



## Office of Sustainability, Resilience and Innovation

### • Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Group Monthly Activities

#### Summary

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This report provides a summary of Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation (SRI) activities for the month of March 2026.

#### Purpose

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Informational

#### Activities in Support of the GM Business Plan

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#### **Goal: Execute the Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) Implementation Strategy to Integrate Climate Adaptation District-wide**

Since the approval of the CAMP4W Five-Year Implementation Strategy, staff has focused on the use and refinement of the CAMP4W Decision-Making Framework and Assessment Form. Staff is applying lessons learned and recommending low-regret near-term actions based on identified risks. Recommendations are reflected in ongoing planning and development as well as in the proposed budget.

Identified Risks	Low-Regret Actions
Aging and vulnerable infrastructure	<b>Invest in operational resilience through increasing capital improvement program investments and supporting robust asset management:</b> Although traditional Repair and Refurbishment projects are not evaluated using the CAMP4W framework, portfolio assessments make clear that future water supply challenges will increase if our baseline of service and reliability deteriorates. Maintaining existing infrastructure and facilities is critical to build long-term resilience.
Accelerating and unpredictable climate impacts (chronic and acute)	<b>Continue planning and development of new supply and storage projects:</b> Planning and design of projects less vulnerable to drought and seismic disruption (e.g., Pure Water Southern California) and with the capacity to manage extreme precipitation (e.g., new south of delta storage) helps mitigate these risks and prepare Metropolitan for future decision making. Effort now is important to ensure these options exist as conditions change.
Regulatory uncertainty impacting imported water supplies	<b>Increase imported supply resilience:</b> Investments in watershed restoration pilots, natural and built infrastructure improvements, and new partnerships in the Feather River, Bay-Delta, and Colorado Basin reduce risks and facilitate resilience and meaningful co-benefits in the near term.

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Identified Risks	Low-Regret Actions
Seismic System flexibility and recoverability	<b>Enhance flex supply opportunities:</b> Tools (e.g., Member Agency Exchange Framework), and partnerships (e.g., water transfers, unmanaged surplus) that can quickly activate water savings, sales and/or additional supplies are critical for flexibility and adaptation to extreme events and can also provide meaningful co-benefits to partners and member agencies.

### Goal: Decide on Sites Reservoir and Protect Bay-Delta Interests

#### (1) Implement risk reduction strategies to protect Delta assets and minimize supply disruption

For the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project, Environmental Planning staff began preparation of the preconstruction submittals in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Restoration Management Permit (RMP), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sacramento District Regional General Permit (RGP) 16, Regional Water Quality Control Board Statewide Restoration General Order, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Restoration Programmatic Biological Opinion. Environmental Planning staff also completed the environmental section of the construction specifications (Section 01065), ensuring that all regulatory permit measures and conditions were integrated into the specifications.

For the Delta Conveyance Project, Environmental Planning staff continued representing Public Water Agencies in a coordinator role, working with the Department of Water Resources on regulatory permitting efforts.

### Goal: Complete Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Planning for Board to Consider Pure Water Southern California

#### (1) Complete EIR analysis and public process

Following certification of the Final EIR by the Board of Directors and filing of the Notice of Determination for the Pure Water Southern California Program in February, Environmental Planning staff continued to support the ongoing engineering design efforts. Environmental Planning staff, Ana Reyes and Amy Mila de la Roca, were recognized as Water Champions on Metropolitan’s social media for their leadership and dedication to Pure Water during the preparation of the EIR, a complex document that is 47,000 pages in length, including the technical appendices.

## Additional SRI Activities

### Climate Action Plan

On March 2, staff from SRI and the Engineering Services Group (ESG) joined the Water Utility Climate Alliance’s (WUCA’s) Spring Virtual Convening which brought together WUCA staff and utility colleagues from the 12 largest water providers in the US for a focused discussion to identify and understand the processes and challenges for design teams and capital program staff to adopt and implement climate-resilient design guidance within their organizations. WUCA is developing climate-resilient design guidance strategies across a range of project types to align climate resilience considerations with existing engineering practices that utilities can integrate directly into their planning and design processes. The guidance is intended to inform updates to engineering design standards manuals and support on-the-ground implementation by identifying leading practices in climate-resilient design for different infrastructure and capital project types.

On March 3, staff from across the district convened for the Climate Action Plan (CAP) Implementation Working Group meeting to discuss implementation updates and provide key presentations. Presentations included: Soil Health and Soil Carbon Research on Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Lands in the Palo Verde Valley; Greenhouse Gas (GHG) monitoring and Carbon Crediting in the Delta; the SPARKe Strategic Energy Management Program at Diemer Water Treatment Plant; Overview of the CAP and the CAP Annual Progress

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Report 2025 Update; and the GHG emissions inventory process for 2024. Staff welcomed General Manager Shivaji Deshmukh who joined the meeting.

On March 23, staff participated in the Council for Watershed Health's Annual Symposium: ReDesigning LA Together, focused on multi-benefit projects and partnerships. The Chief SRI Officer provided welcoming and closing remarks at the event as the President of the Council for Watershed Health Board of Directors.

On March 24, Sustainability and Resilience Section staff joined plant staff at the Weymouth treatment plant for an energy audit site visit by Cascade Energy for the SPARKe Energy Audit program.

On March 25, Sustainability and Resilience Section staff joined plant staff at the Skinner treatment plant for an energy audit site visit by Cascade Energy for the SPARKe Energy Audit program.

### **Innovation, Pilots, and Emerging Technologies**

In March, the Innovation Team advanced district-wide coordination on technology priorities and strengthened Metropolitan's engagement with global and peer utility partners.

On March 3, the Innovation Team hosted a Technology Needs Assessment session for management to prioritize Metropolitan's technology needs across the organization. The session provided a structured forum to surface cross-departmental challenges, identify near- and mid-term capability gaps, and align on strategic areas of interest. The discussion built on earlier preparatory work and will inform future technology scouting, pilot development, and engagement with peer utilities through Metropolitan's Technology Advisory Group (TAG) network. The outcomes of the assessment will be synthesized to guide coordinated innovation efforts and ensure resources are directed toward the highest-value opportunities.

On March 12, Metropolitan staff hosted Booky Oren, former Chairman of Mekorot, Israel's national water company, for a peer exchange on global utility management best practices. The discussion focused on long-term water reliability strategies, digital transformation, operational efficiency, and governance approaches that support resilience in highly constrained water environments. The session provided staff with an international perspective and practical insights relevant to Metropolitan's ongoing efforts to modernize processes and strengthen system resilience.

On March 17-18, the Innovation Team convened the Spring TAG meeting with peer utilities. The session focused on scouting and evaluating emerging technologies aligned with the needs identified through the Technology Needs Assessment. Staff engaged with peer agencies and technology providers to assess readiness, implementation considerations, and potential pilot opportunities. The meeting reinforced Metropolitan's role within the TAG network and supported proactive identification of solutions to operational and strategic challenges.

### **Zero-Emission Vehicle Transition**

In March, the Sustainability and Resilience Section continued to collaborate with the Fleet Services Unit, ESG, and regulatory staff for the Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) transition. Metropolitan is awaiting proposed revisions to the California Air Resources Board (CARB)'s Advanced Clean Fleets Regulation which would delay the current mandate that 100 percent of medium and heavy-duty (those with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating greater than 8,500 pounds) new vehicle purchases be battery electric. Sustainability and Resilience staff continue to explore potential ZEV grants and incentives, including application to the South Coast Air Quality's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Resiliency Program. This program provides a cost-sharing grant for the installation of a solar canopy for off-grid vehicle charging at a desert location.

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### Environmental Planning Services

Staff continued preparation of supplemental California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation for the Pressured Concrete Cylinder Pipe Rehabilitation Sepulveda Feeder Reach 9 Project, as well as continued to support the progressive design-build process for the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project and the Lake Mathews New Pressure Control Structure and Electrical Upgrades Project. For the Inland Feeder/Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project, staff continued coordination with the USFWS and CDFW on the Incidental Take Permits (ITP) under the federal and state endangered species acts; staff is coordinating with the regulatory agencies on the mitigation strategy. For the Copper Basin Discharge Valve Replacement and Access Road Improvements Project, coordination between Environmental Planning staff and CDFW continues for the ITP application pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 2081(b) and SB 147 for potential incidental take of the Fully Protected Species, desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*); staff is coordinating with the agency on appropriate mitigation. For the Casa Loma Siphon No 1 and San Jacinto Pipeline Protection project, staff prepared the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), Responses to Comments, and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the project; the MND is scheduled to go to the Board of Directors for adoption in April. Environmental monitoring of construction activities continued for the La Verne Shops Upgrades Project and the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation Project, and staff continued oversight and coordination of revegetation efforts associated with temporary impacts from the construction of the 2024 Allen-McColloch Pipeline Urgent Relining Project within the Orange County Natural Community Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan Reserve.

Critical operations and maintenance activities were supported by the Environmental Planning Section. Staff provided CEQA and regulatory clearances and conducted preconstruction biological and nesting bird surveys for activities throughout the service area. Staff conducted monitoring close-out activities for the annual Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) shutdown that was held in February. Staff provided full-time monitoring and environmental support for the shutdown, including conducting desert tortoise and environmental awareness trainings for staff to ensure the avoidance of impacts to desert tortoise and other sensitive desert resources; providing training on environmental field hazards, such as rattlesnakes, to ensure work crew safety; providing environmental clearance and support to canal and tunnel cleaning crews along the CRA; relocating wildlife found at Metropolitan infrastructure; conducting pre-activity site assessments for shutdown activities, including water releases and vegetation removal; and clearing patrol roads prior to activities. The monitoring, training, and oversight provided by Environmental Planning staff ensured the avoidance of impacts to desert tortoise and other species during the shutdown (see photos). Finally, Environmental Planning managers and staff provided an environmental awareness and coordination training for Landscape Maintenance managers and staff on March 3 at La Verne to educate staff on environmental regulations and strengthen communication and coordination efforts.

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*Desert lily (Hesperocallis undulata) along CRA*      *Desert tortoise (Gopherus agassizii) on MWD access road*



*Mojave sand-verbena (Abronia pogonantha) along CRA*

Staff provided subject matter expert review of Assembly Bill (AB) 1881 (Ramos): California Indian Freedom Act of 2026; AB 2132 (Macedo): CEQA: exemption: groundwater recharge project; AB 2218 (Kalra): Water policy: California Native American tribes; and AB 2630 (Bennett): Water diversion and use: adoption of regulations; and Senate Bill (SB) 899 (Grove): Fire prevention: Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force: wildfire smoke; SB 1085 (Durazo): Water supply planning: CEQA determination; and SB 1326 (Wahab): CEQA: tribal cultural resources: mitigation measures. In addition, staff reviewed and analyzed CEQA notices for 24 external projects to determine the potential impacts on Metropolitan and protect Metropolitan's right-of-way and facilities; comment letters were prepared and submitted for projects that had the potential for impacts. Staff finished review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Post-2026 Operational Guidelines and Strategies for Lake Mead and Lake Powell, which was released for public review by the Bureau of Reclamation on January 9. Environmental Planning staff reviewed and prepared comments on the Draft EIS; coordinated review and consolidated comments from internal reviewers; and prepared and submitted a comment letter on the Draft

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EIS on the March 2 comment deadline. In addition, staff reviewed and analyzed CEQA notices for ten other external projects to determine the potential impacts on Metropolitan and protect Metropolitan's right-of-way and facilities; comment letters were prepared and submitted for projects that had the potential for impacts. The Environmental Planning Section continued oversight of Reserve management activities to protect valuable natural resources and meet Metropolitan's mitigation obligations. Security patrols and fence repairs were conducted throughout the Lake Mathews Multiple Species Reserve and the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve (MSR) to prevent trespassing, vandalism, poaching, and theft and to protect the reserves' natural and cultural resources, facilities, and equipment. Specific activities at the Lake Mathews Reserve included the application of herbicide to invasive species to prevent seed development and limit the germination of these species. Activities at the MSR included coordinating with researchers on the Reserve, including the Riverside County Resource Conservation Agency, to conduct surveys for Quino checkerspot butterfly, white-tailed kite, and vernal pools; applying herbicide to invasive plants throughout the Reserve; and continuing work in the Tualota Creek restoration area with planting of mulefat and willows. The Judy Abdo Wildflower Trail opened in February and remained open through the month of March, with a Reserve environmental education interpreter present on Saturdays to guide and educate visitors. The Alamos Schoolhouse environmental education center was open to visitors on Saturdays, with 109 visitors reported for the month.



*Quino checkerspot butterfly on the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve and visitors on the Judy Abdo Wildflower Trail*

### Land Management

A lease amendment was executed to extend the tenancy on Bouldin Island East for an additional one-year period. Staff is working toward issuing a Request for Proposal in the summer of 2026 for rice farming on the entire Bouldin Island.

### Other

On March 9, 2026, the Chief Officer of Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation, and staff from the Sustainability and Resilience Section and the Fleet Services Unit, attended a roundtable discussion conducted by the Office of Mayor Karen Bass, the Climate Leadership Group (C40), the California Alliance for Sustainability Executives, and the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), to discuss updates to the City of Los Angeles' Sustainability Plan. Attendees were able to preview the Plan prior to its release in May 2026. At the meeting, Metropolitan, along with members from City of Los Angeles, public agencies (Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Los Angeles County Department of General Services and others), and private industry (NBC Universal, Netflix, and others), shared comments on the upcoming plan that centers on four goals:

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creating a clean, connected, and healthy city; building climate-resilient neighborhoods; growing a thriving green economy with opportunity for all; and positioning Los Angeles as a global model for bold and equitable climate leadership. Participants discussed how current and planned sustainability projects and initiatives could support the city's goals.