



MARK PESTRELLA, Director

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"


900 SOUTH FREMONT AVENUE
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91803-1331
Telephone: (626) 458-5100
<http://dpw.lacounty.gov>

ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO:
P.O. BOX 1460
ALHAMBRA, CALIFORNIA 91802-1460

June 20, 2024

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO FILE: **SWP-8**
10571-1-1-F

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Mark Pestrella, PE 
Director of Public Works

BOARD MOTION OF MARCH 19, 2024, AGENDA ITEM 19 PROGRESS AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE SAFE, CLEAN WATER PROGRAM 90-DAY REPORT BACK

On March 19, 2024, the Board adopted a motion instructing Public Works to report back in 90 days on the progress and timeline for completion of the following 15 items related to the adaptive management of the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP). All 15 items are on schedule to be completed by June 2025 as directed.

Item 1: Indicators and Targets

Public Works recently completed a Metrics and Monitoring Study that developed recommendations for program-wide and project-level performance measures and monitoring criteria. Many of these performance measures (or metrics) as well as related population indicators (targets) are already being incorporated to guide watershed planning, inform project development and solicitation, and to evaluate achievement of the SCWP goals. Additional performance measures and population indicators will be incorporated into the program moving forward.

At the May and June Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) meetings, I introduced a set of these performance measures and related population indicators and discussed how these measures will help support ROC members in their oversight capacity.

Item 2: Align Metrics, Definitions, and Scoring Criteria with SCWP Goals

As described in Item 1, performance measures and population indicators are being incorporated to help further align program implementation with the SCWP goals. Each SCWP goal aligns with at least one performance measure.

Regional program scoring criteria are also being assessed and will continue to be assessed to align with the revised performance measures and population indicators during ongoing adaptive management. This alignment is consistent with the comments and recommendations made by the Scoring Committee in their Fiscal Year (FY) 2024-25 scoring memo.

Definitions of key terms, like those related to locally available water supply, community investment benefit, public access, etc. are on schedule to be refined in late 2024 as part of the framework for watershed planning, scoring, and other program elements, which will ensure shared understanding and consistency. Definitions and standards for nature-based solutions are currently the purview of the Blue-Ribbon Panel called for in the December 5, 2023, County Water Plan Board motion.

Item 3: Watershed Planning Progress

Public Works continues to lead watershed planning efforts across the region in alignment with the County Water Plan and has initiated watershed-specific planning efforts for the nine SCWP watershed areas. The watershed planning process will involve extensive engagement with the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs), the ROC, municipalities, community groups, and other interested parties. A draft Community Strengths and Needs Assessment survey is being developed to pilot how to meaningfully incorporate community insights into the program and to supplement watershed planning efforts.

By November 2024, Public Works plans to have completed the initial watershed area plan framework, completed data compilation and gap analysis, and developed additional targets and population indicators for all nine watersheds. A complete initial watershed plan will be developed for one pilot watershed by March 2025, and initial watershed plans for all nine watersheds are expected to be completed by June 2025.

Item 4: Revised Regional Program Applications, Feasibility Study Guidelines, and Scoring

Significant effort has already been invested in revising the regional program application processes, guidelines, and scoring criteria in the first 5 years of the program. Public Works will further enhance the application and reporting functionality within the project portal by April 2025. These improvements will include creation of separate applications for each phase of a project (e.g., design, construction, and operations and maintenance), new post-construction monitoring criteria, and other tools and guidance.

Revisions to the feasibility study guidelines will reflect the performance measures and population indicators described above and will be informed by watershed planning efforts. The first set of such revisions will be made by April 2025 and will include a 30-day public comment period to allow input from interested parties.

Scoring criteria adjustments are in process, including those that will address cost inflation, load-based criteria for water quality, scaled scoring between dry-weather and wet-weather capacities, and cost-effectiveness for dry-weather projects. Initial adjustments to scoring criteria will be reviewed as part of the new feasibility study guidelines, completed by April 2025 as part of the project portal enhancement, and will be updated as new data becomes available.

Item 5: Revise Regional Program Transfer Agreements for Project Phases

Completion of a revised transfer agreement to better align with distinct project phases like design, construction, and maintenance is on track to meet the June 2025 deadline stipulated in the motion. These revisions will be presented to the Board for approval in 2025 and are anticipated to take effect for all projects and studies approved for funding in the FY 2026-27 Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP).

Item 6: Updated or New Guidance and Tools

As part of the ongoing adaptive management of the SCWP, Public Works has developed numerous guidance documents, user-friendly tools, and supplemental guidelines. These items include governance committee operating guidelines and handbooks, topic-specific interim guidance, the SCWP portal, and the geospatial data library that allows interactive planning across the region. Many of these documents were developed through robust engagement with interested parties and public comment processes, and some are updated routinely to continue to streamline processes and/or adapt to current regional needs.

By April 2025, additional guidance and tools will be developed through both the project module updates being completed in accordance with the new performance measures and population indicators described above, as well as through the watershed planning efforts discussed under Item 3.

Item 7: Updated Strategies for Monitoring Progress Toward Goals and Providing Updates

New post-construction performance monitoring and reporting came online in late 2023. These requirements and associated data will be adaptively reviewed, revised, and

incorporated as appropriate in conjunction with other efforts described in response to other items in this report.

Additionally, Public Works has implemented a comprehensive dashboard and mapping system that serves as a centralized platform to consolidate and analyze the data provided by infrastructure program developers through their reports. This visual representation of key Performance Measures and progress toward program goals, also allows for aggregating data from multiple projects across the region so that interested parties can obtain a holistic view of how each project is contributing to the program goals, informs decision making and strategy within different watershed areas, and supports program oversight by the ROC and the Board.

Regular updates on pertinent aspects related to project/program monitoring and overall adaptive management have also been incorporated into other regular ROC meetings.

Item 8: WASC Guidance for Enhanced Financial Oversight

Each year, Public Works offers guidance to WASCs during deliberations for pending SIPs. In the current fiscal year, guidance included general recommendations for managing cost overruns and project modification requests. By December 2024, Public Works will release the SIP programming guidelines for FY 2025-26 to provide more detailed guidance to the WASCs that will include caps on recommended funding being programmed in annual SIPs. The SIP programming guidelines will be updated annually thereafter to align with watershed planning and other adaptive management efforts.

Additionally, Public Works is increasing its efforts to lead regional collaborations that will support strategic regional investments through partnerships and leveraged resources and will engage with potential project developers to provide insight and oversight related to financial elements of collaborative projects.

Item 9: Assess Community Engagement Processes

Community engagement and local stakeholder education are integral components of the SCWP. The Watershed Coordinator (WC) program supports community engagement through educating project proponents and building capacity for SCWP involvement in each of the 9 watershed areas. To date, the WCs have hosted an estimated total of 888 events, resulting in more than 36,600 individual contacts. WCs have directly supported 77 funded projects in various capacities, including engagement about the projects and connection of project proponents with appropriate resources or community groups. A majority of the WCs also participate in a Tribal Allyship Working Group, which

is intended to support the adoption of best Tribal engagement practices across watersheds and are actively engaged in a working group related to schoolyard transformation and education. The Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program described in Item 13 is anticipated to greatly amplify these efforts.

Water for LA, <http://waterforla.lacounty.gov>, continues to be a central hub for information about water in LA County and has regular and far-reaching campaigns about critical water issues and water resilience. The SCWP is featured on the Water for LA website, which also provides a link to the SCWP website that was recently revamped to be more user friendly and provide easy-to-access and up-to-date information about the SCWP (<http://www.safecleanwaterla.org>).

Item 10: Assess Need for Scientific or Technical Advisory Committee

Each year, Public Works utilizes technical experts to carry out peer review for scientific studies conducted by other entities. Once the peer reviews are completed, each one is shared with their respective WASCs for further assessment. Public Works is assessing the viability and potential responsibilities of a scientific and/or technical advisory committee for the SCWP to expand upon the current practices and will include recommendations/decisions.

Item 11: Assess Scientific Studies from a Countywide Perspective

In conjunction with the assessment described under Item 10, Public Works will evaluate viability and a strategy to fund scientific studies that have Countywide significance and would not be dependent on WASC timelines. In the interim, scientific study proponents that are interested in partnering with Public Works to implement regional studies that have Countywide significance are encouraged to begin engaging with Public Works as early as possible. Regional study partnership opportunities will be considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on alignment with SCWP goals, funding needs, and available budget.

Item 12: Collaboration with the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) on Workforce Initiatives

DEO is working in collaboration with Public Works to develop a SCWP maintenance and operations worker training program to train approximately 150 individuals over the next 2 years. This collaborative approach will ensure that workforce development initiatives are tailored to meet the specific needs of the SCWP, while also addressing the employment and skill development needs of the community, including career pathways

that will ensure a sustainable workforce and maximize SCWP outcomes. The program will train approximately 150 individuals to prepare them for entry to mid-level maintenance and operational jobs to support SCWP-related projects. The training program will include full wrap-around services to help ensure successful long-term placement of entry level workers. These wrap-around services will support recruitment, placement, and hiring. To develop this program, DEO will build off of the success of the existing Preparing Los Angeles for County Employment Program in training and placing maintenance workers in County employment.

Additionally, DEO and Public Works will continue to strengthen collaboration and reporting on Local Hire Programs. SCWP projects that include building infrastructure are subject to the County's Community Workforce Agreement, which includes Local and Targeted Hiring goals. DEO and its network of 18 America's Job Centers of California support job seekers in completing the labor-approved Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) pre-apprenticeship to prepare them for an apprenticeship with the building trades. The Apprenticeship Readiness Fund and other partners then help match these trainees with apprenticeships with contractors on these local hire projects, creating a win-win scenario for businesses and the community.

Item 13: Progress on District Education Programs

Criteria for Public Works' Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program is in active development, and grants are anticipated to be distributed starting in late 2024. The program will advance SCWP's goals by supporting education and community engagement efforts and providing pathways for entry into the SCWP for groups that may have seen low participation in the past. The public will have two formal opportunities to provide input on the grants criteria and framework through two upcoming hybrid community meetings. Eligible organizations – nonprofits, tribes, public agencies, and educational institutions – will have an opportunity to apply for grant funding to support community-led project concept developments, host community meetings, develop related educational and engagement programs, and advance other eligible activities.

Items 9, 12, and 14 address other elements of the District Education Programs including workforce development and schools.

Item 14: Strategies for Engaging Schools in Stormwater Capture Projects

Public Works has recently completed a benchmarking white paper that looked at best practices in stormwater and watershed education, as well as the potential for intersection of school greening and curriculum. Public Works is assessing next steps for

supporting/enhancing existing school education programs and evaluating opportunities to align education with school greening as part of the infrastructure program. In addition, the WCs have established a school working group that is developing additional strategies to effectively involve schools and school districts in the SCWP.

Item 15: Engagement and Consultation with Governance Committees

Each year, Public Works administers and facilitates approximately 80 hybrid SCWP governance committee public meetings. As part of the ongoing adaptive management of the SCWP, Public Works, in partnership with the governance committees, has developed numerous policies and guidance documents to inform and support SCWP implementation as well as ongoing adaptive management. Measures to enhance communication are underway, including the development of a ROC charter to provide additional clarity on committee goals, roles, and responsibilities. Regular updates on adaptive management will continue to be provided at governance committee meetings, and the watershed planning process will include multiple direct engagements with the WASCs.

Related Items

In a separate but related matter, the motion instructed the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District to work with County Counsel to prepare amendments to the SCWP ordinance to amend Section 18.07 of the SCWP implementation ordinance to authorize the Chief Engineer to request proposals for new projects, project concepts, and scientific studies for inclusion in SIPs on either an annual or biennial basis; amend Sections 18.07, 18.08, and 18.09 to change the frequency of progress and expenditure reporting from quarterly to semi-annually, and to clarify that certain County Flood Control District responsibilities are carried out by the Chief Engineer. The new ordinance language was introduced on May 7 and adopted by the Board on May 21, 2024.

As noted in the March 19, 2024, Statement of Proceedings, the Board also instructed Public Works to determine the feasibility of leveraging the County's recent storm emergency declarations to move the projects ahead and faster in terms of hiring, contracting, and procuring. This is consistent with Public Works' ongoing efforts to accelerate implementation and adaptive management. Public Works has already made organizational changes to better align with current SCWP needs and is developing an internal strategy to drive future efforts, including taking a leadership role in partnering with other entities, especially in the Municipal Program, to strategically develop aggregated regional projects and provide support with design, construction, and maintenance. All applicable contracting mechanisms are being evaluated, and potential leverage from

Each Supervisor
June 20, 2024
Page 8

recent emergency declarations is under consideration. Public Works has also attended and will continue to attend applicable events hosted by various professional organizations to further build relationships and offer services consistent with the strategy to accelerate implementation and adaptive management.

If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Deputy Director Adam Ariki at (626) 458-4012 or aaariki@pw.lacounty.gov.

HH:yg

P:\SWPPUB\SEC\2024\BOARD REPS\SCWP PROG & ADAPTIVE MGMT\SCWP REPORT.DOCX

cc: Chief Executive Office
County Counsel
Executive Office

March 19, 2024

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR LINDSEY P. HORVATH

Progress and Adaptive Management of the Safe Clean Water Program

The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP or Program) funds stormwater infrastructure projects and scientific studies that improve water quality, increase our local water supply, and provide community benefits including green spaces and parks, local jobs, and recreational opportunities. The Program cultivates regional and community partnerships and prioritizes investments in historically underserved communities. In November 2018, voters approved Measure W, a parcel tax to fund the Program, which - beginning in Fall 2020 - has provided nearly \$280 million per year for multi-benefit projects and programs. The Program was designed based on extensive and diverse stakeholder engagement and continues to leverage robust regional collaboration.

The first years of the SCWP focused on successfully establishing this complex program, establishing numerous sub-programs, governance committees, guidance documents, tools, and processes. To date, the SCWP has committed approximately \$514 million to 126 regional multi-benefit infrastructure projects and programs and has provided approximately \$446 million in direct funding to municipalities to undertake an additional 360 projects and activities. Together, these projects promise to provide nearly 60,000 acre-feet annually of additional stormwater capture.

MOTION

SOLIS _____

MITCHELL _____

HAHN _____

BARGER _____

HORVATH _____

In addition to early successes, the initial years of program implementation and investment have daylighted some important issues, some of which will require Board action to address, and others that can be addressed through policy and programmatic updates at the Flood Control District (District) level. Proposed adaptive management of the Program to address these issues is described below. For example, several of the projects for which funding has been allocated are experiencing significant cost increases due to inflation and challenges that have arisen during project development. This issue of cost overruns is sometimes exacerbated when a project that is yet to be designed receives funding for the estimated total costs of the design through construction phases, increasing the chance that costs or anticipated benefits may change as project development proceeds. Several Watershed Area Steering Committees have committed hundreds of millions of dollars of future funds to projects with high potential for water quality, water supply, and community benefits; however, these early project approvals have limited near-term investment funding, particularly in areas with the highest opportunity for water supply. Proposed remedies include process and guidance improvements to better facilitate proposals for distinct project phases and allowing for changes in costs or benefits to be better anticipated and therefore incorporated into overarching watershed planning efforts that will inform future recommended investments.

Several reviews of the Program - a performance audit commissioned by the District, the July 25, 2023 "Accelerating Implementation of the Safe Clean Water Program" motion (Horvath) and report back, the recently completed Regional Oversight Committee Biennial Progress

Report, and the Public Works Director's March 2024 Report on Program status and plans - include recommendations for Program modifications and improvements.

In January of 2024, the SCWP Regional Oversight Committee (ROC) completed a SCWP Biennial Progress Report which includes several findings and recommendations. Findings include that the Program has been launched successfully, that watershed-specific needs and capabilities should be considered in planning, and that the Program needs to better quantify program success and progress towards goals. These findings resulted in a recommendation to expedite watershed planning with specific goals, metrics, and timelines associated for issues like water quality, water supply, community benefits, and disadvantaged community investments. The ROC also recommends that the District create processes to support collaborative planning and co-funding with other agencies and organizations, develop guidelines and criteria for different sized projects and distinct stages of development, and make strategic investments in workforce development programs.

This month, the Director of Public Works submitted to the Board a report that summarizes the status of the Program and includes a series of recommendations for accelerating Program and project delivery to meet Program Goals. Highlights of the report recommendations include:

- Establishing additional programmatic metrics and indicators of success
- Targeted planning to more strategically drive the Program towards desired outcomes
- Improving and streamlining processes
- Increasing Public Works and District capacity to provide expanded services to

municipalities in designing, building, and managing infrastructure projects

- Ramping up public engagement, education, and workforce development

The Director's Report parallels many of the ROC recommendations, with the highest priority being development and adoption of indicators and watershed plans. Other priorities include updating and developing new guidance, revisions to the Regional Program Scoring and Feasibility Study Guidelines and Transfer Agreements for different project phase applicants. The report also highlights updates that the District will make to valuable tools and data that are utilized by project developers and municipalities. Some actions in the Director's report require action by the Board while others can be completed at the District level. As such, the processes (e.g., public comment period, stakeholder engagement, etc.) for the different actions vary. Some actions, like the Ordinance changes called for in this motion, can happen quickly if Board approval is provided. Others, like the updates to and creation of guidance documents, require a comprehensive development and deployment strategy to ensure consistency across the many nuanced program elements. Many of the recommended program changes are already underway, and others are forthcoming.

The SCWP is ambitious, unprecedented, and complex. It cultivates sustained regional and community partnerships and prioritizes historically underserved communities, all while advancing multi-benefit stormwater initiatives to promote regional water resilience. It is the envy of all local and state governments facing the challenge of sustainably managing water resources in an era of climate change. While much has been accomplished to date, it is time to move the SCWP into

the next level of strategic implementation. To best accelerate the effective adaptive management of the SCWP and ensure the most strategic investments going forward, certain new efforts must be prioritized, while certain existing efforts must be modified so that they can proceed according to evolved information, best practices, and tools. Doing so is a critical aspect for advancing the recently adopted County Water Plan's vision of a shared, inclusive, regional path forward to sustainably and equitably achieve safe, clean, and reliable water resources for Los Angeles County.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct of the Department of Public Works to report back in 90 days with a progress report and timeline for completion of the items below, with a target date no later than June 2025 for completion of all the following:

1. Indicators and targets for the Program, to be developed with the Regional Oversight Committee, that can be used to measure achievement of Program Goals, guide watershed planning, and inform project development, solicitation, and evaluation efforts.
2. Precise metrics, updated definitions of Local Water Supply Benefit, Nature-Based Solutions, Disadvantaged Community Benefit, and Local Water Supply Benefit, dry- and wet-weather water quality, and scoring criteria that better align with the SCWP goals.
3. Watershed planning efforts, including data and gaps analysis, community needs assessment (including engagement with WASCs), and alignment with the plan to capture 300,000 acre-feet per year of new stormwater by 2045.
4. Revised Regional Program application processes, feasibility study guidelines, and

scoring criteria to account for additional performance indicators and distinct project phases. These revisions should include the required public processes and input from the governing bodies as appropriate.

5. Revised Regional Program Transfer Agreements to better align with distinct project phases like design, construction, and maintenance. Transfer Agreement revisions will be brought back to the Board for approval.
6. Updated or new guidance documents, tools, and information for governance bodies and project developers to facilitate achievement of performance indicators and targets.
7. Updated strategies for monitoring of completed projects towards meeting stated project goals and a regular update with cumulative findings on impacts, including any related recommendations for adaptive management of the program to maximize program outcomes.
8. Guidance and recommendations to WASCs for managing cost overruns and project modification requests in the context of watershed planning and constrained funding availability in certain watersheds.
9. An assessment of community engagement processes to date and how they could be improved upon, including strategies to better engage small cities, tribal interests, CBOs, and others who have been less involved or underrepresented.
10. An assessment of viability and potential responsibilities of a scientific or technical advisory committee for the SCWP, specifically for review and recommendations for

scientific studies.

11. An assessment of viability and a strategy to fund scientific studies that have Countywide significance without requiring approval of every WASC.
12. Collaboration with and funding of the Department of Economic Opportunity to design and implement Workforce Development program(s) to support SCWP program goals. Corresponding workforce requirements shall be integrated into Feasibility Study Guidelines, Project Modules, and Transfer Agreements.
13. District Public Education programs, including progress of Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program and investments in school curricula.
14. A report on strategies and best practices for engaging school campuses in implementing stormwater capture projects that help achieve schoolyard transformation, greening, cooling, and other benefits in concert with the water supply, water quality, and multi-benefit goals of the Program. The report should also include best practices for integration of school projects with school curriculum such as those being developed and/or funded as part of the District Education Programs.
15. Ongoing communication and consultation with the Watershed Area Steering Committees and ROC in the development of new policies and programs.

I, **FURTHER, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors direct the District to work with County Counsel to prepare amendments to the Safe Clean Water Program Ordinance to:

1. Amend Section 18.07 of the Safe, Clean Water Implementation Ordinance to authorize

the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District to request proposals for new Projects, Project concepts, and scientific studies for inclusion in Stormwater Investments Plans on either an annual or biennial basis.

2. Amend Sections 18.07, 18.08 and 18.09 to change the frequency of progress and expenditure reporting from quarterly to semi-annually, and to clarify that certain District responsibilities are carried out by the Chief Engineer.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors request the Regional Oversight Committee to provide further recommendations to the Board to improve the efficacy and accelerate project delivery of the SCWP by the end of 2024.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors thank the members of the Regional Oversight Committee, Scoring Committee, and nine Watershed Area Steering Committees for their service during the first four years of the program and congratulate the newly appointed community leaders that will help to actively manage the program moving forward.

#

LPH:ao