Leadership Today. Water Tomorrow.

THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California was born out of the need to provide a reliable water supply to a growing Southern California. Metropolitan has met that challenge, in the face of extraordinary regional growth, historic droughts and now, climate change. As the largest supplier of treated water in the country, Metropolitan delivers water to 26 member agencies that serve 19 million people across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties. Metropolitan is grounded through wise investments, innovative thinking and leadership from its 38-member board.

Metropolitan was established in 1928 to build and operate the Colorado River Aqueduct to deliver much-needed water from the Colorado River across the desert to a growing Southland. In the depths of the Great Depression, Southern Californians voted for a major bond to fund the herculean construction effort.

The post-World War II boom prompted a huge expansion of the service area as new cities sought additional water supplies. In 1960, Metropolitan worked with other public water agencies and the state to build the State Water Project, including the California Aqueduct to deliver water from Northern California.

Learning hard-earned lessons from droughts in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, Metropolitan committed itself to diversifying its water portfolio and developed an Integrated Water Resources Plan that emphasizes conservation and development of local supplies.

In 1999, Metropolitan finished construction of the largest reservoir in Southern California, to store water from wet years that can be relied upon in dry times, and help secure a six-month emergency supply for the region.

As the Colorado River has been gripped by a prolonged drought, Metropolitan maintained the reliability of this important source of water through the development of an innovative mix of exchange, transfer and storage agreements.

Metropolitan continues to pursue supply reliability solutions with the development of a major water recycling project in partnership with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County and support for local projects throughout the region.

Metropolitan’s proud legacy and forward-looking leadership has brought regional value to Southern California for decades and has positioned the region to meet tomorrow’s water challenges.
Metropolitan’s service area is home to:
1 of 2 Californians and
1 of 17 Americans
Metropolitan built and maintains a water supply system that is the cornerstone of the region's $1.3 trillion economy.

» To supply more than 300 cities and unincorporated areas in Southern California with reliable and safe water, Metropolitan owns and operates an extensive water system that includes three major reservoirs, six smaller reservoirs, 830 miles of large-scale pipes, about 400 connections to member agencies, 16 hydroelectric facilities and five water treatment plants.

» Metropolitan’s water supplies come from two main sources. The State Water Project delivers about 30 percent of the region’s water from Northern California through the California Aqueduct, and Metropolitan’s Colorado River Aqueduct delivers about 25 percent of the region’s water supply through its 242-mile system of canals, tunnels and siphons. Metropolitan is working hard to ensure the reliability of both sources.

» Metropolitan strongly supports the state of California’s plan to modernize the State Water Project’s delivery system in the Delta to improve water quality, reliability and the Delta environment using new intakes in the north Delta and a tunnel to move water.

» Metropolitan worked with other states and water agencies on the Colorado River to approve the Drought Contingency Plan to ensure those supplies remain reliable. Managing water supply conditions and adapting to climate change has prompted opportunities to create new partnerships including a land fallowing agreement and agricultural conservation program in the Palo Verde Valley that benefits both urban areas and farmers.

» Metropolitan and its member agencies invest in local resources, including groundwater recharge and cleanup, stormwater capture, desalting projects and water recycling. Conservation programs help reduce water demands.
Metropolitan delivers an average of 1.5 billion gallons of water per day.
Safeguarding the quality of the Southland’s drinking water is core to Metropolitan’s mission and essential to protecting public health.

» Metropolitan is a national leader in treating and providing safe drinking water that meets or exceeds stringent state and federal water quality standards.

» Metropolitan owns and operates five treatment plants, among the largest in the world, that can produce billions of gallons of high-quality drinking water every day.

» Thanks to a system-wide retrofit completed in 2017, Metropolitan’s treatment plants now use ozone as the primary disinfectant. This process is more effective than traditional chlorine disinfection because it improves and protects the quality of drinking water and reduces disinfection byproducts associated with chlorination.

» Metropolitan’s scientists are nationally known for developing innovative methods for the early detection of constituents of concern. At Metropolitan’s state-of-the-art water quality laboratory in La Verne, Metropolitan also plays a significant role in developing future regulatory requirements.

» Metropolitan relies on both advanced technology and the human senses to detect constituents in water that have potential health as well as taste and odor impacts. A Flavor Profile Panel, comprised of specially trained staff, routinely taste and smell water gathered from throughout the distribution system for early detection of issues.

» By making investments in watershed protection programs, Metropolitan safeguards its source waters of the Colorado River and State Water Project, helping to prevent contaminants from entering the distribution system.

» Invasive species in the watershed can have significant effects on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health, so Metropolitan supports programs and coordinated efforts to prevent and manage the spread of quagga and zebra mussels, and other non-native species.
Each year, Metropolitan conducts 250,000 drinking water tests and monitors daily for 400 constituents.
As a major steward of the region’s water supply resources, Metropolitan is committed to a comprehensive planning process that addresses climate change impacts and ensures greater water supply reliability.

» Metropolitan strategically plans to **effectively manage water** system operations and infrastructure to ensure the sustainability of communities, businesses and the natural environment throughout Southern California today and in the future.

» Over the past decade, California has had eight drought years. If not for Metropolitan’s **smart planning**, including building Diamond Valley Lake – Southern California’s largest reservoir – the region would have faced severe shortages. Today, work continues to assess the region’s storage capabilities to identify what new investments are needed.

» As an agency responsible for delivering water in one of the world’s most seismically active regions, Metropolitan has a comprehensive plan to enhance the **resiliency of infrastructure** and water deliveries in response to earthquakes.

» Planning for tomorrow’s water needs is done with an ever evolving **long-term water strategy** known as the Integrated Water Resources Plan. The plan is regularly updated in a transparent, collaborative process involving member agencies and hundreds of stakeholders.

» The latest IRP update continues decades of work to **diversify the region’s water portfolio** by maintaining the reliability of imported supplies, expanding local supply development and reducing demand through conservation and water-use efficiency initiatives. It sets targets to:
  
  - Increase water conservation savings with a greater emphasis on outdoor water efficiency
  - Develop local supplies, including groundwater management, desalination and recycling, while exploring how stormwater capture can help
  - Maintain Colorado River Aqueduct supplies and stabilize State Water Project supplies
  - Maximize the effectiveness of water storage
Metropolitan and its member agencies deliver less water today to serve nearly 19 million people than in 1990 when the region had 14 million people, thanks to investments in conservation and local resources.
Metropolitan Invests

With a history of responsible fiscal management, Metropolitan is investing to meet the demands of a growing Southern California and its $1.3 trillion economy.

» To keep Metropolitan’s vast water delivery system running smoothly and able to meet Southern California’s water demands, the district makes forward-thinking investments – in supplies, in storage, in conservation and in infrastructure. These strategically important programs together provide Metropolitan operational flexibility to store water when it is available to provide later in dry years.

» Water rates are set to recover the cost of providing water service in an open and transparent public process as part of the biennial budget.

» The most recent $1.7 billion budget (FY 2018-19, FY 2019-20) includes capital spending of more than $500 million, largely to rehabilitate existing facilities so they are well-maintained, reliable and seismically sound.

» Among some of Metropolitan’s largest strategic investments in recent years:

  STORAGE: Metropolitan has developed more than 5.5 million acre-feet of storage capacity – a 13 times increase in capacity since 1990.

  INLAND FEEDER: Through the completion of the 43-mile Inland Feeder water line in 2009, Metropolitan can refill Diamond Valley Lake rapidly to take advantage of wet years and maximize the flexibility of the Southland’s water system.

  SUCCESSION PLANNING: Metropolitan has an ongoing, dynamic effort to ensure the strongest possible future for Metropolitan by tapping the best talent, training employees, and developing leaders for the future.

  REGIONAL RECYCLED WATER PROGRAM: In partnership with the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, a demonstration facility in Carson has been built to test new treatment methods to purify wastewater. The facility could pave the way for one of the nation’s largest water recycling facilities.

  FUTURE SUPPLIES PROGRAM: Metropolitan helps fund research projects for future production of recycled water, seawater desalination, groundwater recovery and local stormwater.
Because of its fiscal integrity and sound business practices, Metropolitan maintains some of the nation’s highest credit ratings among government agencies.
Since the 1990s, investments of more than $1 billion in conservation and recycled water have led to a more than 35 percent reduction in per capita potable water use.

» At the urging of Metropolitan and its member agencies, the California Legislature in 2009 mandated that urban retail water providers achieve a 20 percent per capita reduction in potable water use by the year 2020. To meet this goal, Metropolitan’s Board of Directors adopted a Long-Term Conservation Plan, developed in collaboration with its member agencies, retail agencies and other stakeholders.

» Over the years, Metropolitan has invested nearly $800 million in conservation programs, including rebates for toilets, turf removal, sprinklers and smart irrigation controllers and custom efficiency projects for the region’s businesses and industries.

» Southern Californians have made conservation a sustainable way of life by cutting average per capita potable water use from about 205 gallons per day in 1990 to about 130 gallons per day now.

» While early conservation efforts greatly improved indoor water use, Metropolitan is now focusing on outdoor savings, and in a big way – launching the nation’s largest turf removal program in 2015 and removing more than 160 million square feet of lawn.

» Metropolitan’s commitment to conservation is bolstered through strong strategic partnerships with schools, universities, community groups, environmental organizations, and energy utilities.

» Metropolitan’s award-winning advertising and outreach campaign provides important water conservation messages in six languages. The campaign features advertising on television, radio, outdoor signs, bus and train wraps, social and digital media, and high-profile special events including using the iconic Randy’s Donuts and Santa Monica Pier Ferris Wheel, and partnerships with major league sports teams to attract public and media attention.

» Lower water demands benefit the region’s long-term water reliability, an important hedge against drought periods and climate change. This speaks to the continued commitment of Southland consumers to use less water.
Cumulative water savings since 1990 from conservation is close to 3 million acre-feet of water.
Metropolitan’s commitment to environmental stewardship is reflected in everything it does – from producing and using renewable energy, to investing in ecosystem protection and restoration, to promoting sustainable landscapes.

» Four large-scale nature reserves totaling more than 30,000 acres in Riverside County and about 28,000 acres of protected open space in Orange County are cornerstones of Metropolitan’s investments in environmental stewardship in its service area.

» As part of its role in the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation program, Metropolitan has contributed funding and expertise for the preservation of more than 8,000 acres of riparian, marsh and backwater habitats. The latest addition is the Dennis Underwood Conservation Area, named for the former Metropolitan general manager, which adds 635 acres for natural habitat.

» With an investment of tens of millions of dollars annually for environmental and science-based activities in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Metropolitan supports research to improve water supply reliability, protect Delta smelt and other native species, and restore the Delta ecosystem.

» Metropolitan was the first agency to join the California Climate Change Action Registry and is now developing a district-wide Climate Action Plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Metropolitan is also supporting other climate programs, including the California Resilience Challenge – a statewide effort to build local resilience to climate change.

» To reduce its carbon footprint, Metropolitan has invested in 16 hydroelectric power plants and four major solar energy projects.

» A sustainability initiative helped achieve a LEED certification for Metropolitan’s Headquarters building and an ENERGY STAR score of 97/100. Other sustainability activities include Metropolitan’s hybrid transportation fleet, electric vehicle charging stations, proximity to public transportation and employee rideshare programs.
Metropolitan helps manage four multi-species ecological reserves spanning 30,000 acres.
Nearly a century ago, Metropolitan built the Colorado River Aqueduct, an unparalleled engineering feat at the time. In the decades since, Metropolitan has been a leader in the water industry, not just for the size and scale of its projects, but for its innovative solutions and creative thinking to deliver, protect and treat drinking water.

Today, that drive to innovate and meet future challenges is stronger than ever.

- Metropolitan drives water innovation not only in its own operations, but also with entrepreneurs across the country through collaboration, outreach and new technologies.

- An online incubator run by Metropolitan links the innovation community with water industry professionals, entrepreneurs, and investors. The program has more than 750 participants.

- The Water Savings Incentive Program encourages innovation at commercial, industrial and agricultural facilities. More than 125 facilities have received funding for customized projects that have resulted in nearly 30,000 acre-feet of water savings.

- Metropolitan representatives regularly meet with international delegations as well as leading water utilities from across the nation to discuss opportunities to advance innovative ideas and products.

- A Technology Feedback Forum offers innovators and entrepreneurs an opportunity to pitch new technologies or services, and receive helpful information to improve the marketability and application of their projects.

- Metropolitan regularly embraces innovative technologies to improve Metropolitan’s business and outreach practices, such as drones for facility inspections and surveys, virtual reality as an educational tool, and 3D printers to model new equipment and procedures.

- Metropolitan has committed nearly $1 million in funding for a multi-million program to support water reuse research.
History tells the story of innovation at Metropolitan from its very founding - created as unique regional agency without political boundaries working together for shared goals.
Metropolitan’s two primary sources of water are the Colorado River and State Water Project.
Our mission 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.