



**Metro Commission  
&  
Metro Wastewater JPA**

**2020**

**Strategic Plan**

**Approved  
November 7, 2019**

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This Strategic Plan was adopted in November 2019, and it serves as a roadmap with clear direction as to where we are going and how we will get there. Development of the Strategic Plan was a collaborative process that included Commission member and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member participation during the fall of 2019. The process included a Strategic Planning Workshop in which participants identified recent achievements of the Metro JPA, and the top issues on the horizon to monitor and address. Participants reviewed the existing 2015 Strategic Goals (SGs) and Strategic Initiatives (SIs), and determined which to retain, delete and/or modify. This workshop was followed by two TAC meetings and two Metro JPA meetings to develop understanding, ownership and approval of the Strategic Plan.

The Metro Wastewater JPA exists in order to create an equitable partnership with the City of San Diego on regional wastewater issues, and to ensure fair rates for Participating Agencies (PAs). The JPA has two core Strategic Goals, each of which have 6 Strategic Initiatives. The two Strategic Goals, or care areas of focus, are:

- **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 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.

There are significant issues the Metro JPA will collaboratively address over the next several years. These include the following:

- **Implementation of the Amended and Restated Disposal Agreement (ARDA):** This will establish the proportional distribution of costs to all signatory agencies related to the costs of the City of San Diego's Pure Water program.
- **Secondary Equivalency Legislation:** HR4611 (OPRA II) was introduced October 4, 2019 after many years of hard work. The goal is to obtain the next Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant permit via this legislation.
- **OPRA I Waiver:** As the HR4611 (OPRA II) bill makes its way through the approval process, due diligence must be taken in order to ensure that preparations can be made to apply for the next waiver under OPRA I, if necessary.
- **Pure Water Phase II:** The Metro JPA will work closely with the City of San Diego and the PAs to ensure a technically and financially balanced approach and ensure that an appropriate allocation methodology of costs is established.



The strategic plan, coupled with our commitment to transparent, clear, timely and accurate communication with all PA's and the City of San Diego, will help shape future decisions and help us meet the water-wastewater related needs of the region for generations to come.

Working together - we can make this happen.

Jerry Jones, Chair  
City of Lemon Grove

## **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 2.5 miles offshore. In 1993, the existing outfall was lengthened to 4.5 miles which extends 320 feet below the surface in a Y-shaped diffuser to provide for a wide dispersal of effluent into ocean waters.

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 155 million gallons of wastewater per day. Presently, the plant is an advanced primary treatment plant capable of removing 85% to 90% of the influent solids.

The South Bay Water Reclamation Plant (SBWRP) is located at 2411 Dairy Mart Road, San Diego, CA 92154. The plant relieves the South Metro Sewer Interceptor System and provides local wastewater treatment services and reclaimed water to the South Bay. The plant opened in May 2002 and has a wastewater treatment capacity of 15 million gallons a day. The plant shares the South Bay Ocean Outfall (SBOO) with the International Wastewater Treatment Plant operated by the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC). While the plant has been operating since May 2002, distribution of reclaimed water started 4-years later in July 2006. The volume reclaimed and distributed varies depending on demand for recycled water.

The North City Water Reclamation Plant (NCWRP) is located at 4949 Eastgate Mall. The NCWRP can treat up to 30 million gallons of wastewater per day. Reclaimed water produced at the plant is distributed throughout the northern region of San Diego via more than 79 miles of distribution to our customers for irrigation, landscaping and industrial use. The plant also provides reclaimed water for the City of Poway.



## **CURRENT METRO WASTEWATER AGENCIES**

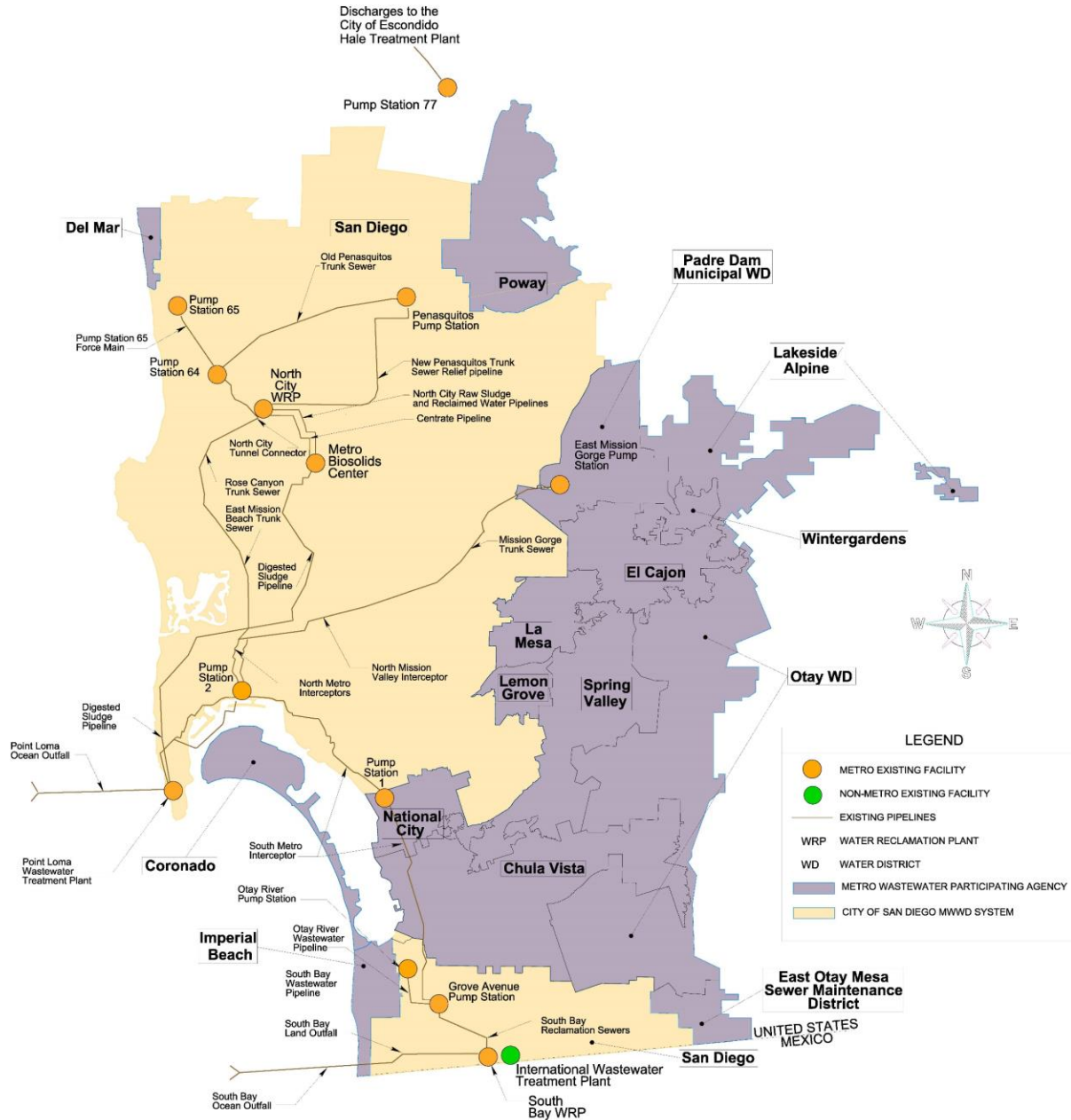
### **Cities**

Chula Vista  
Coronado  
Del Mar  
El Cajon  
Imperial Beach  
La Mesa  
National City  
Poway

### **Special Districts**

*Lemon Grove Sanitation District*  
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**

**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.

The METRO System is governed and managed by a coalition of participating cities and special districts pursuant to the *Regional Wastewater Disposal Agreement* originally signed in 1998 and *updated on December 5, 2018* 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.

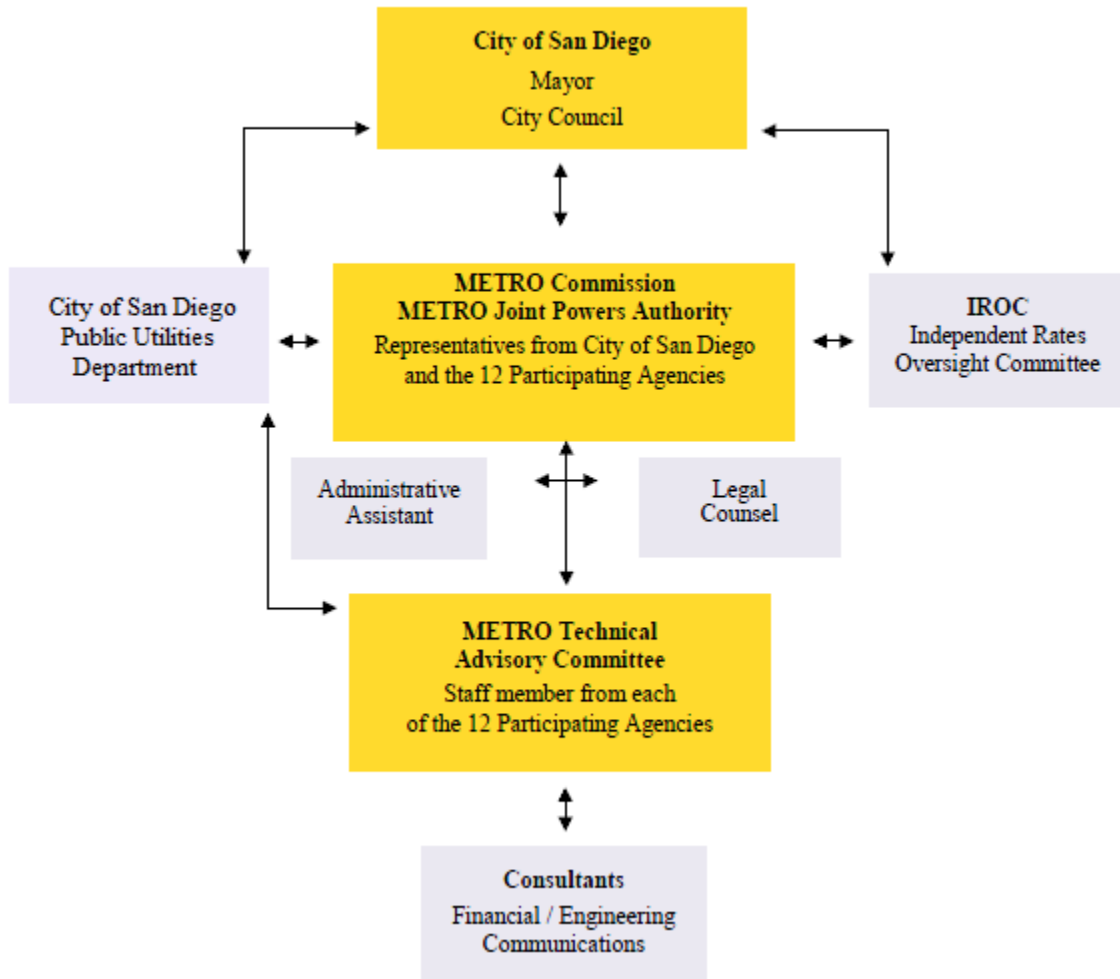
The METRO Wastewater Joint Powers Authority (METRO JPA) was formed later, by the adoption in 2000 of the *METRO Wastewater Joint Power Authority Agreement*, to give the Participating Agencies the authority to make decisions regarding operations, maintenance, capital improvements and rates. Currently, 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](http://www.metrojpa.org) for the date, time and location of upcoming meetings.



## METRO ORGANIZATION CHART





## 2020 STRATEGIC GOALS AND INITIATIVES

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 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><b>Strategic Initiative #1: Oversight of Service and Billing</b></p> <p>Oversee City of San Diego Public Utilities Department to ensure that services provided to METRO member agencies are efficiently delivered, professional and accurately billed.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p>	<p><b>Continuing</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative #2: Oversight of Costs and Rates</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p>	<p><b>Continuing</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative #3: Oversight of Capital Improvements and Maintenance Operations to Protect Ratepayers and the Environment</b></p> <p>Oversee the City of San Diego’s METRO wastewater system capital improvement program (CIP) and maintenance operations, to protect the environment and the investment of METRO member agencies.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC</p>	<p><b>Continuing</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative #4: Audit Process</b></p> <p>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.</p> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee</p>	<p><b>Continuing</b></p>

**Strategic Initiative #5: Strength-based Billing System and Process Audit (5-Year Audits)**

Conduct a full engineering review of the strength-based billing system (ADS metering system) and process (cost allocation review) at least every five years, to be consistent with section 3.53 of the Amended Restated Agreement.

Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee

**New, 2020**

**Strategic Initiative #6: Develop and Maintain Key Partnerships**

Create positive working relationships and endorse and explain secondary equivalency at Pt. Loma and Pure Water San Diego to citizens and stakeholders. These include local and regional business groups, San Diego County Board of Supervisors, city councils, water district boards, legislators, the Regional Water Quality Control Board, congressional representatives, and stakeholders from the environmental community.

Assigned To: METRO TAC and Finance Committee

**New, 2020**

## 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

<p><b>Strategic Initiative #1: Oversight of USEPA Modified Permit for Pt. Loma/ Pt. Loma Secondary Equivalency Permit</b></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"> <li>1. Permit application and processing</li> <li>2. Definition of secondary equivalency at Pt. Loma</li> <li>3. Regulatory change to accept secondary equivalency at Pt. Loma</li> <li>4. A facility plan for Pure Water</li> <li>5. A cost allocation plan for Pure Water</li> <li>6. An outreach plan for Pure Water</li> </ol> <p>Assigned To: METRO TAC, FINANCE COMMITTEE and METRO JPA</p>	<p><b>Continuing</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative #2: Oversight of Post-2015 Permit Planning</b></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><b>Continuing</b></p>
<p><b>Strategic Initiative #3: Oversight of Recycled Water Pricing Study</b></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><b>Continuing</b></p>

**Strategic Initiative #4: 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**

**Strategic Initiative #5: 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**

**Strategic Initiative #6: Oversight of Pure Water Program, Phase 2, and any Associated Projects**

Maintain ongoing technical, financial and regulatory analyses as the location and composition of each facility is determined. As Phase II costs are developed, ensure that an appropriate allocation methodology of costs will be established. 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**

## 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?

## CONCLUSION

The San Diego region has developed a truly integrated water management plan that will meet future water demand in a sustainable way. As the Metro JPA continues to develop its role to create an equitable partnership with the City of San Diego on regional wastewater issues, it is important to promote the balance between fair rates, regionally balanced decisions and environmental stewardship. To this end, there are several significant issues the Metro JPA will collaboratively address over the next five years.

- **Implementation of the Amended and Restated Disposal Agreement (ARDA)**  
As Phase 1 of the Pure Water program goes into construction, the negotiated methodology for the proportional distribution of costs to all signatory agencies will be established and continuously audited to ensure compliance.
- **Secondary Equivalency Legislation**  
HR4611 (OPRA II) was introduced October 4, 2019 after many years of hard work. The goal is to obtain the next Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant permit via this legislation. However, as the bill makes its way through the approval process, due diligence must be taken in order to ensure that preparations can be made to apply for the next waiver under OPRA I, if needed.
- **Pure Water Phase II**  
Develop a comprehensive plan and initiate the design phase for the second phase of the Pure Water Program. Ensure a technically and financially balanced approach that accounts for future regulatory contingencies as the location and composition of each facility is determined. In addition, as Phase II costs are developed, an appropriate allocation methodology of costs will be established.
- **Clear Communications**  
Strive for transparent, clear, timely and accurate communication with all PA's and the City of San Diego.

Henry Ford said, "if everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." The billions of dollars that will be invested over the next 5 years will put a strain on all rate payers in the region. The only way this body can ensure the most efficient use of the funds is to work together.