



Subcommittee on Public Affairs Engagement

Review of Metropolitan's Solar Cup Program

Item 3b

May 23, 2023

Program Overview

Solar Cup

Overview

- Educational objectives
- Participation
- Resources
- Outcomes
- Current status
- Looking forward



Educational Objectives

Engaging High School Students

Water and Career Pathways

- Water conservation and stewardship
- Alternative energy sources
- Integrate concepts of STEAM
 - Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math



Participation

Member Agencies and Schools

Participation

- Two decades of success
 - 2002-2019 in person / 2020-2022 online
 - 600 teams representing 12,000 students, from all six counties of Met's service area
- 2019 in person
 - 40 teams /47 high schools
 - 18 Member Agencies
 - 11 Retail Agencies





2019 schools

Planning and Implementation

Year-long Program

Boat design and
construction,
technical workshops,
social media

3-day competition at
Lake Skinner

Resources

- 2019 cost = ~\$700,000
 - 50% labor, 50% expenses
 - 3 FTEs + Technical Consultant + interns
- Significant in-kind and volunteer services
 - Three Valleys MWD
 - Member agencies (\$3k contribution, support to schools, volunteers)
 - Metropolitan staff
 - SCE, County of Riverside, Boy Scouts

Success Stories

Outcomes

- Diverse, inclusive teams
- Some Solar Cup students moved into water careers
- Students in underserved communities participated with additional technical support
- Students from a juvenile rehabilitation facility participated in some years
- Provided many with their first experience on the water and camping



Budget Reductions

FY 2022/23 and FY 2023/24

Budget Reductions

- External Affairs' non-labor budget was reduced approximately 16% in current biennial budget
 - FY 2022/23: \$1.75 million in program cuts
 - FY 2023/24: \$1.39 million in program cuts
- In addition to Solar Cup, reductions were also made to the Directors' Inspection Trips (50% cut in year 1), sponsorships, some conservation activities, polling and research, social media boosting
- Staff member who led Solar Cup has retired.

Challenges to
Looking
Forward

Considerations

- Need a long-term source of funding, additional staffing (1 -2 FTEs), and purchase of new materials and equipment since much of the previous inventory was at end of useful life and has been surplusd
- Approached other organizations to explore program transfer
 - No interest to date, but could consider other organizations. Metropolitan would likely need to help fund and staff.
- Strong member agency role

Meeting Needs

Next Steps

Programs to Meet Strategic Needs for Education, Career Development

- Need for high school STEAM/STEM programs
- Career pathways to water industry have included cybersecurity and other internships
- Water Engineering 4 Good
 - New program in 2022/23 for middle and high school students; potential to scale up, add in-person learning. Expand in FY 2023/24



