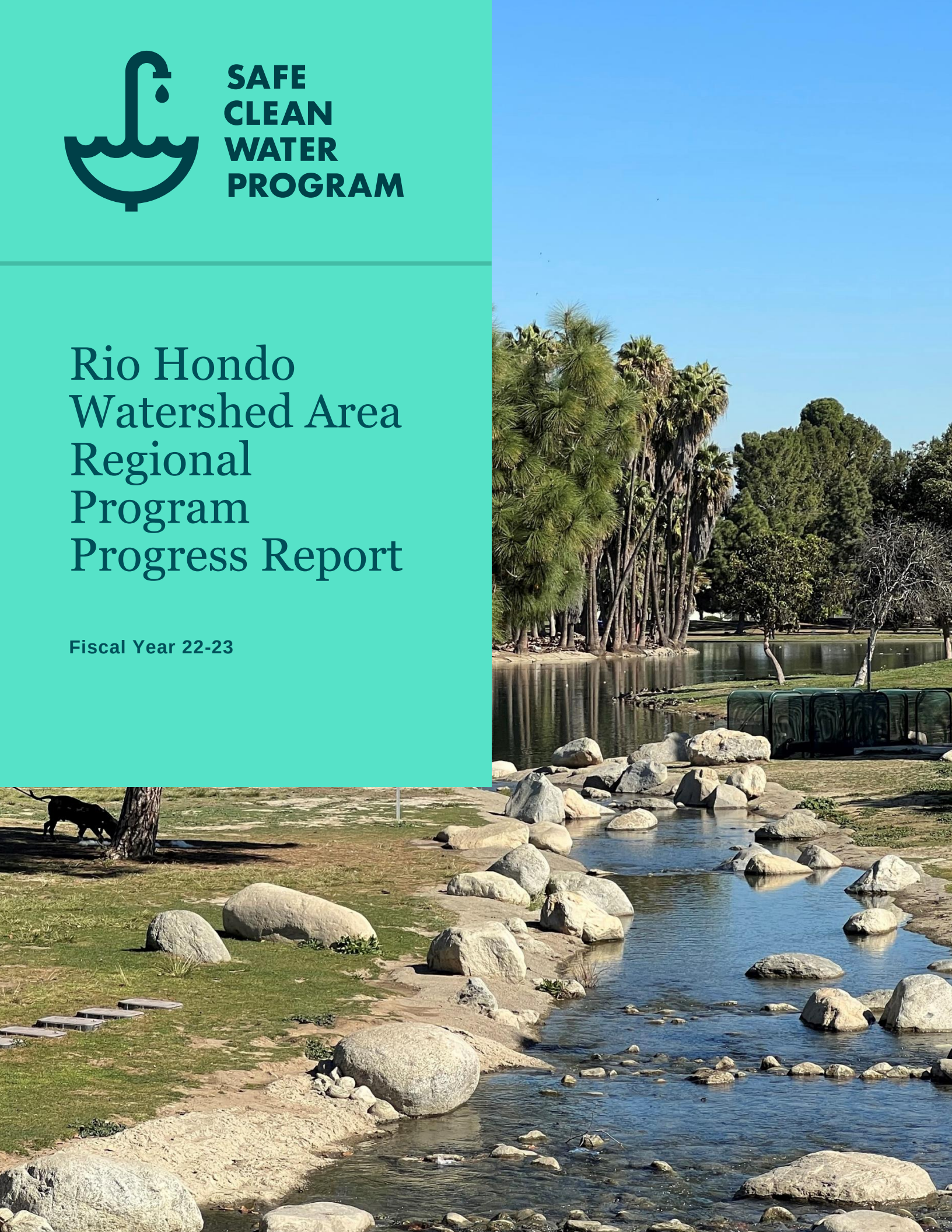
SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Rio Hondo Watershed Area Regional Program Progress Report

Fiscal Year 22-23



SAFE CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

Rio Hondo Watershed Area Regional Program Progress Report FY22-23

The Watershed Area Regional Program Progress (WARPP) Report is an annual summary of funded projects, concepts, and studies in each Watershed Area. The WARPP Report highlights how the implementation of approved Stormwater Investment Plans contributes to achieving SCW Program Goals.

Safe, Clean Water Program Overview

The Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP, Program) is a pioneering regional initiative that provides dedicated local funding to increase water supply, safeguard and improve water quality, and deliver community benefits with particular focus on historically underserved communities. The Program was created in 2018 following the approval of Measure W by Los Angeles (LA) County voters, which established a special parcel tax of 2.5 cents per square foot of impermeable surface area on private properties within the jurisdiction of the LA County Flood Control District (District). The Program receives approximately $280M annually, with a total of $1.12B collected as of July 2023 and consists of three major programs which each receive a proportional share of the funds: the Regional Program (50%), Municipal Program (40%) and the District Program (10%).

The Program promotes a multi-benefit approach to stormwater management by encouraging innovation and adaptive management. It supports projects and programs that contribute to the fulfillment of Clean Water Act requirements and addresses many other priorities across LA County related to equity, climate resilience, sustainability, and workforce development.

What distinguishes the SCWP from other similar programs is its regional and collaborative approach to addressing the stormwater management needs of LA County. It engages communities in the design and implementation of local infrastructure improvements and prioritizes nature-based solutions that can enhance communities with amenities such as green spaces and recreation areas. These efforts help mitigate the urban heat island effect and make neighborhoods and communities more climate resilient. The Program also places significant emphasis on education, outreach, and engagement, including the development of sub-programs to provide environmental education to K-12 students and support for growing a workforce with expertise in green infrastructure and stormwater management.

The multi-benefit and innovative nature of the Program complements other Countywide initiatives including the OurCounty sustainability plan and Infrastructure LA to help build the resilience and sustainability of the region. The SCWP is established by District Code Chapters 16 and 18. Many additional governing documents, resources, and guidance can be found on the SCWP website.

SCWP Goals

The SCWP is being implemented consistent with the Program Goals outlined in District Code Section 18.04:

A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.
B. Increase drought preparedness by capturing more Stormwater and/or Urban Runoff to store, clean, reuse, and/or recharge groundwater basins.
C. Improve public health by preventing and cleaning up contaminated water, increasing access to open space, providing additional recreational opportunities, and helping communities mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change through activities such as increasing shade and green space.
D. Leverage other funding sources to maximize SCWP Goals.
E. Invest in infrastructure that provides multiple benefits.
F. Prioritize Nature-Based Solutions.
G. Provide a spectrum of project sizes from neighborhood to regional scales.
H. Encourage innovation and adoption of new technologies and practices.
I. Invest in independent scientific research.
J. Provide Disadvantaged Community (DAC) Benefits, including Regional Program infrastructure investments, that are not less than one hundred and ten percent (110%) of the ratio of the DAC population to the total population in each Watershed Area.
K. Provide Regional Program infrastructure funds benefitting each Municipality in proportion to the funds generated within their jurisdiction, after accounting for allocation of the one hundred and ten percent (110%) return to DACs, to the extent feasible.
L. Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.
M. Promote green jobs and career pathways.
N. Ensure ongoing operations and maintenance for Projects.

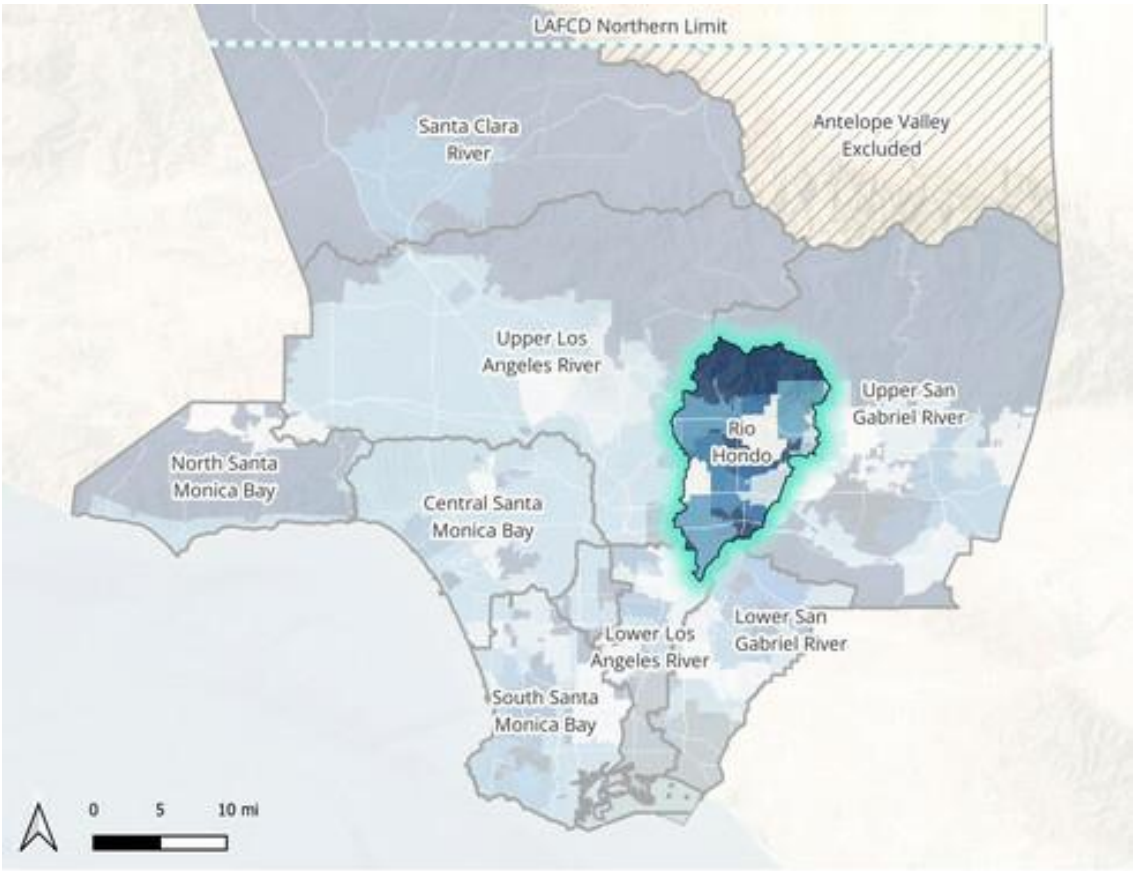
A number of these goals are programmatic in nature and are inherent to the manner that the SCWP has been framed and is being implemented. Other goals are being tracked more explicitly through the current Regional and Municipal Program frameworks including Feasibility Studies, Annual Reporting, and Annual Plans. Where applicable, progress for specific goals will be highlighted throughout this Regional Program Progress Report.

Regional Program Summary

The Regional Program receives fifty percent (50%) of the funding from the SCWP annually. The Regional Program is comprised of the Infrastructure Program (IP) (receiving not less than 85% of the Regional Program funds), Technical Resources Program (TRP) (not more than 10% of the funds), and Scientific Studies (SS) Program (not more than 5% of the funds). The Regional Program receives approximately $139M annually. To date the Regional Program has received $557.8M (FY20-21 through FY23-24). The Regional Program is subdivided into nine watershed areas overseen by Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs), which allocate funding through annual Stormwater Investment Plans (SIPs) for five-year projection periods (see watershed areas in Figure 1).

Detailed information on the timing for the yearly Call for Projects, Regional Program processes, and reporting requirements are on the SCWP website.

Figure 1: Watershed Area Map – Rio Hondo Highlighted



Infrastructure Program

The objective of the IP is to plan, build, and maintain watershed-based multi-benefit projects to further progress towards the 14 Program Goals. Each project is required to provide a Water Quality Benefit and either a Water Supply Benefit, Community Investment Benefit, or both. The allocation of IP funds follows a well-defined process outlined in District Code Ch16.05.D.1.

Technical Resources Program

The TRP provides resources to community groups, municipalities, and individuals who need technical assistance to develop their project concepts into Feasibility Studies that can be considered under the IP. The District provides Technical Assistance Teams, comprised of subject matter experts, that support the development of Feasibility Studies in partnership with the project proponent. The TRP also provides Watershed Coordinators to educate and build capacity in communities and facilitate community and stakeholder engagement.

Scientific Studies Program

The Scientific Studies Program provides funding for eligible scientific studies and other activities such as, but not limited to, technical studies, monitoring, modeling, and other similar activities. This Program also includes efforts by the District to use independent research and academic institutions as peer reviewers for activities carried out by other entities.

Summary of Rio Hondo Watershed Area Regional Program Funded Projects, Studies, and Concepts

Over the first four years of the SCWP (FY20-21 through FY23-24), 15 IP Projects, 5 TRP Project Concept, 6 Scientific Studies, and 1 Watershed Coordinator were approved in the Rio Hondo (RH) Watershed Area. The 15 approved IP Projects to date represent over $60M in funds programmed through FY27-28. These projects are being implemented across 10 municipalities and are projected to:

- Capture stormwater from over 66,907 acres that drain to the respective projects.
- Invest over $53M in projects benefiting Disadvantaged Communities.
- Provide an increase in storage capacity for projects that clean stormwater during rain events of 82 acre-feet (for a typical rainy day).
- Provide an increase in local water supply through an additional annual average stormwater capture of 2,174 acre-feet.
- Remove 4 acres of impervious area, which reduces concentrated stormwater flows and pollution running off paved surfaces. Increased greenspace can also reduce the urban heat island effect and increase opportunities for community activities.
- Reduce numerous pollutants and contribute to meeting water quality requirements related to stormwater discharges and water quality; and
- Leverage over $48M in other funding sources to complete the projects.

Of the 5 funded TRP projects, 1 feasibility study has been developed and subsequently approved for funding through the Infrastructure Program. The remaining funded TRP project concepts have technical assistance teams with work in progress or anticipated to start soon. Additional information about the Technical Resources Program can be found on the SCWP website.

Table 1: Summary of Regional Program Rio Hondo Funded Projects, Concepts and Studies

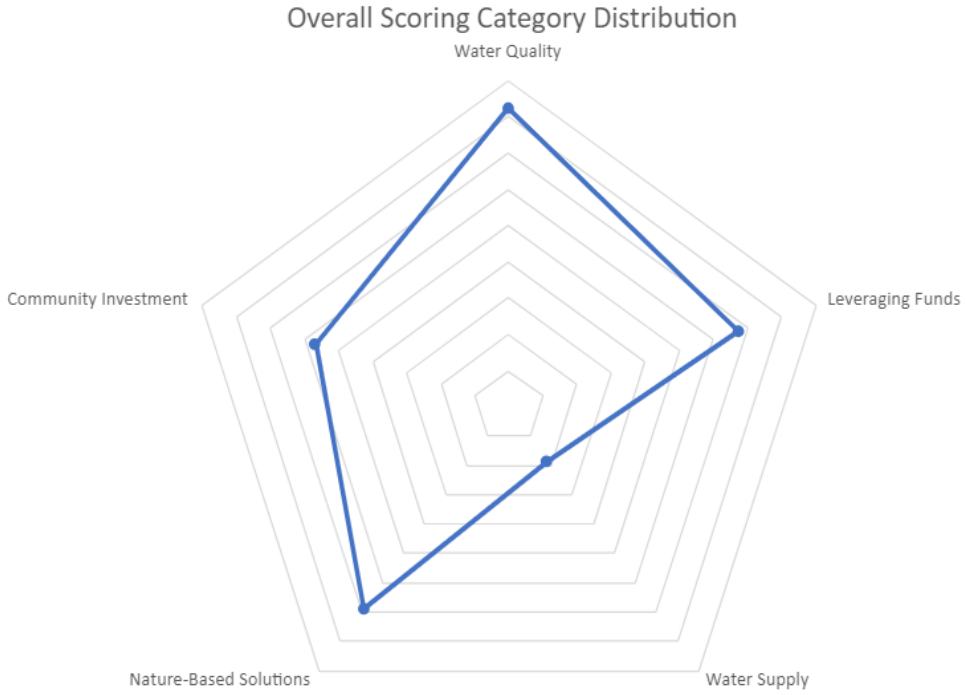
Funding Program	No. of Projects, Concepts, Studies	Total SCW Funding Budgeted & Projected through FY27-28	Total Projected Leveraged Funds	Projected SCW Funding benefitting Disadvantaged Communities
SIP FY20-21	**7**	**$18,504,500.00**	**$28,800,000.00**	**$15,800,000.00**
Infrastructure Program	2	$15,500,000.00	$28,800,000.00	$15,500,000.00
Scientific Studies	2	$804,500.00	N/A	N/A
Project Concepts	2	$600,000.00	N/A	$300,000.00
Watershed Coordinators	**1**	**$1,600,000.00**	**N/A**	**N/A**
SIP FY21-22	**12**	**$15,654,479.00**	**$14,007,713.22**	**$14,369,329.00**
Infrastructure Program	8	$14,569,329.00	$14,007,713.22	$13,769,329.00
Scientific Studies	1	$185,150.00	N/A	N/A
Project Concepts	3	$900,000.00	N/A	$600,000.00
SIP FY22-23	**3**	**$4,433,493.79**	**$0.00**	**$4,078,000.00**
Infrastructure Program	1	$4,078,000.00	$0.00	$4,078,000.00
Scientific Studies	2	$355,493.79	N/A	N/A
Project Concepts	0	$0.00	N/A	$0.00
SIP FY23-24	**5**	**$27,038,233.23**	**$4,883,284.00**	**$19,627,769.00**

Funding Program	No. of Projects, Concepts, Studies	Total SCW Funding Budgeted & Projected through FY27-28	Total Projected Leveraged Funds	Projected SCW Funding benefitting Disadvantaged Communities
Infrastructure Program	4	$26,344,649.00	$4,883,284.00	$19,627,769.00
Scientific Studies	1	$693,584.23	N/A	N/A
Project Concepts	0	$0.00	N/A	$0.00
Grand Total	**27**	**$65,630,706.02**	**$47,690,997.22**	**$53,875,098.00**

Projected Project Benefits

The Scoring Committee evaluated the benefits anticipated to be provided by each proposed project including assessment of claimed Water Quality Benefits, Water Supply Benefits, Community Investment Benefits, Nature-Based Solutions, and Leveraged Funds, as defined in the Project Scoring Criteria in the Feasibility Study Guidelines. As shown in the web plot below, all five scored benefit categories are represented in the funded Regional Program projects, with water quality being the core benefit. The web plot charts the benefits and features provided by RH's regional program projects; the further the point is from the center, the greater the proportion of projects that achieve that feature or benefit.

Figure 2: Overall scoring category distribution for IP Projects in first four years (15 total IP Projects)



Below are tables and graphics that summarize the information collected through applications for the funded IP Projects. The numbers next to the claimed benefits within the "raindrop" represent the number of Infrastructure Program Projects providing the projected benefit.

Table 2: Estimated projected aggregate benefits for RH IP Projects in first four years (15 total)

Project Characteristic	Value
Total # of IP Projects	15
Area Managed by Projects (acres)	66,907
Project 24-hour Storage Capacity (acre-feet)	82[1]
Annual Average Stormwater Capture (acre-feet)	2,174
Dry Weather Inflow to Projects (cubic feet per sec)	9
Impervious Area Removed (acres)	4

[1]For wet-weather Projects only.

Table 3: Projected Benefits of IP Projects in first four years (15 total IP Projects)

Number of Benefits Provided by Infrastructure Program Projects	
Primary Pollutant Addressed	
5	Zinc
0	Bacteria
1	Nitrogen
9	Other*
Water Supply Benefits	
11	Connected to Aquifer
0	Sends to WW Treatment Plant for Reuse
1	Uses Water Onsite
Community Investment Benefits	
12	Reduces Heat Island Effect
14	Provides Recreational Opportunities
11	Increases Shade and Trees
9	Improves Flood Protection
6	Improves Waterways Access
11	Enhances Habitat or Park Space
2	Enhances Green Spaces at Schools
Nature-Based Solutions	
15	Mimics Natural Processes

Number of Benefits Provided by Infrastructure Program Projects	
15	Uses Natural Materials
Leveraging Funds	
11	Leverages Shared Funds

***Primary Pollutant Addressed does not apply to Dry Weather Projects. "Other" includes Phosphorous and Copper.**

Table 4: Number of RH IP Projects by BMP type (15 total IP Projects)

Primary BMP Type	Number of IP Projects
Wet Weather Focus	**8**
Biofiltration	2
Bioretention	1
Cistern	0
Diversion to Sanitary Sewer	0
Infiltration Facility	1
Infiltration Well	1
Treatment Facility	3
Dry Weather Focus	**7**
Biofiltration	0
Bioretention	1
Diversion to Sanitary Sewer	0
Infiltration Facility	1

Primary BMP Type	Number of IP Projects
Infiltration Well	1
Treatment Facility	4

Table 5: RH Regional Program Funding Allocated/Projected for Disadvantaged Communities through FY27-28, including projects from first four years

A: Total Number of IP Projects benefitting Disadvantaged Communities	B: Total SCW Regional Program IP Allocations and Projects through FY27-28	C: Total SCW Regional Program IP Allocations and Projections Benefitting Disadvantaged Communities through FY27-28	D: Percent of SCW Regional Program IP Allocations and Projections Benefitting Disadvantaged Communities through FY27-28 (C/B)
12 (of 15)	$60M	$53M	88%

Project Status and Phases

The list below summarizes the status of the 11 funded IP Projects for FY20-21 to FY22-23.

- 2 Projects in planning or design phase
- 1 Projects in bid/award or construction
- 8 Projects with no eligible SCWP expenditures during period

Funding and Expenditures

Table 6 summarizes expenditures for the 11 IP Projects and 5 Scientific Studies in FY20-21, FY21-22, and FY22-23 SIPs.

Table 6: Summary of expenditures for FY20-21 to FY22-23 SIPs

Funding Year	Total SCW Funds Awarded up to (6/30/2023)	Total SCW Expenditures up to (6/30/2023)	Total Cost Share Expenditures up to (6/30/2023)	Total SCW Expenditures in FY22-23	Total Cost Share Expenditures in FY22-23
SIP FY20-21	**$16,304,500.00**	**$8,330,598.48**	**$19,236,157.25**	**$160,772.02**	**$1,120,375.97**
Infrastructure Program Projects	$15,500,000.00	$7,708,529.51	$19,236,157.25	$0.00	$1,120,375.97
Scientific Studies	$804,500.00	$622,068.97	$0.00	$160,772.02	$0.00
SIP FY21-22	**$10,543.081.00**	**$224,721.45**	**$1,013,501.54**	**$220,908.74**	**$51,901.40**
Infrastructure Program Projects	$10,423,114.00	$95,079.60	$1,013,501.54	$95,079.60	$51,901.40
Scientific Studies	$119,967.00	$129,641.85	$0.00	$125,829.14	$0.00
SIP FY22-23	**$800,997.04**	**$0.00**	**$0.00**	$0.00	$0.00
Infrastructure Program Projects	$682,000.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Scientific Studies	$118,997.04	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00	$0.00
Grand Total	**$27,648,578.04**	**$8,555,319.93**	**$20,249,658.79**	**$381,680.76**	**$1,172,277.37**

Note: Information based on submitted and completed reports by Regional Program Project Developers as of end of December 2023.

Table 7 summarizes the 1 Regional Program Projects reporting SCWP expenditures in FY20-21 to FY22-23 towards Program benefits.

Table 7: Number of RH Regional Projects reporting SCWP Expenditures towards Program Benefits FY22-23

Program Benefits	Number of IP Projects
Community Benefits	1
Water Quality Benefits	1
Water Supply Benefits	1
Nature-Based Solutions	1
Disadvantaged Community Benefits	1
Total Number of IP Projects reporting SCWP Expenditures in FY22-23	**1**

Note: Information provided by Regional Program Project Developers. Information is current to December FY23-24.

Watershed Coordinator Program

The Technical Resources Program provides Watershed Coordinators to educate and build capacity in communities and to facilitate community and stakeholder engagement with the SCW Program. The WASC funds 1 Watershed Coordinator (Richard Watson & Associates, Inc. (RWA)). The Watershed Coordinator began work in July 2021. To date, they've engaged over 1,200 people and have held 8 education events and 15 outreach events across the watershed area.

Watershed Coordinator progress presentations and reports may be reviewed on the RH WASC webpage (https://safecleanwaterla.org/rio-hondo-watershed-area/). The most recently updated and approved Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plan may be viewed here (approved August 20, 2024). The Watershed Coordinator FY23-24 Annual Report may be viewed here.

Highlights

> "During the last two years, the Rio Hondo Watershed Coordinator Team has given special attention to the development and implementation of an Opportunity Planning Process to assist the WASC with identifying potential projects and project

sites within the Watershed Area. This process involves locating potential project sites along each of the six (6) washes tributary to the Rio Hondo, as well as along the Rio Hondo itself. In addition to locating potential project sites, we have worked to evaluate the interactions between approved projects and potential future projects to help WASC members focus on the spatial and equity aspects of their project deliberations and decisions. Our project-scale focus fits well with the overall Safe Clean Water Program's new Watershed Planning Approach and could help other Watershed Areas with watershed planning implementation."

-Watershed Coordinators Richard Watson and Julie Millett (Richard Watson & Associates, Inc.)

Regional Program Findings

The findings highlighted here are representative of observations and feedback from governance committees, external stakeholder reports (see those identified in the Adaptive Management Section), and a survey completed by the District to collect feedback from applicants on their experience with the Regional Program from all nine watershed areas. The findings included here are not comprehensive but are summarized to reflect findings that led to the development of the ROC recommendations and near-term adaptive management actions.

- Large municipalities have been most active and successful with obtaining Regional Program funds.
- Applicants and stakeholders have provided feedback that the application requirements can be cumbersome and complex for some applicants (e.g., small municipalities and NGOs/CBOs, schools).
- The number of applications is decreasing year over year as the backlog of projects identified in other planning documents/efforts (e.g., EWMPs, WMPs, IRWM, etc.) have already been submitted.
- Project opportunities and potential for benefits vary by location (e.g., water supply potential) and many feel these variations should be accounted for in watershed planning and project scoring.
- Project applications and reporting for different project phases and project sizes could be tailored.
- Surveyed project applicants have had positive experiences with the application Portal, informational materials, and information sessions.
- The metrics and information currently collected for the Regional Program could benefit from clarity and refinement.
- Definitions of Program Goals could benefit from clarity and refinement.

- Watershed planning and/or establishment of targets could assist with decision making and project identification and prioritization.
- Scoring criteria could be re-evaluated to align with experience to date in the Program and new metrics/methods.
- Inflation and the impacts of COVID-19 on supply chain and schedules have had a larger than expected impact on costs and timing of projects.

Adaptive Management

The SCW Program will continue to evolve as it adapts to the needs of the communities it serves to effectively advance the Regional Program while refining guidance, processes, and tools that will further maximize SCW Program Goals, demonstrate/report on SCW Program Goals and metrics, and facilitate enhanced long-term planning. The Regional Program investments to date address the urgent and growing needs in our communities and in our region. More than ever, investments in creative and innovative solutions are being made for a resilient future. Overall, the SCW Program Goals are being achieved and the program is implementing a variety of multi-benefit infrastructure projects that improve water quality, increase local water supply, enhance communities, and improve public health.

Adaptive Management to Date

To ensure adaptive management, the WASC shall review progress and expenditure reports and the annual summary reports to evaluate whether the schedules, budgets, scopes and expected benefits have significantly changed and remain consistent with the SCW Program Goals. Programs and Projects that are over budget or behind schedule, or that demonstrate reduced or revised scope of benefits, may be adjusted or removed from future SIPs.

As part of the ongoing adaptive management of the SCW Program, the District has refined processes, tools and has developed iterative guidance materials including, but not limited to, the items listed below. Please refer to the Project Portal (https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/scw-reporting/map), Regional Program webpage (https://safecleanwaterla.org/regional-program/), and the WASC webpage on the Safe, Clean Water website (https://safecleanwaterla.org/) for details.

- Watershed Area Steering Committee Operating Guidelines (https://safecleanwaterla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Regional-Program-WASC-Operating-Guidelines-20190924-FINAL.pdf)

- Guidelines for public participation and public comments during Governance Committee in-person or virtual meetings (https://safecleanwaterla.org/video-conference-guidelines/)
- Guidance for project applicants, including but not limited to, project applications, factsheets, and information sessions
    - Call for Projects Information Sessions (https://safecleanwaterla.org/call-for-projects/)
- Regional Program Funding Process Handbook (https://safecleanwaterla.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Handbook-20191007-1630.pdf)
- Reporting Module for Project Developers to submit progress reports (https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/reporting/)
- Safe Clean Water Spatial Data Library (https://stantec.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=35df45808fe6470a8eff1075967c2156)
    - WASCs utilize the SCW GIS Maps to help assess multi-benefit projects across the watershed area to aid in development of SIPs
- SIP Programming Tool (https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/sip-tool/)
- Preliminary Committee Member rankings of projects for discussion purposes, as applicable
- Anticipated future SCW applications/funding request for construction costs from projects being awarded design SCW funds
- Program Guidance (https://safecleanwaterla.org/2022-interim-guidance/)
    - Programming of Nature-Based Solutions
    - Implementing Disadvantaged Community Policies in the Regional Program
    - Strengthening Community Engagement and Support
    - Water Supply
        - Alternate Water Supply Scoring Pilot for FY24-25 Call for Projects
- Partial Funding Guidelines
    - https://safecleanwaterla.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Partial-Funding-Guidelines-20220216.pdf
- Reduced reporting requirements of Project and Study Developers from quarterly to semi-annually
- Starting FY24-25, a dedicated consultant team has been onboarded to leverage resources to streamline coordination in order to expedite the review process.

Ongoing and Future Adaptive Management

Compliant with LACFCD Code Ch18.04.L. The progress reports and audits submitted by project developers provides meaningful insight on the extent projects and studies are achieving SCW Program Goals (https://safecleanwaterla.org/reporting-and-audits/).

The Benefits Dashboard and the Reporting modules that track project benefits, expenditures, and progress reports are available via the SCW Portal https://portal.safecleanwaterla.org/scw-reporting/map). As the early suite of SCW Program funded projects complete their funded activity or complete construction, project developers will report on post-performance of completed Infrastructure Projects. The post-performance report information will help inform future improvements to the Regional Program process and requirements to better achieve SCW Program Goals.

Public Works' Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) is intended to help inform future SIP development through the support of both early/coordinated planning as well as more meaningful tracking/monitoring of projects and benefits. The MMS will use a robust stakeholder and consensus-based approach to assess and develop metrics that can be used across the SCW Program to support Program Goals. Additionally, Public Works commissioned a white paper as part of the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) by UCLA and Stantec (Equity in Stormwater Investments: Measuring Community Engagement and Disadvantaged Community Benefits for Equitable Impact in the Safe Clean Water Program) which is published on the UCLA Luskin Center website: https://innovation.luskin.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Equity-in-Stormwater-Investments.pdf.

In alignment with the LA County Board of Supervisor Horvath's motion calling for the acceleration of the SCW Program, Public Works has begun facilitating regional and watershed-based planning efforts with the goal of identifying project opportunity areas and refine targets to support strategic investment. This effort will build on past and ongoing work and will incorporate meaningful feedback from the communities while leveraging available data and best practices to create watershed plans.

These results, along with other efforts and regional plans related to identifying needs, priorities, and lessons learned, will continue to be grafted into the Regional Program process as able such as improvements to project application process, scoring criteria, and reporting.