
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

External Affairs builds awareness and support for Metropolitan's mission and programs by directing the media and stakeholder communication initiatives, public outreach and education programs, legislative activities, and member agency services.

PROGRAMS

External Affairs is responsible for advancing Metropolitan's policy objectives and communicating with external audiences on its behalf. Because Metropolitan's water supplies and operations are influenced significantly by state, federal and even international policy, External Affairs manages strategic offices in Sacramento, Washington, D.C. and San Diego, and conducts its core business at the Union Station headquarters. Personnel in External Affairs' remote offices execute Metropolitan's state and federal legislative advocacy, provide strategic counsel and extend community outreach to these regions. Personnel at the Union Station office give voice to Metropolitan's policy priorities and project initiatives through external communications, regional outreach and educational initiatives in support of the General Manager's business plan.

Office of Group Manager oversees the Legislative Services, Conservation & Community Services, Media & Communications Sections, Customer Services Unit and the Business Management Team. The Group Manager directs the activities of the group, establishes the communication plans, and manages and deploys resources in support of Metropolitan's policy objectives in coordination with the board, executive management and other groups in the organization.

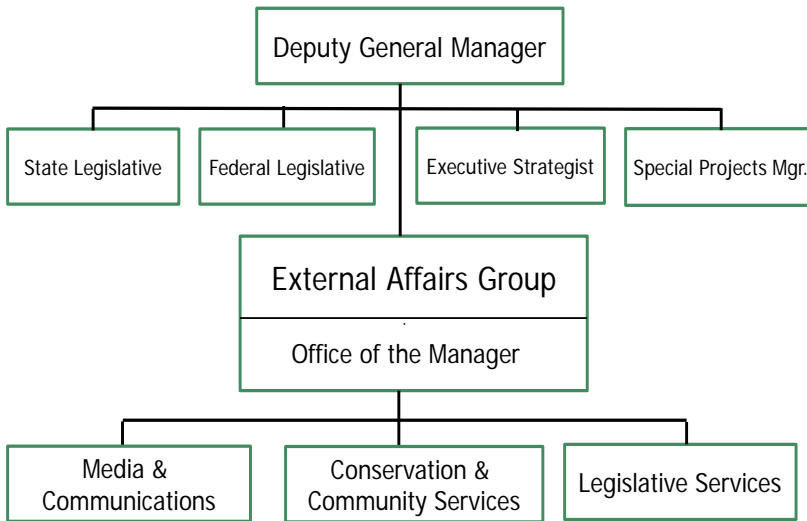
The Customer Services Unit, which reports directly to the Group Manager, provides support services to member agencies; manages outreach efforts regarding Metropolitan's facility operations, construction activities, conservation and other water resource initiatives; works with and supports member agencies, local government and the community-at-large; provides staff support for the Agriculture and Industry Relations Committee; and directs research efforts to support External Affairs programs.

Media & Communications develops, coordinates and communicates messages, information and achievements to support Metropolitan's key objectives and programs. The section is responsible for strategic communications planning, handling media inquiries and press conferences; developing news releases, videos, fact sheets, talking points, brochures and opinion pieces; and managing Metropolitan's websites, e-newsletters, blogs and its growing presence on social media platforms.

Conservation and Community Services advances public awareness through advertising, education and community outreach. The Community Programs Unit coordinates and manages Metropolitan's sponsorships for education and research programs, exhibits, water forums, events, and community memberships. The Education Unit develops and distributes printed and online materials to support a comprehensive, standards-based water education curriculum and oversees programs that support Metropolitan's initiatives for students and teaching staff in elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities.

Legislative Services promotes and protects the interests of Metropolitan and its member agencies before executive, legislative, and regulatory agencies of the state and federal governments. The section advances

Metropolitan’s policy objectives and board-adopted legislative priorities with legislators and other water policymakers to meet Metropolitan’s legislative and regulatory objectives, and supports an effective and growing outreach program with member agencies and other stakeholders to mobilize and sustain support for legislative and regulatory policies.



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In FY 2016/17 and FY 2017/18, External Affairs will continue to focus on the following key issues and objectives:

Legislative Policy Objectives

- Work with the board, member agencies and executive management to secure support for and/or sponsor federal and state legislation and regulatory policies that advance Metropolitan's policy objectives, including strategic water quality and supply initiatives, conservation and drought responses, Delta solutions, regional water resources projects, and sustainable water and energy management.
- Conduct briefings, presentations, and inspection trips for elected officials, government leaders and environmental and business organizations to inform about the impacts of legislative and regulatory policies on Metropolitan operations and the overall management of water programs, policies and sustainability initiatives throughout Southern California.

Communication and Outreach Efforts

- Develop and implement strategic, creative and well-coordinated communication plans to inform the public, businesses, environmental and other stakeholder groups about Metropolitan's important role and leadership to ensure safe, reliable water supplies now and into the future through its operations, policies, objectives, and programs.
- Expand public outreach efforts to disseminate information on Metropolitan and its programs, policies and objectives through broad-based direct contact with the news media and through production of publications, videos, social media/Internet platforms and the Your Water e-newsletter that inform and educate. Continue to develop and utilize cost-effective social, digital and online platforms to provide information to target audiences and engage with stakeholders.
- Strengthen the Community Partnering Program's capacity to enhance communication and information sharing with community leaders, stakeholder groups and the public on water issues and stewardship in communities throughout Southern California.

Water Supply Reliability, Conservation and Sustainability

- Develop and implement paid advertising and other effective outreach campaigns using available resources for multi-cultural and multi-media communications efforts that increase public awareness of drought and water supply conditions and support for long-term conservation strategies.
- Provide communication support for Metropolitan programs and projects that ensure water supply reliability including existing water operations, imported supplies from the Colorado River and State Water Project, local resource programs that diversify the region's water portfolio, expanded conservation actions and innovative water supply technologies.
- Increase awareness of Metropolitan's long-standing efforts to promote environmental stewardship through its actions and investments for projects, programs, research, and collaboration that protect, restore and enhance habitat, ecosystems, watersheds, and water quality.

Bay Delta Initiatives

- Provide information and secure support of stakeholders, the public and legislators for Metropolitan's positions on policies that promote water supply reliability and an environmentally sustainable Bay-Delta. This includes programs and policies related to the California WaterFix and EcoRestore.

Member Agency Support

- Facilitate ongoing communication and coordination between Metropolitan and its member agencies through regular meetings of general managers, legislative and education coordinators and public information officers.
- Respond promptly to member agency requests regarding Metropolitan's services and infrastructure, conservation, environmental and legislative issues, and public outreach.
- Engage in research and related activities that provide accurate and timely information on public opinions, consumer/customer attitudes and awareness to help inform future outreach activities with member agencies, stakeholders and the public.

Board and Committee Activities

- Provide primary support to the Communications and Legislation Committee and the Agriculture and Industry Relations Committee, and ensure that committee presentations, board letters and associated activities such as inspection trips and community events provide timely, accurate, important information on programs, trends and activities that can help inform board actions and ensure transparency.
- Engage in research and related activities that provide accurate and timely information on public opinions, consumer/customer attitudes and awareness to help inform future outreach activities with member agencies, stakeholders and the public.

Educational Programs

- Continue to update and expand distribution of Metropolitan's comprehensive K-12 water education curriculum that meets state standards for each grade level in the areas of science, math, language arts and social studies.
- In coordination with member agencies and the educational community, advance the use of online services and new technologies to reach more students, teachers and classrooms including underserved and culturally diverse populations. Explore opportunities to expand services for all educational levels in traditional classrooms, homeschool and online education services, and after school programs.
- Continue support for Metropolitan's unique educational programs including Solar Cup, World Water Forum and the Student Art Contest.

Emergency Management and Crisis Communication

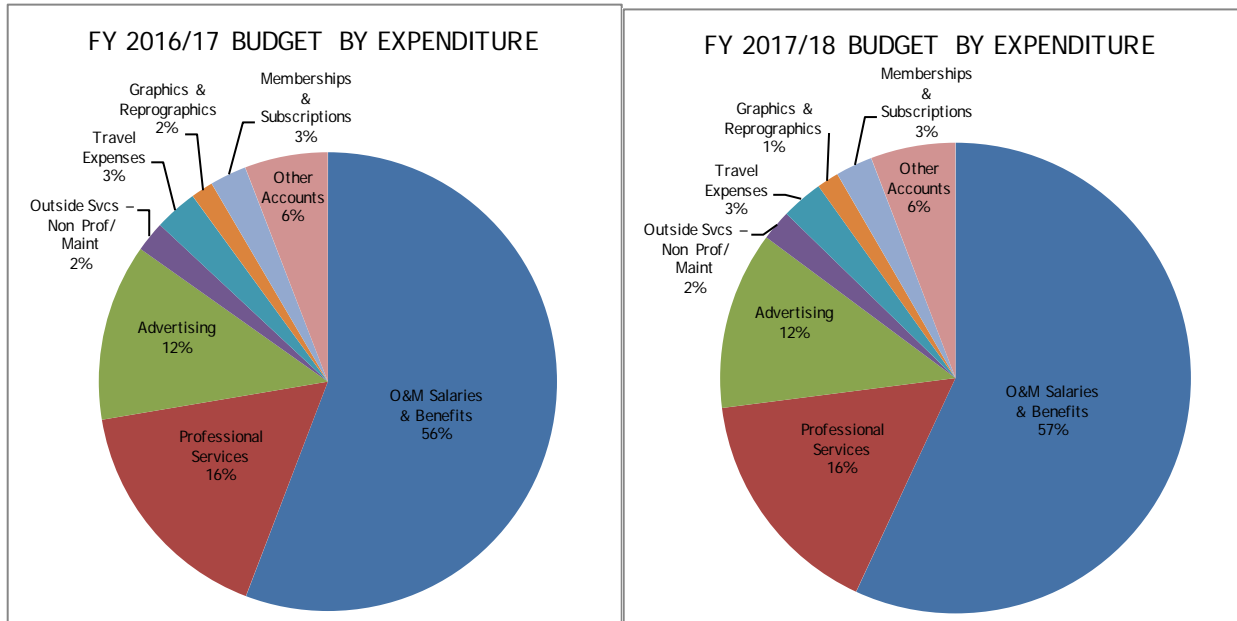
- Support Metropolitan's emergency preparedness with a responsive, updated crisis communications plan and trained staff for emergency response.

- Expand capabilities of social media and other communications technologies to provide essential services to Metropolitan staff and the public during times of emergency and in response to natural and man-made disasters.

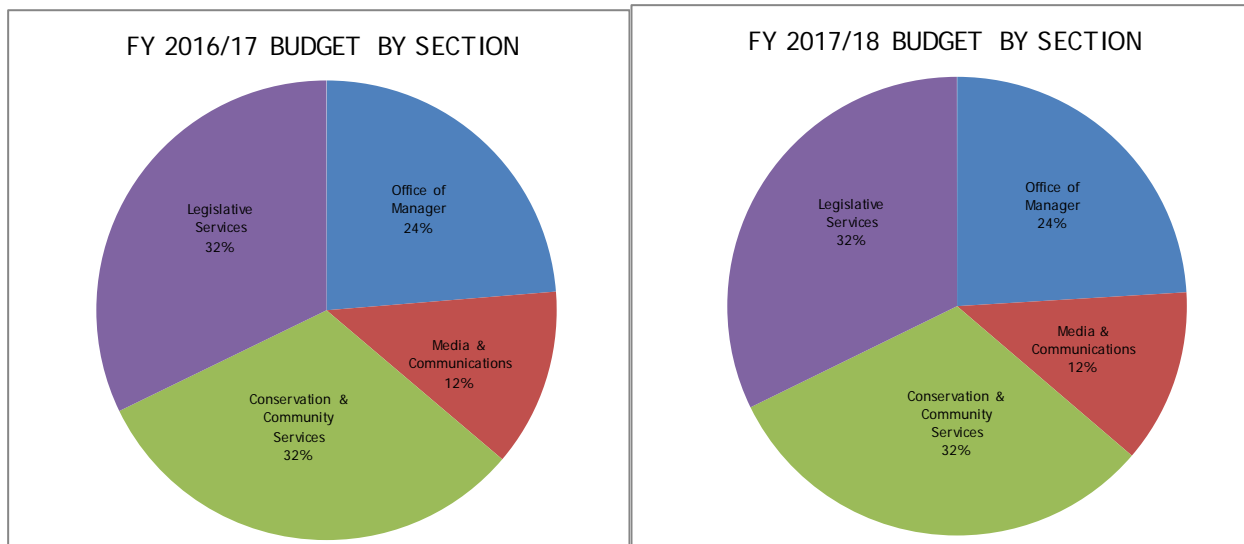
O&M Financial Summary

	2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Proposed	Change from 2015/16	2017/18 Proposed	Change from 2016/17
Total Salaries and Benefits	8,828,900	10,084,300	9,859,700	(224,600)	10,259,900	400,200
Direct Charges to Capital	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total Salaries and Benefits	8,828,900	10,084,300	9,859,700	(224,600)	10,259,900	400,200
% Change		14.2%		(2.2%)		4.1%
Professional Services	2,324,200	2,876,700	2,919,700	43,000	2,889,700	(30,000)
Advertising	1,529,600	3,148,600	2,200,000	(948,600)	2,200,000	—
Memberships & Subscriptions	380,500	379,100	379,100	—	379,100	—
Outside Services - Non Professional / Mainte	461,200	546,400	535,400	(11,000)	514,400	(21,000)
Sponsorships	282,700	282,000	277,000	(5,000)	272,000	(5,000)
Travel Expenses	263,800	436,000	456,000	20,000	456,000	—
Other Accounts	757,300	1,219,000	1,038,500	(180,500)	1,050,500	12,000
Total O&M	14,828,200	18,972,100	17,665,400	(1,306,700)	18,021,600	356,200
% Change		27.9%		(6.9%)		2.0%

Note – Totals may not foot due to rounding.



O&M BUDGET BY SECTION



	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Proposed	Change from 2015/16	2017/18 Proposed	Change from 2016/17	Pers. 15/16	Pers. 16/17	Pers. 17/18
Conservation and Community Services	6,919,965	5,579,372	(1,340,593)	5,670,128	90,755	11	11	11
External Affairs, Office of Manager	4,257,223	4,187,855	(69,368)	4,331,108	143,253	15	15	15
Legislative Services	5,601,830	5,688,680	86,850	5,814,017	125,336	14	14	14
Media and Communications	2,193,086	2,209,450	16,364	2,206,344	(3,106)	8	9	8
Total O&M	18,972,104	17,665,358	(1,306,746)	18,021,597	356,239	48	49	48

Note - Totals may not foot due to rounding.

Personnel Summary

		2014/15 Actual	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Proposed	Change from 2015/16	2017/18 Proposed	Change from 2016/17
Regular	Total	40	48	48	—	48	—
	O&M	39.9	48	48	0	48	0
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0
Temporary	Total	1	—	1	1	—	(1)
	O&M	1.27	0	1	1	0	-1
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Personnel	Total	41	48	49	1	48	(1)
	O&M	41.17	48	49	1	48	-1
	Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0

Note - Totals may not foot due to rounding.

SIGNIFICANT BUDGET ISSUES

External Affairs' biennial budget is \$17.7 million in FY 2016/17 and \$18.0 million in FY 2017/18 or a decrease of 6.9% and an increase of 2.0%, respectively from the prior budget years. In an effort to achieve budget savings, advertising and outreach efforts have been reexamined with the following impacts:

Advertising: In FY 2014/15 and 2015/16, the board authorized a \$5.5 million multi-media and multi-lingual advertising and outreach campaign to promote greater awareness of water conditions and conservation activities. With the currently proposed funding for the next two fiscal years, a limited advertising campaign using on social and digital media, radio and some outdoor advertising could be implemented. To run a full-scale advertising campaign on drought response or other important water management issues, board authorization and additional funding will be necessary in FY 2016/17 and FY 2017/18. That funding has not been identified.

Capital Projects Outreach: Communications and public outreach support for capital improvements and other major operational and policy initiatives, including the Regional Recycled Water Supply program and refurbishment of existing infrastructure such as the Second Lower Feeder and other pipe rehabilitation projects will require funding from the capital projects.

Diamond Valley Lake: External Affairs inherited the responsibility for the exhibits and education materials at the DVL Visitors Center without an O&M budget and the exhibits have fallen into disrepair. To update and maintain the exhibits at DVL Visitors Center at a level of quality consistent with Metropolitan's standards and provide information that engages audiences to discover more about the history and future of water management in Southern California, new funding will be required for the visitor center and activities in the community.

The following are the significant changes by budget year:

FY 2016/17

Personnel-related issues

The number of authorized positions in the External Affairs office will remain at 48, maintaining staffing reductions made since 2008/09 when the group was budgeted for 55 positions. The budget for Salary and Benefits reflects anticipated vacancies from retirements and unfilled positions.

Other

The budget reflects reductions in funding for sponsorship, materials and supplies, advertising, non-professional and graphics to achieve budget savings. These changes have been carefully evaluated to ensure External Affairs will be able to successfully carry out its core mission and objectives in these areas effectively and efficiently.

The budget identifies and redirects existing funding for new research and related activities that provide accurate and timely information on public opinions, consumer/customer attitudes and awareness to help inform future outreach activities with member agencies, stakeholders and the public.

FY2017/18

Personnel-related issues

The budget for Salary and Benefits reflects merit increases and an increase in retirement-related benefits.