



*THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA*

Public Forum: Climate Adaptation for Water
September 12, 2024



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California held its first public forum associated with its developing Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) on Thursday, September 12, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The focus of the hybrid forum was “Climate Adaptation for Water.” A narrative summary is provided below. The PowerPoint slides presented over the course of the forum are included as Appendix A.

1) Forum Welcome & Introductory Remarks

Metropolitan Chief Sustainability, Resilience & Innovation Officer Liz Crosson opened the public forum with a land acknowledgement and welcomed all virtual and in-person attendees. Crosson identified that the primary goal of the forum was to gather valuable feedback from all attendees, many of whom were familiar faces deeply committed to water sustainability and ensuring a sustainable water future for all communities. She expressed appreciation to attendees for their choice to partner with Metropolitan in taking climate action and climate adaptation seriously.

Crosson then provided background on the development of the Sustainability, Resilience & Innovation (SRI) office at Metropolitan and explained what Metropolitan is doing through the SRI office to reduce its impact on climate change. She identified efforts to mitigate emissions within operations and other actions involving alternative land uses on Metropolitan-owned properties, as well as the ways in which Metropolitan is adapting to changes in climate that impact regional water supplies.

She conveyed to attendees that Metropolitan and its member agencies have collaborated on CAMP4W since early 2023, with each agency contributing its values to determine how best to address climate change issues as a cooperative. While delivering reliable water has always been a top priority for Metropolitan, Crosson identified additional values—such as climate resilience, financial sustainability, equity and affordability for both member agencies and their customers—that they aim to bring to the forefront of their developing CAMP4W decision-making framework. Crosson underscored that feedback from forum participants would help ensure these values are prioritized effectively as Metropolitan moves forward, and she highlighted the opportunity for participants to help identify potential policies and partnerships to achieve climate- and water-resiliency for all Southern Californians.

2) Overview of Forum Participants

Metropolitan’s facilitators for the forum, representatives from the Community Relations team, polled participants in attendance using an online platform, to help establish a shared understanding of the wide range of participants, what brought attendees to the forum and what issues or concerns were most important to them and their communities.

Forum attendees represented a wide range of sectors, with most coming from the government/public sector (21), water industry (17) and nonprofit/environmental groups (12). There was also a notable presence of the private sector and small businesses, students and others.

In articulating what motivated their participation in the forum, many attendees expressed a strong desire to learn, with several stating they were there to hear from experts and keynote speakers and to gain knowledge on specific water-related issues like the CAMP4W process and water sustainability. Some were eager to provide input, network and engage with the community, while others were

passionate about environmental justice, equity and future planning. Overall, a common theme was a concern for the next generation and the long-term availability of water resources.

When asked about concerns regarding climate change, attendees overwhelmingly mentioned extreme weather events – including extreme heat, droughts, floods and wildfires. Many emphasized the disproportionate impact on vulnerable communities, highlighting issues of inequity and environmental justice. Several expressed concerns about water insecurity, resource scarcity and the need for better preparedness and adaptation to these growing challenges.

In discussions about water issues within their communities, attendees frequently mentioned water quality, affordability and accessibility as key concerns. Many were also worried about aging infrastructure, contamination and stormwater capture. The high cost of water, both for supply and conservation efforts, was a recurring topic, as was a growing mistrust of tap water and concerns over contamination from substances like PFAS. Water scarcity and the need for better conservation and storage solutions were also identified.

3) CAMP4W Introduction, followed by Q&A

Metropolitan Section Manager for Sustainability and Resilience Carolyn Schaffer then provided an introduction to Metropolitan and its developing CAMP4W process. She emphasized that Metropolitan is a mission-driven organization, and that its mission is to deliver “adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible manner” (Slide 08). CAMP4W will help Metropolitan continue to meet this critical mission in the face of a changing climate and related future uncertainties.

Highlighting that climate change not only impacts the water supplies Metropolitan has traditionally imported into Southern California but also the district’s system-wide operations, Schaffer indicated that Metropolitan may be entering another period in which major capital investments are necessary, in this case to address and mitigate the risks of a changing climate (Slide 10). Previous periods of major capital investments in Metropolitan’s nearly 100-year history include the building of the Colorado River Aqueduct (1920s-30s), water treatment plants (1940s-50s), the formation and construction of the State Water Project (1960s-70s) and the construction of Diamond Valley Lake and other local resource investments (1990s-2000s).

Schaffer then outlined the objectives of CAMP4W, which include finding the proper balance between water supply reliability and financial sustainability (Slide 11). Objectives related to water supply reliability include increasing water efficiency, system resilience and system-wide access, as well as expanding our water supply portfolio to include in-region water banking and storage. Objectives related to financial sustainability include the development of regional partnerships and cost-sharing agreements, as well as ensuring that water rates remain affordable for Metropolitan’s member agencies and their customers.

Underscoring that CAMP4W is a comprehensive, adaptive planning process, Schaffer noted that Metropolitan’s CAMP4W process will be iterative. In addition to the consideration of climate and growth scenarios, the identification of time-bound targets and related monitoring and reporting, Metropolitan’s CAMP4W process also includes the identification of policies, initiatives and partnerships.

As highlighted in the CAMP4W Year-One Progress Report (May 2024), Schaffer shared examples of policies and initiatives that staff have identified, including those for Sustainability and Ecosystem Habitats (Slide 15), as well as Community Equity/Affordability and Conservation/Efficiency (Slide 16). Schaffer concluded her presentation by sharing the upcoming timeline for CAMP4W milestones, especially the development of a policy framework to be included in the draft CAMP4W plan that will be submitted to Metropolitan’s board for consideration and approval in late 2024 or early 2025 (Slide 18).

Following the presentation, there was a brief Q&A period. Questions from forum attendees ranged from the official start date and impetus behind Metropolitan’s new CAMP4W process to specific elements of the CAMP4W decision-making framework, including GHG tracking and reporting, the crucial importance of watershed health to “Ecosystem & Habitat Benefits” and the role for water reuse within CAMP4W.

4) Breakout Session 1: What issues or concerns would you like to see prioritized?

Following the CAMP4W Q&A period, forum attendees participated in two successive breakout sessions. For the first breakout session, participants were provided the following prompt to initiate conversation and solicit feedback: What issues or concerns would you like to see prioritized? At the conclusion of the breakout session, individual representatives from each group were invited to share their group’s ideas. A summary of notes from all breakout groups, including those that were not reported verbally during the forum, is provided below.

During the first breakout session, several recurring themes emerged across both virtual and in-person groups, reflecting a shared priority on diversifying water resources, enhancing equity and strengthening community engagement. Many groups emphasized the need for local, sustainable water sources, with specific calls for stormwater capture and expanded recycled water initiatives. Both in-person and virtual groups, for example, prioritized stormwater capture, seeing it as both a cost-effective and locally adaptable solution. Recycled water initiatives were also highlighted, with both in-person and virtual groups advocating for improved public perception and funding to support recycled and direct potable reuse programs.

Equity and environmental justice were recurring concerns, underlining a desire to ensure fair water access, affordability and workforce development. One group stressed the importance of affordable water access for vulnerable populations, especially renters, and called for addressing the broader intersections with housing and land rights. Similarly, other groups identified social justice and affordability as crucial, suggesting that current water policies need to address both cost and accessibility barriers. Many groups also raised concerns about equitable distribution and governance, with particular attention to supporting underserved communities and improving transparency in water management processes.

Community engagement and education also surfaced as essential priorities. Multiple groups underscored the value of involving local communities in understanding water issues and planning solutions, while advocating for programs that promote water literacy among both residents and policymakers.

Finally, many groups called for targeted funding and more resilient infrastructure, especially to prepare for climate change impacts like extreme heat and wildfires. Participants identified funding challenges and the need for innovative financing solutions to support local and adaptive infrastructure projects. Some groups also stressed the importance of planning for a changing workforce and distributed management structures to better respond to evolving needs. Overall, the responses from virtual and in-person groups aligned closely in their emphasis on localized solutions, community-centered approaches and environmental resilience.

5) Breakout Session 2: What types of partnerships or collaborations could be successful in addressing these issues?

For the second breakout session, participants were provided the following prompt to initiate conversation and solicit feedback: What types of partnerships or collaborations could be successful in addressing these issues?

At the conclusion of the second breakout session, individual representatives from groups that had not shared after the first breakout session were invited to share their group's ideas from the second breakout session. A summary of notes from all breakout groups, including those that were not reported verbally during the forum, is provided below.

In the second breakout session, groups identified a variety of partnerships to address regional water issues, with a significant emphasis on including diverse voices and fostering both regional and local collaborations. Across all groups, there was a strong consensus on the importance of engaging tribal groups, environmental justice (EJ) organizations, community-based organizations and local elected officials. Many groups highlighted the need for partnerships that respect and include the perspectives of non-federally recognized tribes and communities directly impacted by California's water use, such as those affected by the Colorado River.

Another recurring theme was the collaboration between public and private entities, with multiple groups advocating for partnerships that leverage private-sector resources for public benefit, particularly in infrastructure, water treatment and conservation efforts. Some groups recommended partnerships with utilities and private companies that would invest in water conservation projects and regional infrastructure to address water scarcity more sustainably.

Educational partnerships were another key focus. Several groups suggested engaging educational institutions, including local school districts, to spread awareness about water conservation from an early age and to advocate for the greening of school facilities. Additionally, both in-person and virtual groups mentioned the value of educational events, symposiums and collaborations with media to combat misinformation and cultivate a culture of conservation. There were also suggestions for partnerships with healthcare professionals to address public concerns around recycled water, highlighting the importance of targeted outreach to address public perception issues.

In addition to local partnerships, there was support for funding strategies, especially those involving state and federal grant programs to fund water projects. Numerous groups emphasized the importance

of transparency and communication in managing these funds to help local agencies navigate complex grant applications and funding guidelines.

6) Keynote Address

Metropolitan board Chair Adán Ortega, Jr. opened the afternoon session with remarks prior to the keynote address. Chair Ortega identified numerous dimensions informing Metropolitan’s approach to climate adaptation as a regional wholesaler, including the challenges and opportunities presented by Proposition 218, the long-term sustainability challenges facing the Colorado River Basin and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and the landmark passage of California’s new Direct Potable Reuse regulations. In closing, he emphasized Metropolitan’s need to invest in additional water storage, recycling technology and collaborative partnerships across the supply chain, all as part of Metropolitan’s ongoing climate-adaptation process.

Following Chair Ortega’s opening remarks, Tianna Shaw-Wakeman and Dr. Zoe Cunliffe, co-leads of the Environmental Justice team at Black Women for Wellness, provided the forum keynote address. After providing an overview of the mission and advocacy work of Black Women for Wellness in South Los Angeles, Shaw-Wakeman framed water equity as both an environmental justice and reproductive justice issue. She explained that water equity “requires that everyone, regardless of race or income, has access to safe, clean and affordable water.” Water equity is an environmental justice issue, Shaw-Wakeman communicated, because communities of color are more likely to experience water inequity. Residents in these communities are more likely to carry water debt and face shutoffs, and the water infrastructure serving communities of color are affected by historical disinvestment and redlining. Finally, Shaw-Wakeman noted, communities of color also tend to live in less climate-resilient neighborhoods. Water equity is also a reproductive justice issue because the lack of access to safe, clean water negatively impacts fertility, the health of pregnancies and one’s ability to raise children in safe conditions.

Dr. Cunliffe then provided an overview of the water equity work Black Women for Wellness has accomplished since 2022. This work encompasses the assessment of community needs, the development of public education materials, public outreach and other forms of advocacy work on this issue. She also shared insights from the EJ team’s work on the Drinking Water Guide for South Los Angeles (2024). For example, she noted that approximately 35% of residents in South Los Angeles reported trouble affording their water utility bills, while nearly 2 in 3 residents surveyed do not trust their drinking water. As a consequence of this distrust, 84% of households in South Los Angeles rely to some degree on bottled water, and nearly 3 in 4 residents desire policy advocacy to support safer drinking water. Finally, the majority of residents surveyed did not know where to go with questions about the quality of their tap water or about the possibility of financial assistance with their water bills.

Ms. Shaw-Wakeman then underscored the importance of climate adaptation to achieving water equity, in light of Southern California’s historical reliance on imported water and the increasing unreliability of those imported supplies as a consequence of climate whiplash. She also cautioned that if our water systems fail to adapt successfully to our changing climate, communities of color are more likely to be denied their human right to water, in continuance of the legacy of environmental racism that communities of color have experienced in South Los Angeles (as well as throughout the United States

and across the globe). Finally, she observed that communities that have been harmed historically and that continue to be harmed should have their voices heard in the climate adaptation process.

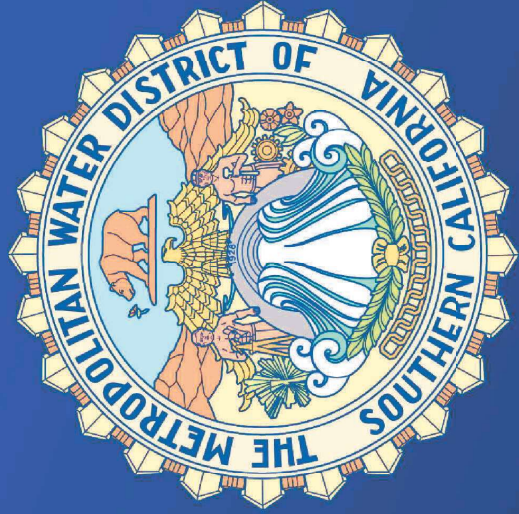
Moving forward, Shaw-Wakeman emphasized the importance of centering the voices of indigenous tribes and water protectors, prioritizing historically disinvested and under-resourced communities and the hope that a reparative justice model would offer. She also urged community members to believe in their constitutional right to safe, clean water and to participate in the process of climate adaptation.

7) Conclusion & Next Steps

All in attendance were invited to take with them hard copies of Metropolitan’s [CAMP4W Year One Progress Report](#) and the [Drinking Water Guide for South Los Angeles](#), or to access the digital copies posted online. Forum participants were also invited to [sign up](#) for CAMP4W updates and to email comments or questions to camp4water@mwdh2o.com.

Appendix A

“Climate Adaptation for Water” PowerPoint Presentations



Welcome!

Climate Adaptation Planning for Water Public Forum

September 12, 2024

Welcome

Liz Crosson

Chief Sustainability, Resilience, and
Innovation Officer



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions (10 AM)
- Presentation on CAMP4W (10:25 AM)
- Forum Sessions on Priorities, Partnerships & Community Engagement (10:45 AM)
- On-site Lunch (12 PM)
- Keynote Address (12:30 PM)

Let's learn more about each other.
Take out your phones.



Join at <https://www.menti.com/>
Use code 1719 5603

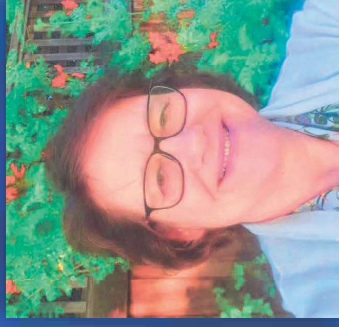


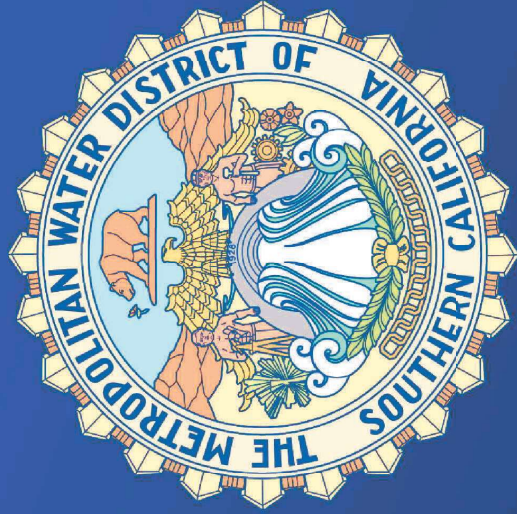
Overview_

Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water

Carolyn Schaffer

Sustainability and Resilience
Section Manager





Public Forum

Climate Adaptation Planning for Water

September 12, 2024

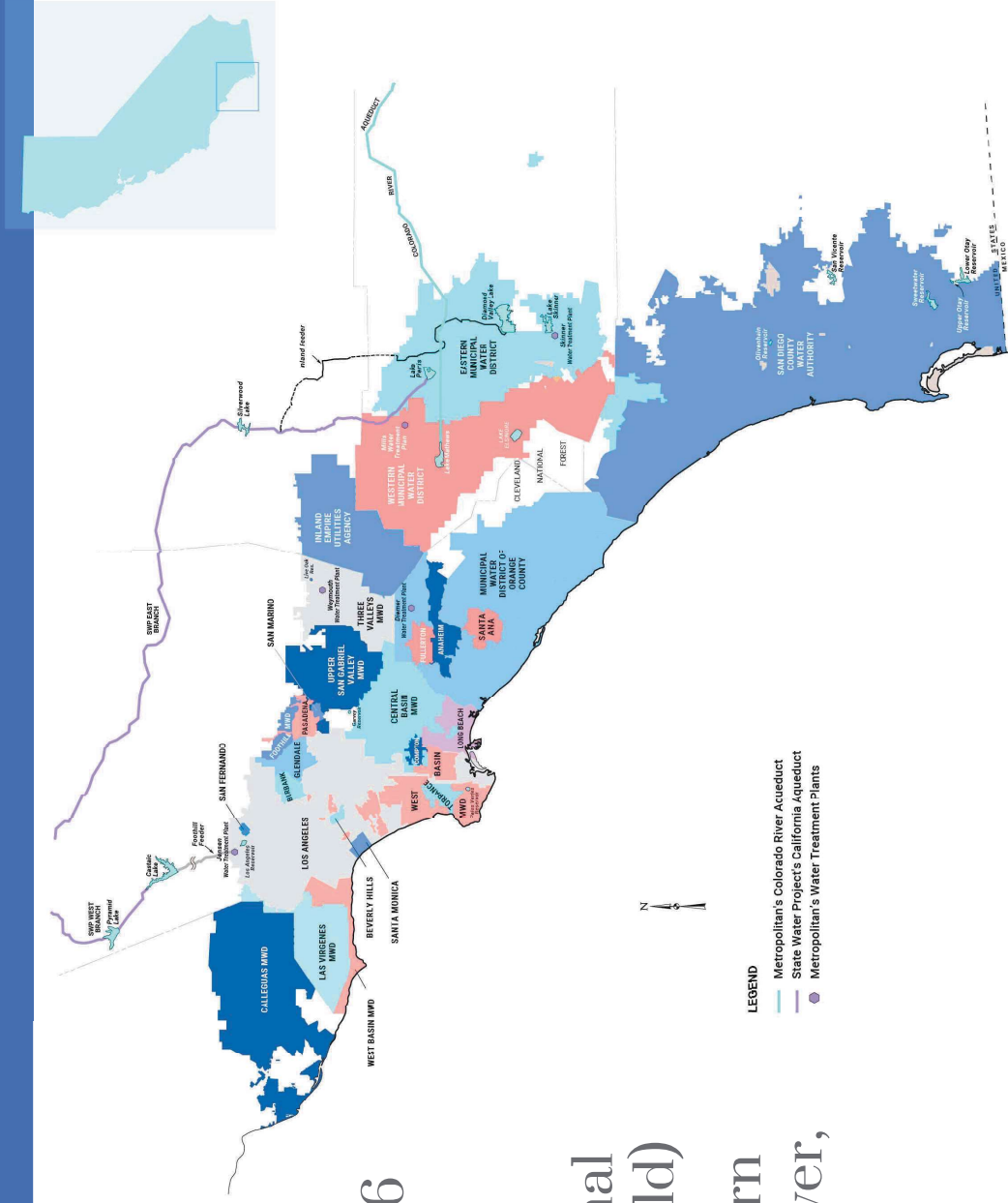


CAMP4W

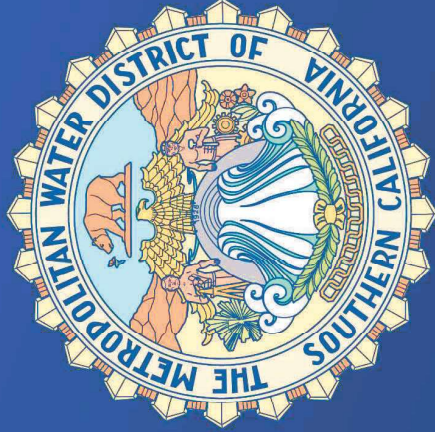
Climate Adaptation
Master Plan for Water

Metropolitan Overview

- Nation's largest wholesale water provider
- 5,200 square miles throughout 6 counties
- 19 million people through 26 public member water agencies
- Supports \$1.6 trillion regional economy (11th largest in world)
- Imports water from Northern Sierra and the Colorado River, invests in local projects & conservation

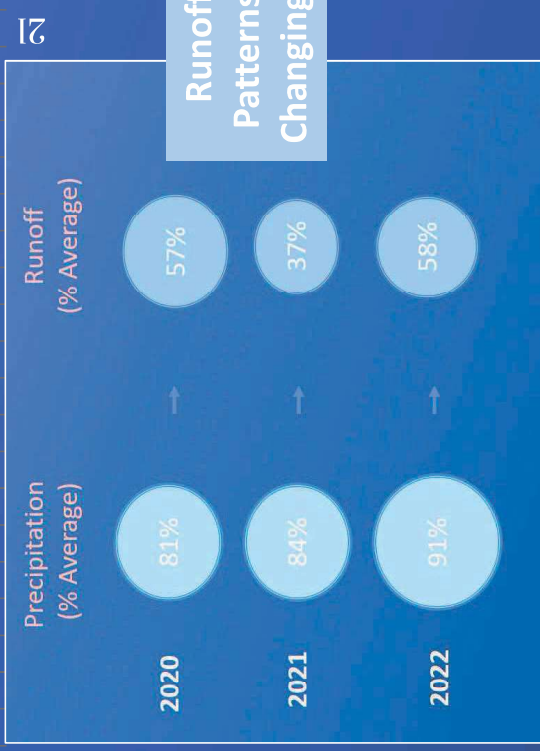
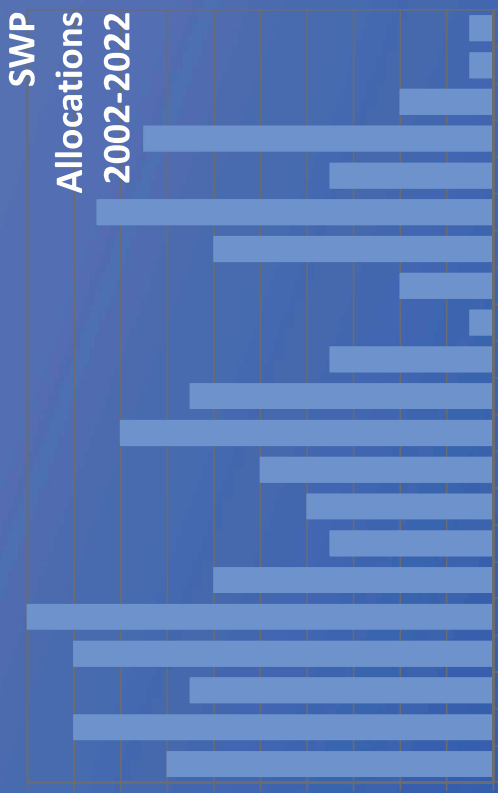
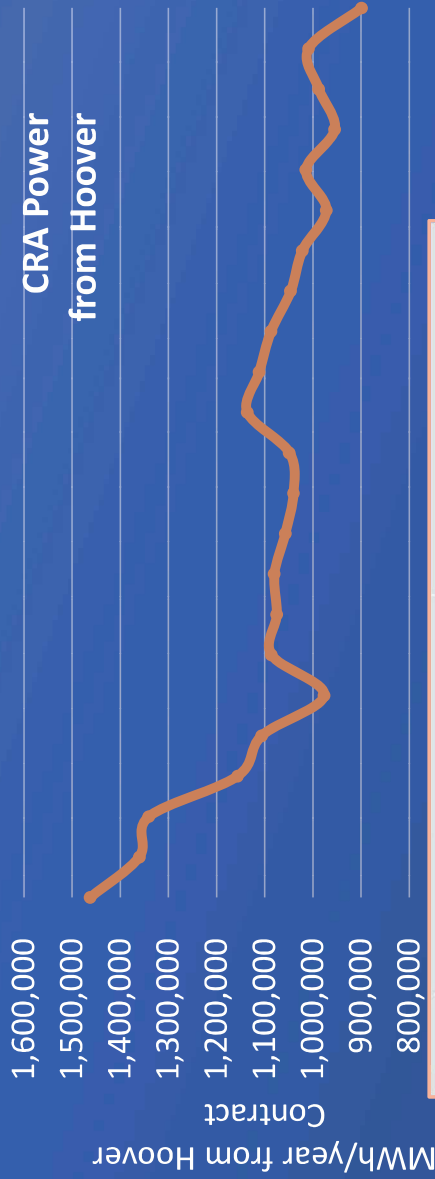


Mission Driven

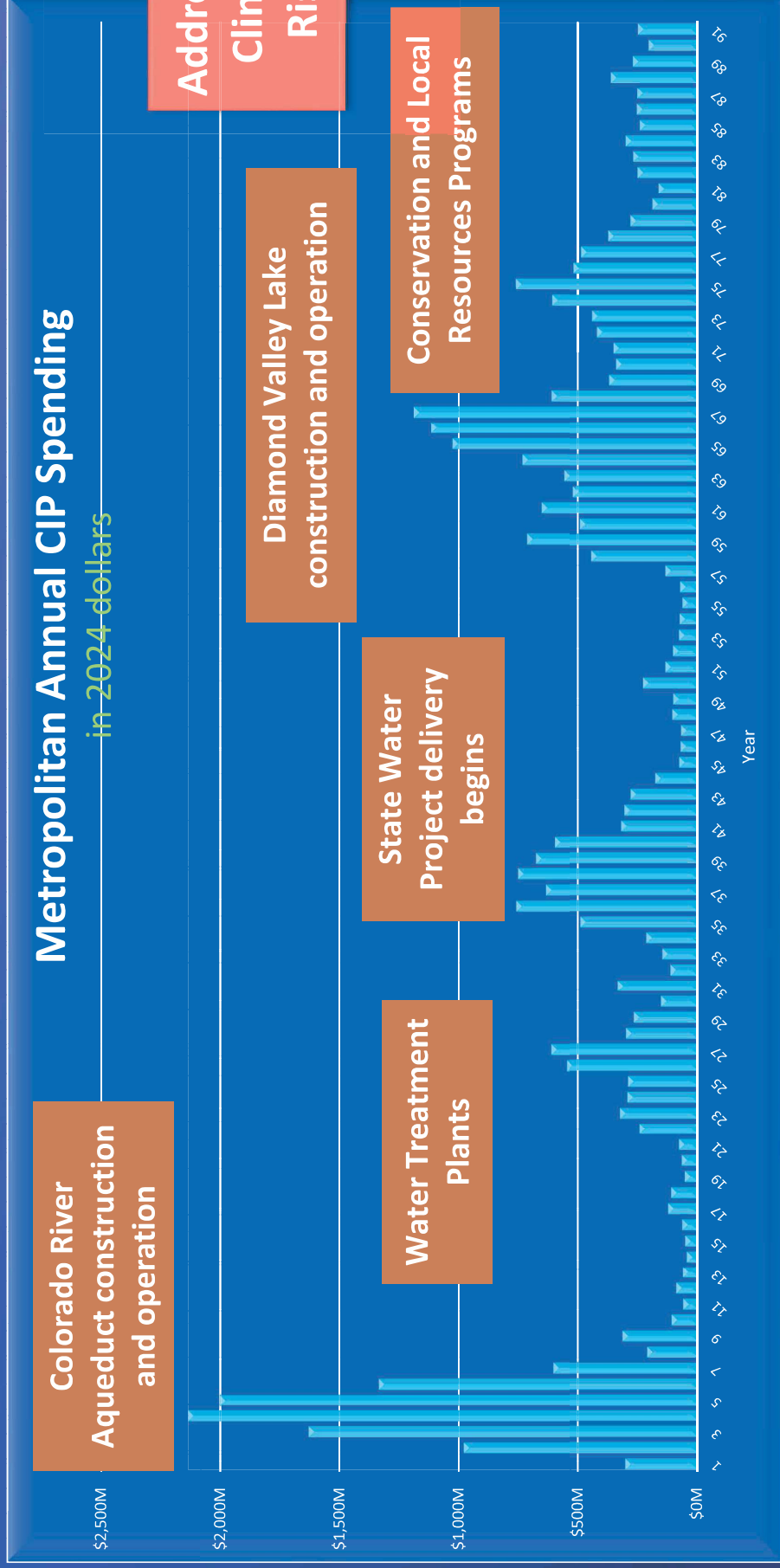


The mission of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is to provide its service area with adequate and reliable supplies of high-quality water to meet present and future needs in an environmentally and economically responsible way.

Climate Impacts on Operations and Water Supply



History of Investing in Reliability



CAMP4W Objectives

WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY



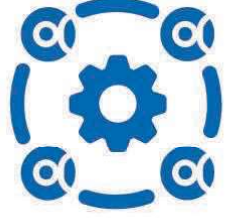
Increasing Water Efficiency



Expanding Water Supply Portfolio



Regional Water Banking & Storage



Improving Access to Water Delivery Systems



Increasing System Resilience

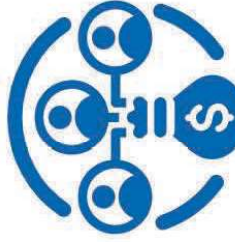
FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY



Maintaining Affordable Water Rates



Sound Investments



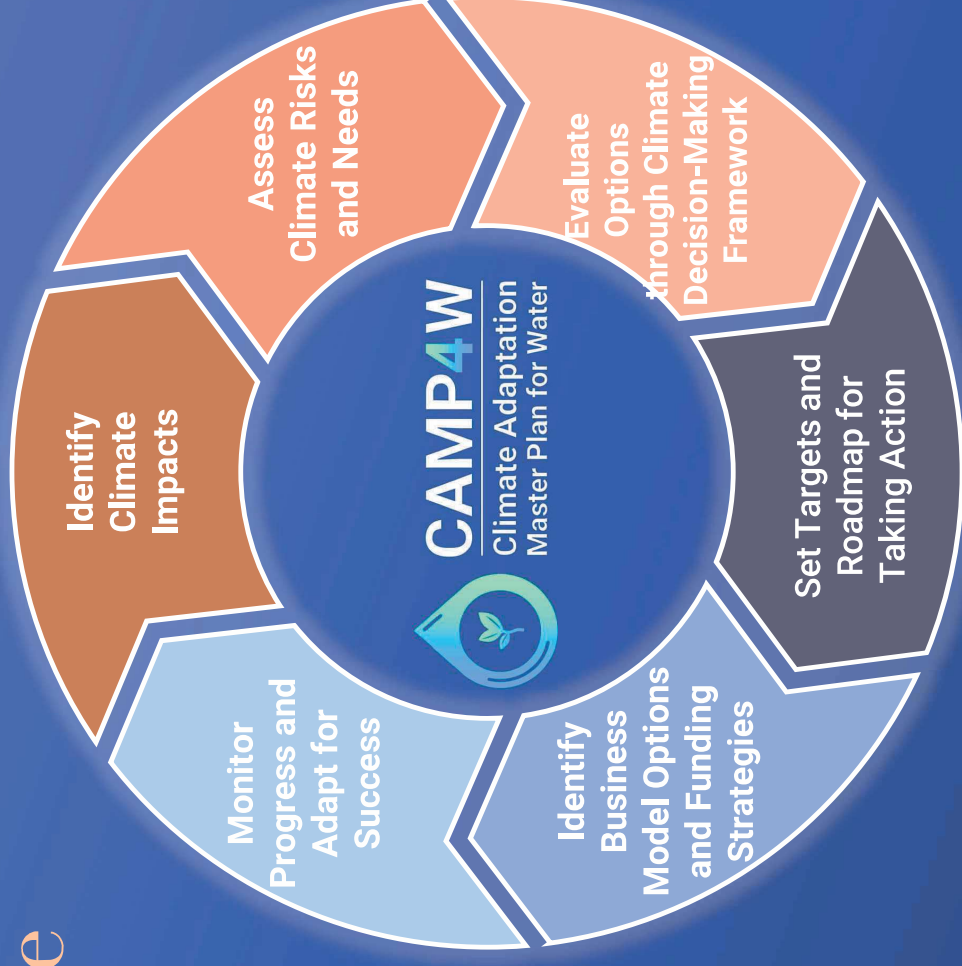
Project Cost-Sharing



Regional Partnerships

A comprehensive, adaptive planning process

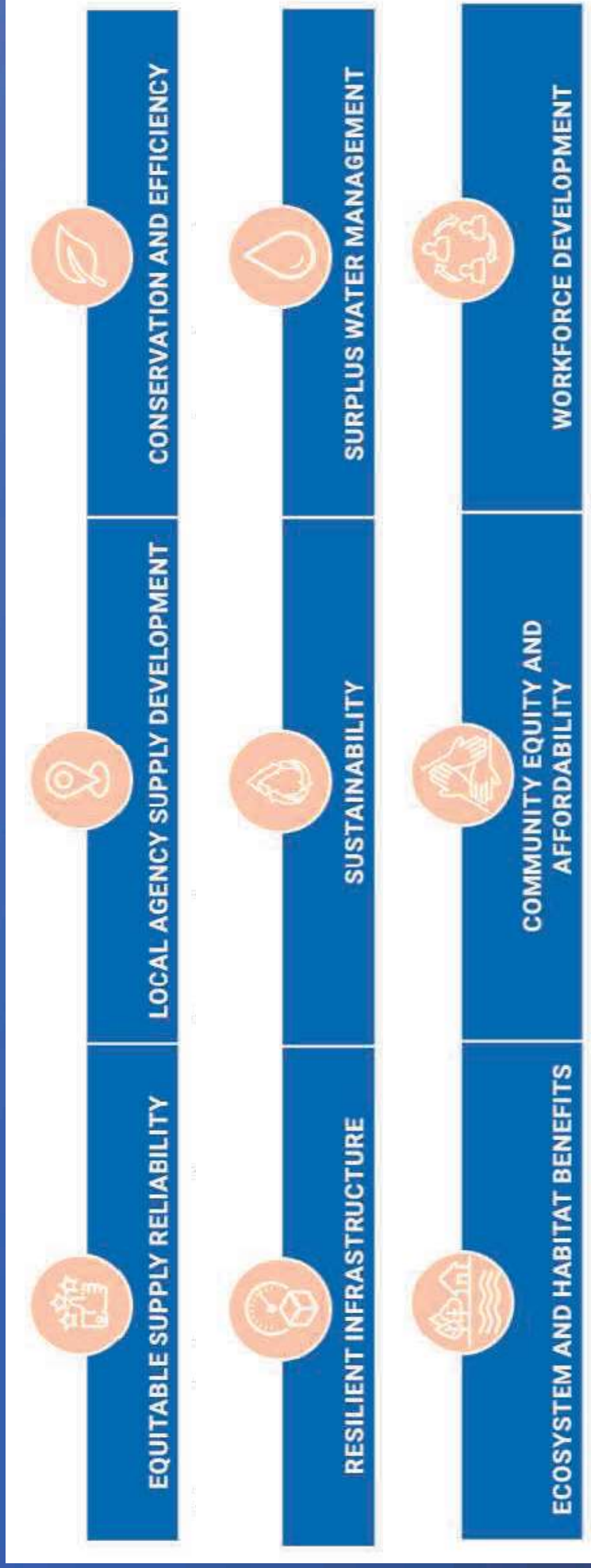
- Climate and Growth Scenarios
- Time-bound Targets
- Framework for Climate Decision-Making and Reporting
- Policies, Initiatives, and Partnerships
- Business Models and Funding Strategies



MWD Board Priorities



Policies & Initiatives: Shaping Our Future



Policies & Initiatives



- Contribute to long-term environmental sustainability:
- Reduce our GHG emissions
 - Increase energy and water efficiency
 - Pursue renewable energy
 - Reduce waste

CAMP4W Public Forum



- Drive investments to make the ecosystem more resilient to:
- Fires, flood, other risks
 - Protect water quality coming from the watershed
 - Influence supply reliability
 - Protect water infrastructure

Slide 15

Policies & Initiatives



Commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion:

- Mitigating impacts to disadvantaged communities
- Engaging underrepresented communities in workforce development
- Consider affordability and Metropolitan’s role as a water wholesaler



Making conservation a California way of life:

- Conservation and efficiency to achieve long-term goals for reliability, resilience and financial sustainability

Your Ideas

Shaping our Future Together

What water issues or concerns would you like to see prioritized?

What types of partnerships or collaborations could be successful in addressing these issues?



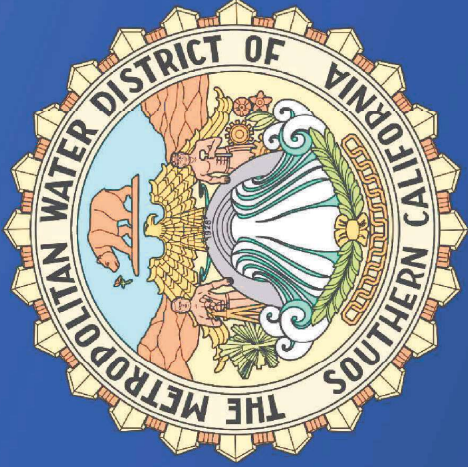
September 12, 2024

CAMP4W Public Forum

Slide 17

Process for Climate Adaptation Policy, Initiatives, and Partnerships Development





CAMP4W

Climate Adaptation
Master Plan for Water

Thank you!

www.mwdh2o.com/camp4w



Discussion in small groups_

Breakout Session One

What water issues or concerns would you like to see prioritized?

- Please take 10 minutes to discuss in your groups
- Select a notetaker and a spokesperson
- We will return and share thoughts

Discussion in small groups_

Breakout Session Two

What types of partnerships or collaborations could be successful in addressing these issues?

- Please take 10 minutes to discuss in your groups
- Select a notetaker and a spokesperson
- We will return and share thoughts

Lunch
Please return at 12:25 p.m.

Remarks

Chairman Adán Ortega, Jr
Board of Directors, Metropolitan Water District of
Southern California



Keynote Speakers:
Tianna Shaw-Wakeman and Zoe Cunliffe

Co-leaders of the Environmental Justice Program at
Black Women for Wellness



MWD Public Forum 2024:

Water Equity:
An Environmental
and Reproductive
Justice Issue





Acknowledgement & Beyond

Today & always, I want to acknowledge the original and rightful stewards of the land we are currently on - the Gabrielino-Tongva Nation. These peoples have been residents of the Los Angeles Basin for 7,000 years and are still here. After displacement, enslavement, broken treaties, and land theft perpetuated by colonizers, the Gabrielino-Tongva tribe has been indescribably harmed and this harm perpetuates. We must all move beyond acknowledgement and toward reparations, returning land and rights, and building authentic relationships with the current representatives of the Gabrielino-Tongva community.

In addition to these truths, I want to uplift that this country was built on the free and enslaved labor of stolen African people. Black Americans hold this history, feel its legacy in current policy that upholds systemic racism, and deserve repair.

Learn more: <https://gabrielinotribe.org/>



Agenda



Introductions,
and the
connection
between EJ & RJ



BWW's water
equity work



Climate adaptation,
water equity, and
community input



1. Introductions & the EJ/RJ connection

Black Women for Wellness

Mission Statement:

Black Women for Wellness, a 501 c(3) non-profit, is committed to the *health and well-being* of Black women and girls through health education, empowerment and advocacy.



Programs:

- Reproductive Justice
- Get Smart B4 U Get Sexy
- Grown & Sexy
- Maternal & Infant Health
- Sisters@8
- Kitchen Divas & Food Distribution
- Voting Rules Everyone Around Me
- Diabetes Prevention Program
- BWWAP
- **Environmental Justice**

Environmental Justice Team

Built Environment Initiatives:

- **Water equity**
- STAND LA
- Plastics Pollution
- Green Social Housing

Beauty Justice Initiatives:

- Research: Taking Stock, Salon Product Labeling, Natural haircare
- Empowerment: Curls & Conversations, Breast health education
- Advocacy: Safer Beauty Bill Package, J&J, Occupational Health of Salon Workers



Dr. Astrid Williams

EJ & RJ connection

Environmental Justice holds that all communities deserve equal protection from environmental harms – especially historically overburdened communities!



Reproductive Justice demands:

1. The right to have a child.
2. The right not to have a child.
- 3. The right to parent the children we have in safe and healthy conditions regardless of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability, or economic condition.**
4. The right to bodily autonomy.



Water equity is an EJ and RJ issue

Water equity requires that everyone, regardless of race or income, has access to safe, clean, and affordable water.

- **An EJ issue** - communities of color are disproportionately affected by water inequity
 - More likely to carry water debt and face shutoffs
 - Water infrastructure affected by historical disinvestment and redlining
 - Likely to live in less climate resilient neighborhoods
- **An RJ issue** - lack of access to clean water affects fertility, healthy pregnancies, and the ability to raise children in safe conditions





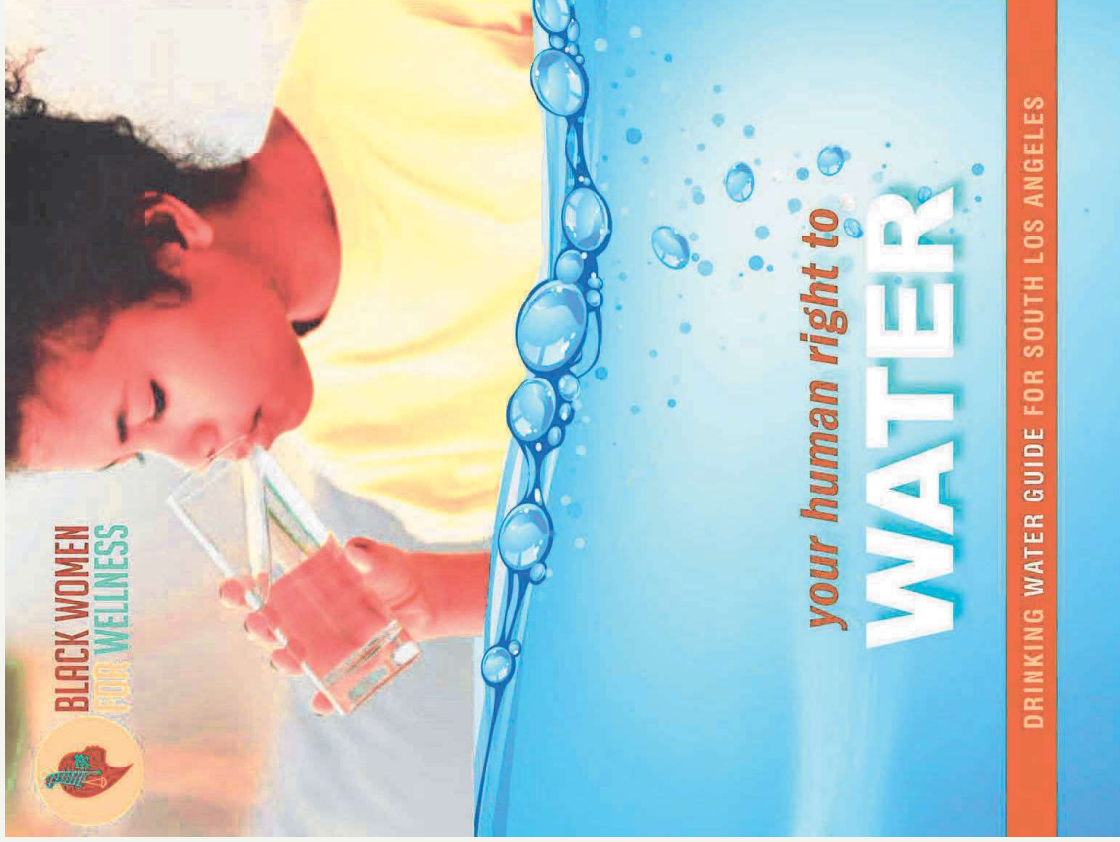
2. BWW's water equity work

BWW's water equity work

BWW's EJ team has been working on water equity since 2022. Our work has included:

1. Assessing community needs
 - a. Phone banking and canvassing
 - b. Community workshops/town halls
2. Development of public education resources
 - a. Water equity 1 pager
 - b. Drinking Water Guide for South Los Angeles
3. Educational outreach
 - a. Water Guide canvassing & public ed
 - b. Further workshops
4. Advocacy
 - a. LA County's Safe Clean Water Program





bwwla.org/a-water-guide-for-south-la/



The guide has 2 major sections, each section has many QR codes & links to extra resources:

1. **Section 1.** Context and History of our Drinking Water
 - i. In the US
 - ii. In CA, and South LA

2. **Section 2.** What Can You Do?
 - i. Water quality
 - ii. Water affordability
 - iii. Tap water vs bottled water

Canvassing Results

Some high level takeaways from our initial 2022 water equity canvas of 750+ Black households in South LA:

- Two thirds of those surveyed do not trust their tap water
- 35% indicated they have trouble affording their water bill
- 84% of households in South LA rely to some degree on bottled water
- 74% of those surveyed want to understand their water better, and want policy advocacy that would support safer drinking water
- Most people surveyed didn't know where to go with questions about their tap water quality, or about financial assistance



3. Climate adaptation, water equity, and community involvement

Climate adaptation is necessary for water equity

- Many climate related factors are obstacles to water equity:
 - Climate whiplash
 - The unpredictability of water supplies
 - LA's dependence on imported water
- Due to environmental racism, if our water systems *do not* adapt, low-income communities of color are more likely to be denied their human right to water

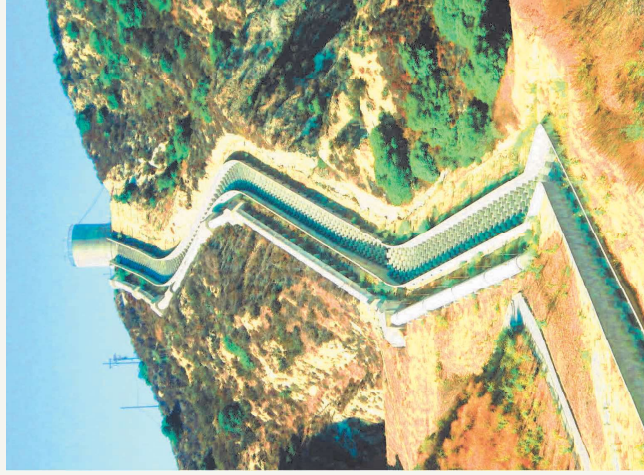


Community involvement in climate adaptation

Local residents deserve to have their voices heard about climate health and water quality issues - **especially communities who have been historically harmed, and continue to be harmed!**

BWW members consistently share concerns about water and climate:

- In 2023, 75% of surveyed residents expressed concern about water quality & 57% about climate change in general; and 95% said climate change impacted their lives
- In 2024, community priorities for water infrastructure projects were improving drinking water quality (92% said this) and water conservation (62%)



Moving Forward

MWD:

- Reparative Justice as a model
- Southern California Indigenous communities & local Water Protectors should be centered
- Disinvested in & under resourced communities should be catered to

Community Members:

- Take space - both those offered & demanded.
- Believe in your human right to water - it is yours!



Thank you!

[@bw4wla / bwwla.org](https://www.bwwla.com) / tianna@bwwla.com / zoe@bwwla.com



Join Black Women for Wellness to chat about your water quality, and learn where your water in South LA comes from.

Sisters @ Fight

Let's Talk About It:
Clean Water for Reproductive Freedom

In Person, September 13th 2024:
9:30-11:30AM PT

Department of Power's Community Room
4030 Crenshaw Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90008

RSVP required!



SISTERS @ FIGHT

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Wrap-up:
Thank you for coming!

Stay Connected

For more information:

- Visit our website at www.mwdh2o.com/camp4w
- Sign up for our e-mail updates
- Email us at camp4water@mwdh2o.com

