

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Agenda

The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Board of Directors Workshop on Ethics, Organization, and Personnel - Final

June 27, 2023

8:30 AM

Tuesday, June 27, 2023
Meeting Schedule

08:30 a.m. BOD Wksp - EOP
11:00 a.m. BOD Wksp -
LTRPPBM
01:15 p.m. Break
01:45 p.m. Exec
03:45 p.m. PWSCRC
03:45 p.m. Audits

Agendas, live streaming, meeting schedules, and other board materials are available here: <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>. A listen only phone line is available at 1-877-853-5257; enter meeting ID: 862 4397 5848. Members of the public may present their comments to the Board or a Committee on matters within their jurisdiction as listed on the agenda via in-person or teleconference. To participate via teleconference (833) 548-0276 and enter meeting ID: 815 2066 4276 or click <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81520664276?pwd=a1RTQWh6V3h3ckFhNmMdsUWpKR1c2Zz09>

MWD Headquarters Building • 700 N. Alameda Street • Los Angeles, CA 90012

Teleconference Locations:

3008 W. 82nd Place • Inglewood, CA 90305

2680 W. Segerstrom Avenue Unit I, • Santa Ana CA 92704

13 Pumphouse Road • Garden Valley, ID 83622

504 Pier Avenue • Santa Monica, CA 90405

8700 Beverly Boulevard, Ste M313 • Los Angeles, CA 90048

1370 North Brea Boulevard, Ste 235 • Fullerton, CA 92835

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Determination of a Quorum
4. Opportunity for members of the public to address the Board limited to the items listed on agenda. (As required by Gov. Code §54954.3(a))
5. WORKSHOP ITEMS

- a. Framework for Ethical Decision Making

[21-2445](#)

Attachments: [06272023 BOD Workshop EOP 5a Bio for Brian Green](#)
[06272023 BOD Workshop EOP 5a Presentation](#)
[06272023 BOD Workshop EOP 5a Use Case](#)

6. FOLLOW-UP ITEMS

NONE

7. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

8. ADJOURNMENT

NOTE: Each agenda item with a committee designation will be considered and a recommendation may be made by one or more committees prior to consideration and final action by the full Board of Directors. The committee designation appears in parenthesis at the end of the description of the agenda item, e.g. (EOT). Board agendas may be obtained on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Writings relating to open session agenda items distributed to Directors less than 72 hours prior to a regular meeting are available for public inspection at Metropolitan's Headquarters Building and on Metropolitan's Web site <https://mwdh2o.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

Requests for a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, in order to attend or participate in a meeting should be made to the Board Executive Secretary in advance of the meeting to ensure availability of the requested service or accommodation.

Brian Patrick Green

Director of Technology Ethics
Markkula Center for Applied Ethics
Santa Clara University



Green's work focuses on practical and theoretical issues in the ethics of technology, including AI and ethics, the operationalization of technology ethics in corporations, the ethics of space exploration and use, the interface of technology ethics and the environment, the ethics of technological manipulation of humans, the ethics of mitigation of and adaptation towards risky emerging technologies (including ones with catastrophic risk potential), and various aspects of the impact of technology and engineering on human life and society, including the relationship of technology and religion.

Green is author of the book [Space Ethics](#) (2021), is co-author of the book *Ethics in an Age of Disruptive Technologies: An Operational Roadmap (The ITEC Handbook)* (forthcoming, 2023), and co-author of the [Ethics in Technology Practice](#) (2018) resources. He is co-editor of the book [Religious Transhumanism and Its Critics](#) (2022) and co-editor of a [special issue of the Journal of Moral Theology](#) on AI and moral theology (2022). A list of his academic writings can be found on his [Google Scholar page](#).

Green works with organizations, ranging from startups to the largest corporations, helping them to think about how to create more ethical technology products. He is co-chair of the Responsible Use of Technology group at the World Economic Forum's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in San Francisco, has worked with the Partnership on Artificial Intelligence to Benefit People and Society (PAI), and also works with the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education on issues related to AI ethics.

Green teaches AI ethics in Santa Clara University's Graduate School of Engineering and supervises the Markkula Center's Environmental Ethics Fellowship program and individual Hackworth Ethics Fellows. He has doctoral and master's degrees in ethics and social theory from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. His undergraduate degree is in genetics from the University of California, Davis. Between college and graduate school, Green served for two years in the Jesuit Volunteers International teaching high school in the Marshall Islands.

Green has been published, interviewed, or mentioned in media including *America*, *Ars Technica*, *The Atlantic*, *Axios*, *BigThink*, *CNN.com*, *The Daily Beast*, *Daily Nous*, *EuroNews*, *Excelsior TV* (Spanish), *FiveThirtyEight*, *Forbes.com*, *Fortune.com*, *KCBS radio*, *NPR*, *Nature*, *NBC Bay Area*, *Pacific Standard Magazine*, *Reason*, *Reforma* (Spanish), *The San Francisco Examiner*, *The San Jose Mercury News*, *SF Weekly*, *Smithsonian.com*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *WIRED Magazine*, *WNYC*, and the World Economic Forum website.



Markkula Center
for Applied Ethics
at Santa Clara University

A Framework for Ethical Decision Making

Brian Patrick Green, Ph.D.

Director of Technology Ethics Markkula
Center for Applied Ethics Santa Clara
University

Ethics, Organization and Personnel Committee

June 27, 2023

Item 5a



The Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

Founded in 1986. Now 21 Staff and 75 faculty affiliates. The most comprehensive university-based applied ethics center in the world.

Bioethics, Business Ethics, Campus Ethics, Environmental Ethics, Government Ethics, Internet Ethics, Journalism & Media Ethics, Leadership Ethics, Social Sector Ethics, Technology Ethics

Work with: tech companies of all sizes, consultant firms, the World Economic Forum, the Partnership on AI, the Vatican, governments, etc.



Why Ethics?

Ethics is about seeking the good together, not just avoiding bad

Ethics is not just rules, not just compliance, not just laws, not just culture, not just opinion

Ethics is about how to make good choices, become better decision-makers, and create better organizations

Ethics is a way to talk about moral values and communicate on issues of moral significance

Good ethical process will help eliminate blind spots, facilitate communication, and lead to better solutions

Ethics helps us to understand each other and balance and protect what is important to all of us



RECOGNIZE AN ETHICAL ISSUE



- Could this decision or situation be damaging to someone or to some group, or unevenly beneficial to people?
- Does this decision involve a choice between a good and bad alternative, or perhaps between two “goods” or between two “bads?”
- Is this issue about more than solely what is legal or what is most efficient? If so, how?



GET THE FACTS



- What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are not known? Can I learn more about the situation? Do I know enough to make a decision?
- What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Are some concerns of some of those individuals or groups more important? Why?
- What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? Have I identified creative options?



EVALUATE THROUGH ETHICAL LENSES



- **Rights:** Which option best respects the rights of all who have a stake?
- **Justice:** Which option treats people fairly, giving them each what they are due?
- **Utilitarian:** Which option will produce the most good and the least harm for as many stakeholders as possible?
- **Common Good:** Which option best serves the community as a whole, not just some members?
- **Virtue:** Which option leads me to act as the sort of person I want to be?
- **Care Ethics:** Which option appropriately takes into account the relationships, concerns, and feelings of all stakeholders?



MAKE A DECISION AND TEST IT



- After an evaluation using all of these lenses, which option best addresses the situation?
- If I told someone I respect (or a public audience) which option I have chosen, what would they say?
- How can my decision be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all stakeholders?



ACT & REFLECT ON THE OUTCOME



- How did my decision turn out, and what have I learned from this specific situation?
- What, if any, follow-up actions should I take?



REPEAT

Ethics, Organization and Personnel Committee

06/27/2023

Item 5a Slide 4





Identify the Ethical Issue

Could this decision or situation be damaging to someone or to some group, or unevenly beneficial to people?

Does this decision involve a choice between a good and bad alternative, or perhaps between two “goods” or between two “bads?”

Is this issue about more than solely what is legal or what is most efficient? If so, how?



Get the Facts

What are the relevant facts of the case? What facts are not known? Can I learn more about the situation? Do I know enough to make a decision?

What individuals and groups have an important stake in the outcome? Are the concerns of some of those individuals or groups more important? Why?

What are the options for acting? Have all the relevant persons and groups been consulted? Have I identified creative options?



Evaluate Alternative Actions

Which option best respects the rights of all who have a stake?

Which option treats people fairly, giving them each what they are due?

Which option will produce the most good and the least harm for as many stakeholders as possible?

Which option best serves the community as a whole, not just some members?

Which option leads me to act as the sort of person I want to be?

Which option appropriately takes into account the relationships, concerns, and feelings of all stakeholders?



Choose an Option and Test It



After an evaluation using all of these lenses, which option best addresses the situation?



If I told someone I respect (or a public audience) which option I have chosen, what would they say?



How can my decision be implemented with the greatest care and attention to the concerns of all stakeholders?



Implement Your Decision and Reflect on the Outcome

How did my decision turn out, and what have I learned from this specific situation?

What, if any, follow-up actions should I take?



The Rights Lens

Some suggest that the ethical action is the one that best protects and respects the moral rights of those affected. This approach starts from the belief that humans have a dignity based on their human nature per se or on their ability to choose freely what they do with their lives. On the basis of such dignity, they have a right to be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means to other ends. The list of moral rights – including the rights to make one's own choices about what kind of life to lead, to be told the truth, not to be injured, to a degree of privacy, and so on – is widely debated; some argue that non-humans have rights, too. Rights are also often understood as implying duties – in particular, the duty to respect others' rights and dignity.





The Justice Lens

Justice is the idea that each person should be given their due, and what people are due is often interpreted as fair or equal treatment. Equal treatment implies that people should be treated as equals according to some defensible standard such as merit or need, but not necessarily that everyone should be treated in the exact same way in every respect. There are different types of justice that address what people are due in various contexts. These include social justice (structuring the basic institutions of society), distributive justice (distributing benefits and burdens); corrective justice (repairing past injustices), retributive justice (determining how wrongdoers should be treated), and restorative or transformational justice (restoring relationships or transforming social structures as an alternative to criminal punishment).





The Utilitarian Lens

Some ethicists begin by asking, “How will this action impact everyone affected?” – emphasizing the consequences of our actions. Utilitarianism, a results-based approach, says that the ethical action is the one that produces the greatest balance of good over harm for as many stakeholders as possible. It requires an accurate determination of the likelihood of a particular result and its impact. For example, the ethical corporate action, then, is the one that produces the greatest good and does the least harm for all who are affected – customers, employees, shareholders, the community, and the environment. Individual cost/benefit analysis is another consequentialist approach.





The Common Good Lens

According to the Common Good approach, life in community is a good in itself and our actions should contribute to that life. This approach suggests that the interlocking relationships of society are the basis of ethical reasoning and that respect and compassion for all others – especially the vulnerable – are requirements of such reasoning. This approach also calls attention to the common conditions that are important to the welfare of everyone – such as clean air and water, a system of laws, effective police and fire departments, health care, a public educational system, or even public recreational areas. Unlike the utilitarian lens, which sums up and aggregates goods for every individual, the common good lens highlights mutual concern for the shared interests of all members of a community.





The Virtue Lens

An ancient approach to ethics argues that ethical actions ought to be consistent with certain ideal virtues that provide for the full development of our humanity. These virtues are dispositions and habits that enable us to act according to the highest potential of our character and on behalf of values like truth and beauty. Honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, tolerance, love, fidelity, integrity, fairness, self-control, and prudence are all examples of virtues. Virtue ethics asks of any action, “What kind of person will I become if I do this?” or “Is this action consistent with my acting at my best?”





The Care Ethics Lens

Care Ethics is rooted in relationships and in the need to listen and respond to individuals in their specific circumstances, rather than merely following rules or calculating utility. It privileges the flourishing of embodied individuals in their relationships and values interdependence, not just independence. It relies on empathy to gain a deep appreciation of the interest, feelings, and viewpoints of each stakeholder, employing care, kindness, compassion, generosity, and a concern for others to resolve ethical conflicts. Care ethics holds that options for resolution must account for the feelings, concerns, and relationships of all stakeholders. Focusing on connecting intimate interpersonal duties to societal duties, an ethics of care would counsel, for example, an expansion of public health policy to include food security, transportation access, fair wages, housing support, and environmental protection alongside physical health.





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The Ethics Toolkit

EXPANDING THE ETHICAL CIRCLE

Ensuring that the legitimate moral interests of all stakeholders have been taken into account, and that impacted communities have been consulted.

ETHICAL PRE-MORTEM

Exercising the skill of identifying how ethical failure of a project might happen and understanding the preventable causes so they can be mitigated.

CASE-BASED ANALYSIS

Reviewing existing use cases with similar ethical dilemmas, to transfer knowledge and skill across ethical situations.

REMEMBERING ETHICAL BENEFITS

Keeping the ethical benefits at the center of the project, framing clearly its positive outcomes.

THINKING ABOUT THE TERRIBLE PEOPLE

Identifying those groups or individuals who may abuse or misuse the technology and setting mitigation plans.

ETHICAL RISK SWEEPING

Ethical risks are choices that may cause harm to persons or other entities with moral status or spark acute moral controversy. Failing to anticipate such risks can constitute ethical negligence. Ethical risk sweeping is an essential tool for good design and engineering practice.

CLOSING THE LOOP

Creating channels to invite ethically salient feedback, integrating with post-project data gathering and user support, and developing procedures for ethical iteration.

ETHICAL POST-MORTEM

Ensuring that the legitimate moral interests of all stakeholders have been taken into account, and that impacted communities have been consulted.



These Resources Are All Free on Our Website

[The Framework for Ethical Decision Making: https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/](https://www.scu.edu/ethics/ethics-resources/ethical-decision-making/a-framework-for-ethical-decision-making/)

Ethics Toolkit (part of the Ethics in Technology Practice resources):
<https://www.scu.edu/ethics-in-technology-practice/ethical-toolkit/>



Thank you!

Questions?

Use Case

Scenario: Metropolitan is considering a proposal to purchase land outside of its service area. The land is desirable because water rights are attached to the purchase, and access to water rights improves water supply reliability. This could support Metropolitan's core mission.

On the other hand, if a public agency purchases this land, tax will no longer be collected which could impact revenue to the local community. Reduction in pumping rights would be to the detriment of the local community as well.

Further, if the use of the land changes after the purchase, there may be impacts to the local economy or environment. For example, if the land is no longer used for farming, this could have an impact on available jobs (labor impact). Some believe the proposal should include measures to offset social or economic effects, such as support for new commercial developments or jobs programs.