tool called shotgun sequencing to identify the specific organism causing high taste and odor compounds. With this information, it may be possible to develop a new quantitative polymerase chain reaction assay specific to the nuisance taxa in the impacted system.

Nuisance taxa are organisms that are not inherently harmful, but cause problems in specific contexts like water treatment, ecological management, or research. The organisms disrupt systems, out compete other species, or complicate processes and include algae, aquatic invertebrates like zebra mussels, cyanobacteria, weedy plants, and other invasive species.

In 2025, two new studies were initiated. The first study is an evaluation of long-term monthly monitoring data to identify manganese patterns at Clifton Court Inlet, Banks, Del Valle Check 7 in the South Bay Aqueduct, and O'Neill Forebay. The second study is called "Trends in Organic Carbon & Alkalinity Concentrations in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and State Water Project" and will: 1) evaluate seasonal and inter-annual statistics and trends in Delta organic carbon and alkalinity at key locations in the Delta and State Water Project and 2) demonstrate the efficacy of the Delta Simulation Model II in simulating dissolved organic carbon and alkalinity trends and source contributions in the south Delta. Work also continued on developing a water quality database for turn-ins to the California Aqueduct.

Clifton Court Forebay, the starting point of the California Aqueduct. Photo courtesy DWR.



Delta Water Quality Studies

Metropolitan continues to work with the State Water Contractors and other stakeholders to support studies and management actions that address the impact of nutrients, contaminants, and other water quality stressors impacting native species in the Delta watershed. Metropolitan funded studies investigating toxic contaminant effects on Delta smelt and juvenile salmon. Since 2021, Metropolitan has conducted studies with UC Davis to evaluate contaminant toxicity in the spring on larval Delta Smelt.

Reorienting to Recovery Salmon Project

The Reorienting to Recovery California Central Valley Salmon Recovery Project engaged entities involved with or interested in salmonid recovery in the Central Valley in an inclusive, collaborative, and structured process to: 1) identify a suite of implementable and impactful actions that will advance the recovery of the four distinct runs of California Central Valley salmon (spring-run, fall-run, late fall-run, and winter-run) throughout their life cycle, and 2) establish broad support and buy-in for these preferred actions by making trade-offs transparent and balancing participants' diverse values, perspectives, and priorities. The project is structured in three phases and has engaged more than 110 agencies across the landscape in a discussion around salmon recovery over the last four years.

Phase 1 (2021) engaged fisheries scientists to develop a salmon recovery framework consisting of 12 measurable objectives based on the viable salmon population parameters: abundance, productivity, spatial structure, and diversity. The group also identified performance measures, which are quantitative metrics that can be used to track the degree to which each of these objectives is being met, and they set targets that define the numerical values of desired conditions. This framework is documented in the Phase 1 report.

Phase 2 (2022) solicited input from state and federal agencies, non-governmental organizations, Tribal Governments, public water and agricultural agencies, and commercial and recreation fishing interests related to how and why they value salmonids and developed 24 socio-economic objectives that are being tracked in the process.

Phase 3 (2023/24) implemented a structured decision-making process to identify, model, and evaluate portfolios of management and restoration actions related to hydrology, hatchery, habitat, and harvest. The goal is to support salmon recovery while balancing potential associated socio-economic costs. A final report documenting recovery actions that received broad support from decision-makers was released in December 2024. This project was funded by the Delta Stewardship Council's Delta Science Program with additional support from the State Water Contractors, Metropolitan, Essex Partnership, National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Valley Water, Kearns & West, and the Water Foundation.

Delta Islands

Metropolitan's 2016 acquisition of four islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta allows us to help secure and guard the Delta's future State Water Project supplies. We use the strategically located islands – Webb Tract, a large portion of Holland Tract, Bouldin Island, and Bacon Island – to research and identify potential projects that support water system reliability, recovery of listed species, habitat restoration, science-related hypotheses, and promote sustainable agricultural practices. The preliminary results from a study by Metropolitan, state and federal agencies, UC Davis researchers and the U.S. Geological Survey suggest that pond culture could be a viable method to supplement Delta smelt and other fish species of concern. Further study is warranted to address limitations in pond culture that include prey densities, temperature stress, and post-release survival.



Metropolitan-owned Webb Tract plays host to inter-agency collaborative research projects regarding supply reliability and environmental health.

Metropolitan also completed Phases 1 and 2 of the Delta Islands Adaptation Project, funded by a CDFW Proposition 1 planning grant. The planning project includes evaluating opportunities for island-wide improvements, including subsidence reversal, sustainable agricultural practices, carbon sequestration, water quality improvements, and habitat restoration. For the continuation of Phase 2, Bouldin Island was selected as the initial focus of science-based planning for potential land uses (including conceptual landscape designs and identification of pilot projects and further scientific studies) on an entire island owned by Metropolitan that meets the Delta Plan co-equal goals using creative and innovative solutions for subsided Delta islands.

In 2023, Metropolitan was awarded a \$20.9 million grant from the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy to design and construct an approximately 2,200-acre wetland and up to 1,500 acres of rice fields on Webb Tract, located in Contra Costa County. The project's goals are to stop or reverse subsidence on the deeply subsided island, sequester carbon, generate income from long-term leases of the rice fields, and generate revenue from carbon sequestered in rice and wetlands. The income generated from the project is expected to fund its long-term maintenance and monitoring costs. The project will have the added benefit of providing a habitat for migratory birds and other species in the Delta.

Metropolitan's Wetland Restoration Project received concurrence from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife on Metropolitan's Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects, which streamlines the California Environmental Quality Act process through the Governor's Cutting the Green Tape Initiative. Metropolitan will submit applications to regulatory agencies and incorporate any regulatory requirements identified during the permit process before completing the final design package. Metropolitan expects wetland construction to begin in late Spring 2026. The grant also funds a subsidy of up to \$3000 per acre to a rice farming partner to help offset the cost of land levelling and installation of other infrastructure to support growing rice on the island. Metropolitan's Board approved a rice farming lease in August 2025. Rice will be phased in over three years with the first planting expected in the Spring of 2026.

Northern Sierra Upper Watershed Health Initiatives

In September 2024, Metropolitan's board authorized the General Manager to enter into agreements to provide funding for three pilot investigations associated with forest restoration programs in the northern Sierra. If these pilot investigations demonstrate that they significantly improve water supply resilience and water quality, they will open the door to working with other water agencies across the state to make these investments in watershed health on a much broader scale.

The forest restoration programs are being funded through a new finance model known as a Forest Resilience Bond, managed by the non-profit Blue Forest, which was founded to advance restoration projects through partnerships. The financing mechanism combines public and private funding to expedite restoration efforts that otherwise could take decades to advance.

- Plumas Community Protection I Forest Resilience Bond – The Plumas Community Protection project will aid in the protection of communities, water supply, water quality, and biodiversity in the Feather River watershed. Forest health projects implemented in watersheds upstream of the Bay-Delta ultimately help support long-term sustainability, protect key species and habitats, and contribute to climate change adaptation of the State Water Project.
- North Feather I Forest Resilience Bond – The North Feather project brings together a diverse coalition of organizations to finance the acceleration of forest restoration in an area of the Feather River Watershed heavily impacted by the 2021 Dixie Fire. This project aims to restore forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, protecting communities and creating a more resilient landscape and water supply.
- Upper Butte Creek I Forest Resilience Bond – The Upper Butte Creek project will offer a unique opportunity to investigate the benefits of improving the health of a watershed on vulnerable fish species. Butte Creek supports the largest population of naturally spawning wild spring run chinook salmon and may be the only remaining naturally spawning population in the region, given recent wildfires.



Aquatic life in Butte Creek is the subject of studies to help improve vulnerable fish species and their watershed. Photo courtesy DWR.

Public Hearing Notice

To coincide with the report preparation, the MWD Act requires Metropolitan to “hold an annual public hearing during which the district shall review its urban water management plan for adequacy in achieving an increased emphasis on cost-effective conservation, recycling, and groundwater recharge and invite knowledgeable persons from the fields of water conservation and sustainability to the hearing.” The MWD Act also provides that Metropolitan “shall consider factors of availability, water quality, regional self-sufficiency, benefits for species and environment, the totality of life-cycle costs, including avoided costs, and short- and long-term employment and economic benefits.”

While Metropolitan's Urban Water Management Plan is prepared and updated every five years per state requirements, Metropolitan hosts an annual hearing to share progress on fiscal year UWMP objectives and to receive public comments. Metropolitan's 2025 UWMP is currently under development and is scheduled for adoption by June 2026 and submission to the state by the July 1, 2026 deadline.



Glossary of Terms

BESS Battery Energy Storage Systems

CAP Climate Action Plan

CAMP4W Climate Adaptation Master Plan for for Water

CDFW California Department of Fish and Wildlife

CEC Constituent of Emerging Concern

CHECK 13 O'Neill Forebay

CII Commercial, Industrial and Institutional

CO₂e Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

CRA Colorado River Aqueduct

CRB Colorado River Basin

Delta RMP Delta Regional Monitoring Program

DPEIR Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

DVL Diamond Valley Lake

DWR Department of Water Resources

DV7 Del Valle Check 7

EPA Environmental Protection Agency

EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EWCP Emergency Water Conservation Program

FEIS Final Environmental Impact Statement

FSA Future Supply Actions Funding Program

GHG Greenhouse Gas

GIS Geographic Information System

GPCD Gallons Per Capita Per Day

ICP Innovative Conservation Program

IRP Integrated Water Resources Plan

LRP Local Resources Program

MSSC Multi-State Salinity Coalition

MWQIP Municipal Water Quality Investigation Program

NWRI National Water Research Institute

PVU Paradox Valley Unit

RFI/SOO Request for Information and a Statement of Objectives

Sanitation Districts Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts

SBA South Bay Aqueduct

SCP Salinity Control Program

SCSC Southern California Salinity Coalition

SNWA Southern Nevada Water Authority

SoCalGas Southern California Gas Company

STEAM Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math

SWP State Water Project

TCR The Climate Registry

USBR United States Bureau of Reclamation

UWMP Urban Water Management Plan

WSIP Water Savings Incentive Program

ZEV Zero Emission Vehicle



Metropolitan is a voluntary cooperative of 26 member agencies with a 38-member board of directors. Metropolitan board and committee meetings are open to the public and broadcast live through mwdh2o.com

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About Metropolitan

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative of 26 member agencies – cities, municipal water districts, and one county water authority – that directly or indirectly serve nearly 19 million people in six counties. Metropolitan imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies and helps its members develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage, and other resource management programs.

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