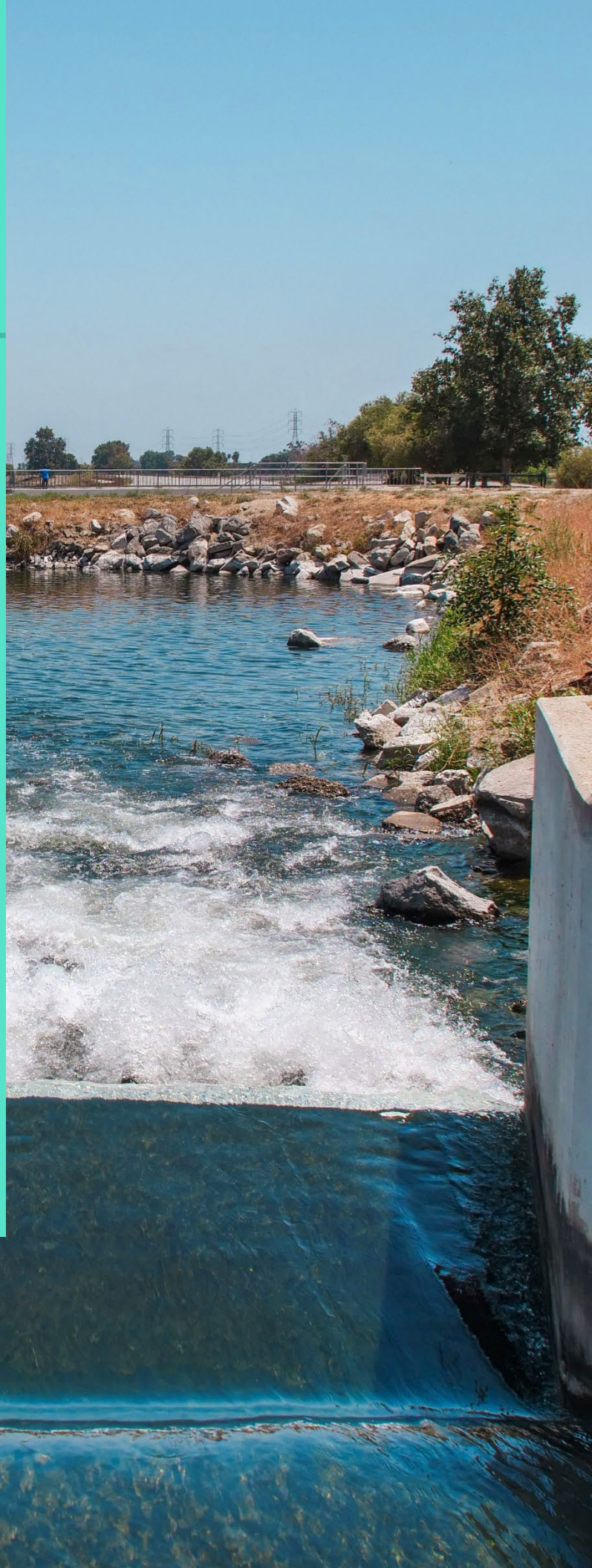




**SAFE  
CLEAN  
WATER  
PROGRAM**

# Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Regional Program Stormwater Investment Plan Programming Guidelines

March 2025





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# Introduction

**The Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) is a five- (5-) year plan developed annually by each Watershed Area Steering Committee (WASC) that recommends funding allocations for Projects, Project Concepts, and Studies in the Regional Program’s Infrastructure Program (IP), Technical Resources Program (TRP), and Scientific Studies Program (SSP).**

The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP), under the authority of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and administered by the Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works), shall be implemented consistent with the programmatic Goals as outlined in Section 18.04 of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District Code. These guidelines were developed to interpret the codified language and to aid WASCs in reviewing and recommending Projects, Project Concepts, and/or Studies that are consistent with SCWP Goals.

For the current SIP programming cycle (recommending funding for Fiscal Year 2025-2026), the following guidelines are intended to assist governance committees in strategically carrying out their roles and responsibilities. Public Works intends to continue implementing other adaptive management practices in parallel with ongoing engagement with the governance committees.

***The information presented in these guidelines is not new – it is a sweeping compilation of existing guidance and data provided to reinforce the importance of strategic prioritization and long-term planning.*** Guidance to date has emphasized the importance of planning beyond the 5-year SIP cycle and prioritizing the limited SCWP Regional Program funding based on all available data and resources shared and discussed within each SIP programming cycle.

Financial analysis shows the **potential** costs to fund all future phases of the Projects and/or Project Concepts already included in past SIPs – if SCWP remains the only funding source – may exceed available funding from the SCWP Regional Program for approximately 10 years. WASCs – especially those that have prioritized numerous design-only funding proposals in past SIPs – will need to determine which SIP-programmed Projects can proceed to (or continue) construction and/or operations and maintenance (O&M) phases using SCWP Regional Program funds, and those that will need to rely on leveraged funds or be deferred, modified, or halted. Additionally, Projects should continue to be carefully evaluated to ensure sufficient leveraged funds are secured to bring each Project to completion and sustain the Project’s O&M throughout the Project’s life span. If sufficient funding is not accounted for, projects should be deferred until additional leveraged funding is committed to ensure completion of all activities such that benefits claimed are fully realized. The monetary caps recommended in the following guidelines aim to help ensure capacity for proper consideration of both new Projects, Project Concepts, and Studies in the future, and future phases of certain existing Projects and/or Project Concepts.



# Complying with the SIP Criteria

SIPs shall be developed by the WASCs in accordance with the criteria described in Section 18.07.B.2 of the Ordinance, below. Additional guidance in complying with the SIP criteria is provided in [blue](#):

- a. Not less than eighty-five percent (85%) of the budget shall be allocated to Infrastructure Program activities, not more than ten (10%) of the budget shall be allocated to Technical Resource Program activities, and not more than five percent (5%) of the budget shall be allocated to Scientific Studies Program activities;
  - [Percent allocations will be evaluated over a rolling 5-year period each year. The criteria for Infrastructure Program activities will be calculated based on the total funding allocated over the 5-year period. The criteria for Technical Resource Program activities and Scientific Studies Program activities will be calculated based on the annual revenue generated by the Watershed Area over the 5-year period.](#)
  - [Additionally, not more than 20% of the total funding allocated shall be allocated to Design-only Infrastructure Program Activities.](#)
- b. Projects that assist in achieving compliance with a MS4 Permit shall be prioritized, to the extent feasible;
- c. Funding for Projects that provide DAC Benefits shall not be less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area. To facilitate compliance with this requirement, the District will work with stakeholders and Watershed Coordinator(s) to utilize existing tools to identify high-priority geographies for water-quality improvement projects and other projects that create DAC Benefits within DACs, to help inform WASCs as they consider project recommendations;
  - [WASCs may determine DAC Benefits on a project-by-project basis.](#)
  - [Refer to the SCWP Interim Guidelines and Appendix G of the SCWP Watershed Planning Framework for additional information regarding benefits to Disadvantaged Communities.](#)
- d. Each Municipality shall receive benefits in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible, to be evaluated annually over a rolling five (5) year period;
- e. A spectrum of Project types and sizes shall be implemented throughout the region, to the extent feasible, to be evaluated annually over a rolling five (5) year period;

- f. Nature-Based Solutions shall be prioritized, to the extent feasible;
  - Refer to the [SCWP Interim Guidelines](#) for additional information regarding Nature-Based Solutions.
- g. Projects, Feasibility Studies, scientific and technical studies, and other activities selected for inclusion in a SIP should be recommended to receive funding for their total estimated costs, unless a lesser amount has been requested;
  - If a lesser amount is requested, the Developer must remain committed to securing additional funding sources to ensure completion of all activities proposed in the application and submitted Feasibility Study such that benefits claimed are fully realized.
  - “Total estimated costs” must also include an estimate of long-term operations and maintenance costs throughout the Project’s life span.
  - Note that funding included in the SIP for TRP Project Concepts only includes the amount for feasibility study completion, and not the full lifecycle costs; WASCs shall therefore consider the longer-term *potential* costs for design, construction, and operations and maintenance for TRP Project Concepts.
- h. Operation and maintenance costs for any Project may be included in the Infrastructure Program portion of a SIP, whether or not the design and construction of that Project was included in a SIP; and
  - Funding requested beyond the first 5 years should only be used for extended planning, design, and/or construction. Operations and Maintenance requests should be submitted as separate funding requests in 5-year increments.
- i. Only Projects that meet or exceed the Threshold Score shall be eligible for inclusion in the Infrastructure Program. Projects that receive a score below the Threshold Score may be referred to the Technical Resources Program at the discretion of the Watershed Area Steering Committee.

Under extenuating circumstances where the SIP criteria cannot be met, an exception may be permitted and disclosed in the SIP. For example, if very few IP Projects were submitted such that it significantly restricts available funding for TRP and SSP, up to 10% and 5% of revenue generated by the Watershed Area can be allocated towards TRP and SSP, respectively.

# Setting a Monetary Cap

The purpose of the SIP is to capture recommended programming for the upcoming fiscal year (to be approved by the Board) as well as anticipated recommendations for the next four subsequent years. The SIP projection for the subsequent four years should remain fluid/open for revisions because:

- a. The actual amount of available revenue for subsequent years is unknown and subject to change each year due to exemptions, credits, and appeals;
- b. Other Projects or Project Concepts may become available that were not ready for consideration in prior years, including Projects that have advanced through the TRP and may apply for IP funding in upcoming years (Note: long-term capital costs of approved TRP Project Concepts are unknown until completion of each Feasibility Study and are therefore not earmarked in the 5-year SIP planning window);
- c. Economic fluctuations may escalate estimated costs; and
- d. Contingencies for programmed projects may be required and/or changed.

Additionally, governance committees should consider the longer-term financial viability of the SIP beyond the 5-year period to ensure that funding is available to support construction and O&M activities projected beyond the 5-year period.

To allow for inflation and cost overruns, the WASCs should apply at least an **80% monetary cap** to the recommended programming in the four subsequent years, to the extent feasible.

The online [SIP Programming Tool](#) is available and updated to support decision-making by the WASCs.

# Technical Resources Program

A flat rate of up to \$400,000 shall be allocated for the development of each Feasibility Study funded through the Technical Resources Program (TRP) in an approved SIP. This flat rate has been adjusted up from \$300,000 to address inflation/escalation and provides additional capacity to conduct a more detailed engineering analysis and provide additional outreach and engagement. To support benefits claimed based on current Scoring Committee practices, engineering analysis may include, but is not limited to, site-specific geotechnical analysis, analysis of water supply and demand impacts of the project, sewer capacity studies, and other analysis needed to support benefits claimed, as appropriate.

The WASCs will have the discretion to allocate a lesser amount, in consultation with Public Works, based on Watershed Area funding availability, current status of the Project Concept, and appropriate level of engineering analysis. If less funding is needed to complete the Feasibility Study, the excess funds will be returned to the WASCs for future project budgeting. If additional funds are needed, Public Works, at its discretion, may use SCWP District Program funds to supplement the need.

Public Works will assemble a Technical Assistance Team (TAT) to oversee progression of the Feasibility Study. The TAT will be led by Public Works' assigned technical consultant and will consist of the Project Concept proponent, SCWP staff, Watershed Coordinator(s), and other interested parties. Participation by the proponent will be at their own expense; funding is not provided to applicants for their participation. Public Works will assign the technical consultant lead at its discretion. Once a completed Feasibility Study is produced by the TAT, the project proponent can use it to apply to the Infrastructure Program to request funding for the partial or full cost to implement the Project, which may include planning, design, construction, and operations and maintenance.

When recommending Projects for TRP funding, WASCs should also consider:

- Location and potential benefits of the Project in the context of the watershed, community, and existing/planned Projects (e.g., a project located in an area not currently managed by Regional and Municipal Program Projects), and
- Long-term and wholistic design, construction, and operations and maintenance costs.

# Scientific Studies Program

Study proponents that are interested in partnering with Public Works to implement Regional Studies are encouraged to begin engaging with Public Works as early as possible. Regional Study partnership opportunities will be considered on a case-by-case basis and evaluated based on alignment with SCWP Goals, funding needs, and the District Program's available budget.

## Evaluating Project Modifications

Proposed modifications to a Project, Project Concept, or Study shall be disclosed in a Project Modification Request (PMR) form as soon as the need arises and will be evaluated in accordance with the [Project Modification Guidelines](#). WASCs shall encourage Developers who are submitting PMRs for additional funding to maximize leveraged funding. To maximize the value of past investments in Regional Program Projects and accelerate implementation, Public Works requests WASCs consider project phase when prioritizing PMRs. For example, Projects requesting additional construction funding could be prioritized over Projects requesting additional design funding. WASCs can consider withdrawing future funding for Projects whose PMRs result in a significant increase in costs and/or reduction in anticipated benefits compared to the original scope of work, or in cases where alternative Projects may deliver similar or greater benefits more expediently or cost effectively.

## Re-distributing Annual Funding Allocations

During the SIP development and programming phase, the WASCs are authorized to recommend a re-distribution of funding for new and continuing Projects and Studies without changing the total funding request (unless requested in a PMR) if the applicant demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the WASC, a willingness and ability to complete the full project or study scope identified in the application with the re-distributed SCWP funding. This can be a useful tool to maximize capacity, prioritize Projects and Studies, and ensure Projects and Studies are receiving funds in alignment with their anticipated schedule. When recommending re-distribution of funding to future years, WASCs should consider the potential for cost escalation due to inflation and consider maintaining appropriate monetary reserves to accommodate future funding requests (see [Setting a Monetary Cap](#)).



# Prioritizing Funding Allocations

To ensure anticipated benefits can be fully realized, Public Works continues to urge the WASCs to prioritize funding allocations for Projects and Studies that are in their final stages of implementation.

Appropriate actions to consider for lower priority Projects and Studies may include, but are not limited to:

- Deferring funding to later years, if appropriate. Deferral could be based on:
  - Strategic need to advance a different Project or Study that better aligns with the Watershed Areas goals and/or demonstrates greater leveraged funding.
  - Opportunity to enhance overall benefits to the Project or Study for resubmission in future years.
- Funding only a portion of the additional funding request, if appropriate.
- Encouraging or requiring Project Developers to pursue other cost-sharing funding such as grants or committing supplemental matching funds.