



**METRO COMMISSION
AND
METRO WASTEWATER
JOINT POWERS
AUTHORITY**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2009 – 2011**

MISSION STATEMENT

“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.”

Participating Agency Members

City of Chula Vista – Mayor Cheryl Cox
City of Coronado – Councilmember Al Ovrom
City of Del Mar – Councilmember Donald Mosier
City of El Cajon – Councilmember Bill Wells
City of Imperial Beach – Councilmember Patricia McCoy
City of La Mesa – Councilmember Ernest Ewin
City of National City – Vice Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis
City of Poway – Councilmember Merrilee Boyack
County of San Diego – Supervisor Diane Jacob
Lemon Grove Sanitation District – Councilmember Jerry Jones
Otay Water District – Director Larry Breitfelder
Padre Dam Municipal Water District – Director Augie Caires

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2009-2011 Strategic Plan represents the first official strategic planning document adopted by the Metro Commission/Metro Wastewater JPA (Commission/JPA). We envision that the Strategic Plan will be re-evaluated and updated every two years to coincide with an all-hands workshop, next scheduled for spring 2011.

Strategic planning provides a number of advantages. It can improve the effectiveness of the Commission/JPA by minimizing the element of surprise and maximizing our ability to change effectively. Strategic planning also helps us work together efficiently toward achieving our Mission and Goals, and strategic planning is a valuable communications tool, providing all Participating Agencies with a common source of strategic information.

In part, the Commission/JPA Mission Statement calls for a partnership with the City of San Diego in managing the Metro Wastewater System to ensure fair rates for the Participating Agencies. At the heart of this Mission is being “at the table” with San Diego on all major wastewater issues.

This Plan enumerates five Strategic Goals which are essential to achieving our Mission. Each Goal was evaluated in detail for its continued importance at the May 7, 2009 Workshop.

Our success in achieving these goals is evidenced by effective Exhibit E Audits; Capital Improvement Program involvement; renewal of the Modified Permit, which prevented enormous and unnecessary capital expenditures; beneficial working relations with City of San Diego staff and the Independent Rates Oversight Committee (IROC); effective ongoing financial oversight; and an agreement with the City of San Diego on a “Debt Service Coverage/Operation Reserve Policy.”

As a public agency serving a diverse group of Cities and Special Districts, there are several key reasons for our existence, as outlined below. These, coincidentally, are the benchmarks of our success, meaning that we are successful if we achieve the following:

- Control Metro wastewater costs, thus minimizing our costs
- Engage in effective oversight of the Metro Wastewater system
- Monitor the Capital Improvement Program
- Develop a regional presence in wastewater and recycling issues
- Sustain alignment among the Participating Agencies on major wastewater and recycling issues
- Participate on the IROC
- Communicate with Participating Agencies and the public

The Commission/JPA focuses on several Strategic Initiatives intended to help achieve its Mission, Goals and Purposes. The short-term initiatives are generally found in the Technical Advisory Committee's (TAC) Work Plan, and include specific projects and programs such as the Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) Pilot Study and the "No Drugs Down the Drain" program. Long-term initiatives are tied more directly to the Mission and Goals and include top themes, or priorities, such as the expansion of all forms of water recycling as a sustainable water supply, and the monitoring of Metro finances to ensure the protection of the Commission/JPA's investment in the Metro System.

The organizational strengths of the Commission/JPA far outweigh the challenges we face. Strengths such as an "effective work model" and "effective cost control and auditing" overshadow challenges such as having "limited impact on regional wastewater issues" and "limited bottom-line impact on Metro decisions".

The work model utilized by the Commission/JPA obviates the need for full-time staff by employing a combination of consultants and Participating Agencies' staff to cost-effectively manage oversight of a \$65 million annual cost to the Participating Agencies. The key to this successful work model is the TAC, which evaluates all Metro projects, programs and budgets on behalf of the Participating Agencies.

The Strategic Planning process has helped the Commission/JPA to formulate short- and long-range plans for the organization. The next all-hands workshop will focus on re-evaluating and updating the Plan itself, thereby directing our energy toward charting our course for the next two years and beyond.

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Strategic Planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide an organization. The backbone of the Commission/JPA strategic planning process is an “all hands” workshop preceded by a pre-workshop questionnaire. The workshop is attended by Commission/JPA representatives, alternates, TAC members, and other Participating Agency (PA) supporting staff and consultants, as well as City of San Diego Public Utilities Department representatives and IROC representatives.

The Strategic Planning Workshop is held every two years (last held on May 7, 2009) and focuses on the following: Mission Statement; Strategic Goals; Strategic Initiatives; organization strengths, challenges and purposes; and a current reality update. The work plan for the TAC is also adopted at the workshop. Finally, the Strategic Plan is updated and re-adopted based on the results of the workshop.

COMMISSION/JPA STRATEGIC GOALS

1. *Reduce costs and ensure fair rates*
2. *Create alignment among the Commission/JPA members*
3. *Enhance positive/effective relations with the City of San Diego*
4. *Create/sustain a positive image in the region*
5. *Identify ways to increase usage of recycled water*

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Strategic initiatives or objectives exhibit several basic characteristics. They are feasible, acceptable, understandable, measurable and supportive of our Strategic Goals. The most challenging of these characteristics is measurability. We have made no attempt here to determine how the following strategic initiatives will be measured, nor in what timeframe they should be achieved. Instead, the Chair has asked the TAC to analyze these initiatives and to return to the Commission/JPA with recommendations for success metrics and target timeframes.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 1: FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT

Vigilantly oversee finances to ensure that costs assessed to the PAs are for appropriate high quality services efficiently delivered by the San Diego Public Utilities Department.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 2: AUDIT PROCESS

Maintain the integrity of the annual audit process to ensure that only Metro Wastewater costs are charged to the PAs.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 3: MODIFIED PERMIT

Diligently support a modified permit for the Metro Wastewater system, which requires renewal every five years. The modified permit prevents expensive and unnecessary upgrades to secondary treatment, which could cost the PAs \$200-500 million. The next permit application process will commence in 2015.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 4: RECYCLING

Encourage the production and beneficial reuse of recycled water as a viable and sustainable water resource. Two exciting avenues toward this initiative are now being pursued: the Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) Reservoir Augmentation Pilot Study, and the Regional Recycled Water Optimization Study. The latter is now under way and is funded jointly by the City and the PAs.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 5: PARTNERSHIPS

Partner with the City of San Diego in managing the Metro Wastewater System, as called for by our mission statement. Other potentially beneficial partnerships, with the County Water Authority, for example, should also be explored.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 6: PROJECT OVERSIGHT

Oversee the Metro Wastewater Capital Improvement Program to protect our investment in these facilities. Oversight is essential, and starts with our involvement in the Capital Improvement Program planning process.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 7: PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

Oversee the many unique Metro Wastewater programs, such as the wastewater rate case, recycled water rate case, and the Bid to Goal program, to ensure that our interests are protected.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 8: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Be responsible stewards in protecting the environment in all Commission/JPA activities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 9: LEADERSHIP

Take a leadership role in important issues in our region. As practitioners in wastewater and recycling, we cannot underestimate our ability to guide public opinion on important issues. Therefore, we have the opportunity to make a significant impact by taking a leadership role on these issues in our region. Example: Support IPR/Reservoir Augmentation.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 10: PUBLIC IMAGE

Focus on creating a positive public image. Although not well known, the Commission/JPA must be cognizant of its image within the region and among wastewater customers, and should take a more focused approach to creating a positive public image.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 11: LEGISLATIVE

Review and monitor legislation that may have impacts on the Metro Wastewater system and the PAs, and take action to support or oppose.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE 12: REGIONAL GOVERNANCE

The concept of a regional, independent wastewater agency has intriguing possibilities. Initially proposed by the City of San Diego in 1989, the “Special Act District” was approved by the State Legislature in 1992. However, a general lack of commitment on the part of the City of San Diego and the PAs resulted in the agency becoming nonfunctional in its first year. The Special Act District now exists in name only and meets once per year to retain grant eligibility status. Its members include: The Cities of Coronado, Del Mar, Imperial Beach, National City and Poway, as well as the Lemon Grove Sanitation District, the Otay Water District and Padre Dam Municipal Water District. The PAs have since proposed a joint study of the issue, but the City of San Diego Mayor and City Council have been unwilling to consider it. Therefore, this initiative has been shelved.

TAC WORK PLAN (Not in order of priority)

This Work Plan is developed by the Technical Advisory Committee with input from the Commission/JPA Chair and Representatives and is adopted at the Strategic Planning workshop. It represents high priority initiatives, projects and programs that are generally short-term in nature. The TAC and Commission/JPA will add to this list as new work priorities arise.

1. State WDR's & WDR Recommendation Plan

The Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRS), a statewide requirement that became effective on May 2, 2006, requires all owners of a sewer collection system to prepare a Sewer System Management Plan (SSMP) by a certain date, based on population served. The SSMP covers the operations, maintenance, capacity and management of the collection system. One specific component of the WDRS is to develop a communications plan for staff and the public. The TAC has begun working on these items to develop uniform PA SSMP's.

2. "No Drugs Down the Drain"

The State has initiated a program to reduce pharmaceuticals entering wastewater flows. The TAC will monitor proposed legislation, coordinate regional disposal events, and develop educational tools for the public.

3. Fiscal Items

The Ad Hoc Finance Committee (now Standing Finance Committee) will continue to monitor and report on the financial issues affecting the Metro System and the charges to the PAs. Current items include debt finance and reserve coverage issues, recycled water credits, annual audits, and quarterly billings. The TAC will participate in this process.

4. PLWWTP Modified Permit

The City of San Diego is attempting to acquire a new 5-year modified permit to continue to operate PLWWTP at advanced primary. The TAC will continue to monitor the process and provide support when appropriate. Also, the TAC wants to participate in the recycled water optimization study that is a requirement of a settlement with environmental groups in exchange for their support of the modified permit.

5. **IPR Pilot Program(s)**
The San Diego City Council directed the Mayor to pursue an Indirect Potable Reuse (IPR) Reservoir Augmentation pilot program to replenish potable water sources with reclaimed water. The TAC wants to monitor and participate in this process to understand the project, offer input, and ensure that PAs are fairly represented.
6. **Lateral Issues**
Sewer laterals are owned by the property owners they serve, yet laterals often allow infiltration and roots into the main line, causing maintenance issues. As this is a common problem among PAs, the TAC will gather statistics from national studies and develop solutions.
7. **Grease Recycling**
To reduce fats, oils, and grease (FOG) in the sewer systems, more and more restaurants are being required to collect and dispose of cooking grease. Companies exist that collect the grease and turn it into energy. The TAC is exploring whether a regional facility offers cost savings for the PAs.
8. **Water Reduction - Impacts on Sewer Rates**
As water use decreases, sewer flow also decreases, reducing sewer revenues. The TAC wants to evaluate the possible impact on sewer rates and investigate options.
9. **Flushable Items that do not Degrade**
Several PAs have problems with flushable products, such as personal wipes, that do not degrade and cause blockages. The TAC is investigating other agencies' solutions and exploring the possibility of a public affairs campaign to raise awareness of the problems caused by flushable products.
10. **Power Tariff**
Power companies are moving to a peak demand pricing scheme that negatively impacts PAs with pump stations and other high energy uses. The TAC wants to evaluate the new legislation and regulations and identify and implement cost-saving efforts for the PAs.
11. **Recycled water Optimization Study**
The TAC will monitor this study, which is funded jointly by the City and the PAs to seek methods of optimizing the production and beneficial reuse of recycled water, generated primarily by the San Diego Metro Wastewater System. The TAC may also explore and coordinate ways for the PAs to optimize water recycling.

METRO COMMISSION/JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

DEFINITION OF ORGANIZATION

The Commission/JPA act concurrently to serve the PAs in all activities related to fulfilling the obligations enumerated in the “Regional Wastewater Disposal Agreement” (The Agreement) between the City of San Diego and the Participating Agencies.

The Commission was formed pursuant to The Agreement and is an advisory body, advising the City of San Diego on matters affecting the Metro (Wastewater) System. City of San Diego staff is required to present the position of the Commission to the San Diego City Council on these matters in written staff reports. Additionally, the Commission is entitled to advise the City of San Diego on any issue relevant to the Metro System.

The JPA was established for the purpose of creating a public agency with the authority to take action pertaining to the PAs’ responsibilities and obligations to provide for the financing of public capital improvements for the Metro System, which are constructed pursuant to the Metro Agreement, and to take such other actions as are necessary for the PAs to fulfill the obligations, responsibilities, rights and benefits set forth in the Metro Agreement.

To ensure that the actions and activities of the Commission/JPA are given appropriate weight from both a policy and political perspective, the PAs are requested to appoint a member of their elected body to serve as representatives on the Commission/JPA. Alternates, however, may be staff or elected officials.

JPA COMMITTEES

JPA Committees (either “Standing” or “Ad Hoc”) are established by the JPA Chair, or the Board of the JPA. A Standing Committee has a continuing subject matter jurisdiction, meaning that it continues to meet on matters within the particular Standing Committee’s purview. Standing Committees are subject to the requirements of the Brown Act. Currently, the Commission/JPA has only one Standing Committee, the Finance Committee. Ad Hoc Committees, on the other hand, are created for a limited purpose and/or to carry out a specific task. If an Ad Hoc Committee is comprised solely of members of the JPA Board, constituting less than a quorum of the JPA Board, the Ad Hoc Committee is not subject to the requirements of the Brown Act.

REGIONAL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL AGREEMENT

Adopted June 25, 1998, is included in the Strategic Plan by reference.

METRO WASTEWATER JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY AGREEMENT

Adopted October 25, 2000, and amended several times thereafter, is included in the Strategic Plan by reference.

METRO WASTEWATER JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY BYLAWS

Last revised April 3, 2008, is included in the Strategic Plan by reference.

METRO COMMISSION/JPA DIRECTORS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

An elected member of the governing body of each PA is appointed to serve concurrently as a Commissioner and JPA Director. Each PA also appoints an alternate, who may be either an elected member or staff member. A key responsibility of each Commissioner/Director is to keep his/her agency fully informed of the activities of the Commission/JPA and, when necessary, to seek approval of the governing body on policies and issues addressed by the Commission/JPA.

COMMISSIONERS

Commissioners serve on the Commission, an advisory body, advising the City of San Diego on matters affecting the Metro System.

JPA DIRECTORS

JPA Directors serve on the Metro Joint Powers Authority, a public agency formed by the PAs with the authority to take action pertaining to the PAs' responsibilities and obligations pursuant to the Metro Agreement.

OFFICERS OF THE COMMISSION/JPA

CHAIR

Elected by the Commission/JPA for a two-year term and presides over all meetings. The Chair appoints Committees of the Commission/JPA. The Chair also establishes the agendas for the Commission/JPA meetings, and may schedule special meetings as needed. The Chair may speak on behalf of the Commission/JPA at public meetings and to the media.

VICE CHAIR

Elected by the Commission/JPA for a two-year term and presides over meetings in the absence of the Chair.

TREASURER

Qualified financial manager appointed by the JPA from among the PAs to manage the Treasurer duties of the JPA.

SECRETARY

Elected by the Commission/JPA for a two-year term, the Secretary shall countersign all contracts signed by the Chair or Vice Chair on behalf of the JPA, and performs such other duties as may be imposed by the Board.

TRAINING/ORIENTATION

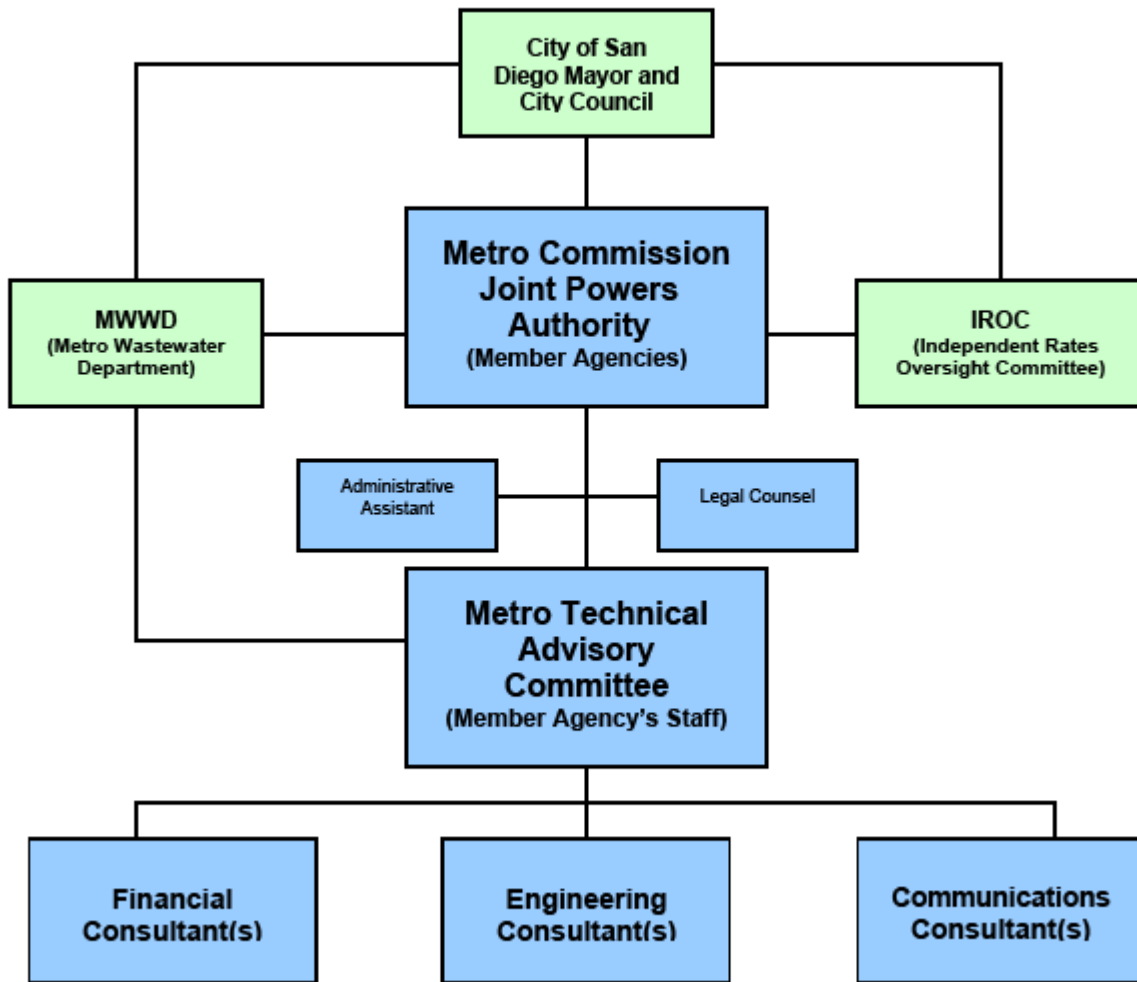
New members of the Commission/JPA are provided training and orientation, including a binder of all pertinent written materials and at least one orientation meeting with several key directors and consultants.

The purpose of this training/orientation is to provide a basic foundation of information and background for the new member.

ORGANIZATION CHART

The organization chart depicts the flow of communication within the Commission/JPA organization, as well as interaction with the City of San Diego.

Metro Wastewater Commission/Joint Powers Authority



INDEPENDENT RATES OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE (IROC)

The Commission/JPA appoints a representative and alternate to sit in an ex-officio capacity on the San Diego IROC, the successor to the San Diego Public Utilities Advisory Commission. Formed in 2008, IROC is an independent advisory committee composed of eleven regular members nominated by the San Diego Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. Members are independent citizens representing different utility user classes and a set of defined professional disciplines. Additionally, the Commission/JPA and the County Water Authority appoint two ex-officio members to serve in a non-voting capacity.

The role of the Commission/JPA and IROC are quite complimentary; IROC represents the “internal” wastewater customers, while the Commission/JPA represents the “external” wastewater customers (the PAs).

INTERFACE WITH IROC

The Commission/JPA appointee attends IROC subcommittee meetings and the monthly committee meetings and reports the activities of IROC to the Commission/JPA monthly. This interface is important to the Commission/JPA for several reasons. First, IROC generally reviews the same projects, programs and budgets as we do and therefore provides a valuable additional perspective. Second, IROC Subcommittees dig deep into the City’s policy issues, yielding insight not found from other sources. Third, IROC generates an annual report to the Mayor and City Council that focuses on future improvements to the Public Utilities Department, including Metro Wastewater.

The IROC Chair, Vice Chair or other representative regularly attends Commission/JPA meetings to enhance the dialogue between IROC and the Commission/JPA.

MISSION STATEMENT

“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.”

COMMISSION/JPA STRENGTHS

- Effective Work Model
- Cost Effective Monitoring / Oversight
- Collaborative Working Relationship with City of San Diego
- Effective Cost Control and Auditing
- Outstanding Support Staff and Support Consultants
- Alignment Among Participating Agencies About Major Issues

COMMISSION/JPA CHALLENGES

- Limited Bottom-Line Impact on Metro Wastewater Decisions
- “Renters” in the Metro System despite paying 35% of Costs
- Relatively Unknown Organization Except Among PAs and City of San Diego
- Limited Impact on Regional Wastewater Issues
- Unable to Bring Timely Closure to Individual Member Transportation Agreements
- Not Involved in Litigation or Negotiations Regarding Modified Permit

COMMISSION/JPA PURPOSES

FINANCIAL: TO MINIMIZE OUR COSTS

1. Control Metro Costs (SG#1)
2. Ensure fair and equitable rate system (SG#1)
3. Annually audit Metro financials (SG#1)
4. JPA may engage in joint financing activities (SG#1)

POLICY: TO IDENTIFY OUR POSITIONS

5. Maintain modified permit for Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plan (PLWWTP) (SG#1 & 2)
6. Promote water recycling and indirect potable reuse (IPR) (SG#5)
7. Promote regional wastewater governance (SG#2)

MONITORING / OVERSIGHT: DUE DILIGENCE TO PROTECT OUR ASSETS

8. Review/approve Metro CIP projects and programs (SG#1)
9. Commission shall advise the City of San Diego on Metro issues (SG#1 & 5)
10. Participate on the “Independent Rates Oversight Committee” (IROC) (SG#1, 2 & 5)
11. Monitor legal and regulatory compliance (SG#1 & 5)

COMMUNICATIONS: TO INFORM PAs AND THE PUBLIC

12. Communicate with political and community leaders regarding wastewater issues (SG#4)
13. Communicate with PAs’ elected bodies to keep them abreast of important activities

ORGANIZATIONAL: TO EFFECTIVELY GOVERN

14. Inform PAs individually and collectively on matters regarding the Metro system (SG#2)
15. Create alignment among the Commission/JPA members (SG#2)
16. Enhance positive/effective relations with the City of San Diego (SG#3)
17. Create/sustain a positive image in the region (of the Commission and JPA) (SG#4)
18. Establish Rules of Conduct and meeting schedule for Commission and JPA (SG#2)

WORK MODEL

The Commission/JPA has no full-time staff, and instead utilizes a unique combination of consultants and PA staff to cost-effectively manage the oversight of the \$65 million annual cost of Metro Wastewater services.

Engineering, financial, legal and communication services are provided via consultant contract. Treasurer and administrative assistant services are provided through contracting with individual PAs.

The key to the Commission/JPA work model is the TAC. The TAC is comprised of engineers and public works managers who meet at least monthly to review all Metro projects, programs and budgets and make recommendations to the Commission/JPA.

These recommendations are the focal point for Commission/JPA decisions about supporting Metro projects, programs and budgets.

The final element of the work model, then, is the decision-making process involving Commission/JPA Committees and Board. Projects, programs and budgets are filtered through the TAC and Commission/JPA Committees to the Board for ultimate approval or denial.

Consultant and other services provided in the work model are described as follows:

ENGINEERING SERVICES

From time to time the Commission/JPA, the TAC, and the various committees require engineering services, including technical review and comments on engineering projects brought before the JPA; value engineering services; recommendations on technical guidelines and criteria; professional opinions on capital improvement projects; analysis of the technical impacts and feasibility of proposed projects; and attendance at staff and board meetings as desired by the Commission/JPA.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Financial Services are provided on an as-needed basis and include annual audits of the Metro System, financial analysis, budget analysis, Capital Improvement Program analysis, and routine monitoring and oversight.

TREASURER SERVICES

The Treasurer's duties include maintaining the JPA's bank accounts; allocating costs and collecting member agency billings; processing accounts payable; providing periodic financial statement reporting to the JPA; advising member agencies concerning finances and billings; and attending staff and Board meetings as desired by the JPA.

LEGAL COUNSEL SERVICES

The role of General Counsel, generally, is to perform a broad range of services for its clients, including document drafting and review; verbal and written legal advice in open and closed-session meetings; litigation; and provision of day-to-day legal advice. The General Counsel represents the client rather than any natural person. The "Client, "therefore, is the Metro JPA itself as embodied in the "highest authorized officer, employee, body or constituent overseeing the particular engagement." (Cal. Rules of Professional Conduct, Section 3-600.) Although the General Counsel may work closely with specific Metro JPA officers, Metro JPA is the client and where the JPA's and an officer's interests diverge, the General Counsel must continue to act in Metro JPA's best interests, not the officer's.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

From time to time the Commission/JPA may employ the services of a communications company to generate a newsletter and other information documents intended to inform the media and political/community leaders about the activities of the Commission/JPA and educate them about issues related to wastewater and recycling. The Commission/JPA may also hire a webmaster to maintain the Commission/JPA webpage and provide related services.

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT SERVICES

The Administrative Assistant provides support for Commission/JPA, TAC, San Diego Area Waste Management District and committee meetings. Support includes preparing agenda packages by soliciting input and distributing it to all members, distribution list, and posting sources the week prior to the meetings (meeting Brown Act policy for posting); ordering lunch for delivery; and attending the JPA meetings monthly and transcribing the recorded minutes. Throughout the month, various requests occur via email for the distribution of various messages and news articles, as well for the scheduling and coordination of committee meetings, and the Administrative Assistant is responsible for these.

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The role of the TAC is to perform technical, analytical review of all City of San Diego Metro Wastewater operations, projects, programs, budgets, policies and associated activities; to provide staff support to the Commission/JPA and its committees as needed; to provide recommendations on policy and operational matters that come before the Commission/JPA; and to provide information about wastewater and recycled water issues from local, state and national sources that may affect the PAs.