



**Metro Commission
&
Metro Wastewater JPA**

2015

Strategic Plan

**Approved
August 6, 2015**

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WHERE SAN DIEGO'S WASTEWATER GOES

In 1960, the population of San Diego County topped 1,000,000, five times the population of 30 years earlier, due primarily to World War II and military build-up. The resulting sanitation issues were severe. In the mid-1950s, the San Diego County Department of Public Health ordered a moratorium on homebuilding in inland communities until septic tanks were replaced by sewer systems. By 1960, the discharge of untreated sewage by cities, industry and the military caused the continuous quarantine of San Diego Bay and heavy pollution in Mission Bay.

In 1963, following three years of construction, the City of San Diego's Metropolitan Wastewater System (METRO System) was put into operation. The system collected wastewater from eight South County and East County communities and the U.S. Navy, treated it at the Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant, and discharged it into the ocean three miles offshore.

Today, 27 wastewater agencies collect and dispose of the wastewater generated by San Diego County's 3.5 million residents. The METRO System collects wastewater generated by 13 of those agencies and serves 2.2 million of those residents over a 450 square mile area, treating an average of 180 million gallons of wastewater per day.

Current Metro Wastewater Agencies

Cities

Chula Vista
Coronado
Del Mar
El Cajon
Imperial Beach
La Mesa
Lemon Grove
National City
Poway
San Diego

Special Districts

Otay Water District
Padre Dam Water District
San Diego County Sanitation District

Metro Wastewater System Map





HOW THE METRO WASTEWATER SYSTEM IS GOVERNED AND MANAGED

The METRO System is governed and managed by a coalition of participating cities and special districts pursuant to the *Regional Wastewater Disposal Agreement* signed in 1998 by the City of San Diego and 12 other jurisdictions called the “Participating Agencies”. Pursuant to the agreement, the Participating Agencies pay their share of the METRO System’s operations and maintenance costs -- approximately 35 percent -- based on the wastewater flow from each agency’s jurisdiction.

The agreement established the METRO Commission as an advisory body to the City of San Diego and charged the commission with advising the San Diego City Council on matters affecting the METRO system. To that end, the position of the majority of the METRO Commission members must be presented to the City Council. Other than these duties, the commission has no legal powers.

The METRO Wastewater Joint Powers Authority (METRO JPA) was formed later, by the adoption in 2000 of the *METRO Wastewater Joint Power Authority Agreement*, to give the Participating Agencies the authority to make decisions regarding operations, maintenance, capital improvements and rates. Currently, all Participating Agencies are members of the METRO JPA.

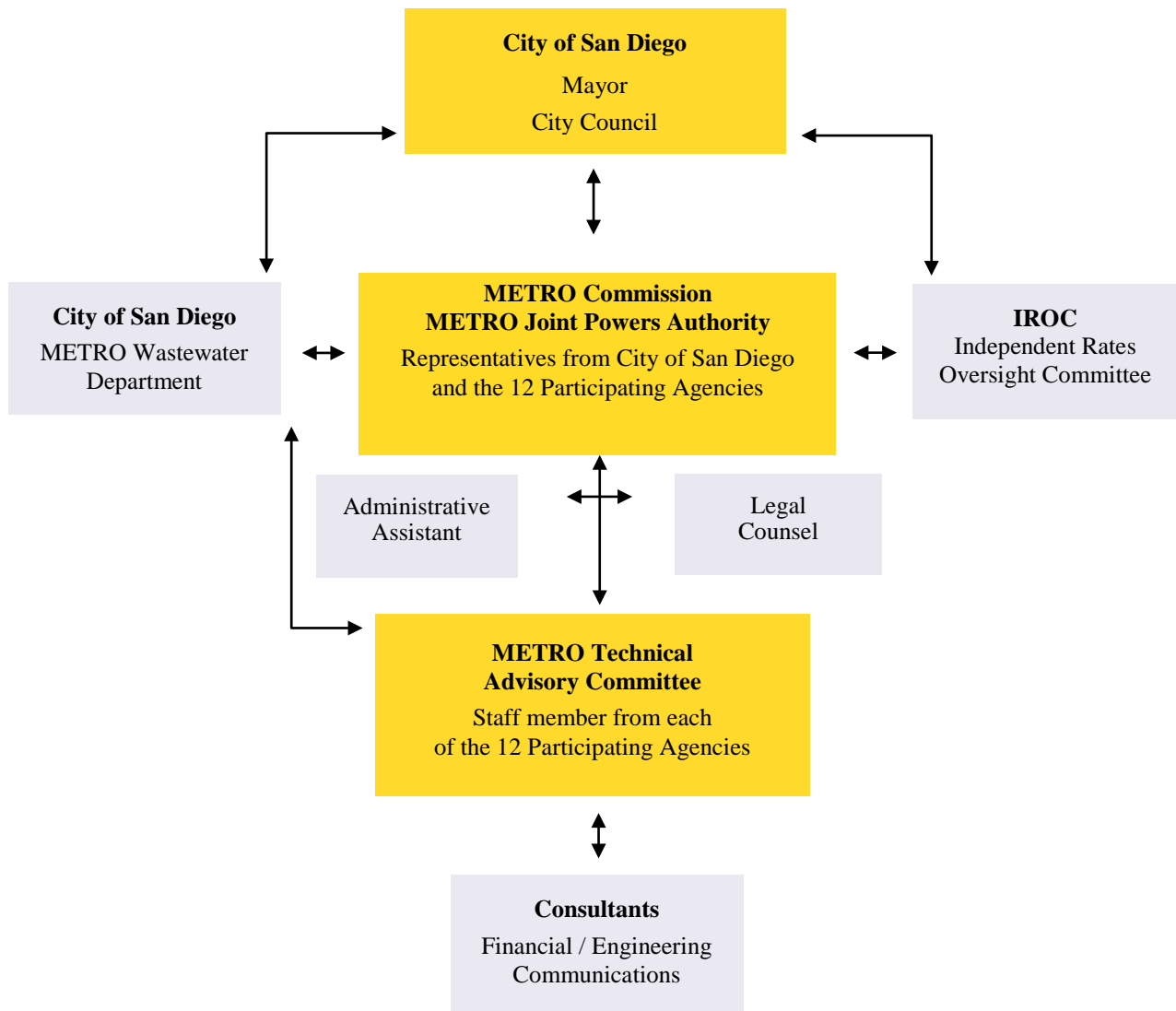
Although the commission and the joint powers authority have separate and distinct responsibilities, they are, in fact, represented by the same people. The 12 Participating Agencies each appoint a member of their elected board or council as their representative. Each Commissioner is responsible for informing their agency of METRO System matters and seeking the approval of their board or council as needed regarding METRO System policies and issues.

The METRO Commission and METRO JPA hold monthly public meetings. Visit www.metrojpa.org for the date, time and location of upcoming meetings.

Mission Statement / METRO JPA

The Metro JPA's mission is to create an equitable partnership with the San Diego City Council and Mayor on regional wastewater issues. Through stakeholder collaboration, open dialogue, and data analysis, the partnership seeks to ensure fair rates for Participating Agencies, concern for the environment, and regionally balanced decisions.

METRO Organization Chart



2015 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goal 1 Oversight of METRO System Management and Operations

The METRO JPA and METRO TAC must continue their oversight of the City of San Diego's management and operation of the METRO System on behalf of the Participating Agencies' ratepayers. .

Strategic Initiatives

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <p>Oversight of Service and Billing Oversee City of San Diego Public Utilities Department to ensure that services provided to METRO member agencies are efficiently delivered, professional and accurately billed. Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Oversight of Costs and Rates Oversee the City of San Diego's METRO wastewater programs, including Pure Water, sewer fees, and recycled water rates to protect the interests of METRO member agencies. Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Oversight of Capital Improvements and Maintenance Operations Oversee the City of San Diego's METRO wastewater system capital improvement program (CIP) and maintenance operations, to protect the investment of METRO member agencies. Assigned To: METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Audit Process Maintain the integrity of the annual audit of the City of San Diego to ensure that only METRO wastewater costs are billed to METRO member agencies. Conduct a full system audit every three years (next in 2016) Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |

Strategic Goal 2

Oversight of the City of San Diego's Water Reuse Planning (Pure Water San Diego)

As the City of San Diego expands the scope of its wastewater operations to include the Pure Water San Diego program, the scope of oversight provided by the METRO JPA and the METRO TAC expands, as well.

Strategic Initiatives

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|--|--------------------------|
| <p>Oversight of USEPA Modified Permit for Pt. Loma</p> <p>Maintain ongoing technical, financial and regulatory analyses of the permit process and provide comments to the City of San Diego, METRO Commission and METRO JPA as needed. . Maintain METRO JPA involvement in the City's negotiations with environmental groups. Focus on the following issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permit application and processing 2. Definition of secondary equivalency at Pt. Loma 3. Regulatory change to accept secondary equivalency at Pt. Loma 4. A facility plan for Pure Water 5. A cost allocation plan for Pure Water 6. An outreach plan for Pure Water <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC, FINANCE COMMITTEE and METRO JPA</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Oversight of Post-2015 Permit Planning</p> <p>Maintain ongoing technical, financial and regulatory analyses and provide comments to the City of San Diego, METRO Commission and METRO JPA as needed.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Oversight of Recycled Water Pricing Study</p> <p>Maintain ongoing technical, financial and regulatory analyses and provide comments to the City of San Diego, METRO Commission and METRO JPA as needed.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |

Participate in San Diego Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Group

Cooperate with this group of agencies, which is developing integrated regional water management strategies and projects, has administrative support from the San Diego County Water Authority, and has access to Proposition 84 grant funds.

Assigned To: METRO JPA and METRO TAC

Continuing

Oversight of Water Purification Demonstration Project

Maintain ongoing technical, financial and regulatory analyses and provide comments to the City of San Diego, METRO Commission and METRO JPA as needed. Focus on key questions below.

Assigned To: METRO TAC

Continuing

Monitor Potable Reuse Regulatory Development

Regulations do not currently exist for some of the planned potable reuse projects in the region. Without regulatory guidance, permitting and acceptance of projects will be challenging. Potential pathways are in place for some regulatory adoption. We must monitor, participate and advocate where appropriate for regulatory adoption.

Assigned To: METRO TAC and METRO JPA

Continuing

Key Questions / Water Reuse

Do San Diego's plans

- Ensure fair rates for Participating Agencies?
- Show concern for the environment?
- Reflect regionally balanced decisions?

Can costs be reduced by

- Integrated planning?
- Integrated development?
- Using existing facilities?
- Using non-METRO facilities?
- Minimizing conveyance distances?
- Minimizing pumping?
- New technology?
- Process improvement?
- Design improvement?

Is the goal of the region to

- Decrease reliance on imported water?
- Save money through an integrated approach?
- Achieve environmental goals?

Strategic Goal 3

Develop and Maintain Key Partnerships

The leaders of San Diego County’s business community and environmental community are concerned about the reliability of the region’s imported water supplies and are advocating the development of potable reuse. They want to see water, wastewater and stormwater agencies integrate their efforts. The METRO JPA and METRO TAC should participate in these regional efforts.

Strategic Initiatives

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|---|--------------------------|
| <p>Speakers Bureau Endorse and explain Secondary Equivalency at Pt. Loma and Pure Water San Diego, local and regional business groups, San Diego County Board of Supervisors, city councils, water district boards, legislators and congressional representatives. Solicit advocates. Consider public affairs staff from Participating Agencies to prepare presentations. Assigned To: METRO JPA and METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Media Outreach Endorse and explain Secondary Equivalency at Pt. Loma and Pure Water San Diego owners, publishers and editors of San Diego County’s print, television, radio and online media. Provide progress reports. Request support. Consider public affairs staff from Participating Agencies to prepare presentations. Assigned To: METRO JPA and METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Regulatory Partnerships Support Secondary Equivalency and Pure Water San Diego at the Regional Water Quality Control Board Assigned To: METRO JPA and METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>Environmental Stakeholders Partnerships Relationships have been forged with stakeholders from the environmental community. They are in support of Secondary Equivalency and Pure Water San Diego. Continue to work with them and maintain their support and retain them as allies. Their influence is essential to the success of these programs. Assigned To: METRO JPA and METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |

Regional Governance (On Hold)

Assess feasibility and appropriateness of implementing, governing and managing a distributed treatment plan and regional wastewater management plan in partnership with the City of San Diego. Assess the issues and opportunities associated with activating the Special Act District formed by the legislature in 1992.

On Hold

Strategic Goal 4 Develop Customer Relationships

Customer relationships are important. Support from stakeholders should be maintained. Strive to enhance the public understanding of the importance, complexity of our business. Tell our story and what we are trying to achieve.

Strategic Initiatives

Visual Information

Create technical illustrations to show the safety of advanced water purification. Visual information can be used in print, presentations, and on the web.

Assigned To: METRO TAC

Continuing

Financial Transparency

Regional wastewater agencies have difficulty explaining sewer collection and treatment costs to their customers. Developing a simplified, visual explanation of costs is necessary in order to explain cost savings.

Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee

Continuing

Website & Social Media

Use website to effectively communicate advantages of Secondary Equivalency at Pt. Loma and Pure Water San Diego

Assigned To: METRO TAC

Continuing

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|---|--------------------------|
| <p>San Diego and Padre Dam Demonstration Project Tours Promote tours of the demonstration projects Assigned To: METRO TAC and METRO JPA</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |
| <p>“What Not To Flush” Public Outreach Combine information about fats, oils and grease, information about other products that should not be flushed, and information about water reuse to create a single public outreach campaign that raises awareness of water reuse. Consider utilizing public affairs staff from Participating Agencies. Provide outreach tools for all Participating Agencies Assigned To: METRO TAC</p> | <p>Continuing</p> |

Key Questions

How do residents
 Know when a large infrastructure project is a good value?
 Know that a regional approach is better than local control?

CONCLUSION

Mark Cowin, Director of the California Department of Water Resources, states in the introduction to the 2009 California Water Plan that:

With new urgency, regions must develop and implement truly integrated regional water management plans as roadmaps to meeting future water demands in sustainable ways.¹

The idea that ratepayers and taxpayers can write one check for water supply reliability, sanitation, environmental stewardship and recreational facilities has not yet trickled down to most wastewater departments and employees in California. While the idea is in development in Sacramento and talked about by regional water resources managers, it is not yet a management or operational initiative at most agencies.

Where the idea has been implemented -- like the Orange County Groundwater Replenishment System -- it has been a tremendous success. Now, San Diego County residents, business leaders and environmental leaders support implementation here. They don't want piecemeal approaches. They want sustainability. Where there is demand, there is opportunity.

¹ Director's Letter, *2009 Update to the California Water Plan*