THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Board Report

Sustainability, Resilience, Innovation Group

- **SRI GM Monthly Report for September 2026**

Summary

SRI monthly activities for August 2026

Purpose

Informational

Detailed Report

Sustainability and Resilience

Staff helped organize and attended Sustain SoCal's Water Solutions event at UC Irvine featuring speakers on water technology, innovation and emerging issues. The Chief SRI Officer presented to the California Water Plan Advisory Committee with other Metropolitan leaders at the Napolitano Innovation Center, and participated in a meeting with the California Natural Resources Agency on land preservation and management. The team also worked closely with Bay-Delta Initiatives on planning and staffing a tour of the four Metropolitan-owned delta islands for the Board Ad Hoc Committee on the Delta Islands.

In August, SRI supported the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure's Envision Sustainability Professional (ENV SP) training for MWD staff. The training prepares staff to take the exam to earn the ENV SP credential, a globally recognized designation that signifies a deep understanding of the Envision Sustainable Infrastructure Framework. The training provides participants with a comprehensive understanding of the Envision framework and how it can be applied to infrastructure planning, design, construction, and operations. The training introduces participants to Envision's sustainability and resilience criteria, including quality of life, leadership, resource use, protection of the natural environment, climate impacts, and resilience. Participants learn how to evaluate infrastructure projects, identify opportunities to improve sustainability outcomes, and incorporate broader environmental, social, and economic considerations into project decision-making.

The training is applicable to a wide range of disciplines beyond engineering, including planning, operations, environmental compliance, sustainability, procurement, and project management. Participants who successfully complete the training and examination can earn the ENV SP credential, providing Metropolitan with a broader network of staff equipped to integrate sustainability and resilience considerations into infrastructure-related decisions. Twenty-seven participants completed the two-day training in August, joining the 145 employees who have completed the training since it was offered. Expanding Envision knowledge across the organization establishes a common sustainability framework and supports consistent consideration of sustainability, climate resilience, and long-term value throughout Metropolitan's infrastructure programs and projects.

Wildfire Mitigation

On August 8, 2026, staff from the Sustainability, Resilience, and Innovation Office attended the "Wildfire Defense Home Retrofit Tour" in Calabasas, presented by the Los Angeles County Fire Department of Forestry and the U.S. Green Building Council. The wildfire defense tour provided education on how to mitigate wildfire impacts, including building design and retrofits, defensible spaces, vegetation

management and landscape ideas. Information from this tour will be used as Metropolitan continues its wildfire and planning mitigation efforts.

SRI staff learning about fire mitigation, building structural hardening, and vegetation management

Innovation, Pilots, and Emerging Technologies

In August, the Innovation Team continued advancing Metropolitan's efforts in data, technology adoption, and applied research. The team participated in the annual Water Data Summit, engaging with water sector leaders and practitioners on emerging data practices, technologies, and opportunities to strengthen the use of data across the organization and region.

The Innovation Team also moved forward three technology pilot projects focused on internal operations. The Innovation Unit shared pilot proposals related to digital transformation and artificial intelligence with Information Technology to support coordination and alignment as Metropolitan evaluates new digital capabilities.

The Innovation Team also undertook additional preparation for the October Pitchfest workshop. The workshop is designed to provide managers with an informal, low-stakes opportunity to pitch operational and strategic needs directly to academic researchers and explore potential matches for impactful research projects.

Environmental Planning Services

For the Pure Water Southern California Program, Environmental Planning Section staff completed biological surveys for the backbone pipeline and reported survey results to USFWS and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS); coordinated with USACE regarding Section 408 compliance, cultural resources testing, and National Environmental Policy Act and National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance; and reviewed the feasibility study addendum for the Direct Potable Reuse Demonstration Facility. Environmental Planning staff also continued preparation of supplemental CEQA documentation for the Sepulveda Feeder Reach 9 PCCP Rehabilitation Project, support for the progressive design-build process for the Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project and the Lake Mathews New Pressure Control Structure and Electrical Upgrades Project, and continued CEQA analysis and document preparation for the District Housing and Improvements Project. For the Inland Feeder-San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District Foothill Pump Station Intertie Project, in partnership with the San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, staff continued coordination with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and USFWS to finalize the mitigation strategy required under the federal and state incidental take permits. Staff also initiated pre-construction activities, including biological surveys and preparation of fencing and trapping plans. For the Copper Basin Discharge Valve Replacement and Access Road Improvements Project, CDFW issued the Incidental Take Permit

for desert bighorn sheep. Environmental monitoring of construction activities continued for the La Verne Shops Upgrades Project, Weymouth Administration Building Seismic Upgrade Project, Sepulveda Feeder Reach 2 PCCP Rehabilitation Project, and the Garvey Reservoir Rehabilitation Project.

Critical operations and maintenance activities were supported by the Environmental Planning Section. Staff provided CEQA and regulatory clearances and conducted pre-construction biological and nesting bird surveys for routine maintenance activities at water treatment plants and within the conveyance and distribution system. Staff participated in the 2026-2027 Annual Shutdown Meeting on August 19, presenting a module on environmental planning shutdown coordination. Staff provided subject matter expert review of the following legislative bills, which have undergone amendment: Assembly Bill (AB) 1881 (Ramos) – California Indian Freedom Act of 2026 and AB 2218 (Kalra) – Water policy: California Native American Tribes, as well as Senate Bill (SB) 601 (Allen) – Water: waste discharge. For AB 1881 and AB 2218, staff have worked closely with Legal and Legislative Services staff to participate in agency working groups, provide proposed revisions/amendments, and review proposed amendments. Staff also provided analysis and participated in the preparation of the August informational Board letter on Proposition 25: Building an Affordable California Initiative that will be on the November 2026 ballot. In addition, staff reviewed and analyzed CEQA notices for 12 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 continued to provide CEQA review and analysis for Local Resource Program projects and real property actions, and supported fire management planning and landscape maintenance activities.

For the Webb Tract Wetland Restoration Project, Environmental Planning Section staff submitted pre-construction plans to the regulatory agencies for approval in compliance with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Restoration Management Permit (RMP), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) 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. Submitted plans included the dewatering plan, final design plans, water quality monitoring plan, giant garter snake rescue and relocation plan, and western pond turtle relocation plan.

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

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 conducting invasive vegetation species management in grassland areas and constructing and installing burrowing owl boxes. Activities at the MSR included conducting weed abatement for fire and habitat management, and trapping cowbirds (70 cowbirds captured for the season). The Alamos Schoolhouse environmental education center was open to visitors, with 69 visitors during the month.

Zero Emission Vehicle Transition

On August 13, 2026, Metropolitan's cross-organization Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Executive Task Force met to discuss progress on its transition to cleaner transportation. Metropolitan began these efforts in 2022 to meet goals in its Climate Action Plan and to comply with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB's) Advanced Clean Fleets Rule. By the end of 2026, Metropolitan's Fleet will include 103 ZEVs and 82 charging ports, with projections for 192 ZEVs/120 charging ports by the end of 2027, and 212 ZEVs/128 charging ports by the end of 2028. Additionally, the Rideshare Program currently provides 20 ports available for employee charging; this will increase as employee chargers are included in Metropolitan's long-term charger build-out project. In addition to staff updates, the Sustainability and Resilience Section's clean transportation consultant, TRC, gave an update on Metropolitan's participation in CARB's Low Carbon Fuel Standard Credit Program, which provides credits for each metric ton of carbon dioxide reduced by using electricity to charge vehicles instead of fossil fuels.

Land Management

A new lease has been granted to Martini Companies for 2,047 acres on a portion of the Bay-Delta Webb Tract with a term of up to 9 years. The lease is for rice farming, which should lead to land subsidence benefits and other ecological improvements.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service entered into a new, four-year license agreement to continue its Delta Smelt monitoring, rearing and caring activities within Metropolitan's Bay Delta Bouldin Island pursuant to the Delta Smelt Supplementation Program.

Annexation

There were no changes to Metropolitan's service area during the reporting period.