

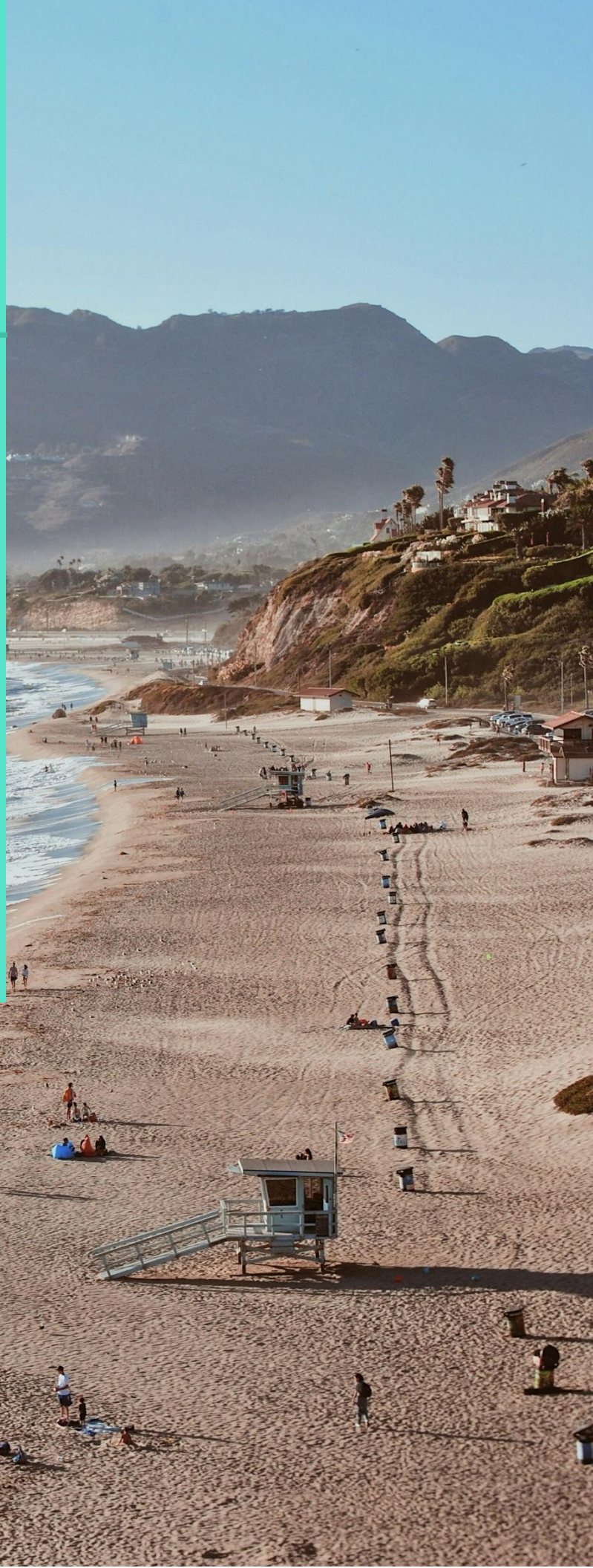
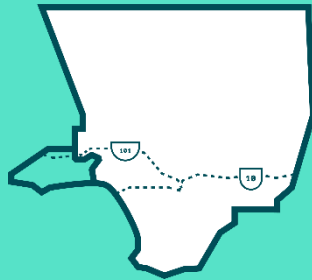


**SAFE
CLEAN
WATER
PROGRAM**

DRAFT Initial Watershed Plan

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

August 2025





DRAFT Initial Watershed Plan

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Safe, Clean Water Program Background	3
1.2 Why Watershed Planning?	5
1.3 Watershed Planning Process & Structure	7
1.4 Working Together	12
1.4.1 Engagement with Interested Parties	12
1.4.2 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)	13
1.4.3 Leveraging Key Efforts to Date	14
1.4.3.1 Metrics and Monitoring Study	14
1.4.3.2 Local and Regional Planning Efforts	15
1.4.3.3 SCW Program Scientific Studies	17
Chapter 2. Watershed Area Characteristics	19
2.1 Key Watershed Area Features	19
2.1.1 Physical and Natural Features	23
2.1.2 Land Use and Population Characteristics	26
2.1.3 Waterbody Conditions	28
2.1.4 Existing Stormwater Capture Facilities & Non-SCW Program Projects	30
2.2 Summary of Potential and Challenges for SCW Program Projects and Programs in the Watershed Area	30
2.2.1 Improve Water Quality	32

2.2.2 Increase Drought Preparedness	33
2.2.3 Improve Public Health, Deliver Multi-Benefits with NBS and Diverse Projects, and Equitably Distribute Benefits	36
2.3 SCW Program Financial Snapshot	39
2.3.1 Regional Program and Financial Snapshot and Outlook	39
2.3.2 Municipal Program Financial Snapshot.....	44
Chapter 3. Baseline of Benefits Provided by Funded Projects (FY20-21 to FY24-25).....	45
3.1 SCW Program Projects in the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	46
3.1.1 Benefit Forecasts for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	54
3.2 Baselines and Forecasts for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	51
3.2.1 Benefit Baselines for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	51
Chapter 4. Quantifying Progress Toward SCW Program Goals	54
4.1 Visioning Setting and Progress Tracking: Indicators & Performance Measures	58
4.2 Establishing Targets	64
4.2.1 Determining the SCW Program's Contributions and Targets	64
4.2.2 Targets for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	72
Chapter 5. Strategies for Addressing Needs and Achieving Goals	74
5.1 Quantifying Watershed Area Needs.....	75
5.1.1 Watershed Area Needs for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	76
5.2 Strategies to Address Needs and Achieve Goals.....	80
5.2.1 Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area	86
5.2.1.1 Improve Water Quality: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities....	91
5.2.1.2 Increase Drought Preparedness: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	95
5.2.1.3 Improve Public Health: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	99
5.2.1.4 Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities.....	106
5.2.1.5 Leverage Funding and Invest in Research and Development: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	113
5.2.1.6 Equitably Distribute Benefits: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	117
5.2.1.7 Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	120

5.2.1.8 Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	123
5.2.1.9 Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities	125
5.2.1.10 Composite Strategies and Opportunities for Providing a Spectrum of Benefits.....	131
5.2.1.11 Aligning Projects with Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities ..	138
Chapter 6. Watershed Planning Tool.....	140
Chapter 7. Next Steps and Recommendations	145
7.1 Key Gaps and Limitations.....	148
7.2 Next Steps and Recommendations for Watershed Planning	157
7.2.1 Implement Strategies	159
7.2.2 Track Data	161
7.2.3 Assess Progress	164
7.2.4 Revisit the Watershed Plans.....	168

Appendices

Appendix A. Glossary	A-1
Appendix B. Acronyms	B-1
Appendix C. Interested Party Engagement	C-1
Appendix D. Community Strengths and Needs Assessment Dashboard	D-1
Appendix E. Key Efforts to Date	E-1
Appendix F. SCW Program Regional Program Financial Outlooks	F-1
Appendix G. Details of Indicators and Performance Measures	G-1
Appendix H. Baselines, Targets, and Watershed Area Needs	H-1
Appendix I. Opportunity Analysis	I-1
Appendix J. Opportunity Maps	J-1

List of Figures

Figure 1-1. Major Initial Watershed Plan inputs and outputs of SCW Program Watershed Planning	3
Figure 1-2. Funding allocations by each of the three main programs of the SCW Program	4
Figure 1-3. Nine SCW Program WAs.....	4
Figure 1-4. Board of Supervisors Motions describing a vision for Watershed Planning	6

Figure 1-5. Planning Themes and SCW Program Goals (Section 18.02 of the LACFCD Municipal Code)	8
Figure 1-6. SCW Program Watershed Planning Elements	9
Figure 1-7. Initial Watershed Plan engagement and collaborators	12
Figure 1-8. CSNA Survey & Dashboard summary	14
Figure 1-9. SCW Program Metrics and Monitoring Study Recommendations	15
Figure 2-1. NSMB WA and its Municipalities	20
Figure 2-2. Summary of key NSMB WA Characteristics used for target setting	22
Figure 2-3. NSMB WA elevation profile	24
Figure 2-4. January 2025 wildfire burn perimeter in the NSMB WA	25
Figure 2-5. Population density and DACs in the NSMB WA	27
Figure 2-6. Total phosphorus load in stormwater runoff across the NSMB WA	29
Figure 2-7. View of Point Dume from the beachside bluffs	33
Figure 2-8. Malibu Creek State Park	36
Figure 2-9. Backbone Trail Santa Monica Mountains (National Park Service)	38
Figure 2-10. NSMB WA Regional Program Infrastructure Program financial outlook ..	43
Figure 3-1. Summary of SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA	48
Figure 3-2. SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA	49
Figure 3-3. Example benefit forecast for the NSMB WA Regional and Municipal Program Project	54
Figure 3-4. Example benefit forecasts for the NSMB WA under current SCW Program trajectory for key Planning Themes	57
Figure 3-5. Summary of benefits provided by SCW Program funded Projects to date in the NSMB WA	53
Figure 4-1. Indicators and PMs terminology	60
Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs	61
Figure 4-3. Conceptual approach to derive SCW Program target contributions from countywide targets	67
Figure 4-4. Example target setting top-down approach	68
Figure 4-5. Example target setting for an Indicator without a countywide target	69
Figure 4-6. Example target setting for an Indicator with a countywide target	70
Figure 4-7. Regional Oversight Committee and WASC engagement summary of priorities for target setting	71
Figure 4-8. NSMB WA targets by Indicator	73
Figure 5-1. Strategies, actions, and opportunities	74
Figure 5-2. WA Need conceptual example for a magnitude-based Indicator	75
Figure 5-3. NSMB WA baselines, targets, and WA Needs	78

Figure 5-4. Example of using strategies, actions, and opportunities to address WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	82
Figure 5-5 Opportunity examples (spatial and non-spatial)	84
Figure 5-6. Example opportunity layer development	85
Figure 5-7. Conceptual example for identifying multi-benefit opportunities using “composite” layers	86
Figure 5-8. Approximate Project capacities and areas that would address NSMB WA Needs.....	90
Figure 5-9. Improve Water Quality: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	92
Figure 5-10. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality	93
Figure 5-11. Increase Drought Preparedness: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	96
Figure-5-12.Opportunity to Increase Water Supply Through Stormwater Capture	97
Figure 5-13. Improve Public Health: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	100
Figure 5-14. Opportunity for Park and Green Space Creation.....	101
Figure 5-15. Opportunity for Park Enhancement or Restoration	102
Figure 5-16. Opportunity to Create Green Space at Schools	103
Figure 5-17. Opportunity to Create Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces	104
Figure 5-18. Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	107
Figure 5-19. Opportunity for Habitat Creation, Restoration, Enhancement, and Protection	109
Figure 5-20. Opportunities to Address Community-stated Priorities and Concerns ..	110
Figure 5-21. Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	115
Figure 5-22. Equitably Distribute Benefits: strategies, actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	118
Figure 5-23. Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	121
Figure 5-24. Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects: strategies, actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals.....	124
Figure 5-25. Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	126
Figure 5-26. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes	132
Figure 5-27. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes: top two grid areas with the most opportunity	133

Figure 5-28. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes: scaled by Municipality	134
Figure 5-29. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply	135
Figure 5-30. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply: top two grid areas with the most opportunity	136
Figure 5-31. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply: scaled by Municipality	137
Figure 5-32. Example multi-benefit Project benefits, organized by alignment with Initial Watershed Plan strategies.....	139
Figure 6-1. SCW Program Portal overview	141
Figure 6-2. Planning Tool Map summary of functionality	142
Figure 6-3. Planning Tool Dashboard landing page	143
Figure 6-4. Planning Tool Dashboard Indicators and PMs progress chart examples	144
Figure 7-1. Watershed Planning near and long-term next steps.....	145
Figure 7-2. SCW Program Adaptive Management conceptual process	146
Figure 7-3. Recent SCW Program Adaptive Management	147
Figure 7-4. Summary of and recommendations for addressing definitional gaps	149
Figure 7-5. Summary of and recommendations for addressing community data gaps	150
Figure 7-6. Summary of and recommendations for addressing SCW Project & Program data gaps	152
Figure 7-7. Summary of and recommendations for addressing knowledge and spatial data gaps	154
Figure 7-8. Summary of and recommendations for addressing other activity data gaps	156
Figure 7-9. Next steps for Watershed Planning.....	157
Figure 7-10. Long-term recommendations for Watershed Planning	158
Figure 7-11. Watershed planning evaluation framework	165

List of Tables

Table 1-1. Highlights of key efforts to date in the NSMB WA	16
Table 2-1. Summary of key WA features	21
Table 2-2. Summary of existing major stormwater capture facilities and non-SCW Program Projects	30
Table 2-3. Regional Program financial snapshot for the NSMB WA	41
Table 2-4. Backlog of Regional Program Projects in the NSMB WA as of June 2025.	42
Table 2-5. Municipal Program financial snapshot for Municipalities included in the NSMB WA	44
Table 3-1. Regional Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA	50
Table 3-2. Municipal Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA	50
Table 5-1. Improve Water Quality: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	94
Table 5-2. Increase Drought Preparedness: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	98
Table 5-3. Improve Public Health: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	105
Table 5-4. Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	111
Table 5-5. Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	116
Table 5-6. Equitably Distribute Benefits: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	119
Table 5-7. Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	122
Table 5-8. Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals	128

Chapter 1. Introduction

The North Santa Monica Bay (NSMB) Initial Watershed Plan represents a historic milestone in the Safe, Clean Water (SCW) Program, by providing targeted guidance on what can be achieved within the scope of the SCW Program and reflects the diverse landscape of the NSMB Watershed Area (WA). The Initial Watershed Plans should be used to inform regional stormwater priorities to ensure that Project and Program¹ implementation aligns with both the SCW Program 14 Ordinance-established Goals² (Goals) and community needs.

The SCW Program was established to improve water quality, enhance local water supply, and invest in communities. Grounded in the principles of sustainability, equity, and resilience, the SCW Program supports multi-benefit Projects and Programs that improve water quality while simultaneously delivering meaningful outcomes for communities—such as improved air quality, reduced urban heat, and increased access to green space, etc.—across the Los Angeles region.

The NSMB WA Initial Watershed Plan serves as a strategic blueprint for what can be accomplished using SCW Program funds as well as through coordinated efforts that leverage additional local, state, federal and other resources, and funding by setting targets and defining strategies tailored to local challenges and opportunities. It reflects the collective insights and priorities of the Regional Oversight Committee (ROC), Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs), Municipalities, Community Leaders, and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). This Initial Watershed Plan is intended

¹ As defined in Chapter 16 of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD; District) Municipal Code (LACFCD Code §16):

- “Project” means the development (including design, preparation of environmental documents, obtaining applicable regulatory permits, construction, inspection, and similar activities), operation and maintenance (including monitoring), of a physical structure or facility that increases Stormwater or Urban Runoff capture or reduces Stormwater or Urban Runoff pollution in the SCW Program Watershed Areas.
- “Program” means a planned, coordinated group of activities related to increasing Stormwater or Urban Runoff capture or reducing Stormwater or Urban Runoff pollution in the SCW Program Watershed Areas.
- A “multi-benefit Project” must have (1) a Water Quality Benefit, and (2) a Water Supply Benefit or a Community Investment Benefit, or both.
- 16.05.C. Projects implemented through the Municipal Program shall include a Water Quality Benefit. Multi-Benefit Projects and Nature-Based Solutions are strongly encouraged.
- 16.05.D.1. Infrastructure Program. This program shall implement Multi-Benefit watershed-based Projects that have a Water Quality Benefit, as well as, either a Water Supply Benefit or Community Investment Benefit, or both.

² As defined in Chapter 18 of the LACFCD Municipal Code (LACFCD Code §16).

for use by the ROC, the NSMB WASC, Project and Program proponents, Municipalities, Planners, CBOs, and Community Leaders. Infrastructure Program Project Applicants are expected to align with the Initial Watershed Plan, which can be streamlined by following the strategies outlined in this Plan. The WASC will incorporate Projects and Programs that reflect this alignment and deliver multiple benefits to ensure that funding addresses the highest-priority WA needs while maximizing Water Quality, Water Supply, and Community Investment Benefits (CIBs). For additional information, please visit [the SCW Program Watershed Planning webpage](#).

This Initial Watershed Plan provides a tailored set of baselines (Chapter 3), targets (3.2.2), and strategies (Chapter 5) for the NSMB WA. This Initial Watershed Plan outputs draw on the NSMB WA's unique characteristics (Chapter 2), findings from key efforts to date—including SCW Program Scientific Studies—best available data, and input from interested parties (Section 1.4). They offer practical guidance for Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works), the ROC, NSMB WASC, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents to implement Projects and Programs that deliver multiple benefits, address diverse needs, and support progress toward achieving multiple SCW Program Goals. Importantly, the Initial Watershed Plans are not intended as comprehensive watershed management plans. Instead, they provide targeted guidance based on what can be achieved within the scope of the SCW Program and its WAs. Project and Program proponents are required to align implementation with these Plans when planning and applying for SCW Program funding.

Complementing this Initial Watershed Plan are two key resources:

- A SCW Program-wide Executive Summary³, developed as a separate companion document to the Initial Watershed Plans. This Executive Summary serves to distill the key elements of each WA's Initial Watershed Plan—such as baselines, targets, strategies, and opportunities—while also providing broader context about Goals, structure, and implementation framework. It is intended to help readers quickly understand the core components of each Initial Watershed Plan and how local planning efforts fit into the overarching objectives of the SCW Program.
- The [Watershed Planning Tool](#) (Planning Tool; Chapter 6), an online interactive, living resource that tracks progress, supports Project and Program planning,

³ To be released with the final Initial Watershed Plans in early 2026.

and helps to inform strategic funding decisions. Integrated with the SCW Program Portal—including the Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) Tool, Projects Module, and Reporting Module—it enables WASCs to evaluate funding scenarios, assess Project contributions, and ensure alignment with current Project data and implementation progress.

These resources are companions to the Initial Watershed Plans and communicate their outputs and progress to interested parties and community members. These planning elements are summarized in Figure 1-1 and their functions and users are summarized in Section 1.4 and detailed throughout this plan. Additionally, the Initial Watershed Plans will establish a shared language to promote a clear understanding of Watershed Planning concepts and Initial Watershed Plan outputs. Key definitions and acronyms are presented in Appendix A and Appendix B, respectively.

Together, the Initial Watershed Plans, Planning Tool, and SCW Program-wide Executive Summary launch an adaptive cycle that will assess progress and adjust outputs through future Watershed Planning efforts, such as Adaptive Watershed Plans (Chapter 7). Informed by community input, scientific findings, and performance data, this approach enables responsive and effective planning.



Figure 1-1. Major Initial Watershed Plan inputs and outputs of SCW Program Watershed Planning

1.1 Safe, Clean Water Program Background

In November 2018, Los Angeles County voters approved Measure W, establishing a special parcel tax to fund the SCW Program in the Los Angeles region. The SCW

Program collects approximately \$280M annually to support implementation of multi-benefit Projects and Programs, making it the largest program for delivery of stormwater capture Projects and Programs in the nation. All investments from Projects and Programs align with the SCW Program's 14 Goals. Funding is distributed across three sub-programs: the Regional Program, Municipal Program, and District Program. Each sub-program and its funding allocation are detailed in Figure 1-2 below.

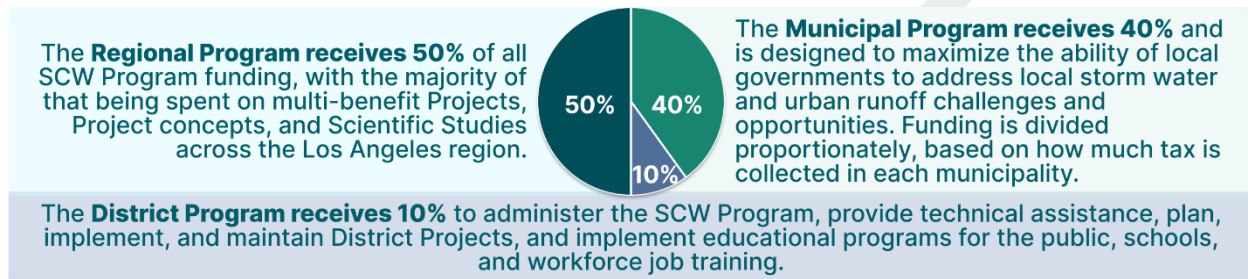


Figure 1-2. Funding allocations by each of the three main programs of the SCW Program

The SCW Program is organized around nine WAs within the Los Angeles region, capturing the unique circumstances and challenges of each WA by diverse representation, as shown in (Figure 1-3).

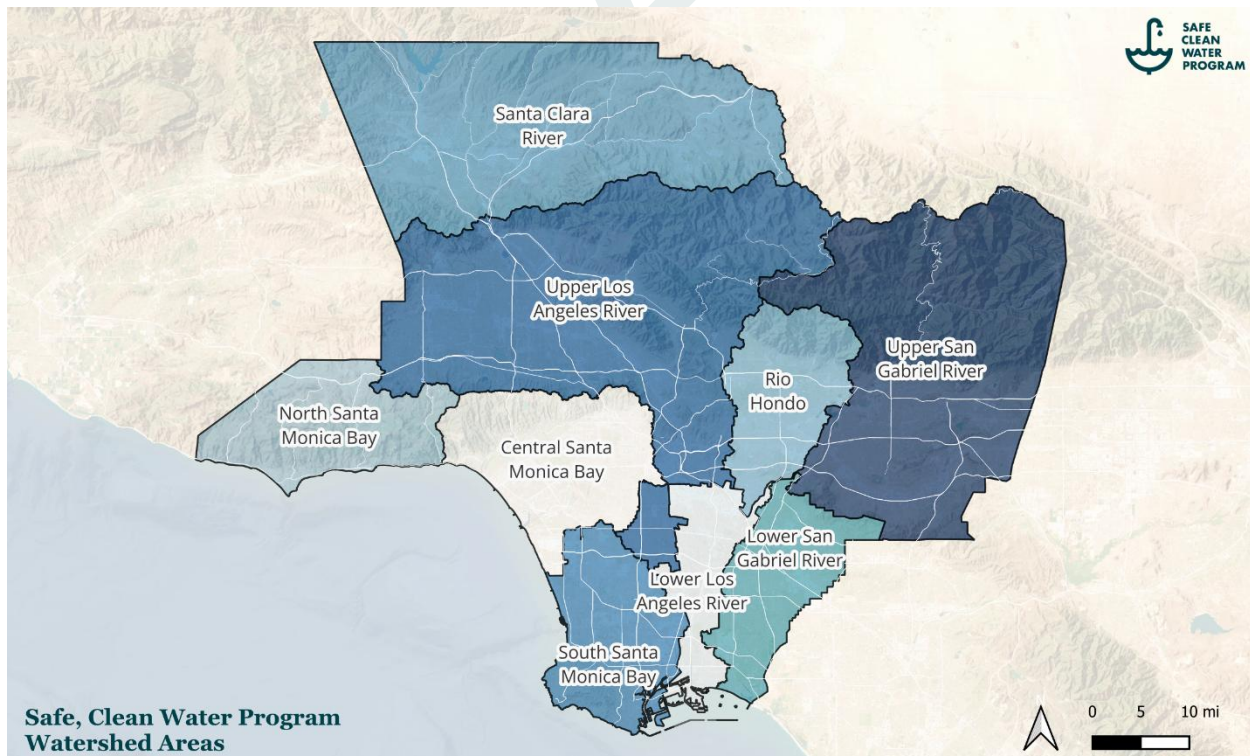


Figure 1-3. Nine SCW Program WAs

11 committees, listed below, oversee the effective governance of the SCW Program and help ensure that the SCW Program and its funded activities are fulfilling its objectives and goals.

- The **ROC** is responsible, on a program-scale, for assessing whether Goals are being met. The ROC consists of subject matter experts with knowledge in Water Quality Benefits, Water Supply Benefits, Nature-Based Solutions (NBS), CIBs, public health, sustainability, and other relevant issue areas.
- The nine **WASCs** are occupied by municipal, agency, and community stakeholders. They review proposed Projects, Project Concepts, and Scientific Studies and develop SIPs for their respective WAs as part of the Regional Program. Each WASC is supported by at least one Watershed Coordinator, who assists in guiding Projects from concept to implementation and promotes engagement throughout the process.
- The **Scoring Committee** works in partnership with Public Works to review and finalize scores for Projects being considered by each WASC for the Regional Program. The Scoring Committee is comprised of subject matter experts in Water Quality, Water Supply, NBS, and CIBs.

1.2 Why Watershed Planning?

The first five years of the SCW Program have been a tremendous success, with over \$1.4 billion in funding allocations projected by 2030 for more than 200 multi-benefit Regional and Municipal Program Infrastructure Projects, 23 Scientific Studies Program Studies⁴, 53 Technical Resources Program Project Concepts⁴, 12 Watershed Coordinators, and a spectrum of valuable Programs for the 86 Municipalities across the nine SCW Program WAs.



Recognizing this momentum and the opportunity to increase community benefits through improved stormwater management, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted a motion in July of 2023 to accelerate SCW Program implementation. This motion led to the formation of the SCW Program Watershed Planning Section within Public Works—a dedicated team tasked with guiding regional and watershed-based planning. Subsequent motions further defined the vision for Watershed Planning, with Figure 1-4 highlighting examples of these BOS motions.

⁴ Counts Scientific Studies and Project Concepts included in the FY25-26 SIPs.

"A vision document that identifies areas within each watershed with the greatest potential opportunities for improvements would ensure continuity and connectivity between interventions. The vision would lessen the burden on both applicants and committees as they consider which suites of Projects could be most impactful." (2023-07-25)¹

"These efforts are progressing toward a single publicly accessible planning portal that would provide direction for implementation. This comprehensive Planning Tool would likely assist a more diverse set of applicants to identify Projects that could achieve multiple benefits and best serve our communities." (2023-07-25)¹

"These goals must be balanced with essential flexibility in the Program for governance committee discretion and changing conditions and community needs." (2023-07-25)¹

"The watershed plans will help foster the design and implementation of the most impactful Projects and will also aid the District and governance committees in considering Project submissions and evaluating Program progress." (2023-11-27)²

"These plans will build upon other plans, in-progress efforts, and assessment of community needs to identify the most promising opportunities for achieving high-impact water quality, water supply, and community enhancing multi-benefit outcomes." (2023-11-27)²

"...watershed-specific needs and capabilities should be considered in planning, and...the Program needs to better quantify Program success and progress towards Goals." (2024-03-19)³

"Performance measures (or metrics) as well as related population indicators (targets) are already being incorporated to guide Watershed Planning, inform project development and solicitation, and to evaluate achievement of the [SCW Program] Goals." (2024-06-20)⁴

"The Watershed Planning process will involve extensive engagement with the WASCs, the ROC, Municipalities, community groups, and other interested parties." (2024-06-20)⁴

Figure 1-4. Board of Supervisors Motions describing a vision for Watershed Planning

¹ BOS Motion of July 25, 2023, Agenda Item 23 Accelerating Implementation of the SCW Program

² BOS Motion of July 25, 2023, Agenda Item 23, 120-Day Report Back (2023-11-27)

³ BOS Motion of March 19, 2024, Agenda Item 19 Progress and Adaptive Management of the SCW Program

⁴ BOS Motion of March 19, 2024, Agenda Item 19, 90-day Report Back (2024-06-20)

At this critical point for water in the Los Angeles region, the Initial Watershed Plans aim to accelerate implementation by providing guidance for future investments by Public Works, WASCs, and Municipalities toward the most impactful multi-benefit Projects and Programs. Developed through a collaborative and responsive phased engagement approach⁵, this guidance, and its highlighted priorities, are driven by engagement input from governance committees (i.e., the WASCs and ROC) and informed by technical analyses. The Initial Watershed Plans directly reflect governance committee priorities and draw on their regional expertise to provide Public Works, the ROC, WASCs, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents with SCW Program-specific resources to guide implementation and establish targets for tracking progress toward Goals.

Additionally, the Initial Watershed Plans will support broader planning initiatives beyond the SCW Program by providing a framework for decision-making and that

⁵ The Initial Watershed Plan engagement process followed a "listen—confirm—advance" approach—listening to input from the WASC and ROC, confirming a shared understanding to ensure alignment, and using validated input to guide analyses and set priorities.

aligns and contributes to regional and local objectives. These include efforts such as the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, County Water Plan (CWP), Watershed Management Programs (WMPs), Vision 2045, County of Los Angeles 2045 Climate Action Plan (2045 Climate Action Plan), etc.

1.3 Watershed Planning Process & Structure

SCW Program Watershed Planning is an iterative process that incorporates elements of the Results-Based Accountability Turn the Curve Thinking framework (Mark Friedman, 2005) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)'s [*Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters*](#). These foundational approaches guided the development of the Initial Watershed Plans, the online Planning Tool, and the framework for Adaptive Watershed Plans. To communicate progress toward achieving Goals and describe the shared vision of capturing and cleaning stormwater while also enhancing communities, Watershed Planning organizes concepts and results around each Goal. Goals are then grouped into nine Planning Themes, as illustrated in Figure 1-5.

The Watershed Planning process integrates interested party input, regional and local plans and requirements, key effort objectives and findings, technical analyses, and progress by SCW Program Projects to establish WA targets (3.2.2) and strategies (Chapter 5). These elements are brought together in the nine Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tool to guide the implementation of impactful, multi-benefit Projects and Programs.



*While not aligned with a specific theme, Goal L is supported by Watershed Planning as a whole.

Figure 1-5. Planning Themes and SCW Program Goals (Section 18.02 of the LACFCD Municipal Code)

Figure 1-6 outlines Watershed Planning's adaptive, iterative process and each of its core elements. Throughout this process, outreach and engagement play a central role, informing and shaping each component.

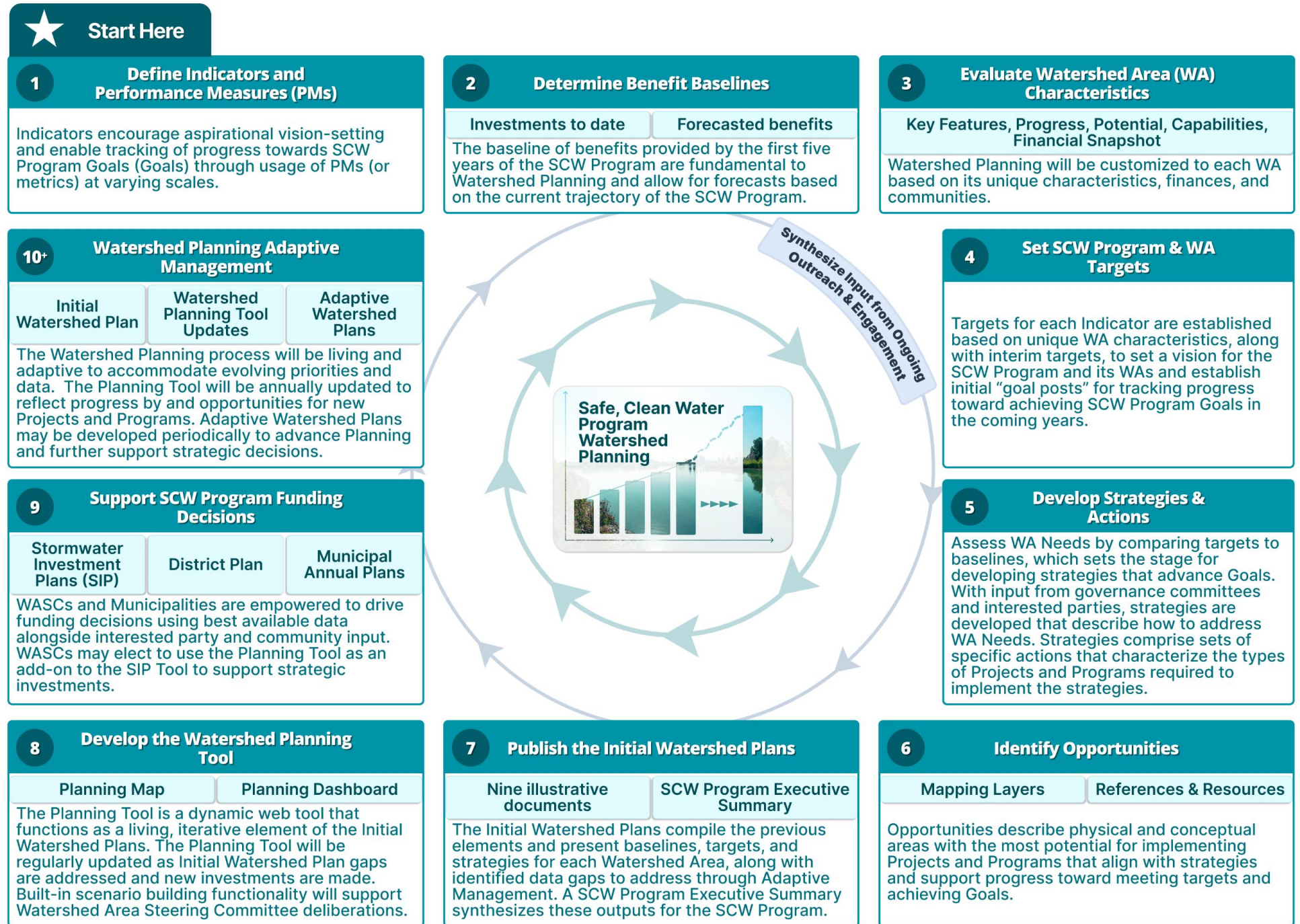


Figure 1-6. SCW Program Watershed Planning Elements

Building on this process, the Initial Watershed Plans and the Planning Tool serve as living, iterative resources that can be used by a range of interested parties—Public Works, WASCs, the ROC, Municipalities, Project and Program proponents, and community members—to:

- **Support** the acceleration of SCW Program implementation (e.g., planning, funding, and progress tracking across the WAs and SCW Program).
- **Expand** and enhance the range of benefits provided by new and continuing Projects and Programs.
- **Communicate** progress and governance committee priorities clearly.

Specifically, the Initial Watershed Plans and the Planning Tool can be used by the interested parties mentioned above to collaboratively accelerate progress toward Goals as described below:

- **WASCs, the ROC, and BOS** can use these resources to communicate priorities, assess Project benefits, and guide future SIPs and funding decisions.
 - **Assess baselines and targets:** Review WA baselines, metrics, targets, WA Needs, and key quantification methods.
 - **Communicate priorities:** Share priorities and strategies with Project Proponents, Municipalities, community members, and other interested parties.
 - **Identify synergies and study gaps:** Align funding decisions with local and regional planning efforts and flag needs for Scientific Studies.
 - **Plan next steps:** Consider near- and long-term recommendations for Watershed Planning.
 - **Review progress:** Evaluate individual and cumulative Project benefits to assess progress to date and inform planning.
 - **Consider funding scenarios:** Test Regional Program SIP Project and Program funding scenarios developed in the SIP Tool using the Planning Tool to evaluate progress and potential contributions by Project and Program applicants.
 - **Identify overlaps and gaps:** Spot Project benefit redundancy and opportunities to directly support Goals to inform future funding decisions.
 - **Incorporate community insight:** Use findings from the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) to understand community priorities and inform future decisions.
- **Municipalities and Project and Program proponents** can refine and align their Projects and Programs with governance committee and community

priorities, identify opportunities, and select design features that address local needs and support multiple Goals.

- **Understand WA context:** Evaluate potential and challenges for achieving Goals.
- **Refine Project Concepts and scopes of work:** Ensure Projects and Programs are designed with clear reference to SCW Program targets and strategies and alignment with Goals. Refine Project Concepts to stay responsive to evolving watershed and community needs. Well-defined scopes with distinct Project components can help the identification of specific leveraged funding opportunities (e.g., grants) and support leveraging outside resources. Clear articulation of multi-benefit elements can make Projects more competitive for complementary funding programs.
- **Utilize opportunities:** Leverage composite geographic information system (GIS)-based opportunities to identify the best areas where Projects can provide both Water Quality Benefits and co-benefits like Water Supply Benefits and CIBs.
- **Align with community input:** Ensure Projects reflect community priorities and concerns by incorporating insights from the CSNA Survey and Dashboard into Project-specific engagement and design choices.
- **Community members and other interested parties** are empowered with knowledge, tools, and data to track progress, engage meaningfully, and advocate for impactful, equitable watershed investments.
 - **Learn about Watershed Planning and Projects:** Understand SCW Program Watershed Planning, local WA characteristics, and local planned and constructed Project benefits.
 - **Understand targets and strategies:** Explore WA-specific targets and priorities to inform future Projects and Programs.
 - **Advocate for local priorities and Projects:** Get involved in Watershed Planning engagement through the CSNA and identify locations for beautification and voice individual priorities and concerns.
 - **Identify local challenges:** Recognize water issues and how Projects and Programs are prioritized.
 - **Track progress:** Use the Planning Tool to monitor progress toward Goals and view the latest Project and Programs

Together, the Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tool launch an Adaptive Watershed Planning cycle that assesses progress and adjusts strategies to address evolving priorities.

1.4 Working Together

The Initial Watershed Plans synthesize input from interested party engagement, technical studies, and local and regional planning efforts to develop coordinated targets and strategies. These strategies are designed to be both practical and aligned with broader planning initiatives (Table 1-1), supporting the SCW Program’s Goals while contributing meaningfully to other local and regional priorities. This integrated, collaborative approach strengthens collective problem-solving and positions the SCW Program to effectively help address complex water and climate challenges facing the Los Angeles region.

1.4.1 Engagement with Interested Parties

Watershed Planning activities facilitated both regional and WA-specific engagement across a range of interested parties. Watershed Planning was guided by a robust 2024–2025 engagement schedule designed to support genuine dialogue and timely input from SCW Program governance committees—ROC, WASCs, and the Scoring Committee—as well as other interested parties. The engagement strategy prioritized focused, structured facilitation—rather than open-ended discussion—to ensure input had a meaningful and actionable impact on technical analyses and planning decisions.



Figure 1-7. Initial Watershed Plan engagement and collaborators

Watershed Planning’s collaborative, cross-sector approach engaged a diverse range of interested parties (Figure 1-7) across key areas of expertise. The Los Angeles County Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Group contributed insights on regulatory compliance and water quality; OurWater LA provided guidance on equity-focused CIB analyses, NBS, and green jobs; the schools working group emphasized school greening; and Rebuild Southern California Partnership offered expertise in workforce development and Project delivery. These are examples of how engagement led to broad expertise contributing to strategy development across all Goals.

A phased engagement approach was implemented, with input from each phase informing the development of the Initial Watershed Plans. This input directly supported the identification of WA-specific and SCW Program-wide priorities and strategies, as presented in Chapter 5. A full summary of engagement activities conducted with governance committees, interested parties, and the public—including public meetings—is provided in Appendix C.

1.4.2 Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)

In November 2024, the SCW Program Watershed Planning Section launched the CSNA, which consists of a Survey and an online Dashboard that gathers community perspectives to strengthen the achievement of Goals. The CSNA allows community members to share their concerns, priorities, and what they value about their communities. Using CSNA Survey results as a reference, Projects and Programs can be more responsive to those community-stated priorities. Those who live, work, study, or serve in a community often best understand the challenges and strengths of their community. Responsiveness to ideas shared by a community can support greater relationships related to a specific Project and bolster long-term partnerships between a community and the agencies and representatives that serve them.

The [CSNA Survey](#) (Figure 1-8) consists of 11 questions, allowing the community to identify their priority areas of concern for stormwater-related issues and potential improvements. Additionally, the [CSNA Dashboard](#), a GIS online platform, visually displays survey response trends, which can be filtered by WA, Municipality, and specific community. The public CSNA Dashboard may also be used to support other planning initiatives beyond the SCW Program. Data from the CSNA is also featured in the Watershed Planning Tool to support Watershed Planning and Project implementation. Additional information on the CSNA is in Appendix D and details how

the CSNA can be leveraged to support Watershed Planning, and Project and Program implementation are outlined in Chapter 5.

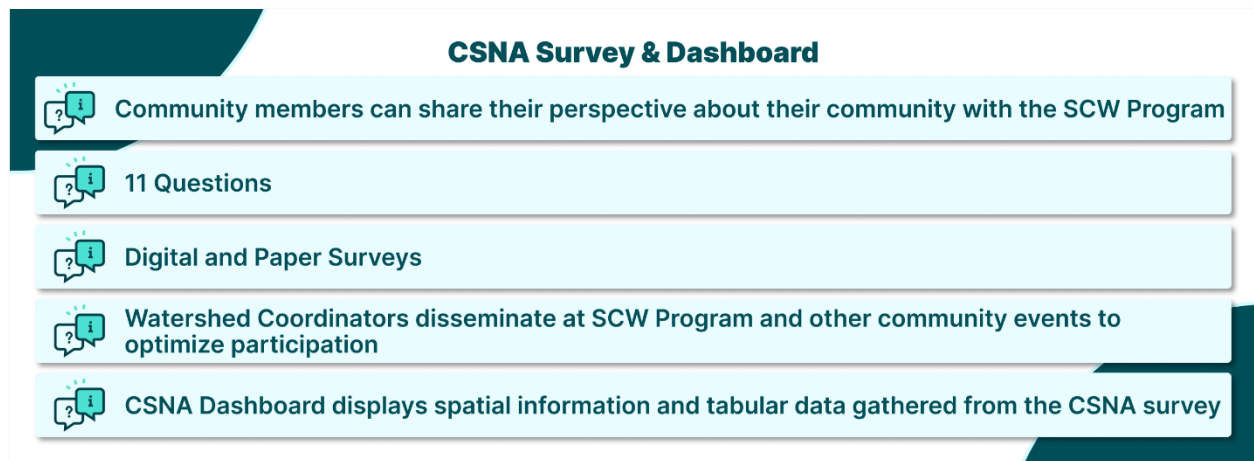


Figure 1-8. CSNA Survey & Dashboard summary

1.4.3 Leveraging Key Efforts to Date

A wealth of regional and local studies, as well as planning and engagement efforts, were considered and incorporated where appropriate to support development of the several elements of this Initial Watershed Plan, including targets and strategies. SCW Program efforts to date, such as the Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) and SCW Program Scientific Studies, were similarly leveraged as described in the subsections below.

1.4.3.1 Metrics and Monitoring Study

The SCW Program MMS was developed to establish consistent methods and definitions for measuring the performance and outcomes of SCW Program Projects. As part of its process, MMS convened a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and conducted public workshops and analyses about Community Investment, Water Quality, and Water Supply Benefits. Input from equity-focused engagements was synthesized into a white paper titled [*Equity in Stormwater Investments: Measuring Community Engagement and Disadvantaged Community Benefits for Equitable Impact in the Safe, Clean Water Program*](#). The white paper advised the SCW Program to develop an interactive survey tool to gather community input on needs and preferences that resulted in the CSNA, which will be discussed later in this Initial Watershed Plan. Also, the white paper recommended the creation of metrics to evaluate Projects and Programs based on community priorities and vulnerabilities, to

guide decision-making and strengthen how Projects and Programs seek to meet community priorities and address concerns. Figure 1-9 summarizes the key SCW Program Adaptive Management⁶ recommendations identified by MMS and which were included in the SCW Program's iterative Watershed Planning process, when applicable.

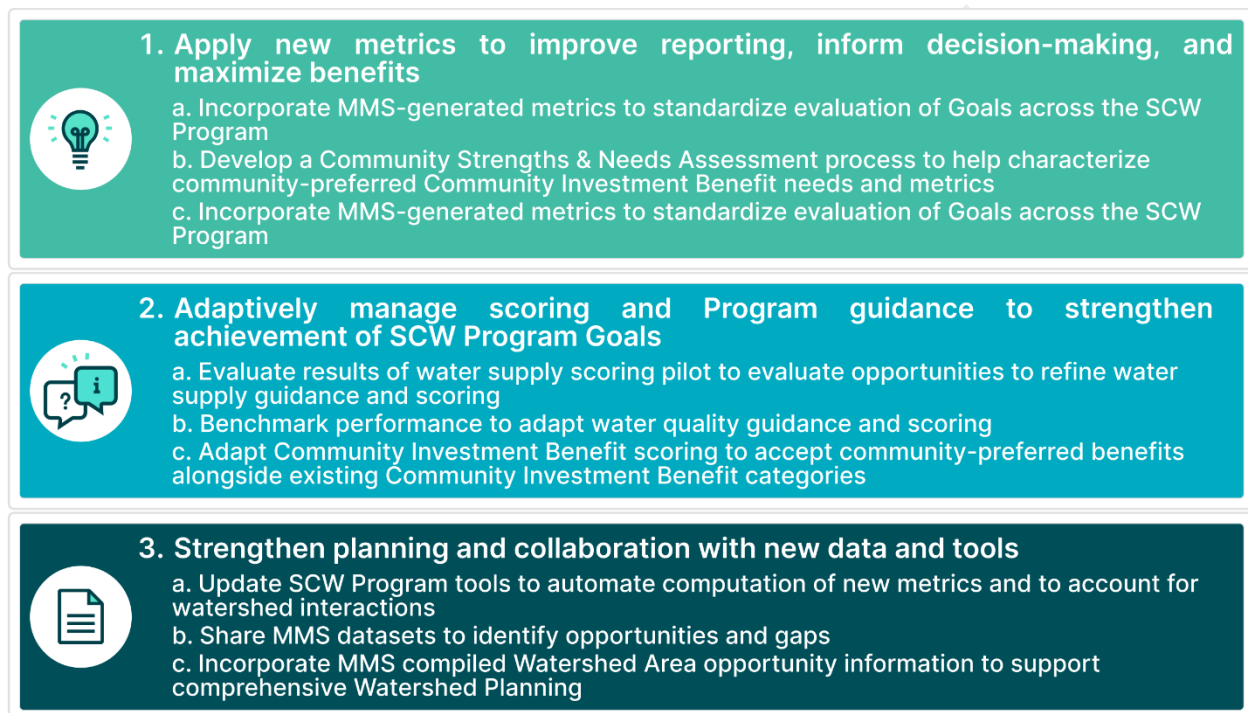


Figure 1-9. SCW Program Metrics and Monitoring Study Recommendations

The Initial Watershed Plans build on these key MMS outcomes by using the datasets, analytical insights, and metrics to develop baselines (Chapter 3) and quantify progress toward Goals (3.2.2). Early Watershed Planning efforts evaluated and summarized MMS outcomes in the context of each WA to ensure key insights were incorporated into the Initial Watershed Plans and to begin filling identified data and definitional gaps.

1.4.3.2 Local and Regional Planning Efforts

In addition to the MMS, the Initial Watershed Plans also capitalize on results from other key planning and implementation efforts to date, identified through regional expertise and engagement input, and includes local and regional plans, databases of

⁶ "Adaptive Management" is an iterative, incremental approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new learnings.

funded Projects and Programs, regional studies, and more. These efforts informed the Initial Watershed Plan technical analyses so that recommendations here align with existing local and countywide efforts and contribute toward parallel countywide goals and targets (e.g., OurCounty Sustainability Plan, County Water Plan, Vision 2045) where applicable.

Table 1-1 below highlights specific efforts referenced that are applicable to the NSMB WA. The full list of key efforts to date, which were reviewed to help inform the Initial Watershed Plans is in Appendix E.

Table 1-1. Highlights of key efforts to date in the NSMB WA

Effort Category	Effort Name	Source/Agency	LINK	Related Planning Element(s)
Water Quality	Coordinated Integrated Monitoring Program (CIMP)	North Santa Monica Bay Coastal Watersheds	LINK	WA Characteristics
Water Quality	Enhanced Watershed Management Program (WMP) for Malibu Creek Watershed	Malibu Creek Watershed Management Group (WMG)	LINK	WA Characteristics, Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Water Quality	Enhanced Watershed Management Program (WMP) for North Santa Monica Bay Coastal Watersheds	North Santa Monica Bay Coastal WMG	LINK	WA Characteristics, Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Wastewater	Pure Water Project Las Virgenes-Triunfo	Las Virgenes - Triunfo Joint Powers Authority	LINK	Strategies
Regional Plan	2021 LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA)	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	LINK	Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Regional Plan	2045 Climate Action Plan	County of Los Angeles	LINK	Strategies
Regional Plan	Los Angeles County Parks Needs Assessment (PNA) and Assessment Plus (PNA+)	Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation	LINK	Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Regional Plan	Los Angeles County Water Plan (CWP)	Los Angeles County Public Works	LINK	Targets, Strategies
Regional Plan	North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategic Outreach Engagement Plan	North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Steering Committee	LINK	WA Characteristics

Effort Category	Effort Name	Source/Agency	LINK	Related Planning Element(s)
Regional Plan	OurCounty Sustainability Plan	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	LINK	Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Regional Plan	The Los Angeles County Community Forest Management Plan (CFMP)	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	LINK	Targets, Strategies, Opportunities
Regional Plan	Using Watershed Science to Build Consensus and Maximize Benefits of L.A. County's Safe Clean Water Program	Accelerate Resilience LA	LINK	Strategies
Regional Plan	Vision 2045: Thriving in a Hotter and Drier LA County through Local Stormwater Capture and Pollutant Reduction	Heal the Bay	LINK	Strategies
Project Example	Malibu Lagoon Restoration and Enhancement	California Department of Parks and Recreation	LINK	Strategies

1.4.3.3 SCW Program Scientific Studies

Outputs developed by the Scientific Studies Program, implemented as part of the Regional Program, are a key resource for Watershed Planning. The Scientific Studies Program is designed to fund research, data collection, and technical tools that improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of SCW Program investments. Its primary purpose is to advance understanding of stormwater management challenges and solutions—such as pollutant behavior, climate impacts, and community benefits—and to inform planning, design, and evaluation of Projects and Programs.

To date⁷, the SCW Program has funded 23 Scientific Studies, including two within the NSMB WA. Appendix E details all Scientific Studies conducted in the nine WAs funded through the SCW Program.

Continued investment in research, such as the two Scientific Studies funded to date in the NSMB WA, and the dissemination of their findings, is critical for identifying new, evidence-based approaches and for developing an understanding of the region's

⁷ As of the FY25-26 SIP. Note that the Infrastructure Program did not accept applications for the FY25-26 Call for Projects.

unique challenges and opportunities. Scientific Study results support Watershed Planning by informing strategies (Chapter 5) and filling gaps (Section 7.1).

Working together—through engagement efforts, identified governance committee priorities, key efforts to date, and technical analyses—this Initial Watershed Plan is built on a shared foundation of collaboration and best available data. These collective efforts establish a clear understanding of WA characteristics, the development of targets (3.2.2), strategies, and opportunities (Chapter 5). The resulting framework enables Public Works, the ROC, WASCs, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents to align planning efforts and funding applications with the Initial Watershed Plans, a prerequisite under the SCW Program. By identifying current limitations and data gaps (Chapter 7), this Plan also provides recommendations for ongoing investment in research, Scientific Studies, and data development to advance adaptive planning and implementation over time.

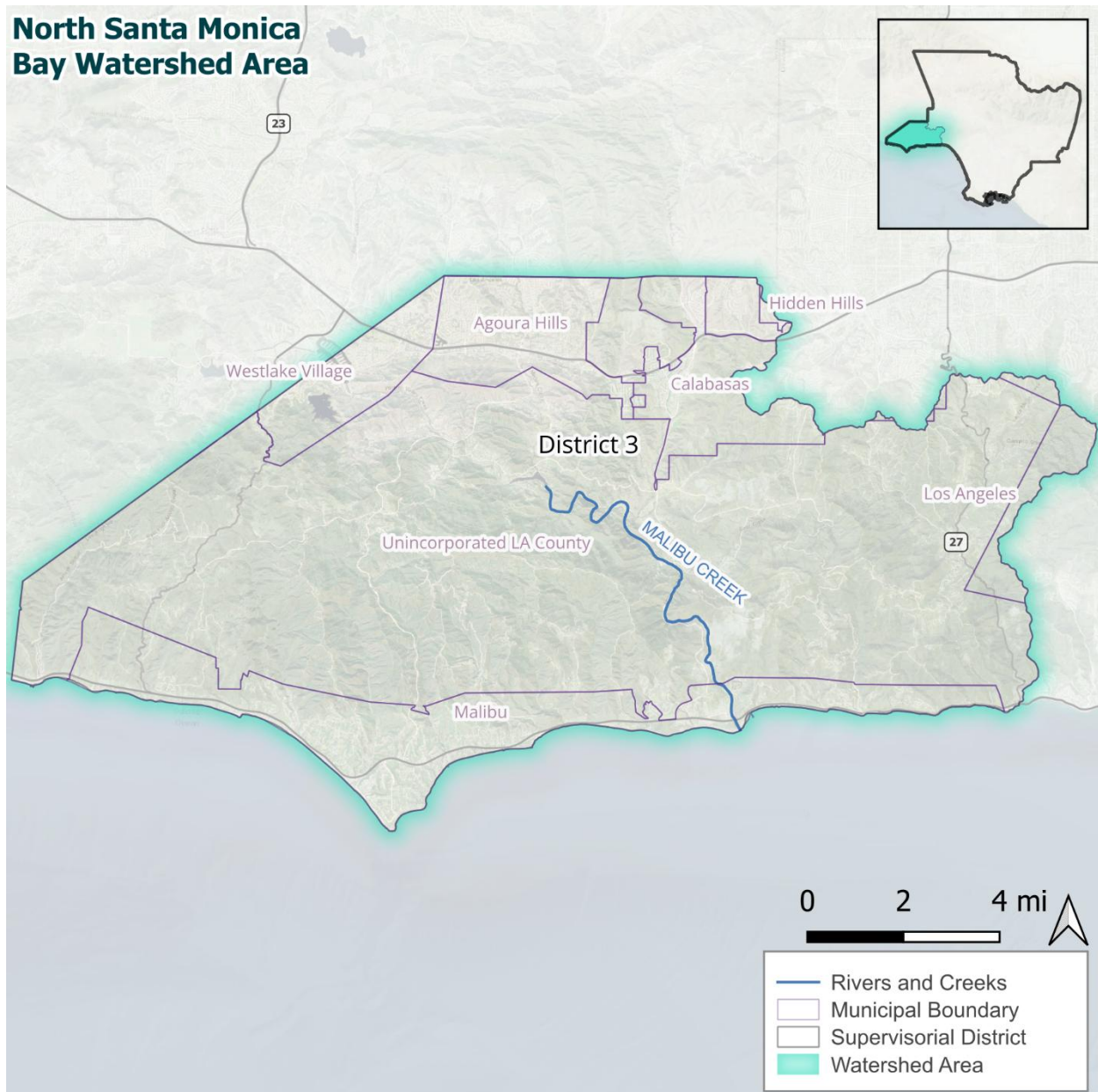
Chapter 2. Watershed Area Characteristics

WA characteristics provide the physical, social, and environmental context needed to develop targeted, effective strategies. Understanding factors such as land use, hydrology, infrastructure, and community demographics allows the Initial Watershed Plans to support establishment of targets and identification of multi-benefit solutions that are tailored to local conditions. The following sections summarize information from key efforts to date (Table 1-1), such as the MMS, NSMB WA Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plans, and WMPs, highlighting key WA characteristics that set the stage for establishing WA-based targets, strategies, and opportunities.



2.1 Key Watershed Area Features

The NSMB WA spans nearly 100,000 acres from the border of Ventura and Los Angeles County along 27 miles of coastline in Malibu to Topanga Canyon. The NSMB WA includes six Municipalities and parts of Unincorporated Los Angeles County, with the majority of area falling within Unincorporated Los Angeles County (73% of the WA) and Malibu (12% of the WA). While the WA is a primarily rugged open space managed by state and federal agencies, pockets of dense urban development generate an average of 26,000 acre-feet/year (ac-ft/yr) of runoff annually. Although runoff volume is moderate for its size, the impervious landscapes are responsible for disproportionate urban runoff and pollutant loading that is degrading the water quality of local creeks and ultimately Santa Monica Bay—an ecologically rich and highly valued recreational area. Although the NSMB WA does not have any designated disadvantaged communities (DAC) (as defined in [California Water Code §79505.5](#)) the WA's coastal and riparian recreational spaces are widely used by visitors from across the Los Angeles Region, including those who reside in DACs. Protecting and maintaining the ecological health, accessibility, and recreational value of these natural areas is essential, not only for the well-being of local residents but also for the broader regional population that depends on these spaces for recreation.



The following Municipalities are located within the NSMB WA, with the Municipality covering the largest portion of the WA listed first.

Unincorporated County, Malibu, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Westlake Village, Los Angeles, Hidden Hills

Figure 2-1. NSMB WA and its Municipalities

Table 2-1 below summarizes key WA statistics to highlight how the NSMB WA compares to other WAs in the SCW Program. Figure 2 presents example characteristics of the NSMB WA that were used to inform target settings. The following sections highlight these key WA features, which help establish WA-based targets and identify WA Needs, targets, and strategies.

Table 2-1. Summary of key WA features

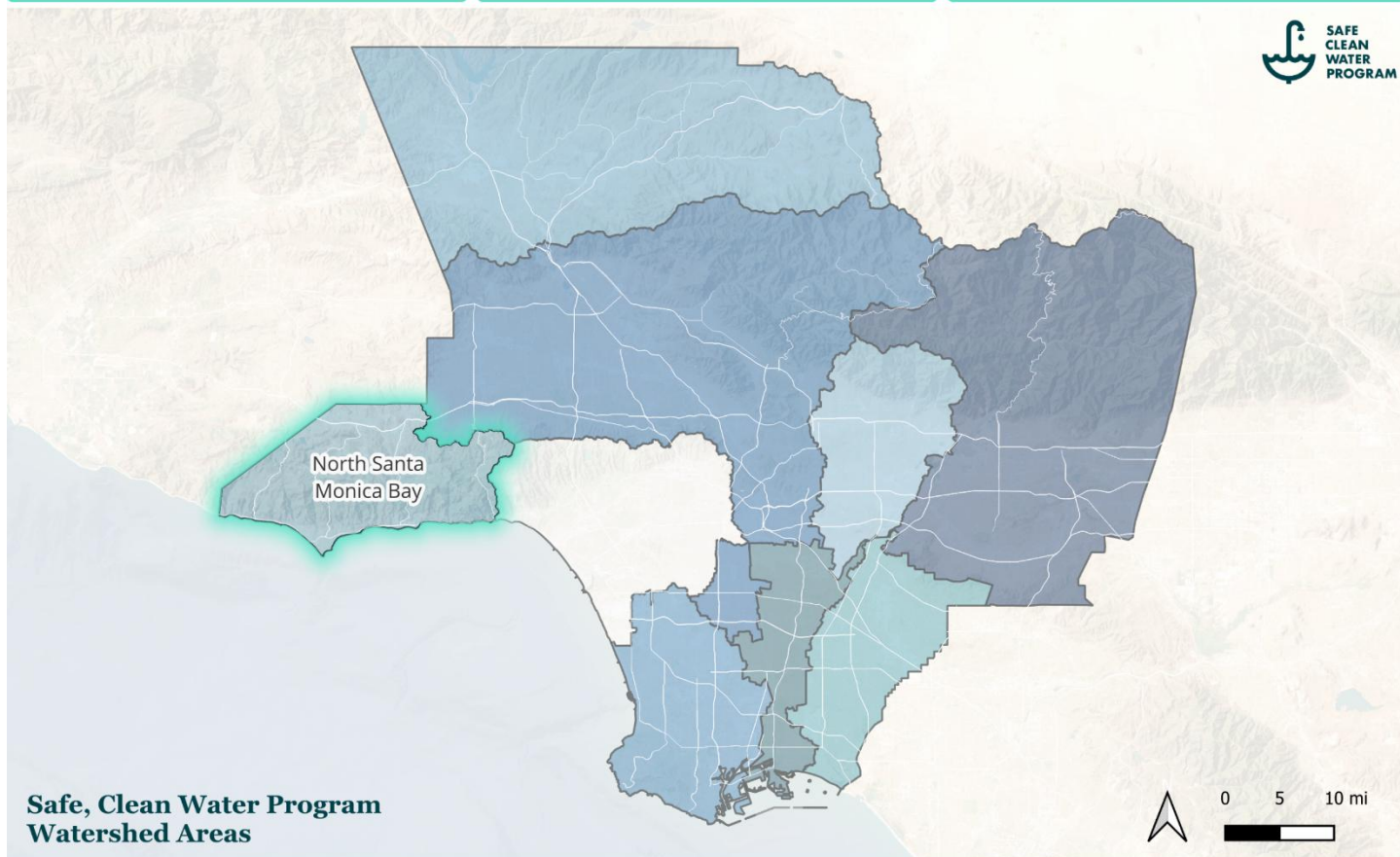
Watershed Area	Total Area (acres)	Impervious Area (acres) (% of total area)	Total Avg. Annual Runoff (ac-ft)	Priority Pollutants ²	Est. Total Population ¹	Required DAC Ratio ³
Central Santa Monica Bay	118,000	52,400 (44%)	70,000	Zinc, Bacteria	1.9M	45%
Lower Los Angeles River	54,500	35,800 (66%)	37,300	Zinc, Bacteria	869.7k	67%
Lower San Gabriel River	80,800	46,600 (58%)	60,000	Zinc, Bacteria	889.2k	22%
North Santa Monica Bay	99,800	6,600 (7%)	26,000	Total Phosphorus, Bacteria	71.2k	N/A
Rio Hondo	84,600	32,400 (38%)	52,100	Zinc, Total Phosphorus, Bacteria	743.7k	33%
Santa Clara River	306,900	20,100 (7%)	94,600	Bacteria	278.3k	12%
South Santa Monica Bay	92,700	51,000 (55%)	50,000	Zinc, Total Phosphorus, Bacteria	995.3k	30%
Upper Los Angeles River	392,000	113,100 (29%)	176,000	Zinc, Total Phosphorus, Bacteria	3.0M	45%
Upper San Gabriel River	313,900	57,700 (18%)	180,000	Zinc, Total Phosphorus, Bacteria	1.0M	22%

¹Based on 2020 American Community Survey data.

²Priority pollutants selected based on the limiting pollutants identified in each WA's WMPs.

³Per Goal J, the required DAC ratio is determined as 110% of the proportion of the DAC population relative to the total population within the WA.

Total Area 99,800 acres	Impervious Area 6,600 acres (7% of total area)	Average Annual Stormwater Runoff 26,000 ac-ft/yr
Local & Regional Park and Open Space 44,800 acres (45% of total area)	“The North Santa Monica Bay contains highly vital wildlife crossings over the 101 Freeway” - North Santa Monica Bay WASC	Required DAC Ratio N/A




Percent Tree Canopy Cover in Urban Areas 26%	Total Population 71.2k residents	Managed Unconfined Aquifer None
Watershed Management Program Implementation Cost \$154M	Priority Pollutants Total Phosphorus Bacteria	Regional and Municipal Program Tax Collected to Date (FY20-25) \$17.2M

Figure 2-2. Summary of key NSMB WA Characteristics used for target setting

2.1.1 Physical and Natural Features

The physical and natural features of the NSMB WA define the hydrology and existing conditions of the WA that influence approaches to stormwater management and strategies to improve waterbody conditions. The following are notable conditions and features of the NSMB WA:

The NSMB WA is uniquely defined by its blend of rugged mountains, natural open spaces, and coastal communities, offering a landscape where coastal and upland ecosystems converge with urban life.



- Malibu, Topanga, Zuma Canyon, Las Virgenes, and Trancas Canyon Creeks are the WA's largest watercourses.
- Several smaller natural creeks and their tributaries, as well as the origin of the Los Angeles River in Calabasas, exist in the WA and are essential for conveying stormwater into the Pacific Ocean.
- The WA originates in the Santa Monica Mountains and discharges to the Pacific Ocean.
- Northern portion of the WA features rugged mountains and canyons which act as natural drainage channels.
- Primarily open space that is preserved by the National Park Service, California Department of State Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. These public lands encompass large portions of the Santa Monica Mountains and provide critical habitat, scenic, and recreational value which play a key role in the natural hydrologic function of the WA.
- Soils are primarily clay or silty clay loams with very low permeability, hindering natural infiltration and groundwater recharge.
- The WA is the unceded ancestral homelands of the Chumash, Fernandeano Tataviam Band of Mission Indians, Gabrielino/Tongva Nation, Tongva, and Kizh Nation
- Watercourses play a key role in shaping nearshore Pacific Ocean morphology and habitats by delivering freshwater and sediment that sustain beach formation and coastal ecosystem conditions.
- Vulnerable to anthropogenic wildland fires (more on this below).

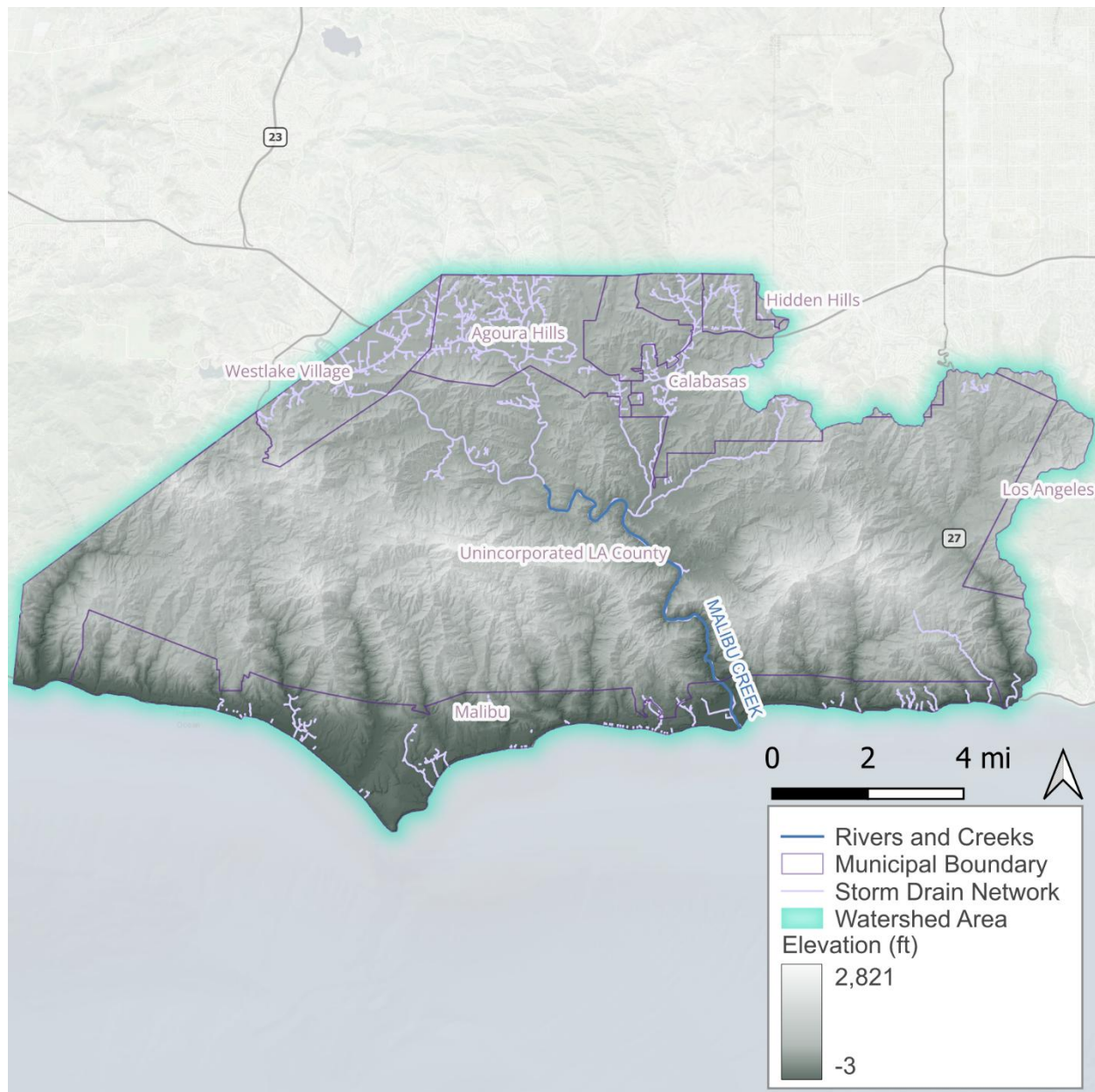


Figure 2-3. NSMB WA elevation profile

In January 2025, ten wildfires, including the Palisades and Kenneth Fires, devastated Los Angeles County, resulting in over 10,000 acres of land being burned in the NSMB WA (Figure 2-4). Over recent decades, the size, intensity, and duration of wildfires in the western United States have increased, posing a growing threat to both natural and residential communities. These trends are expected to worsen in the coming years due to climate change⁸. In addition to destroying wildland and residential areas,

⁸ See United States Geological Survey [How Wildfires Threaten U.S. Water Supplies](#).

wildfires negatively impact water quality and public health by increasing runoff of sediment, heavy metals, and other pollutants, as well as elevating levels of air pollution⁹.

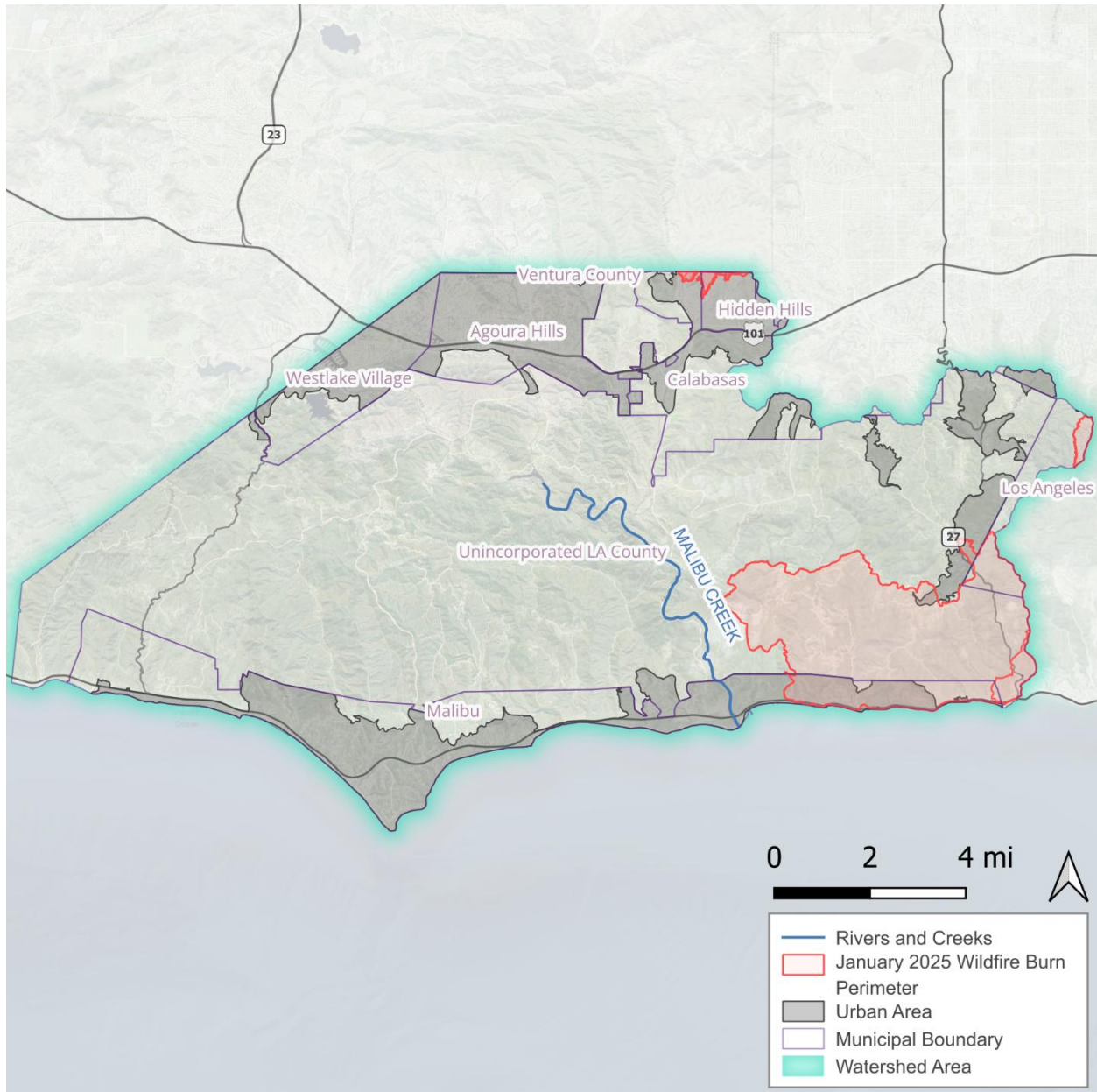


Figure 2-4. January 2025 wildfire burn perimeter in the NSMB WA

⁹ See California Air Resources Board [2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality](#).

2.1.2 Land Use and Population Characteristics

In addition to the physical aspects detailed above, development patterns, industries, and the people that make up the watershed often influence not only the conditions experienced in a watershed, but also the needs of that watershed that can be addressed through programs like the SCW Program. The following summarizes key characteristics for the NSMB WA, with a focus on those that most strongly define its needs, potential, and challenges in supporting the achievement of SCW Program Goals.

- Predominately open space, preserved by the National Park Service, California Department of State Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, with small pockets of residential and commercial land uses.
- Impervious surfaces, such as roofs, roads, and sidewalks, are primarily confined to the limited developed areas (~7% of the overall landscape).
- Development is concentrated in densely urbanized areas along the coast and the canyon communities of Malibu, Topanga Canyon, Agoura Hills, Calabasas, and Westlake Village.
- High need for low-impact development (LID)¹⁰ and/or green infrastructure¹¹—where feasible and based on site conditions—to mitigate the water quality degradation influenced by human activities to enhance public health and community well-being.
- Many visitors from the surrounding region utilize NSMB WA recreational open spaces like mountains, state parks, and beaches.

¹⁰ “Low Impact Development (LID)” is a stormwater management approach that aims to mimic a site’s natural hydrology by utilizing design techniques that infiltrate, filter, store and evaporate stormwater runoff at or near its source

¹¹ “Green infrastructure” includes methods for naturally managing rain and flood waters to reduce and treat stormwater runoff while also improving the local environment by mimicking natural processes, as defined in Appendix IV of the [Our County Los Angeles Countywide Sustainability Plan](#).

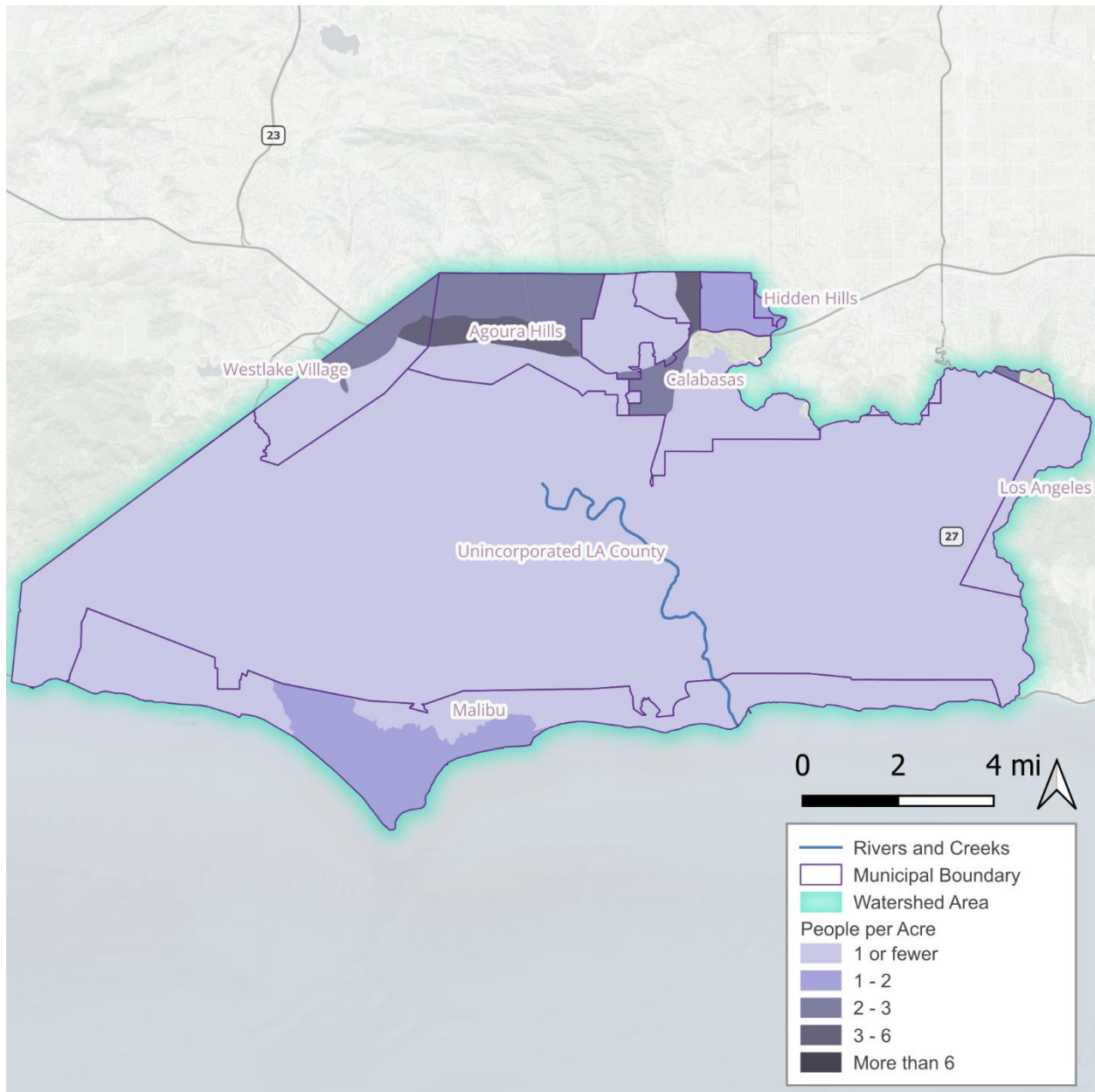


Figure 2-5. Population density and DACs in the NSMB WA

2.1.3 Waterbody Conditions

Water quality regulations aim to improve the conditions of water bodies so they can support their full range of beneficial uses. These conditions are often shaped by the cumulative influence of the watershed's physical, natural, and land use characteristics detailed in the sections above and may lead interested parties within the NSMB WA to pursue certain strategies over others to address the WA's impairments more effectively. The following are general waterbody conditions for the NSMB WA, which have been summarized from key efforts to date, such as those shown in Table 1-1 that may influence related strategies:

- Malibu Creek is on the Clean Water Act (CWA) 303(d) impaired waterbodies list with regulatory Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), trash, and bacteria which cause nuisance effects like algae and unnatural scum/foam, sediment, trash, and benthic-macroinvertebrate bioassessments (Figure 2-6).
- Topanga Creek is also on the 303(d) impaired waterbody list due to high loadings of lead.
- Santa Monica Bay Beaches have regulatory TMDLs for coliform bacteria, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT).
- Minimal natural infiltration in the Santa Monica Mountains due to local soil types and pockets of urbanization.
- Recent wildfires have increased sedimentation and introduced harmful pollutants to coastal waters.
- In January 2025, ten wildfires devastated Los Angeles County, generating post-fire conditions with significantly elevated water quality risks that should be considered in the design of stormwater management Projects. Burned areas contribute high sediment loads, ash, nutrients, and fire-related contaminants (e.g., heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs)) to downstream flows. These pollutants can impair receiving waters, reduce infiltration efficiency, and overload pretreatment systems in stormwater capture infrastructure.
- Existing water quality projects, such as trash capture systems, urban runoff recycling facilities, and green streets, partially mitigate watershed impairments, but substantial opportunities for further improvement remain.

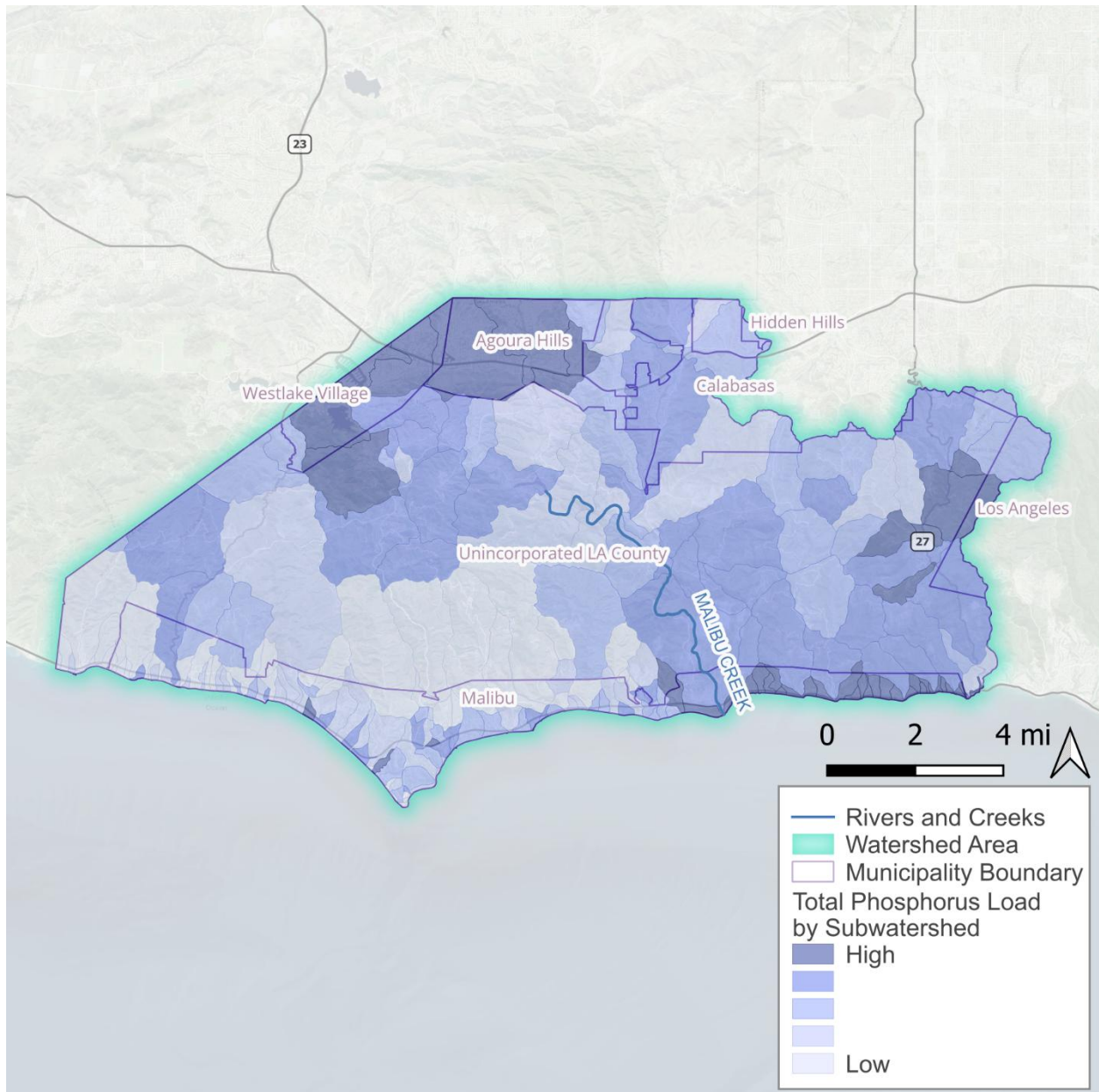


Figure 2-6. Total phosphorus load in stormwater runoff across the NSMB WA

2.1.4 Existing Stormwater Capture Facilities & Non-SCW Program Projects

In developing a full picture of WA characteristics, it is also important to understand the other major existing or planned infrastructure in the watershed. Many of these non-SCW Program projects are complementary to the Goals of the SCW Program and may contribute towards meeting the needs of the NSMB WA. These may include Projects that have already been completed and operational or those that are planned for construction under other regional programs and efforts. Major efforts and infrastructure for the NSMB WA are summarized below in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2. Summary of existing major stormwater capture facilities and non-SCW Program Projects

Program	Project Count	Est. Project Stormwater Capture (ac-ft/yr)
MS4 Watershed Control Measures Completed & Planned ¹	4	35
Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP) ²	0	0
Major Capture Facilities ³	0	0
Total	4	35

¹ Watershed Control Measures as defined in item IX.B.5.b of the Los Angeles Region Regional Phase I MS4 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. These Projects were summarized using data collected via the Watershed Reporting Adaptive Management & Planning System (WRAMPS). Est. Project stormwater capture assumes capture is three times the Projects' daily storage capacity, as reported by WRAMPS users ([link](#)).

² Values as reported via the Greater Los Angeles County IRWMP OptiTool ([link](#))

³ Major capture facilities include spreading grounds, dams/reservoirs, and debris basins that have footprints in the WA. No major capture facilities are within the NSMB WA.

2.2 Summary of Potential and Challenges for SCW Program Projects and Programs in the Watershed Area

The potential and challenges for each SCW Program WA were identified through a comprehensive assessment of WA-specific characteristics. These characteristics include existing water quality conditions, natural and physical features—such as topography, soil types, underlying groundwater basins, and hydrologic connectivity—as well as land use patterns and population demographics. In addition, the assessment considers predicted climate change effects, recognizing that the Los Angeles region is projected to experience more frequent and severe wildfires, coupled

with less frequent but more intense storm events¹². These shifts are expected to increase the volume and velocity of runoff, elevate pollutant loads, and exacerbate flood risks. Together, these factors shape both the opportunities for implementing effective multi-benefit stormwater Projects and the constraints that must be addressed to ensure their success.

To inform this assessment, data and insights were drawn from a range of technical and planning sources, including applicable WMPs, Coordinated Integrated Monitoring Programs (CIMPs), and SCW Program Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plans. Additional context was provided by relevant local and regional plans, such as General Plans, Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs), and climate adaptation strategies. See Table 1-1 for direct links to these referenced documents. By integrating these diverse sources of information, the SCW Program is better positioned to support equitable, data-driven decision-making and to tailor strategies that respond to each WA's unique environmental, infrastructural, and community conditions.

The NSMB WA presents a unique combination of potential and challenges to advance the Goals of the SCW Program. For example, desktop analyses show that the overall landscape of the NSMB WA is only 7% impervious surfaces (Table 2-1). However, developed areas, though limited in their footprint, are primarily responsible for the disproportionate amount of runoff and pollutant loading impacting the water quality of local waterbodies. The WA's distinctive mix of open space and dense urbanization requires a blend of stormwater management strategies tailored to address land use patterns and site-specific conditions.

To address these challenges and to leverage the NSMB WA's unique composition, the NSMB WASC recommended prioritizing Projects that improve the water quality of local waterbodies through a combination of green infrastructure and best management practices (BMPs) that provide co-benefits such as improved public and environmental health and enhanced recreational value.

This section highlights additional unique characteristics of the NSMB WA, which provide essential context for setting targets and identifying effective, locally relevant strategies. The summaries in the sections below are organized by Planning Themes to illustrate how the NSMB WA's specific conditions influence its potential and challenges in supporting the following SCW Program Goals:

- Improve Water Quality (*Goal A*),

¹² See the [Los Angeles Basin Study](#) for more information.

- Increase Drought Preparedness (*Goal B*), and
- Improve Public Health (*Goal C*), Deliver Multi-Benefits with NBS and Diverse Projects (*Goals E, F, and G*), and Equitably Distribute Benefits (*Goals J and K*).

2.2.1 Improve Water Quality

Water quality improvement is a key Goal of the SCW Program and is a required benefit for all SCW Program Regional and Municipal Projects and Programs. The NSMB WA has high annual pollutant loads, especially nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and bacteria that originate in and are transported by impervious surfaces, ultimately discharging into the Pacific Ocean and contributing to unsafe and degraded coastal conditions. For Watershed Planning purposes, priority pollutants in the NSMB WA include phosphorus and bacteria. However, Municipalities should consider implementing Projects that address a broad range of pollutants, including trash and contaminants commonly found in urban runoff. Projects should, where feasible, be designed to support compliance with their TMDL and other relevant regulatory water standards to ensure comprehensive watershed improvements. The NSMB WA's potential and challenges for improving water quality and contributing to this Goal are summarized below and begin to point to the formulation of Initial Watershed Plan targets (3.2.2) and strategies for meeting those targets and achieving Goals (Chapter 5).

Potential Opportunities:

- Notable volumes of stormwater runoff remain untreated by SCW Program wet-weather Projects and presents an opportunity to continue to improve water quality.
- Existing plans and efforts (Coordinated Integrated Monitoring Program (CIMP), WMPs, etc.) have identified many additional Project opportunities, both regional and distributed.
- Runoff flows and associated pollutants following wildfires may be mitigated by advancing climate-ready communities through implementation of best O&M practices and NBS, which reduce chance of wildfires, utilize native vegetation, and promote ecosystem resiliency. While particularly beneficial along the urban-wildland interface—where wildfire risks are heightened—such practices can also provide meaningful water quality benefits throughout the NSMB WA.

Challenges and Constraints:

- The local geology of the Santa Monica Mountains contributes to soils with low permeability, limiting natural infiltration.
- Waterbodies face impairments from diffuse (nonpoint) sources which are more challenging to address with traditional BMPs alone.
- Limited Measure W tax revenue compared to other SCW Program WAs limit the amount and scope of Projects that make lasting water quality improvements.



Figure 2-7. View of Point Dume from the beachside bluffs

2.2.2 Increase Drought Preparedness

Another Goal of the SCW Program is to increase drought preparedness by capturing stormwater and/or urban runoff to augment local water supply and reduce reliance on potable water supplies to support long-term water sustainability and reliance. The [SCW Program 2025 Interim Guidance](#) defines new water supply sources as follows.

What Counts as New Locally Available Water Supply Under the SCW Program?

Per the [2025 SCW Program Interim Guidance](#), the following fates of captured water **count as new locally available water supply** and a Water Supply Benefit (claims to be confirmed through modeling, geotechnical analysis, and/or engagement):

- Net water used onsite for potable offset (not including offset of Project-created water supply demand)
- Diverted to existing treatment/reuse plant
- Diverted to future planned treatment/reuse plant operational within 10 years with concurrence from treatment/reuse plant on timeline and capacity
- Infiltration to managed useable groundwater aquifers
- Infiltration to unmanaged aquifers with geotechnical analysis and/or community acknowledgement to confirm infiltration and use
- Treated and discharged to storm drain or receiving water when tributary to a downstream water recharge facility if the Project facilitates the recharge of water that would otherwise not be used to augment water supply.

The following **do NOT count towards new locally available water supply** but do provide Water Quality Benefits:

- Water that would have already been captured downstream by an existing water recharge facility (see adjustment factors in Watershed Planning Framework that can be used to prorate the net new local water supply when captured upstream from existing facilities) and
- Maintenance of existing capture/conservation infrastructure (i.e. sediment removal behind dams).

Environmental water does not count as locally available water supply nor a Water Quality Benefit unless analysis proves that discharging clean water to channels to support ecological functions will offset potable supplies. Environmental water may provide a Water Quality Benefit if site-specific studies demonstrate improvement in flow ecology.

The NSMB WA's capability to achieve this Goal can be summarized by highlighting potential opportunities and challenges and constraints identified in the NSMB WA to date. These are summarized below and begin to point to the formulation of Initial Watershed Plan strategies that will be further contextualized with quantitative Indicators and Targets in subsequent chapters.

Potential Opportunities:

- Pockets of dense development produce disproportionate volumes of wet and dry-weather runoff for potential capture and reuse.
- Large areas of the WA remain untreated and may provide opportunities for additional stormwater capture and reuse Projects where feasible.
- Surrounding water reclamation facilities may offer an opportunity for increased stormwater diversions to augment local water supplies. Feasibility will need to be confirmed on a Project-by-Project basis.
- The Los Angeles region relies heavily ([~73%](#)) on imported water supplies for potable demands; stormwater can offset use of potable water for non-potable activities such as irrigation.

Challenges and Constraints:

- Urban and local soil types in much of the WA are primarily clay-rich, with low permeability and high shrink-swell potential. These characteristics limit natural infiltration and pose challenges for certain types of infrastructure and construction.
- The Los Angeles region has been historically vulnerable to long dry periods superseded by intense storms([U.S. Drought Monitor](#)). Water Year 2023 exemplified this pattern, as the severe drought from 2020 to 2022 was abruptly followed by an extraordinarily wet winter and spring driven by a series of atmospheric rivers. Designing infrastructure to manage both extremes of this hydrologic whiplash is complex.
- Waterbodies within the WA transport sediments that help maintain the size and condition of coastal beaches. Alterations to natural flow regimes may negatively affect beach stability and health and may also impact habitat quality for endangered and threatened flora and fauna, contributing to broader ecological impact.
- Historic groundwater contamination and seawater intrusion near the coast could require expensive treatment for potable uses of recovered infiltrated stormwater.
- Higher pollutant loading rates in stormwater may also require pre-treatment before conveyance to recoverable points, resulting in higher capital and O&M costs.



Figure 2-8. Malibu Creek State Park

2.2.3 Improve Public Health, Deliver Multi-Benefits with NBS and Diverse Projects, and Equitably Distribute Benefits

The WA characteristics summary used datasets newly proposed by MMS to provide an initial snapshot of WA characteristics related to these Planning Themes/Goals. Every new Project is viewed as a chance to improve public health, especially within areas disproportionately exposed to environmental stressors, whether through adding walking paths, sports fields, community gardens, or simply shade and aesthetic improvements. Although the population within the NSMB WA does not meet the state's threshold for DACs, several pockets of the NSMB WA are classified as priority areas for increasing access to regional recreation due to high levels of social and transportation barriers, health and environmental vulnerability, and low proximity to recreation sites. Employing a diverse set of Project types, including NBS, provides multiple benefits to the surrounding community, including water quality, water supply,

and improvements to public health. The bullets below summarize some of the key opportunities and challenges/constraints of implementing multi-benefit Projects that have been identified in the NSMB WA to date. This will be further contextualized with quantitative Indicators and Targets in subsequent chapters.

Potential Opportunities:

- Riparian corridors and marine environments offer significant opportunities to improve water quality and restore ecological connectivity through wetland rehabilitation, while also enhancing public access to nature and helping to mitigate the urban heat island effect.
- High Park Needs¹³ in the NSMB WA could be addressed in conjunction with Projects that include a Water Quality Benefit, particularly those targeting unmanaged stormwater or urban runoff.
- Opportunity to incorporate green infrastructure in existing public spaces like schools, parks, and roadways can reduce pollutant loads while providing shaded areas, cooling benefits, and recreational space.
- Environmental restoration, increased vegetation and canopy, and enhanced green spaces, particularly at schools and in the most intensively developed areas of the WA, would improve the delivery of multi-benefits and improve place-based measures of SCW Program benefits.
- Expanding green spaces in the NSMB Watershed Area can enhance public health by increasing soil moisture and creating localized buffers that help mitigate the intensity, size, and impacts of wildfires. Implementing NBS, such as the use of native vegetation, further strengthen ecosystem resilience by supporting habitats that are more drought-tolerant and capable of recovering from wildfire events. By reducing the severity of wildfires, these buffers can limit the release of harmful air pollutants such as wildfire smoke, which poses respiratory health risks. In addition, greener landscapes can reduce post-fire pollutant runoff—such as sediment, heavy metals, and nutrients—thereby improving water quality and supporting healthier communities.
- Regional greening efforts at schools, such as the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Green Schools for All Plan, represent opportunities for partnerships that promote Projects that include Water Quality Benefits and greening elements along with other multi-benefits.

¹³ Informed by the [LA County Parks Needs Assessment](#).

Challenges and Constraints:

- Topography may limit the feasibility of creating safe recreational spaces.
- Local soil conditions and existing pollutant levels may limit the effectiveness of NBS, constraining their integration into both existing and planned parks and green spaces.
- Ensuring equitable distribution of resources and benefits requires careful, data-driven planning and robust engagement—adding complexity and sensitivity to Project outcomes
- Majority of open space is preserved by national and state agencies, which may limit suitable areas for large regional Projects or nature-based surface stormwater capture features. As a result, the WA may require numerous, small-scale distributed BMPs that allow for localized capture, treatment, and infiltration of runoff while minimizing disturbance to protected lands.



Figure 2-9. Backbone Trail Santa Monica Mountains (National Park Service)

2.3 SCW Program Financial Snapshot

The following provides brief financial snapshots of both the Regional and Municipal Programs within the NSMB WA. These summaries highlight SCW Program funding, allocations, and eligible expenditures¹⁴ to date, offering financial context for past and ongoing investments. This information also provides insight for interim target and strategy development (Chapter 5).

2.3.1 Regional Program and Financial Snapshot and Outlook

Table 2-3 presents a summary of funding budgets and expenditures in the NSMB WA by the Regional Program based on the last five Fiscal Years (FYs). The NSMB WA receives approximately \$1.8M annually from Regional Program funds, which is just 1% of all Regional Program funding. The latest NSMB WA SIP (FY25-26) shows that approximately 20%¹⁵ of the expected Regional Program funding from FY25-29 is already allocated to previously funded Projects and Programs in the NSMB WA. As more Projects progress to construction or completion, additional Regional Program funds may be earmarked for these existing Projects to ensure their completion and/or ongoing O&M.

While five-year funding allocations are reassessed and established annually through the SIPs, it is not uncommon for Projects to experience unexpected cost increases, schedule shifts, or other implementation challenges. Project Modification Requests (PMRs) serve as an important SCW Program mechanism that allows Project proponents to submit revised funding requests in response to changing conditions, such as updated cost estimates, changes in scope, or delays.

¹⁴ SCW Program eligible expenditure types include:

- Infrastructure development tasks
- Scientific and technical studies, and Stormwater or Urban Runoff modeling and monitoring
- Projects or studies to pilot or investigate new technologies or methodologies to increase or improve Stormwater or Urban Runoff capture or reduce Stormwater or Urban Runoff pollution
- The development of Feasibility Studies
- The modification, upgrade, retrofit, or expansion of an existing Project to incorporate new elements to increase Stormwater or Urban Runoff capture and reduce Stormwater or Urban Runoff pollution
- Stormwater or Urban Runoff Programs such as, but not limited to, school education and curriculum, public education, watershed coordination efforts, and local workforce job training.

See Appendix A. Glossary or the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16) for the complete list and definitions of eligible expenditures.

¹⁵ See the [SCW Program SIP Tool](#) for more information.

In recent years, higher-than-average inflation and rising construction costs have prompted several Project proponents to submit PMRs to request funding adjustments and ensure Project completion. These adjustments often result in increases from the Project's original SIP allocations, drawing from a WA's uncommitted funds. While this can reduce available funding for new Projects, PMRs play a critical role in supporting the Adaptive Management of SCW Program investments—ensuring that Projects already in the pipeline remain viable and deliver their anticipated benefits.

Additionally, as Projects are completed and as a greater proportion of Regional Program funding is dedicated to the O&M of those Projects, the future available funding to support new Projects and Programs is anticipated to decrease. These unforeseen factors, in addition to existing budget allocations and the NSMB WAs already limited Regional Program budget, highlight the importance of utilizing leveraged funding from outside the Regional Program to responsibly manage available resources. Maximizing leveraged funding supports the initiation of new Projects and Programs while also funding later phases of existing efforts, helping support the achievement of Goals efficiently and efficiently. Further discussion of Regional Program financial outlooks and programming forecasts is below.

Leveraging other funding sources is also one of the 14 SCW Program Goals (Goal D). The SCW Program aims to maximize leveraged funding from state, federal, private, and philanthropic sources to amplify the impact of SCW Program investments. Leveraged funding can help offset capital and operational costs, enabling the development of more ambitious, cost-effective, and equitable multi-benefit Projects and Programs. Related strategies for leveraging other funding sources are available in Section 5.2.1.5.

Table 2-3. Regional Program financial snapshot for the NSMB WA

Program	Regional Program Financial Snapshot for the NSMB WA ¹							
	SCW Program Funding					Expenditures (FY20-25) ²		
	Regional Program Funds Collected and Anticipated (FY20-25)	Total Budgeted and Projected (FY20-30) ³	Total Budgeted to Date (FY20-25)	Total Leveraged Funds	Total Number of Projects/Studies Funded ⁴	SCW Program Expenditures	Leveraged Funding Expenditures	Total Expenditures
Infrastructure Program	\$9.1 M	\$4.2M	\$2.6M	\$8.4M	4	\$0	\$0	\$0
Scientific Study Program		\$513.9K	\$66.5K	\$36.5K	2	\$0	\$0	\$0
Technical Resources Program		\$600.0K	\$300.0K	N/A	2	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵	N/A ⁵
Watershed Coordinators		\$1.0M	\$500.0K	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total		\$6.3M	\$3.5M	\$8.4M	8	\$0	\$0	\$0

¹Counts Infrastructure Program Projects, Scientific Studies, and Project Concepts funded in FY20-21 through FY25-26 SIPs. The Project/Study count reflects unique Projects and Scientific Studies. Note that the Infrastructure Program did not accept applications for the FY25-26 Call for Projects.

²Based on completed Regional Program reports as of July 2025. Includes expenditures through Q2 of FY24-25; Q3 and Q4 data are not yet available.

³Projected values are based on those in the FY25-26 SIP.

⁴Total does not count Watershed Coordinators.

⁵Reporting data not available for Technical Resources Program Project Concepts.

While multiple Project Concepts have been evaluated and funded to date in this WA, the time for a Project to mature from a conceptual idea to constructed and operational infrastructure can span multiple years. To date, three of five Project Concept applications submitted in the NSMB WA have been funded and included in their respective SIPs. Table 2-4 summarizes the pipeline of Projects currently receiving funding that are in development phases ranges from planning to construction in the NSMB WA.

Table 2-4. Backlog of Regional Program Projects in the NSMB WA as of June 2025

Concepts in Technical Resource Program ¹	Infrastructure Program Projects Current Phase ²				
	Projects in Planning	Projects in Design	Projects in Bid/Award	Projects in Construction	Projects Constructed
3	2	1	0	1	0

¹Based on Project Concepts included in SIPs FY20-21 through FY25-26.

²Current phase is the based on completed Regional Program FY24-25 Midyear Reports as of July 2025. For Projects that have not yet begun reporting (e.g., FY24-25 Projects), the Project's earliest funded phase was assumed to represent the current phase to support this discussion.

To explore how much leveraged funding may be needed to complete the pipeline of Projects already in the NSMB WA SIP, a financial model was developed using data provided by Project proponents in applications and reporting. For each Project in the NSMB WA SIP, the financial outlook models the future capital costs (i.e., design and construction), O&M costs, and potential cost escalations due to inflation that are not currently included in SIP projections. This is important because the SIP only includes requested funding and does not earmark SCW Program funding for future phases (i.e., if a Project only requests design funding from the Regional Program, its construction costs are not earmarked in the SIP). **This “backlog” of potential future costs is hypothetical**—Project proponents may pursue other funding sources outside the Regional Program to complete their Projects, and funding for Projects in the SIP may be discontinued in future years; however, the results provide useful insights to bracket expectations for Regional Program funding in this WA.

Figure 2-10 below shows the forecasted capital and O&M costs for Regional Program Projects already in the SIP (accounting for inflation), and the amount of leveraged funding that would be needed if all Projects requested Regional Program funding in the coming years. Although forecasted costs could be deferred to future years, it carries risk of substantial cost escalation due to inflation. Note that the forecasts presented herein only consider Infrastructure Program Projects already in approved

SIPs, and do not forecast lifecycle costs for Technical Resources Program Project Concepts that may also apply to the Infrastructure Program in the future.

Over the next 10 years, forecasted capital and O&M costs for Regional Program Projects that have already entered the SCW Program funding pipeline for the Project implementation phases such as planning, design, and construction could amount to 20% of the anticipated annual Regional Program funds collected for the NSMB WA. O&M costs alone could amount to 65% of annual NSMB WA funding and will continue to increase as more Projects complete construction. This is important to consider when programming future SIPs because sufficient funds may need to be reserved for O&M or Project proponents will need to leverage O&M funding from outside the Regional Program. Given the NSMB WA's already limited SCW Program revenue, this analysis underscores the importance of prioritizing Projects and Programs that maximize leveraged funding sources. Reliance solely on Regional Program allocations will not be sufficient to meet long-term watershed goals or support large-scale, multi-benefit Projects.

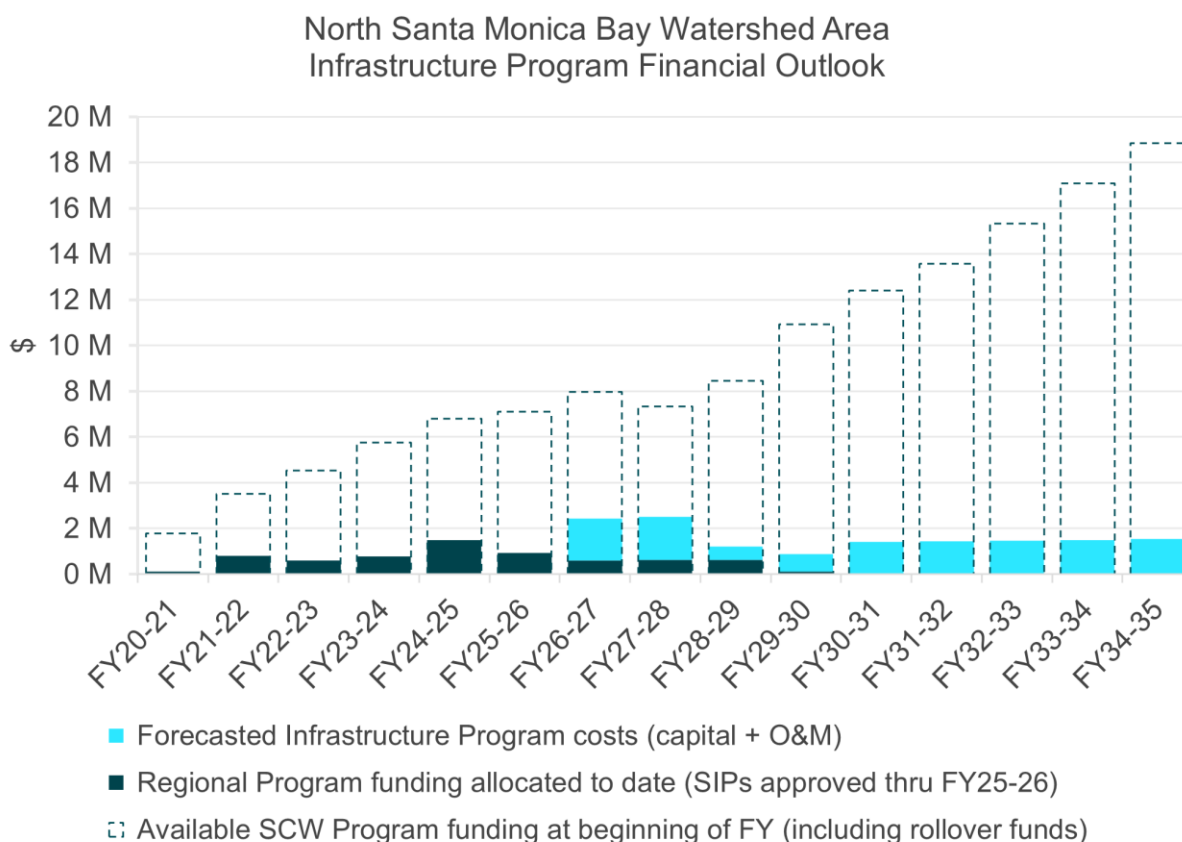


Figure 2-10. NSMB WA Regional Program Infrastructure Program financial outlook

2.3.2 Municipal Program Financial Snapshot

Table 2-5 presents a summary of Municipal Program funding, expenditures, and allocated budget for the NSMB WA. Since municipal boundaries do not follow WA boundaries (some Municipalities may straddle two WAs), Table 2-5 presents Municipal Program totals for the Municipalities that compose the NSMB WA. Municipalities receive direct funding from the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (LACFCD) via the Municipal Program proportional to the revenues generated within its boundaries¹⁶. Municipalities have discretion over which Projects and Programs to fund with their respective Municipal Program disbursements and there is no proportional split of the Municipal Program funding by WA.

Table 2-5. Municipal Program financial snapshot for Municipalities included in the NSMB WA

Municipality ¹	Municipal Program Disbursements ²	Total Interest Accrued to Date ²	Total Expenditures in Annual Reports ²	FY23-24 Est. Rollover to future FY ³	FY24-25 Annual Plan Allocations
Uninc. County	\$44.9M	\$0.3M	\$45.2M	\$0	\$11.1M
Malibu	\$1.5M	\$85.4K	\$0.9M	\$0.8M	\$0.6M
Agoura Hills	\$1.4M	\$7.8K	\$0.9M	\$0.5M	\$0.6M
Calabasas	\$1.5M	\$17.7K	\$0.8M	\$0.7M	\$0.4M
Westlake Village	\$0.9M	\$0.7K	\$0.4M	\$0.5M	\$0.2M
Los Angeles	\$145.2M	\$1.4M	\$82.8M	\$63.8M	\$36.3M
Hidden Hills	\$0.3M	\$1.1K	\$0.2M	\$0.1M	\$39.0K
Total	\$195.8M	\$1.8M	\$131.1M	\$66.5M	\$49.3M

¹Municipalities included in the NSMB WA.

²Reflects total Municipal Program Disbursement to each Municipality from FY20-21 to FY23-24. For Municipalities that span multiple WAs, disbursements and expenditures may not be exclusive to this WA. Municipal Program Annual Reports for FY24-25 are due in February 2026 and are not yet available. Information is self-reported by each Municipality and may be incomplete.

³Rollover to FY24-25.

¹⁶ See the [SCW Program Handbook for Municipalities](#) for more information.

Chapter 3. Baseline of Benefits Provided by Funded Projects (FY20-21 to FY24-25)

A fundamental element of Watershed Planning is the compilation and summary of progress to date in terms of SCW Program Projects and Programs. This chapter compiles Regional and Municipal Program Projects, collectively referred to as “SCW Program Projects”, funded prior to the development of this Initial Watershed Plan (FY20-21 through FY24-25)¹⁷ and summarizes their benefit baselines—referred to as *baselines* throughout this Plan—as well as the forecasted potential benefits to assist with target-setting, assuming a similar linear trajectory of the benefits achieved during the first five years of the program can be achieved by future Projects.

These baselines provide a snapshot of SCW Program Project benefits at the start of the Watershed Planning process, serving as a reference point for measuring future investments and progress. They inform key Initial Watershed Plan elements, including target-setting (3.2.2), the quantification of WA Needs (Chapter 5), and the identification of strategies to address those needs (Chapter 5). Baselines also form a foundation for an adaptive, long-term Watershed Planning process (Chapter 7)¹⁸. While baselines represent a static starting point, ongoing SCW Program Project implementation will be tracked and updated through the [Planning Tool](#) to reflect progress and evolving Project implementation.

Baselines and forecasts include all SCW Program Projects funded to date, regardless of their implementation status (in progress or constructed). By capturing both anticipated benefits (from in-progress Projects) and realized benefits (from constructed Projects), the Initial Watershed Plans present a more accurate picture of current investments—helping inform data-driven strategies rooted in past decisions.

¹⁷ Note that “baseline” throughout this Initial Watershed Plan refers to the benefits of SCW Program Projects. These included Regional Infrastructure Program Projects included in SIPs FY20-21 through FY24-25 and Municipal Program Projects with expenditures in FY20-21 through FY23-24 Municipal Annual Reports and funding allocations in FY24-25 Municipal Annual Plans. Baselines are static by design; new and/or realized benefits will be tracked and reported as progress updated. Baselines do not include Project Concepts, Scientific Studies, or other Municipal Program Activities such as outreach and engagement, O&M, post-construction monitoring, or other Programs. A key gap and recommendation for Adaptive Management is the establishment and quantification of Program benefits so that they may be considered in assessments of progress to date (Chapter 7).

¹⁸ Progress will be continuously tracked via the Planning Tool as new investments are made, while forecasts may be refined through Adaptive Management if targets are reassessed (Chapter 7).

As more Projects are constructed and post-construction monitoring metrics are established, these metrics will be integrated into the SCW Program Portal—including the Planning Tool—and Adaptive Watershed Plans. Progress summaries will be adjusted to reflect realized benefits (Chapter 7).

While this Initial Watershed Plan focuses on quantifying Project benefits, future Watershed Planning efforts may quantify and assess benefits provided by SCW Program funded Programs and Scientific Studies (Chapter 7). As new Projects, Programs, and Scientific Studies are included in SIPs and Municipal Program Annual Plans, and as Project post-construction monitoring and metrics are established and reported, progress will be tracked and annually updated via the [Planning Tool](#) to communicate progress toward meeting targets (set in 3.2.2) and achieving Goals.

3.1 SCW Program Projects in the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

In the first five years of the SCW Program, the SCW Program allocated \$3.1M in the NSMB WA in the form of seven Projects (four from the Infrastructure Program and three from the Municipal Program)¹⁹, all of which are currently in progress. Summarized in Figure 3-1. below are SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA, benefits of which define the baselines presented in this chapter. These Projects have a total 24-hour storage capacity²⁰ of approximately six ac-ft, managing runoff from over 6,000 acres, and reflect a wide variety of Project types and configurations. See Figure 3-2 for a map of the NSMB WA SCW Program Projects. See Table 3-1 and Table 3-2 for additional Project details for these SCW Program Projects in the NSMB WA, respectively.

¹⁹ The Regional Program Project count reflects unique Projects while the [SCW Program Portal](#) relies on an application-based database. Municipal Program Project counts may also differ, as they were manually reviewed to eliminate duplicates and to ensure that only Activities meeting the definition of a “Project” were included in the baselines. Only Projects with expenditures in FY20-21 through FY23-24, or with allocations in FY24-25, are included. Lastly, the SCW Program Portal is a dynamic tool that automatically updates as SCW Program Projects are added or removed from the database. In contrast, the baselines presented herein are static and based on a snapshot of data as of 2025.

²⁰ 24-hour storage capacity includes a Project’s structural capacity plus the additional capacity that can be treated over a 24-hour period through infiltration or other means. The SCW Projects Module calculates 24-hour capacity as the capacity captured during the 24-hour 85th percentile design storm, with the maximum capacity being 100% of the volume of the design storm. 24-hour capacity is the basis for Project scoring metric A.1 Water Quality Cost Effectiveness.

Note that SCW Program Projects are categorized as either being a wet-weather or a dry-weather Project:

- **Wet-weather Project:** Designed to capture and treat stormwater and non-stormwater runoff. These Projects are typically designed to capture and treat 100% of stormwater runoff generated within their capture area during the 85th percentile, 24-hour storm event.
- **Dry-weather Project:** Designed to capture and treat non-stormwater runoff. These Projects are typically designed to capture and treat 100% of the non-stormwater runoff generated within their capture areas.

Under the Regional Program Infrastructure Program, these two Project types have traditionally been used for scoring purposes, with separate scoring rubrics for assessing Water Quality Benefits applied to each type. While the scoring criteria aligns with most Project designs, there are several unique SCW Program Projects that blur the distinction between the two types. For example, some Projects scored as “dry-weather” may also be designed to capture and treat stormwater runoff.

Although non-stormwater pollutant load reductions achieved by dry-weather Projects are not modeled in this Initial Watershed Plan (acknowledged as a Project data gap in Section 7.1), each dry-weather Regional Program Project was individually evaluated to assess its stormwater capture and treatment abilities. These stormwater pollutant load reductions provide meaningful contributions to the 2025 benefit baselines. Table 3-1 identified each Project’s type (wet- or dry-weather) and flags dry-weather Projects which are also anticipated to deliver stormwater pollutant load reduction benefits.

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Summary of Regional and Municipal Program Projects



Funded Projects (FY20-25)

- 4** Regional Program Projects
- 3** Municipal Program Projects



Project Status		Project Types		BMP Types	
0 Constructed		4 Wet & Dry Weather Capture		0 Infiltration Facility	
7 In Progress		3 Dry Weather Capture		0 Cistern	
				0 Infiltration Well	
				3 Treatment Facility	
				0 Green Street	
				1 Diversion to Sanitary Sewer	
				1 Bioretention	
				2 Bioinfiltration	
				0 Permeable Pavement	
Total Capture Area Managed		Capture Area Sizes		Total Project 24-hour Storage Capacity	
6,000 acres		6 < 0-200 acres		6 ac-ft	
		0 200 - 1,000 acres			
		1 >1,000 acres			
Total Cost Share Funding*		Budgeted and Projected to Date (FY20-25)		Projects Benefiting DACs	
\$8.4 Million		\$3.1 Million		N/A	

*Counts Regional Program Projects only.

**Pollutants Addressed does not apply to dry-weather Projects. "Other" includes dry-weather Projects, Copper, Lead, Toxics, and Chlorides.

Note that baselines reflect only SCW Program Projects, not benefits from parallel initiatives outside the SCW Program. Future Watershed Planning efforts may expand baselines to include Programs, Scientific Studies, and post-construction Project performance data.

Figure 3-1. Summary of SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

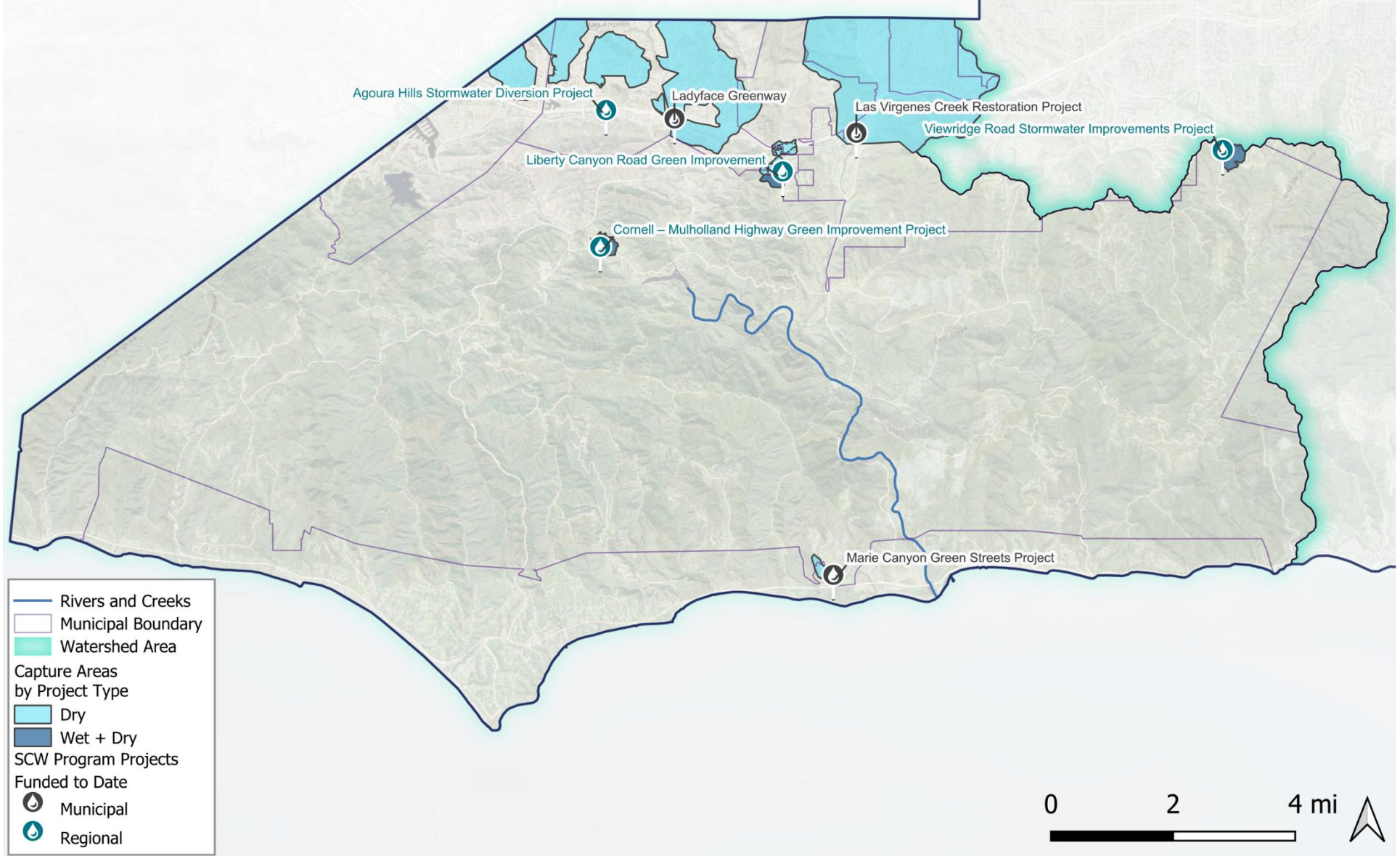


Figure 3-2. SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA

Table 3-1. Regional Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA

Regional Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA				
Project Name	SIP Year(s)	Project Type ¹	Funded Phase(s)	Current Phase ³
Viewridge Road Stormwater Improvements Project	FY21-22	Wet	Construction	Design
Liberty Canyon Road Green Improvement	FY22-23	Wet	Design	Planning
Cornell – Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project	FY23-24	Wet	Design	Planning
Agoura Hills Stormwater Diversion Project	FY24-25	Dry ²	Construction, O & M	Construction

¹Wet-weather Projects capture both stormwater and non-stormwater runoff. Typically, wet-weather Projects are designed to capture 100% of the design storm event.

²Dry-weather Project that also provides wet-weather Water Quality Benefits. Project types under the Regional Program have historically been used for scoring purposes; so, while some Projects may be labeled as 'dry-weather' for scoring purposes, such Projects may also provide some wet-weather runoff capture or treatment. Dry-weather Projects that capture and treat wet-weather runoff typically manage less than 50% of the design storm event.

³Current phase as reported in the FY24-25 Midyear Reports

Table 3-2. Municipal Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA

Municipal Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA			
Project Name	Municipality	Project Type ¹	Status
Ladyface Greenway	Agoura Hills	Dry	In Progress
Las Virgenes Creek Restoration Project	Calabasas	Dry	In Progress
Marie Canyon Green Streets Project	Malibu	Wet	In Progress

¹Wet-weather Projects capture both stormwater and non-stormwater runoff. Typically, wet-weather Projects are designed to capture 100% of the design storm event.

3.2 Baselines and Forecasts for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

The following subsections summarize benefits expected by SCW Program Projects funded to date within the NSMB WA. This data provides a foundation for target-setting and strategy development, supporting the achievement of Goals and the planning priorities of the NSMB WASC and other interested parties.

3.2.1 Benefit Baselines for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

The seven SCW Program Projects in the NSMB WA improve water quality while also delivering other co-benefits to communities including increased drought resiliency and improved public health. Figure 3 below summarizes the NSMB WA baselines which are organized by Planning Theme. SCW Program Projects funded to date in the NSMB WA are estimated to capture 800 ac-ft of stormwater and urban runoff annually, while also removing nutrients (e.g., total phosphorus; 100 pounds removed per year). These Projects are anticipated to deliver over one acre of new park space created, two acres of new tree canopy, cooling and shading surfaces²¹, and are expected to create over ten jobs in the region. Baseline methodology is provided in Appendix H.

Included in these baselines are load reductions for the priority pollutant total phosphorus. Both total phosphorus and bacteria are priority pollutants for the NSMB WA because they are identified as limiting pollutants in the area's WMPs. Load reduction baselines for total phosphorus are estimated using the regionally calibrated Los Angeles County Public Work Watershed Management Modeling System version 2.0 (WMMS2). While bacteria is also a priority pollutant for the NSMB WA, a baseline and target for bacteria load reduction cannot be modeled or quantified at this time. Unlike other pollutants, fecal indicator bacteria loads were not calibrated in WMMS2, and a runoff time series is not available. This is due to the unique complexities associated with modeling bacteria, including their high variability and site-specific behavior. As a result, quantification of bacteria load reduction is an Initial Watershed Plan Project data gap (Figure 7-6), which is anticipated to be addressed through near-term Watershed Planning Adaptive Management efforts.

²¹ These include initial results from Regional and Municipal Program reporting in early 2025 and are subject to additional review and revision.

Overall, SCW Program Projects funded to date will deliver a variety of benefits to the NSMB WA. Watershed Planning will support delivery of future additional benefits that align with the Goals as well as the NSMB WASC and other interested party priorities.

It is important to note that while many other non-SCW Program funded Projects and Programs provide benefits to the NSMB WA, the baselines presented in this chapter do not include those benefits. For this Initial Watershed Plan, Water Quality and Water Supply Benefit baselines were determined through WMMS2 analysis and MMS outcomes and account for stormwater routing and capture by existing major capture facilities and SCW Program Projects. Non-SCW Program Projects, their characteristics, and their Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits are not included in these baselines and instead have been compiled and used to support SCW Program-wide and WA-specific targets, as detailed in 3.2.2.

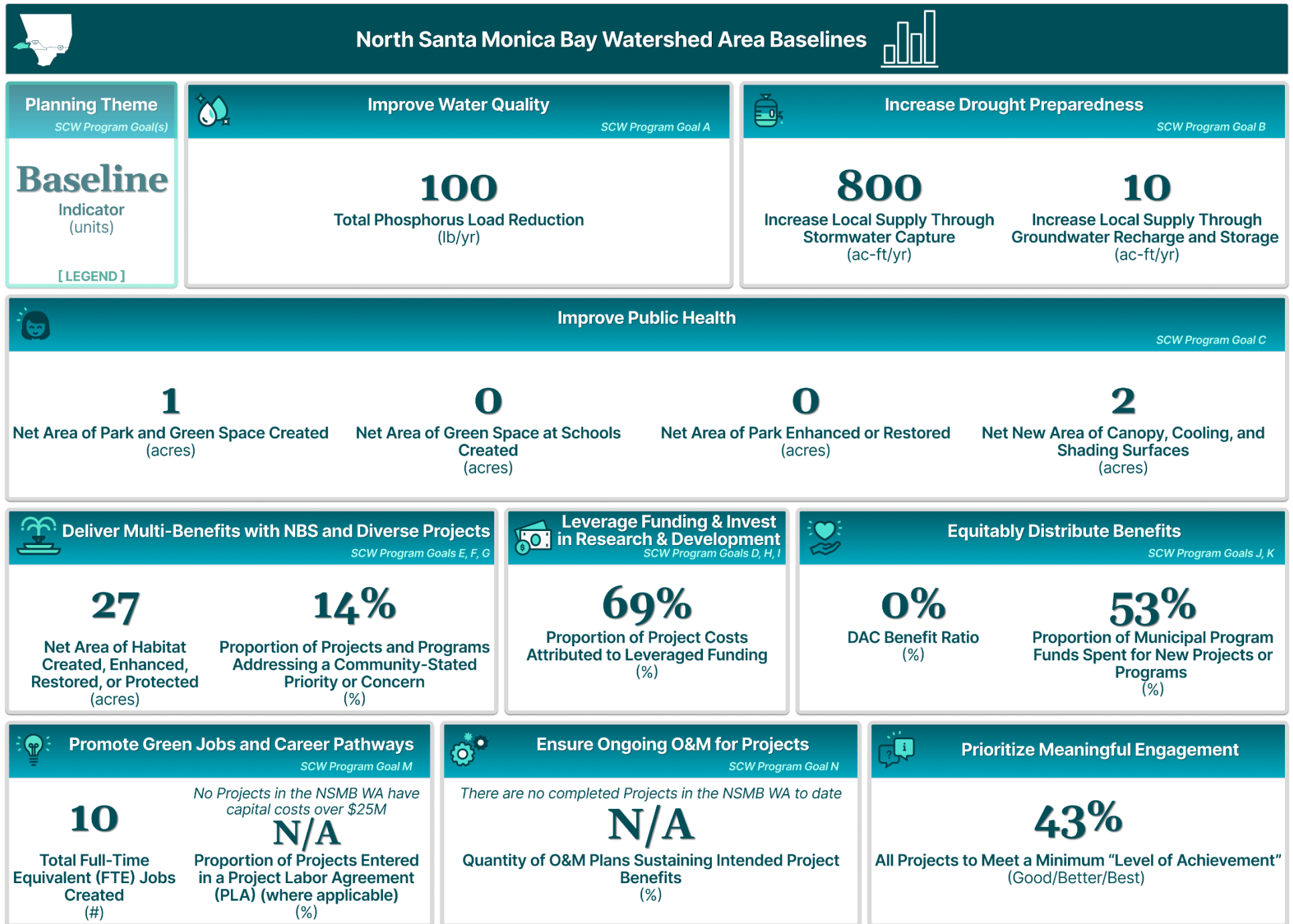


Figure 3-3 .Summary of benefits provided by SCW Program funded Projects to date in the NSMB WA

3.2.2 Benefit Forecasts for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

Building upon the baselines, benefit forecasts estimate the potential trajectory of SCW Program Project benefits to provide context for target-setting (3.2.2). These forecasts are not targets; rather, they are illustrative projections meant to inform planning discussions. Instead, they provide critical context for target-setting and strategy development by estimating how SCW Program benefits might grow over time, if SCW Program Projects (i.e., Regional and Municipal Program Projects) funded to date are implemented as proposed and the SCW Program continues at its current pace.

These forecasts are simplified, linear estimates (illustrated in Figure 3-4) based on SCW Program Projects funded *prior* to the start of the Watershed Planning process (i.e., Projects funded from FY20-21 to FY24-25). To account for the above average number of Projects funded in the first few years of the SCW Program—which stemmed from a backlog of ready-to-go Project Concepts and available budget that could be allocated exclusively to new Projects—forecasts are anchored in the more recent, stabilized implementation pattern observed over the past three fiscal years (FY22-23 through FY24-25). This adjustment reflects the transition from a startup phase with accumulated demand to a more sustainable, ongoing funding cadence, better representing the SCW Program’s expected rate of benefit delivery moving forward.

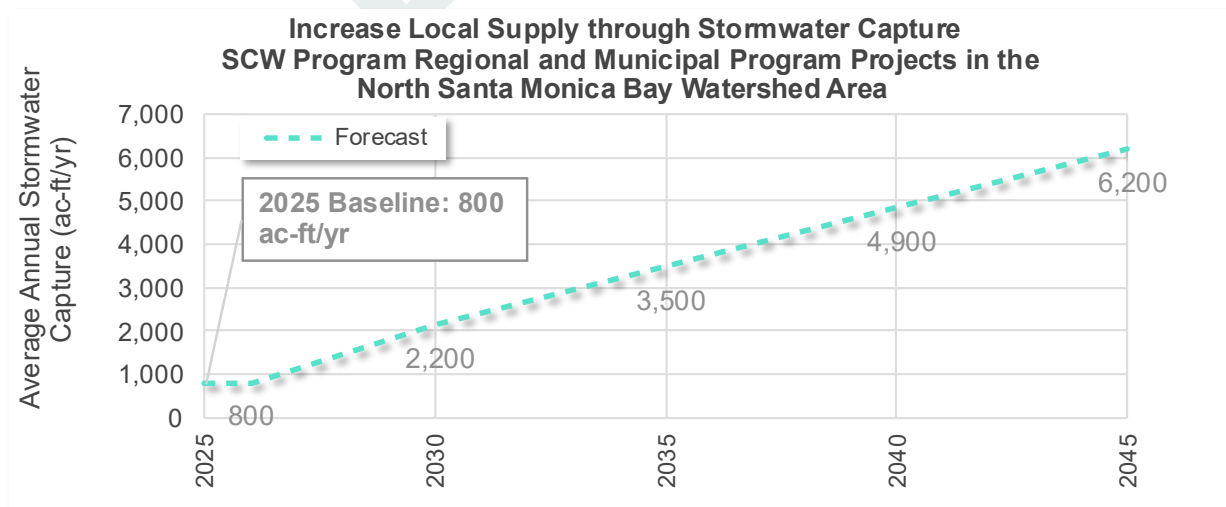


Figure 3-4. Example benefit forecast for the NSMB WA Regional and Municipal Program Project

While basing forecasts on the more recent years of SCW Program Projects is generally useful for estimating future Project potential, it can also result in flat forecasts for certain Indicators (described in 3.2.2) despite having a nonzero baseline.

This occurs when cumulative benefits to date are primarily attributed to SCW Program Projects funded during the SCW Program's first two years, while more recently funded Projects have not yet reported anticipated benefits for those same Indicators. This does not necessarily mean that future benefits will be absent. In many cases, the flat forecast may be a result of Project timing:

- **Earlier implementation stages:** Recently funded Projects may be in planning or design phases, making it too early to accurately quantify anticipated benefits.
- **Greater uncertainty:** Projects earlier in development often have greater uncertainty around benefit estimates compared to Projects further along in implementation.
- **Reporting timelines:** Benefits from Regional Program Projects funded under the most recent SIP (FY24–25) may not yet be reflected in available reporting data at the time of data extraction for the Initial Watershed Plan.

These considerations may also affect baselines. For example, a Project proponent may anticipate that their Project will provide CIBs but may be unable to quantify those benefits at its current phase of implementation. As a result, baselines and forecasts may potentially underrepresent long-term anticipated benefits until newer Projects progress and their contributions can be more reliably quantified and incorporated²².

It is acknowledged that linear forecasts have significant limitations, and projecting linear progression may not be consistent with findings by the financial outlooks. For example, initial financial outlooks findings show SCW Program-wide limitations for funding of new Projects over the next five years. Further, the potential for new Project benefits may be limited by the growing need for O&M funding for existing SCW Program Projects as they complete construction and begin O&M and monitoring.

While actual progress is expected to fluctuate due to various programmatic, financial, and external factors, the linear approach allows for a consistent frame of reference for comparing targets (3.2.2) to the current pace of benefits delivery. Similarly, Initial Watershed Plan targets, strategies, and other efforts are expected to lead to improved

²² Note that this concept does not apply to baseline and forecast estimates for Indicators under the Planning Themes *Improve Water Quality* and *Increase Drought Preparedness*. These metrics are modeled using Project design details and scope of work information, rather than reported data, and are therefore generally more defined and stable.

efficiency and implementation. Forecasts assume an average annual rate of benefit accrual for the sake of clarity and comparability and provide context for target-setting only. If targets are reassessed as part of Adaptive Management (see Chapter 7), then forecasts may be updated at that time. Forecasts may also be updated through future Watershed Planning efforts based on findings from financial outlooks developed concurrently with the Initial Watershed Plans. This linear approach allows targets in 3.2.2 to be viewed relative to the baselines, illustrating how much acceleration or improvement is needed to meet targets.

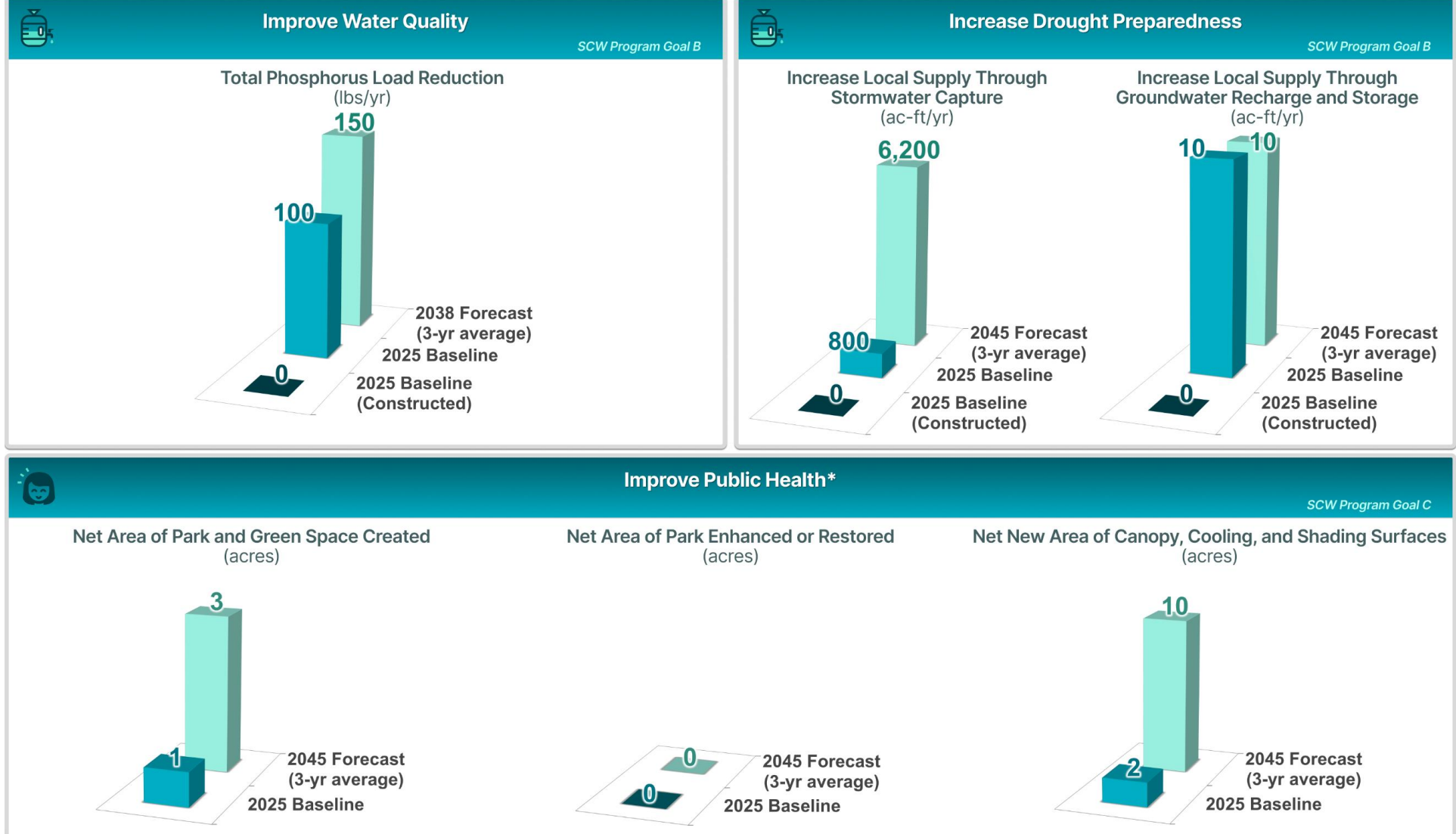
Together, baselines and forecasts serve as foundational tools for setting realistic yet aspirational targets. However, it is essential to recognize that both are primarily informed by the anticipated benefits of Projects that are still in progress, since the majority of SCW Program Projects have not been constructed yet. Consequently, future progress summaries may diverge from these initial baselines and forecasts. Realized benefits could exceed, fall short of, or align with those in original Project designs. This would underscore the importance of adaptive Watershed Planning and continuous tracking to support data-driven decision-making throughout the SCW Program lifecycle.

For the NSMB WA, Figure 3-5 provides example comparisons between:

- 2025 constructed baseline (dark blue column), reflecting realized benefits from constructed SCW Program Projects,
- 2025 baseline (light blue column), reflecting anticipated and realized benefits from all SCW Program Projects, including those not yet constructed, and
- Forecasted trajectory of benefits based on current trends (teal column).

Forecasts for other benefits are provided in Appendix H along with the additional details on forecast methods.

Example North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Forecasts



*Given that the baseline for the Indicator "Net Area of Green Space at Schools Created" is 0 acres, a forecast is not available.

Figure 3-5. Example benefit forecasts for the NSMB WA under current SCW Program trajectory for key Planning Themes

Chapter 4. Quantifying Progress Toward SCW Program Goals

Metrics and targets are essential Watershed Planning tools, enabling vision-setting and the tracking and assessment of progress toward the achievement of Goals. This chapter outlines an initial set of Project-based metrics that estimate Project benefits at three levels: SCW Program-wide, WA-wide (via Indicators), and at the Project level (Performance Measures). These metrics set the foundation for articulating a vision for the NSMB WA and serve as the starting point for tracking progress in the coming years.

4.1 Visioning Setting and Progress Tracking: Indicators & Performance Measures

Visioning and progress tracking are facilitated by Indicators and Performance Measures (PMs). Indicators are metrics which sum cumulative Project benefits across *large spatial scales*, such as the SCW Program as a whole (includes cumulative benefits from Projects in all nine WAs) and across each specific WA (includes cumulative benefits from Projects in one specific WA). Indicators are supported by a set of PMs which are metrics that are quantified and tracked at the *Project scale*.

Indicators and PMs, summarized in Figure 4-1, are anchored in the 14 Goals, and organized into the nine Planning Themes to allow for efficient WA and SCW Program-wide summaries. These Indicators and PMs are used to quantify benefits, establish measurable, aspirational targets, and track progress toward achieving Goals, based on best available Project information and data.

For example, each Project proponent and Municipality submits information and data specific to their Project for the PM: “Community-stated priority or concern addressed.” They identify which community-stated priorities or concerns their Project addresses and cite the source of that engagement input (e.g., CSNA, community engagement meetings, Parks Needs Assessment, etc.). Commonly cited priorities and concerns reported by Projects include addressing impacts of climate change (e.g., flooding, drought, wildfires), outdoor water pollution (e.g., oceans, rivers, lakes), and access to parks and recreational spaces.

This PM directly supports the calculation of the associated Indicator: “Proportion of Projects and Programs addressing a community-stated priority or concern (%).” To quantify this Indicator, the PM data reported by Project proponents and Municipalities for their Projects are assessed to determine how many SCW Program Projects address at least one such priority or concern. The Indicator value is calculated by dividing the number of Projects addressing at least one priority or concern by the total number of SCW Program Projects, at both the Program-wide and WA-specific scales.

For instance, within the NSMB WA, one SCW Program Project reported that they address a community-stated priority or concern that was stated through an engagement effort (e.g., CSNA, engagement meetings, Parks Needs Assessment, etc.). This Project reported that it addresses the priority of improving water quality to support clean rivers and oceans. Using this PM data, the Indicator is calculated as:

$$\frac{1 \text{ Projects addressing a priority or concern}}{7 \text{ SCW Program Projects in the NSMB WA}} = 14\%$$

Proportion of Projects and Programs addressing a community-stated priority or concern in the NSMB WA

Thus, 14% of Projects in the NSMB WA address a community-stated priority or concern. Note that while almost all SCW Program Projects funded to date provide at least one CIB, they may not necessarily address a community-stated priority or concern. This distinction is important because CIBs provided may or may not align with the specific needs expressed by the local community. A Project may meet technical criteria for delivering a CIB without being responsive to the priorities or concerns raised through engagement. Ensuring that future Projects both provide CIBs and directly reflect community-stated priorities and concerns is essential to advancing place-based designs and fostering meaningful engagement.

A total of 19 Indicators and 50 PMs (Figure 4-2) have been selected to quantify and summarize SCW Program progress. These metric selections build on recommendations from the ROC and MMS and incorporate input gathered through engagement with SCW Program governance committees. Details of Watershed Planning Indicators and PMs and each of their tracked data points are presented in Appendix G. While these initial Indicators and PMs are limited to quantifying Project benefits, additional metrics such as post-construction Project metrics and metrics that quantify benefits from Programs and Scientific Studies may be incorporated through Adaptive Management (Chapter 7).

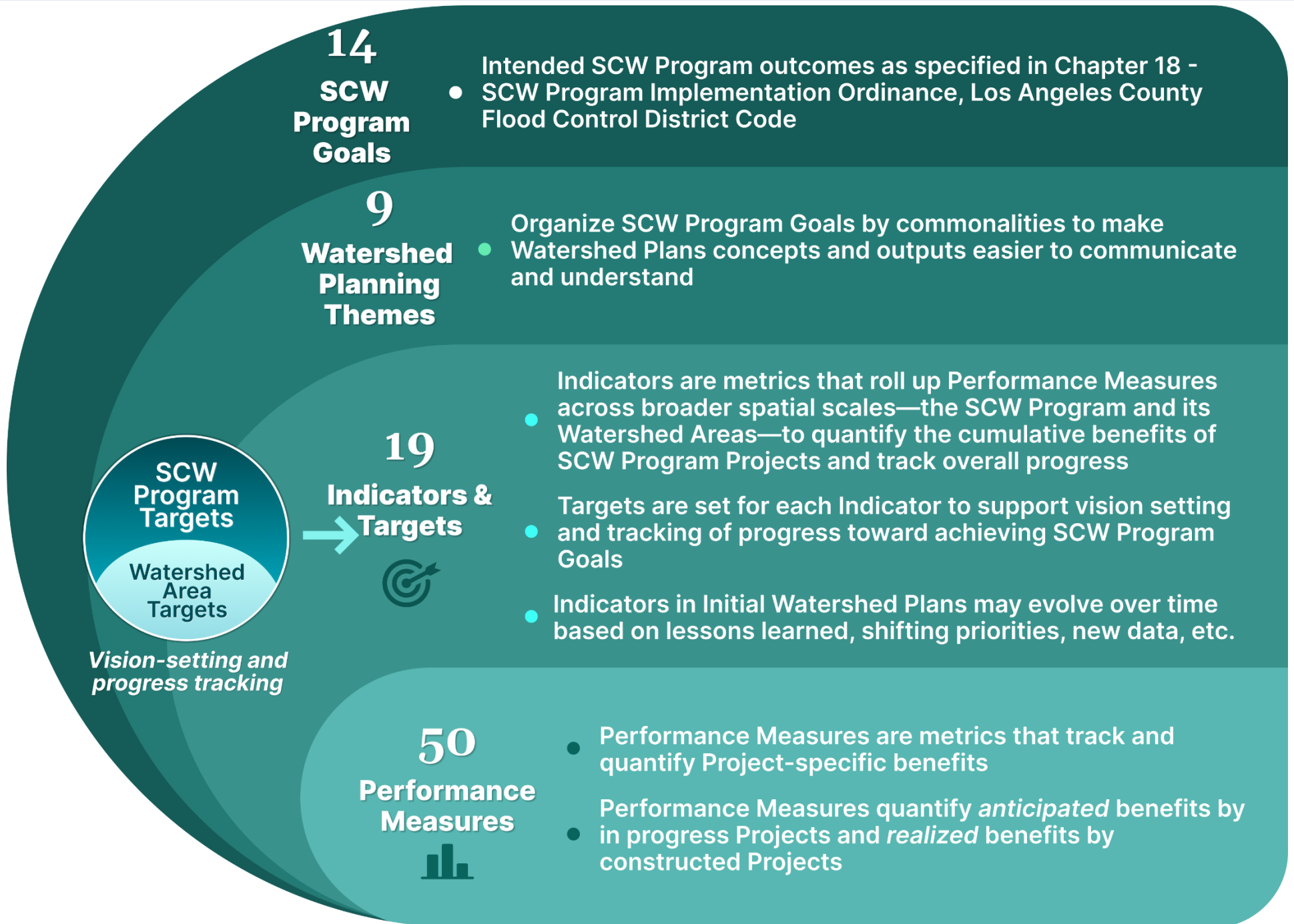


Figure 4-1. Indicators and PMs terminology

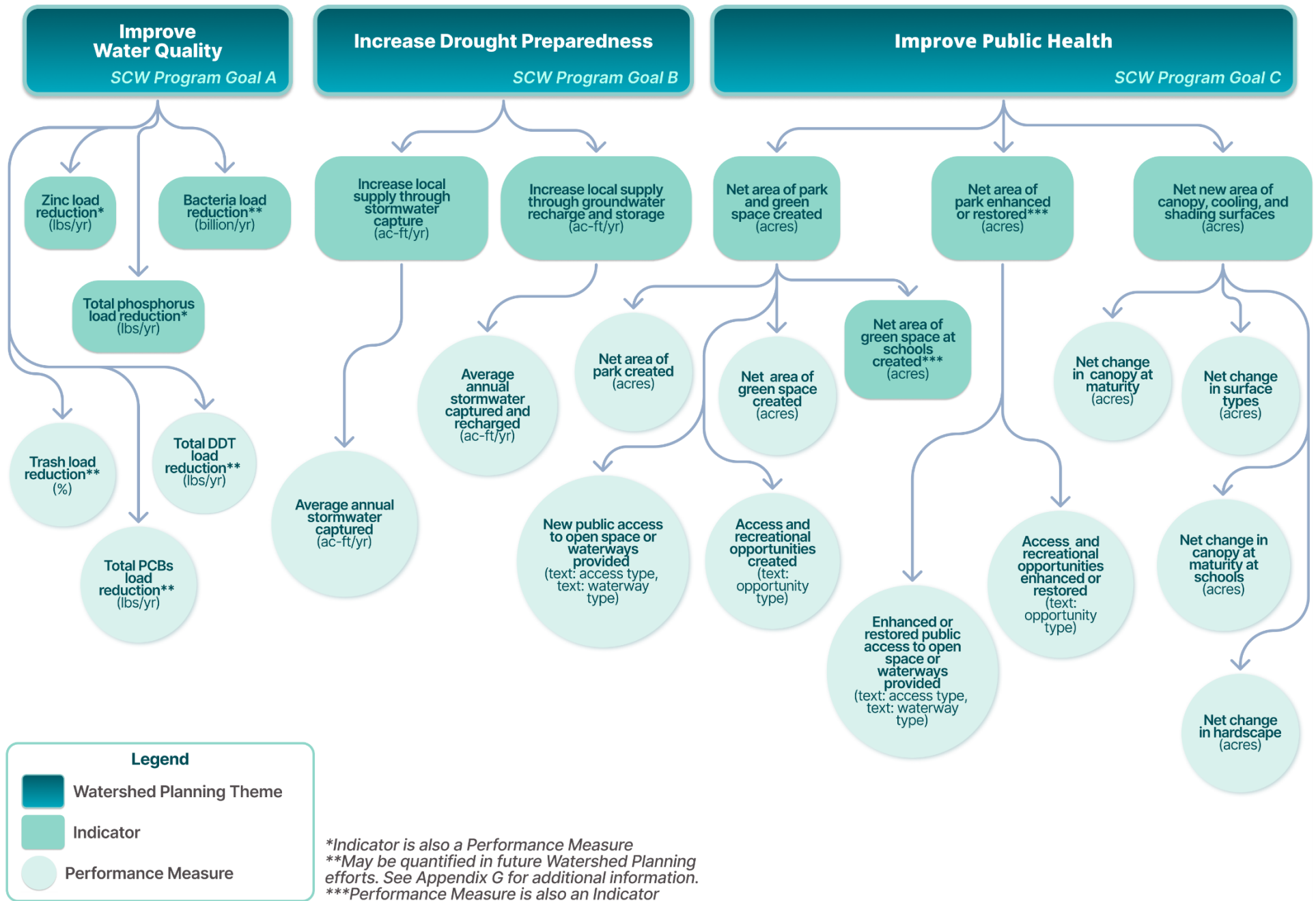


Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs

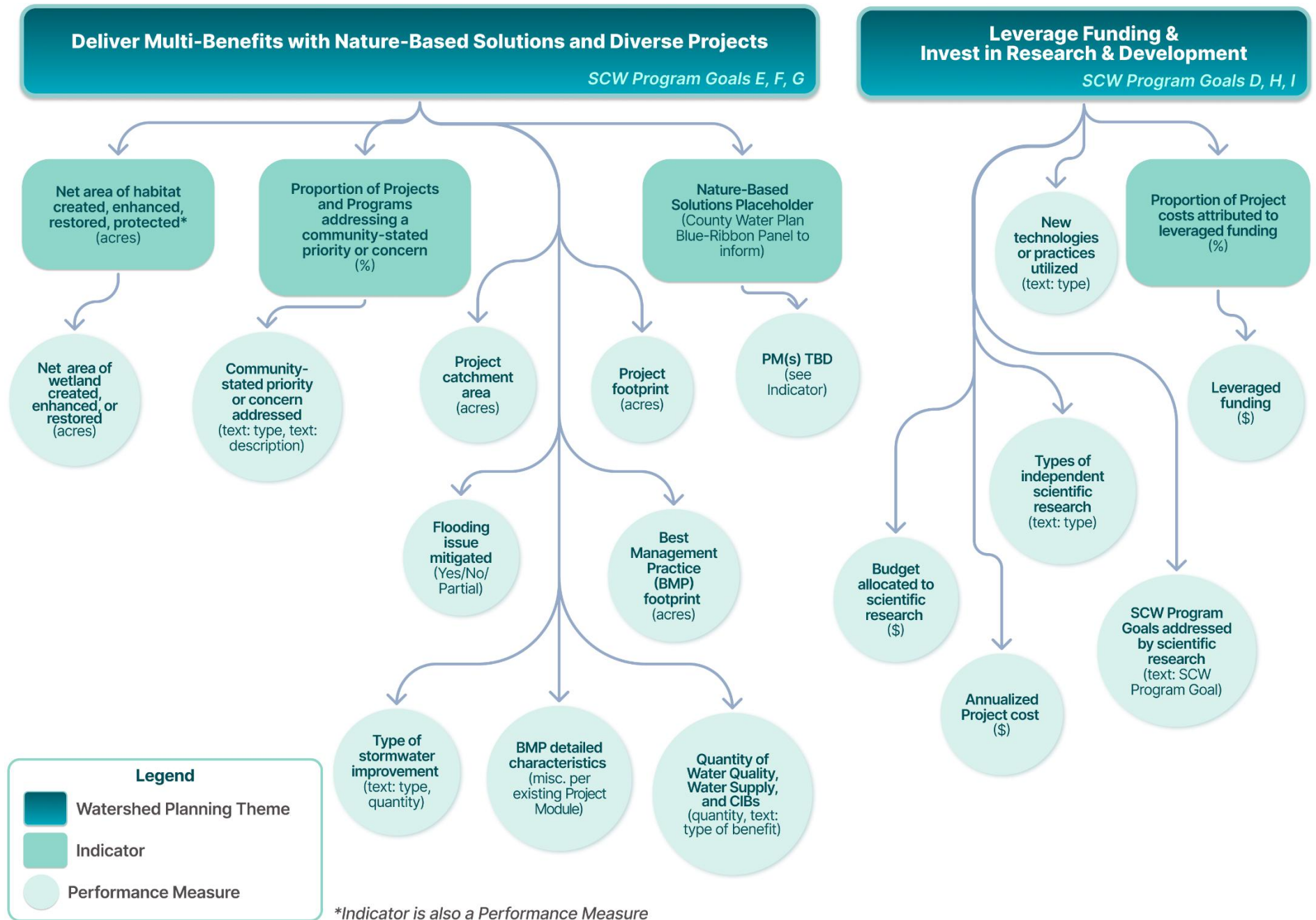


Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs (continued)

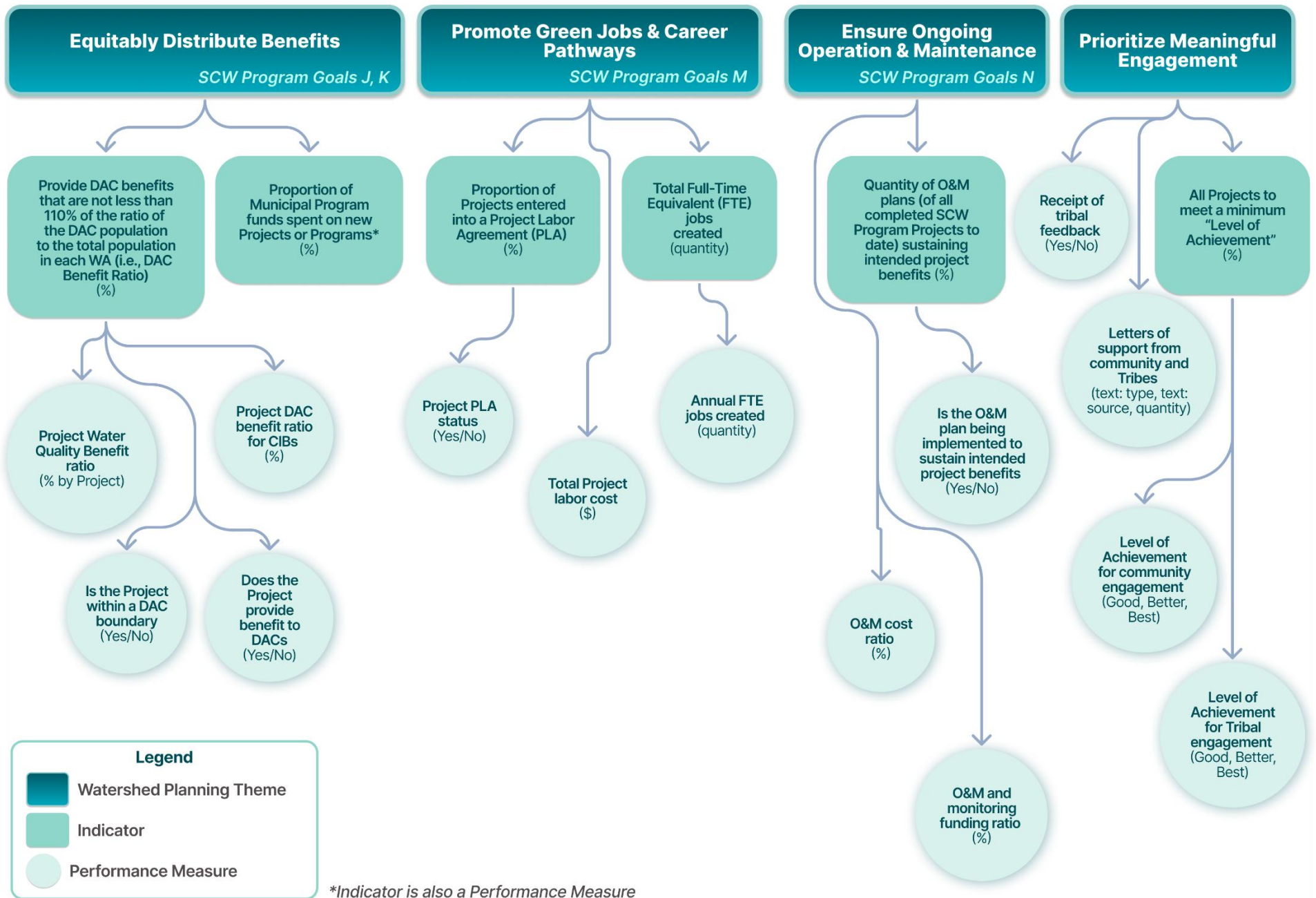


Figure 4-2. Indicators and PMs (continued)

4.2 Establishing Targets

For each Indicator outlined in the subsection above, this Initial Watershed Plan presents targets that reflect the vision for the SCW Program and its desired outcomes of improving water quality, increasing local water supply, and providing CIBs, along with the other 14 Goals. For each of the nine SCW Program WAs, measurable targets have been set with an aspirational lens for each Indicator.

The establishment of Indicators and targets aligns with the [March 2024 BOS motion](#), which called for the development of:

"Indicators and targets for the Program, to be developed with the [ROC], that can be used to measure achievement of Program Goals, guide Watershed Planning, and inform Project development, solicitation, and evaluation efforts."

SCW Program and WA targets are built upon a long history of efforts including engagement workshops and meetings with the WASCs and other interested parties, local planning efforts, funded SCW Program Projects and Scientific Studies, and efforts by the ROC and ROC WQ and CIB working groups. The following subsections describe this approach.

4.2.1 Determining the SCW Program's Contributions and Targets

The SCW Program is a key contributor in the effort to achieve goals essential to LA County's long-term vision for sustainability and resiliency. Numerous countywide planning and strategy documents have been developed that include countywide goals and targets that will be achieved via a variety of programs, including the SCW Program. For example, the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, County Water Plan, Vision 2045, and Parks Needs Assessment contain their own countywide targets for addressing climate change impacts, local water supply resiliency, and public health improvement through expanded recreational opportunities. Figure 4-3. illustrates a few key planning efforts identified and their targets, as well as how the SCW Program alongside other programs will collectively work to meet them.

An important element of this Initial Watershed Plan is to establish the SCW Program contributions to these and other countywide targets. While several Indicators align with an existing countywide target, not all do. In some cases, targets are informed directly by SCW Program requirements—such as those outlined in the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16 and §18). For example,

- **Transfer Agreement requirements:** The SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (Chapter 18.09) requires recipients of SCW Program funds to comply with Transfer Agreement provisions. These include:
 - For Projects with an estimate capital cost over \$25M, all contractors must be bound by the provisions of a Project Labor Agreement (Chapter 18.09.B.9).
 - Requirements related to the operation, maintenance, and repair of the Project throughout its useful life (Chapter 18.09.B.15).

These requirements are reflected by a targets of 100% for the Indicators: “Proportion of Projects entered in a Project Labor Agreement (where applicable)” and “Quantity of O&M plans (of all completed SCW Program Projects to date) sustaining intended Project benefits (%)”, respectively.

- **Municipal Program Spending Requirement:** Per the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (Chapter 18.06.C.1):

"A Municipality must spend at least seventy percent (70%) of its Municipal Program funds annually on eligible expenses related to Projects or Programs implemented on or after November 6, 2018, which also includes operations and maintenance of Projects built to comply with the MS4 Permit, so long as the Project complies with Municipal Program requirements."

This requirement is reflected by a target of 70% for the Indicator: “Proportion of Municipal Program Funds Spent on New Projects or Programs”.

For Indicators whose targets are not predetermined by a SCW Program Implementation Ordinance requirement, targets are established using a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches as described below:

- **Top-Down Approach:** Applies a holistic perspective by referencing countywide targets established through broader planning efforts to set aspirational yet achievable SCW Program targets. It accounts for contributions from related initiatives such as the Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs), WMPs, and MS4 programs. Where a countywide target or SCW Program requirement is not identified for a given Indicator, local targets, outcomes of key efforts to date, and WA characteristics are considered—alongside baselines and forecasts—to determine a SCW Program target.
- **Bottom-Up Approach:** Analyzes SCW Program Projects funded to date and assesses their baseline and forecasted benefits (Chapter 3). Baselines and forecasts serve as a reference for what could be achieved by the SCW Program under its current pace of implementation. Baselines and forecasts are

combined with the top-down approach, to determine SCW Program and WA targets, and thus the SCW Program's contribution to the countywide targets, when applicable. Note that constraints identified through the Regional Program financial outlooks are not considered in this approach to maintain aspirational targets.



As illustrated in Figure 4-3., each of the nine WAs will contribute to SCW Program targets through individual WA-specific targets. The relative contribution toward SCW Program targets by each WA is largely based on their characteristics (Chapter 2), such as unconfined aquifer availability for recharge or the available park space for enhancement.

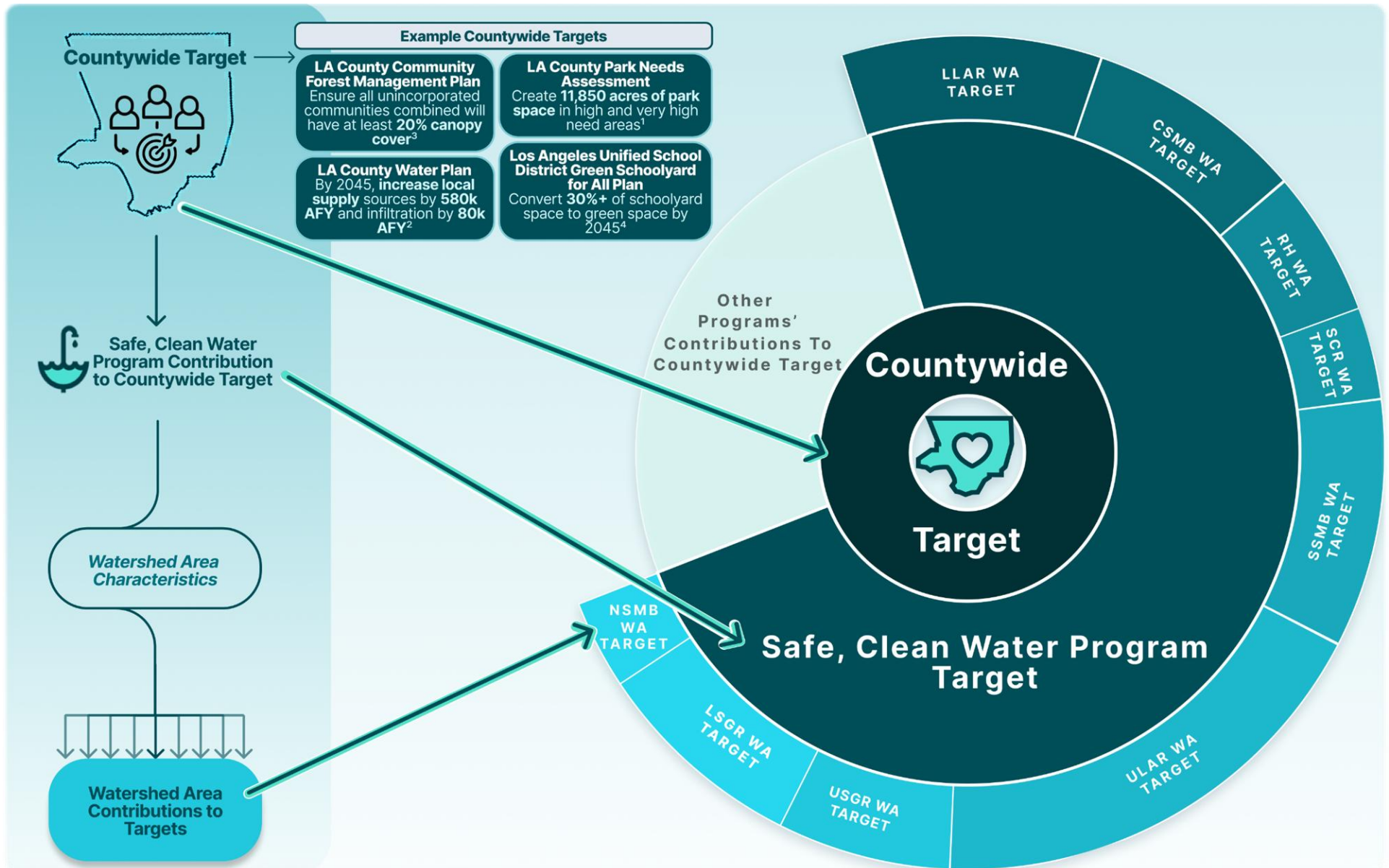


Figure 4-3. Conceptual approach to derive SCW Program target contributions from countywide targets

Note: This figure represents the conceptual process for an Indicator with a corresponding countywide target and does not apply to every Indicator

¹ LA County Department of Parks and Recreation. (2016). LA Countywide Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment. Page 3-66. May 2016.

² LA County Public Works. (2023). LA County Water Plan: Water Supply Resilience (CWP). Page 22. December 2023.

³ LA County Chief Sustainability Office, Dudek. (2024). Room to Grow: A Community Forest Management Plan for Los Angeles County. Page 36. April 2024.

⁴ Los Angeles Unified School District Facilities Services Division. (2024). Green Schoolyard for All Plan. Page 3. April 2024.

Figure 4-4 below demonstrates how the top-down approach references methods and countywide targets set by the OurCounty Sustainability Plan, the County Water Plan, and the ROC to establish SCW Program-wide and WA targets for the Indicator: “Increase local supply through stormwater capture”.

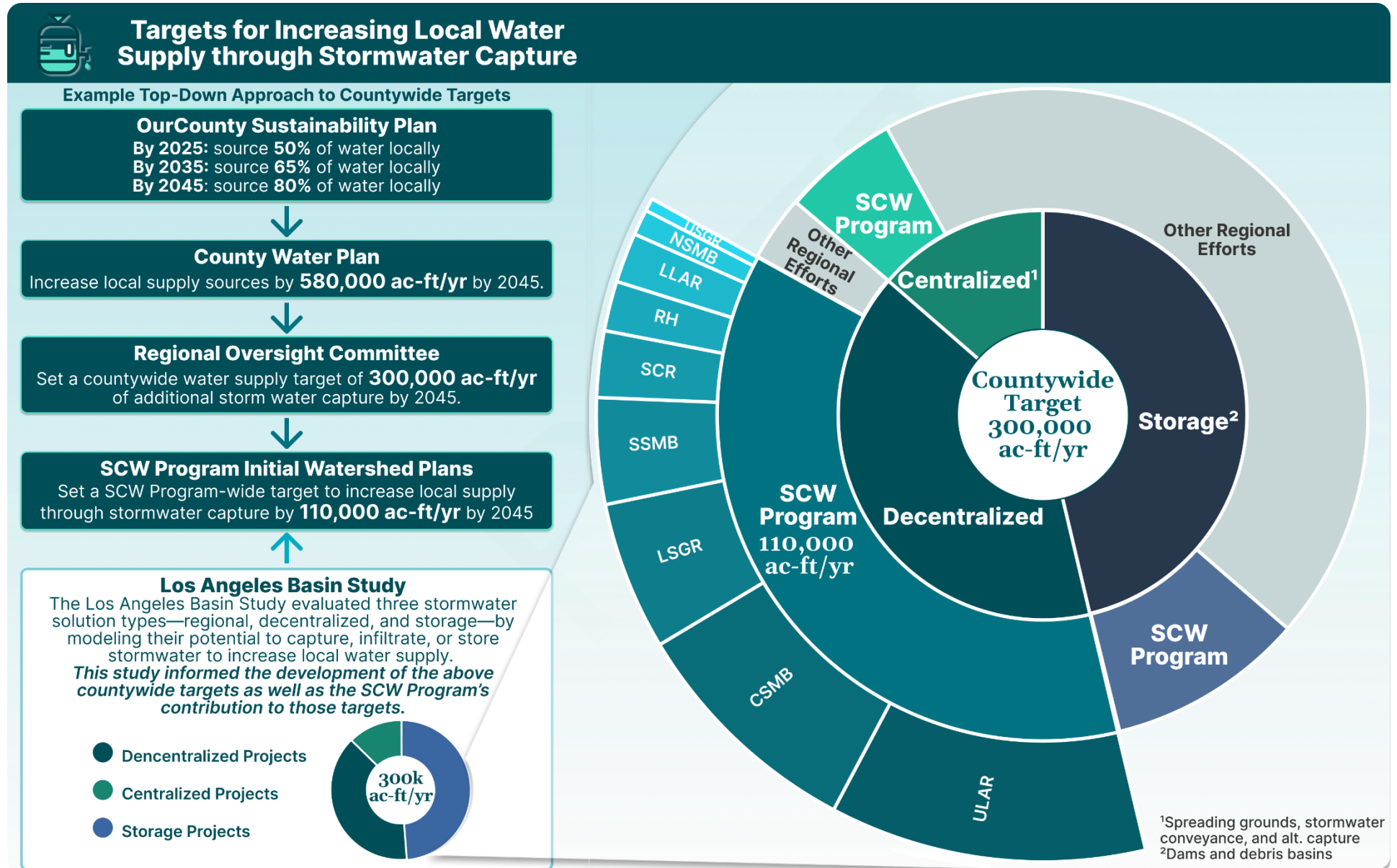


Figure 4-4. Example target setting top-down approach

Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6 are examples of how the top-down and bottom-up approaches are combined to set targets for an Indicator without an identified countywide target (“Net Area of Park Enhanced or Restored”) and with an identified countywide target (“Net New Area of Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces”), respectively.

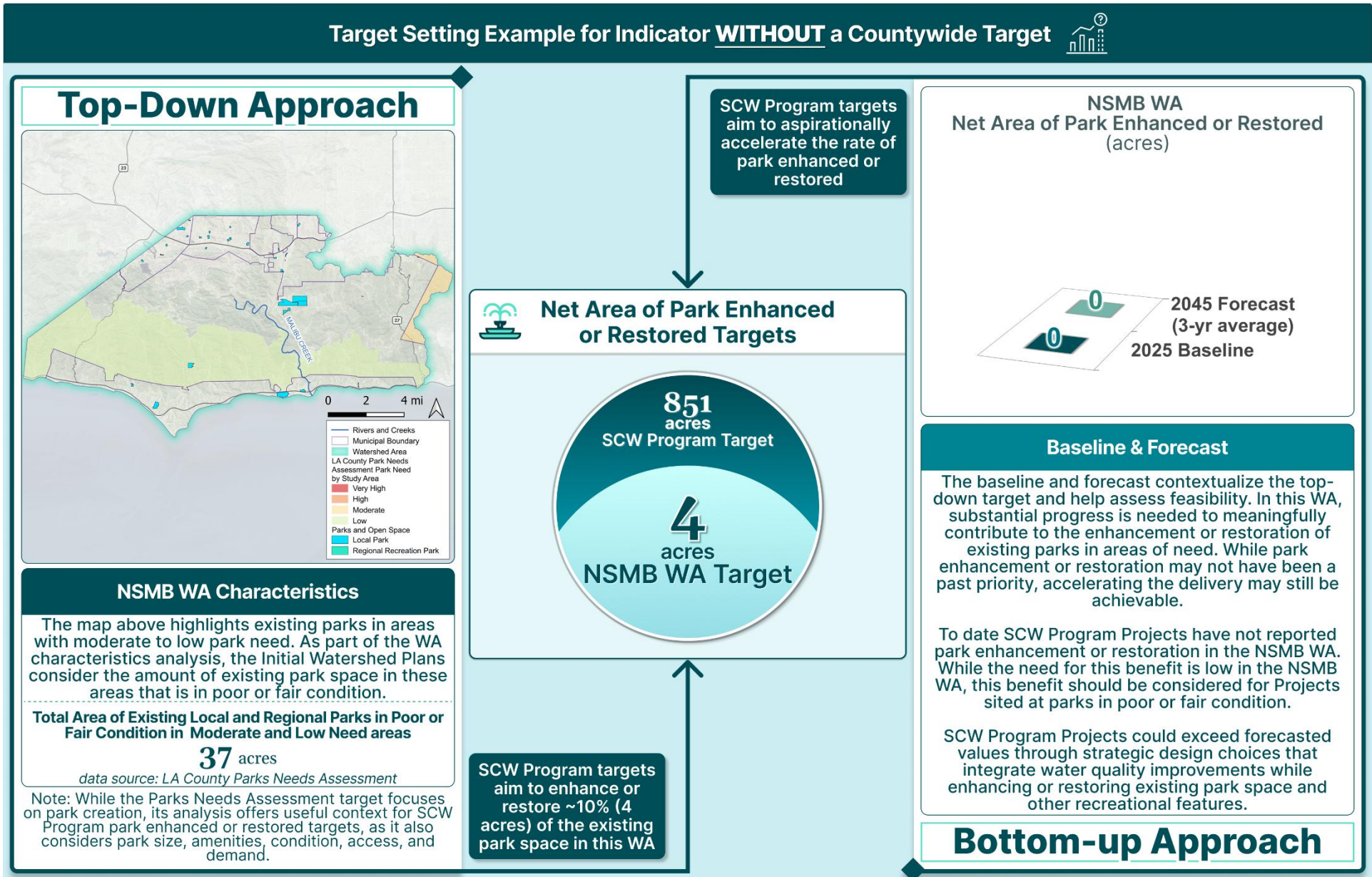


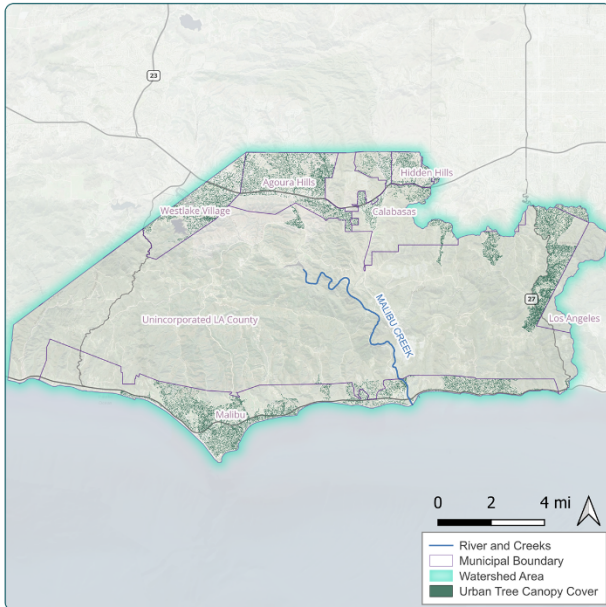
Figure 4-5. Example target setting for an Indicator without a countywide target

Target Setting Example for Indicator WITH a Countywide Target

Top-Down Approach

Los Angeles County OurCounty Sustainability Plan

Increase urban tree canopy cover by 20% of LA County's 2016 baseline to deliver shading from heat and greater community health and well-being.



NSMB WA Characteristics

The map above illustrates existing urban tree canopy cover in the NSMB WA. The Initial Watershed Plans consider the amount of new urban tree canopy cover needed as part of the WA characteristics analysis.

New area of urban tree canopy cover needed to meet the OurCounty countywide target

1,035 acres

SCW Program targets aim to aspirationally accelerate the rate of park and green space creation

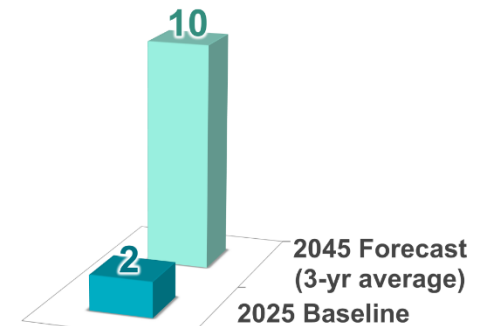


Net New Area of Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces



WA target aims to address ~4% (40 ac) of the 20% countywide increase in urban tree canopy. The final target shown above includes this contribution, along with the target for the nested Indicator: Net Area of Park and Green Space Created.

NSMB WA Net New Area of Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces (acres)



Baseline & Forecast

The baseline & forecast help contextualize the top-down target and inform assessments of feasibility. Despite extensive preserved open space in the WA, expanding urban tree canopy cover is still needed to meet countywide targets and public health goals.

Introducing cooling features into urban clusters, especially in communities most affected by extreme heat, can take many forms. Where tree planting isn't feasible, smaller interventions—such as shade structures or removal of reflective hardscape—can still deliver meaningful benefits and support progress toward targets.

SCW Program Projects could exceed forecasted values through strategic design choices that integrate water quality improvements with the expansion of urban canopy, cooling, and shading surfaces.

Bottom-up Approach

Figure 4-6. Example target setting for an Indicator with a countywide target

As described in Section 1.4, the synthesis of WASC and SCW Program governance committee engagement identified several priorities for Watershed Planning, including target setting. Figure 4-7 outlines the items that were considered during target setting for the NSMB WA. See Appendix C for additional information and all priorities considered.

Regional Oversight Committee and Watershed Area Steering Committee Engagement		
	SCW Program Committee Priority	Effect on Initial Watershed Plan Targets
NSMB Watershed Area Items	Adopt or include targets for existing public open space held by government entities.	» Parks Needs Assessment targets, results, and park condition datasets inform both target setting and the development of strategies and opportunities.
	Adopt or include targets for land acquisition for open space held by government entities.	» See above
	Prioritize stormwater and dry-weather runoff capture for diversion to water recycling facilities over groundwater recharge.	» Watershed Area targets for increasing local supply through stormwater capture and groundwater recharge are informed by Watershed Area characteristics, with the SCW Program target distributed based on each area's potential to infiltrate stormwater into a managed aquifer.
	Incorporate a natural stream condition Indicator as part of target setting for Water Quality, Water Supply, or Community Investment Benefits	» Not included as part of the Initial Watershed Plans, may be reconsidered as part of Adaptive Management if desired by the WASC.
SCW Program Items*	Synergize targets of the Program with other agencies' climate and water targets.**	» Countywide targets are incorporate into target setting through the top-down approach.
	Link operations & maintenance spending with workforce development targets.	» Operations & maintenance spending is linked to workforce development through the Indicator "Total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Jobs Created" and its corresponding target.
	Define Project scale and then evaluate the diversity of Project sizes to date, informed by Watershed Area characteristics.	» Target setting considers Watershed Area characteristics and SCW Program Program Projects funded to date as part of the bottom-up approach.
Regional Oversight Committee Items	Separate metrics for new from those for enhanced green spaces or recreational spaces as a resource for incentivizing and prioritizing new recreational areas.	» The Initial Watershed Plans include separate Indicators and targets for newly created park and green space versus those that are enhanced or restored.
	Document additional planning documents recommended by the group against the existing list and consider their implications for opportunity analysis and target setting.	» Local climate action plans were reviewed and integrated into target setting, strategies, and opportunities where applicable.
	Continue efforts to support delivery of benefits sought by communities that are or are not aligned with the "such as seven" of the Community Investment Benefits policy.	» The Initial Watershed Plans include an Indicator—"Proportion of Projects and Programs Addressing Community-Stated Priorities or Concerns"—and a corresponding target, to track the delivery of benefits sought by communities.
	Concur that specific benefit types should have different distance benefit service areas dependent on scope and scale.	» Community Investment Benefits and benefit ratio distances range from ¼ to 2 miles depending on Project scope and scale.
	With the MS4 Permits as the policy source, acknowledge a countywide target of meeting water quality standards in all receiving waters directly impacted by dry weather and stormwater runoff by 2038 as well as Develop Watershed Area-specific load reduction interim targets for 2032.	» Both the overall pollutant load reductions and SCW Program contributions are calculated. Each Watershed Area has unique load reduction final water quality targets and interim targets for 2032 and 2038, respectively.

*SCW Program-wide items reflect common priorities amongst all nine WASCs

**This SCW Program-wide item is also a priority for the NSMB WASC

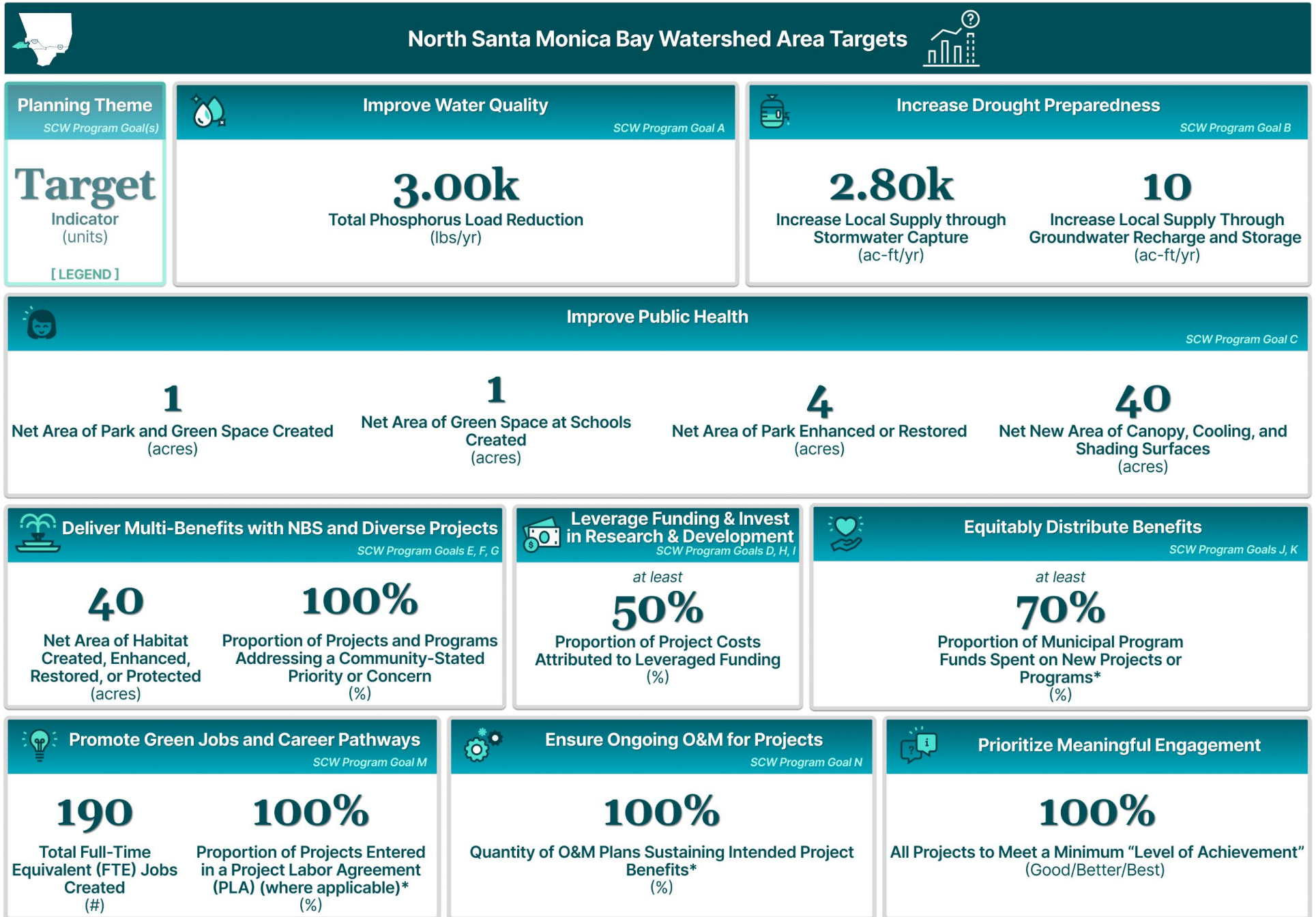
Figure 4-7. Regional Oversight Committee and WASC engagement summary of priorities for target setting

4.2.2 Targets for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

A comprehensive suite of initial WA targets is established for the NSMB WA as shown in Figure 4-8. These targets use a combination of the top-down and bottom-up approaches described in the previous subsection, linking to countywide targets when available and applicable. These WA targets set a vision for the NSMB WA and provide a foundation for tracking progress in the coming years toward the 14 Goals. Appendix H provides details on how WA targets were calculated, which other planning initiatives and countywide targets were considered, and allows for relative comparison between NSMB targets and those of the other eight WAs.

In addition to final targets, interim targets are set for the NSMB WA. Interim targets measure the rate of progress in implementing strategies and actions (Chapter 5) and achieving Goals. Interim targets support Adaptive Management (Chapter 7) by prompting a review of strategies and actions if they are not being met. For the pollutant reduction Indicators under the Improve Water Quality Planning Theme, targets are set for 2032 and 2038, to align with water quality regulatory milestones. For all other Indicators, targets are set for 2030, 2035, and 2045. These milestones align with other ongoing planning initiatives in the Los Angeles region, such as the County Water Plan, the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035, the 2045 Climate Action Plan, and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan. Interim targets are based on the quantification of WA Needs and are detailed and illustrated in Section 5.1.1.

Establishing targets enables the determination of NSMB WA's Needs, which represent the remaining progress required to meet targets and achieve Goals. For Watershed Planning, identifying WA Needs informs the development of strategies to address them. Strategies can then guide informed community investment decisions. The assessment of WA Needs and strategies to address them is presented in Chapter 5.

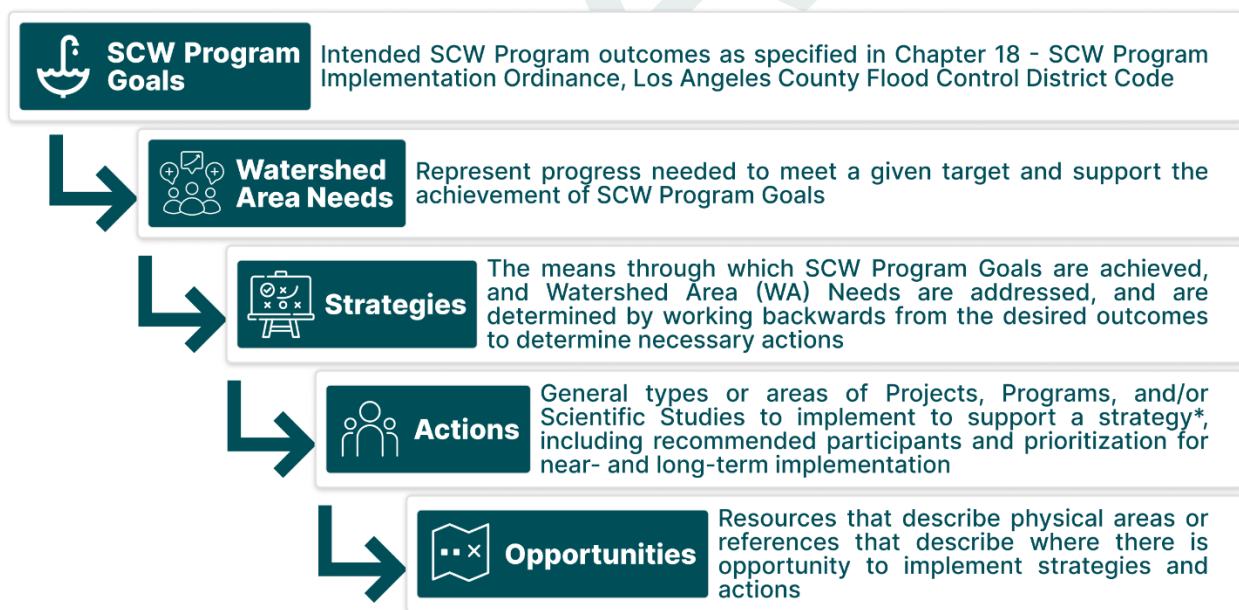


*As required by Chapter 18 of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District Code for the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §18).

Figure 4-8. NSMB WA targets by Indicator

Chapter 5. Strategies for Addressing Needs and Achieving Goals

Building on the baselines established in Chapter 3 and the targets defined in 3.2.2, this chapter identifies the NSMB WA Needs and presents strategies to address them. These strategies serve as a roadmap for achieving Goals. Each strategy is supported by one or more actions and opportunities, which outline steps and available resources for implementation. Collectively, strategies, actions, and opportunities provide guidance to the NSMB WASC, the ROC, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents for addressing WA Needs and advancing the achievement of Goals. Figure 5-1 below defines WA Needs, strategies, actions, and opportunities and their relation to each other. The development of these elements for each WA is informed by a technical analysis of the NSMB WA's unique WA Needs and characteristics, a review of key efforts to date, and community-stated and WASC-identified priorities and concerns, gathered through engagement and the CSNA (Section 1.4).



*Strategies may contribute to the achievement of multiple SCW Program Goals and may address more than one WA Need. Actions and opportunities may support multiple strategies. All Projects and Programs must include a Water Quality Benefit as defined in Chapter 16 of the Los Angeles County Flood Control District Code (LACFCD) for the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16).

Figure 5-1. Strategies, actions, and opportunities

Strategies, actions, and opportunities presented in this section are informed by technical analyses, interested party engagement, and guidance from SCW Program

governance committees. These strategies are designed to be iterative and responsive, evolving over time through the SCW Program's Adaptive Management (Chapter 7).

Importantly, the Initial Watershed Plan strategies, actions, and opportunities are intentionally aligned with a broad range of ongoing local and regional planning initiatives to ensure cohesive and mutually reinforcing outcomes. These efforts include the Parks Needs Assessment, 2045 Climate Action Plan, OurCounty Sustainability Plan, County Water Plan, Vision 2045, LAUSD Green Schoolyards for All Plan, Community Forest Management Plan, and others (Table 1-1 and Appendix E). By aligning with these efforts, the SCW Program advances a unified regional vision that supports improved water quality, enhanced drought and climate resilience, equitable community investment, enhanced and expanded urban forest cover and vegetation, and the creation of healthier, climate-ready communities. This strategic alignment not only enhances the impact of individual Projects and Programs but also accelerates collective progress toward long-term environmental and social goals across the Los Angeles region.

5.1 Quantifying Watershed Area Needs

WA Needs represent the progress that is needed to meet the targets set in 3.2.2. For magnitude-based Indicators expressed in numerical terms (e.g., acres, ac-ft/yr, jobs created), the WA Need is determined as the difference between a target and its baseline (Chapter 3), as illustrated in Figure 5-2. Recall that baselines are informed by SCW Program Projects funded to date and their anticipated benefits, while targets represent aspirational benchmarks for each Indicator.

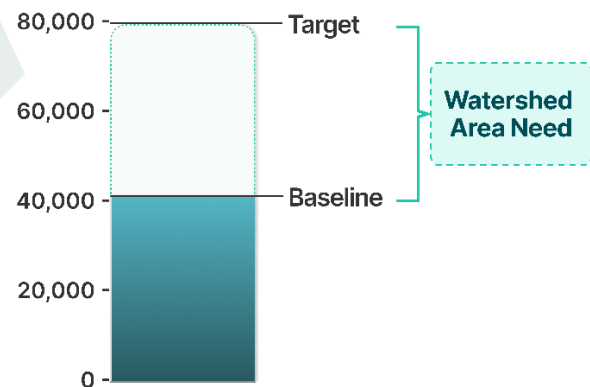


Figure 5-2. WA Need conceptual example for a magnitude-based Indicator

WA Needs for magnitude-based are expected to decrease incrementally over time, as more multi-benefit Projects and Programs are implemented in alignment with strategies that address multiple WA Needs and advance progress toward achieving Goals.

Unlike magnitude-based Indicators, percentage-based Indicators do not accrue benefits in a linear or additive manner. Instead, they reflect cumulative progress over time. As a result, their progress may fluctuate (either decreasing or increasing from year to year) depending on the evolving proportion of benefits realized throughout the lifetime of the SCW Program. To ensure consistent long-term progress toward targets, WA Needs for percentage-based Indicators are set at their respective targets. This means that the specified percentage or greater must be achieved and sustained to demonstrate continued progress toward targets.

In addition to quantitative WA Needs, Watershed Planning encourages the consideration and addressing of community needs identified through Project-specific engagement, the CSNA, or engagement by other planning initiatives. *Note that the term “Need” used within the CSNA differs in context from WA Need.* For Watershed Planning purposes, Projects and Programs are linked to community-stated priorities and concerns through the Indicator: “Proportion of Projects and Programs addressing a community-stated priority or concern”. This Indicator has a target of 100% (Figure 4-8), reflecting the vision that all Projects and Programs should address one or more community-stated priorities or concerns.

This Indicator provides a direct linkage between Watershed Planning and community input, as gathered through the CSNA and other engagement efforts such as Project or Program-specific engagement, the Parks Needs Assessment, OurCounty Sustainability Plan, County Water Plan, Vision 2045, and Community Forest Management Plan. Even if a WA has already met the 100% target, the WA Need remains at 100% to reflect the ongoing expectation that all future Projects and Programs continue to align with and address community-stated priorities.

5.1.1 Watershed Area Needs for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

WA Needs are illustrated by bar charts for each Indicator. Outlined by the legend in Figure 5-3, magnitude-based Indicators have three purple lines in the bar chart that represent two interim targets and the final target (2038 for water quality, 2045 for all other Indicators). For percentage-based Indicators, interim targets are not applicable, and their final (2045) targets can be interpreted as perpetual. The darker blue portion illustrates the current (2025) baseline for that Indicator, while the lighter blue bar quantifies the remaining WA Need to meet the final target.

Interim targets for magnitude-based are informed by the Regional Program Project financial outlooks, as described in Section 2.3.1 and detailed by Appendix F. Interim

targets recognize that approximately 20%²³ of NSMB WA Regional Program funds are already allocated over the next five years (i.e., FY25-26 to FY29-30). This, in combination with the NSMB WA's already limited SCW Program revenue, limits near-term financial flexibility to fund new Projects and Programs and advance progress toward targets. While Chapter 5 presents strategies to help address and alleviate this constraint, the interim targets are developed to reflect the current Regional Program funding reality. Specifically, a phased approach is used to distribute progress toward meeting WA Needs across interim target periods. This approach sets more modest interim targets in the next 5-10 years, with increased expectations for progress in the latter part of the implementation timeline. The interim targets for magnitude-based Indicators are distributed as follows:

- For Indicators under the Improve Water Quality Planning Theme:
 - 33% of the current WA Need is targeted by 2032²⁴.
 - The remaining 67% of the WA Need is targeted for completion between 2032 and 2038.
- For Indicators under all other Planning Themes:
 - 15% of the current WA Need is targeted by 2030 (covering the 2025–2030 period).
 - 33% is targeted by 2035 (covering the 2025–2035 period).
 - The remaining 67% is targeted for completion between 2035 and 2045.

This staggered approach acknowledges immediate Regional Program fiscal limitations while allowing for acceleration in later years the WA Regional Program budget recuperates or as new funding sources are secured.

The baselines, targets, and WA Needs for the NSMB WA are presented in Figure 5-3 for each Indicator and are organized by Planning Theme. Appendix H presents NSMB WA Needs in a tabular format. The following section outlines the individual strategies to address the WA Needs presented below as well as opportunities for addressing multiple cross-thematic WA Needs.

²³ Per the FY25-26 SIP.

²⁴ For the pollutant reduction Indicators under the Improve Water Quality Planning Theme (e.g., Zinc Load Reduction), targets are set for 2032 and 2038, to align with water quality regulatory milestones. For all other Indicators, targets are set for 2030, 2035, and 2045. These milestones align with other ongoing planning initiatives in the Los Angeles region, such as the County Water Plan, the Los Angeles County General Plan 2035, the 2045 Climate Action Plan, and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan.



Figure 5-3. NSMB WA baselines, targets, and WA Needs

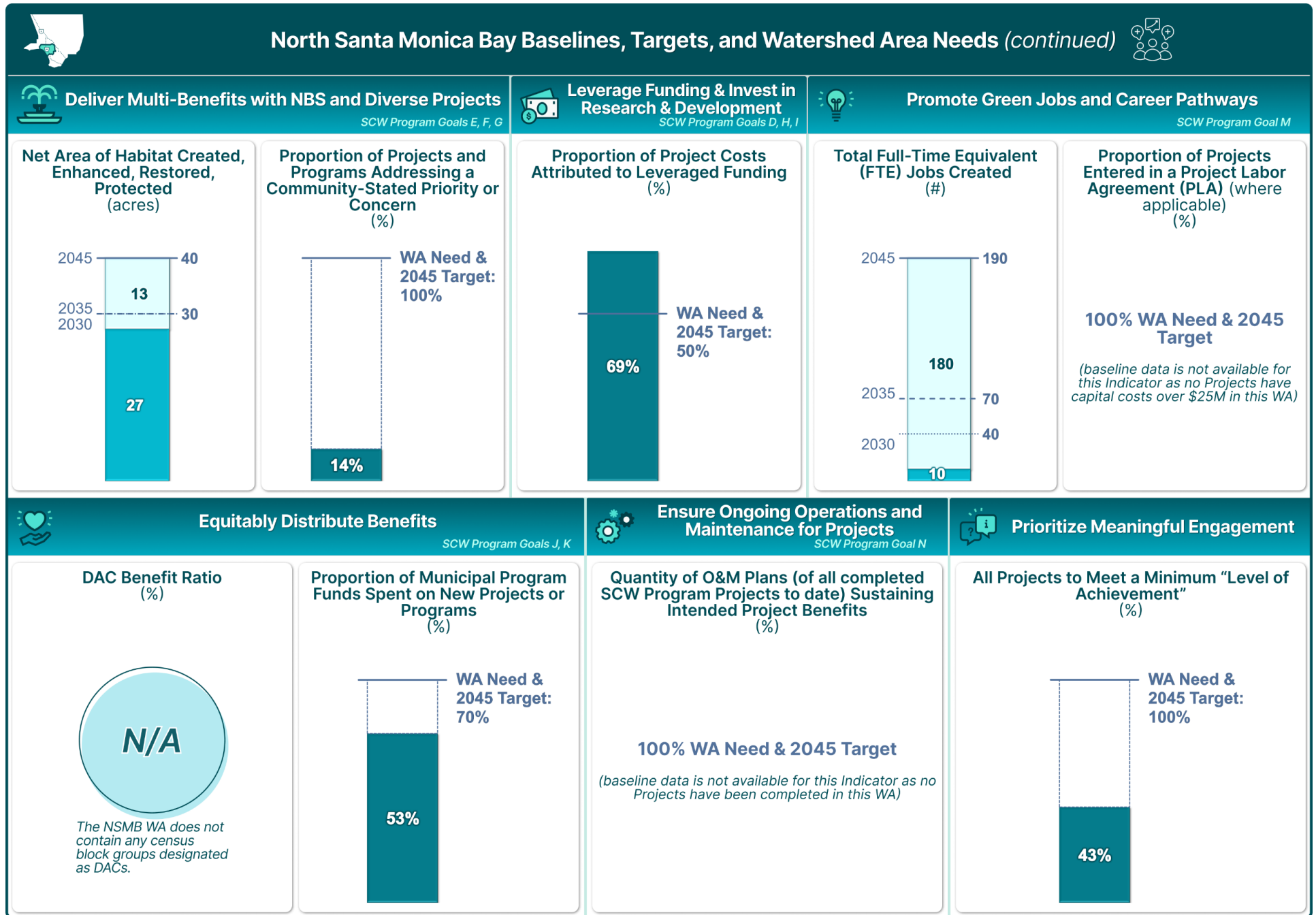


Figure 5-3. NSMB WA baselines, targets, and WA Needs (continued)

5.2 Strategies to Address Needs and Achieve Goals

To support Project and Program proponents, the NSMB WASC, the ROC, Municipalities, and Public Works in addressing NSMB WA Needs and achieving Goals, this section presents an initial set of strategies and actions. While the strategies presented in this Initial Watershed Plan do not describe specific Projects or Programs, they provide general actions and resources to support strategic decision-making in the NSMB WA and an initial vision for approaches for achieving SCW Program goals with increased efficiency and higher returns on investment. This Initial Watershed Plan is intended to provide general direction, including tailored baselines, targets, and strategies for the WA. Nothing in this Initial Watershed Plan should be construed as a commitment by any participating entity to fund the implementation of any specific actions identified herein. Adoption of the Initial Watershed Plan is not intended to serve as approval or authorization for any specific activity that would be considered a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and any future proposed Projects would comply with SCW Program requirements, including environmental documentation, as required.

For each strategy, there is one or more identified opportunity. These opportunities represent physical or conceptual areas where implementing Projects and Programs could deliver cumulative SCW Program benefits by aligning with the associated strategies and supporting progress toward achieving the Goals. Areas of higher opportunity are those with the most potential to contribute to a given Indicator and other countywide goals; however, they are not intended to represent precise locations where Projects are most feasible. Feasibility and effectiveness must be evaluated on a Project-by-Project basis.

Opportunities may be used as guides by the NSMB WASC, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents in identifying areas where Projects or Program implementation would have the greatest impacts. A demonstration of how the key planning elements (WA Needs, strategies, actions, and opportunities) come together to provide a toolkit through which Goals can be effectively achieved, serve as a guide to Project proponents, and support strategic funding decisions by the BOS WASCs, Municipalities, and Public Works is shown in Figure 5-4 below.

Among the strategies presented, several “Priority Strategies” are recommended through WASC Watershed Planning engagement workshops (Chapter 1). WASCs are comprised of Municipalities, agencies, and other interested parties with experience and knowledge of the NSMB WA and its communities. Each WASC must be

comprised of seven members from Municipalities within the WA, five members from local agencies, and five members that represent community stakeholders. Due to the strategic and diverse membership requirements—as well as the technical expertise of its members—the WASC’s Priority Strategies can be considered a strong reflection of priorities for future SCW Program Projects and Projects implemented in the NSMB WA. As such, Priority Strategies serve as an important component of Watershed Planning. The strategies presented in this Initial Watershed Plan include both NSMB WA-specific Priority Strategies as well as those that are common to multiple of the other eight WAs.

Additionally, given the Los Angeles region’s historical vulnerability to wildfires, the Initial Watershed Plans aim to align wildfire resilience measures with water quality improvements to support multi-benefit Projects that enhance both public and environmental health. As a result, wildfire resilience strategies were developed to guide the integration of NBS, O&M best practices, and other fire-adapted infrastructure into Project planning. These strategies are intended to improve water quality in post-wildfire runoff, reduce wildfire risk, promote ecosystem resilience, and ensure that future Projects contribute meaningfully to long-term watershed health and community safety.

North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities Example



Outcome

SCW Program Goals



Improve Water Quality

SCW Program Goal A. Improve water quality and contribute to attainment of water-quality requirements.

Why?

Watershed Area Needs

Watershed Area (WA) Needs summarize **why** strategies are needed

2,900

Total Phosphorous Load Reduction (lb/yr)

How?

Strategies

Strategies describe **how** to address WA Needs and achieve Goals

Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs
in areas with the **highest pollutant loads**

(strategy 1.1)

Implementation Timeline

NEAR TERM
(1 - 5 years)

What?

Action(s)

Actions describe **what** general types of Projects, Programs, and Studies to implement

Prioritize wet-weather Projects

100 ac-ft



Estimated Project capacity (24-hour) to meet WA Need

Located in areas with the highest average annual load reduction opportunity for total phosphorous and bacteria.

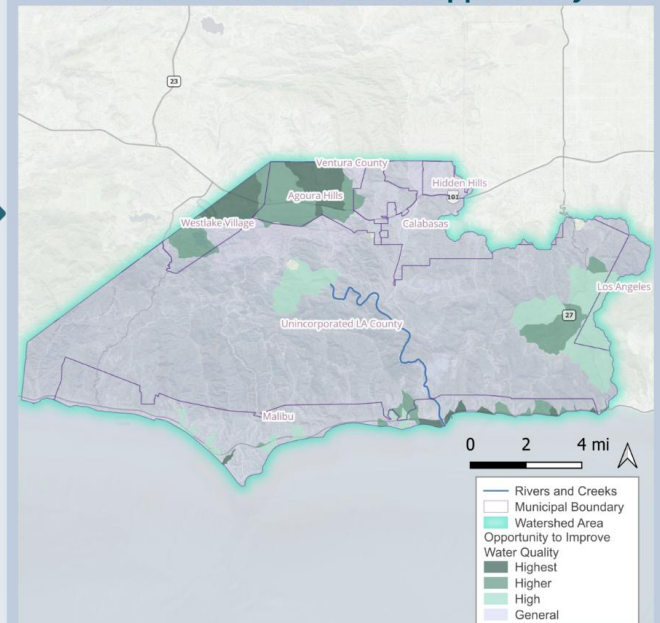
(action 1.1.2)

Where?

Opportunities

Opportunities are mapping layers and/or references to existing efforts that describe **where** there is opportunity to implement strategies and actions

Pollutant Load Reduction Opportunity



Please note that this figure serves only as an example of strategies and actions. See the Initial Watershed Plan Chapter 5.2.1 for a full list of strategies and actions for the NSMB WA.

Figure 5-4. Example of using strategies, actions, and opportunities to address WA Needs and achieve Goals

Strategies describe how to achieve Goals and make progress toward targets by addressing WA Needs. Each strategy's supporting actions describe what types of eligible activities²⁵ (i.e., Projects, Programs, or Scientific Studies) or actions to implement that would best support the strategy. For example, actions may describe:

- Projects with desirable attributes (e.g., wet or dry-weather capture, Project type, size, cost effectiveness) and/or locations (e.g., sites that capture portions of the NSMB WA that are currently untreated).
- Programs that address WA Needs and/or Goals, including identification of potential Scientific Studies and activities such as monitoring programs or community outreach and education efforts.
- Data collection efforts, such as Scientific Studies, which address key data gaps identified for Adaptive Management.

This section connects strategies to their respective opportunities, aiming to 1) assist Municipalities and Project and Program proponents in identifying the most impactful resources and areas for future Projects and Programs and 2) guide strategic funding decisions made by WASCs, Municipalities, and Public Works that would efficiently and effectively achieve Goals.

As shown in Figure 5-5, opportunities with both spatial and non-spatial attributes are provided as key resources to the WA. While spatial opportunities highlight geographic regions where actions can most effectively address the NSMB WA's specific needs and contribute to achieving Goals, non-spatial opportunities provide complementary tools and resources to enhance overall Project and Program implementation. An example of non-spatial opportunities includes the SCW Program's Engagement Calendar and Leveraged Funding Reports.

²⁵ See Appendix A. Glossary or the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16) for the complete list and definitions of eligible expenditures.

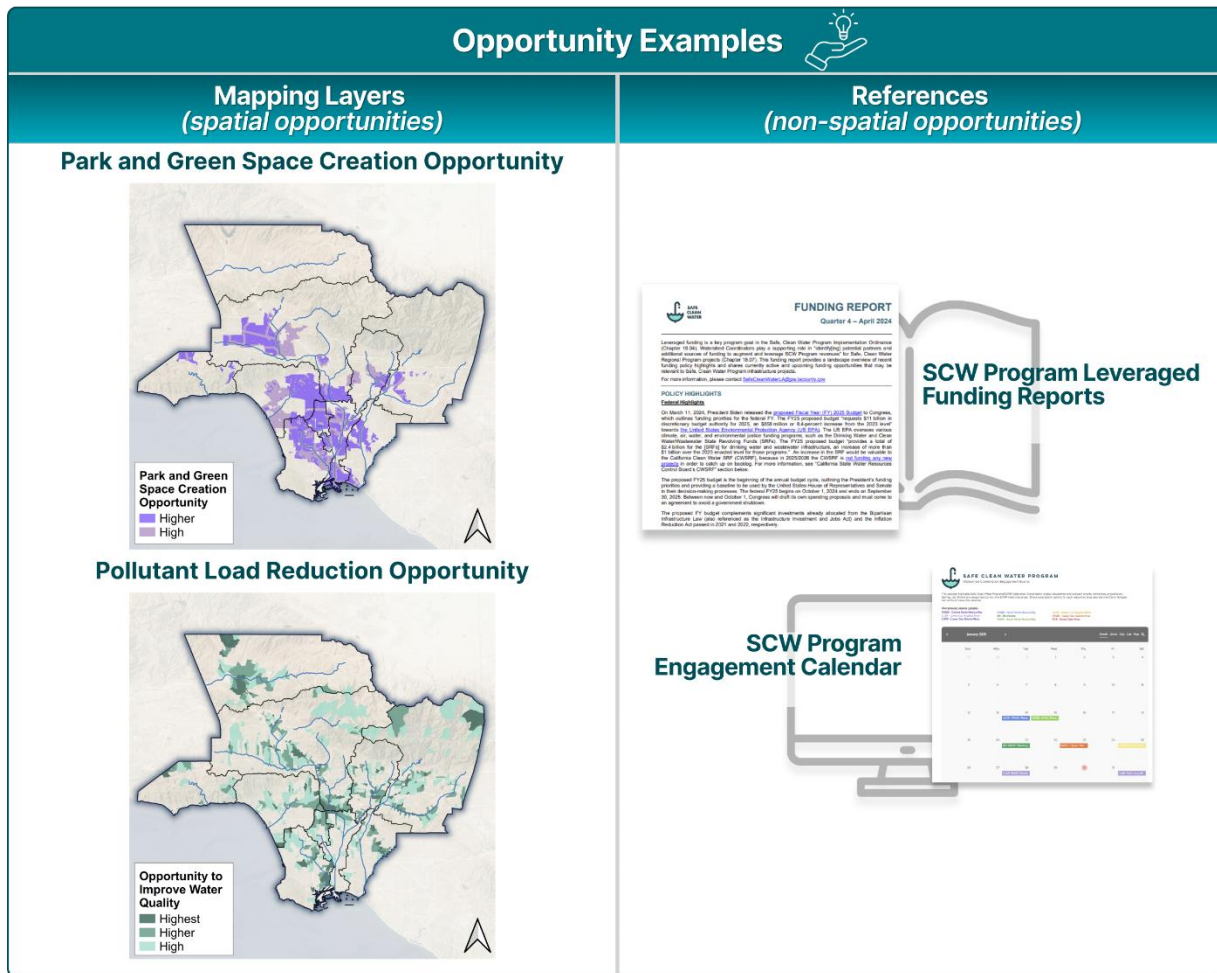


Figure 5-5 Opportunity examples (spatial and non-spatial)

Spatial opportunities are grounded in technical analyses designed to align regional and statewide data with the NSMB WA specific strategies and actions. These layers help identify physical areas with the greatest potential to address WA Needs and achieve Goals while supporting broader countywide objectives.

The foundation of spatial opportunities includes a range of input mapping datasets that reflect key WA characteristics or known areas of need. These datasets are sourced from various planning efforts, including those developed by Public Works and other strategic initiatives such as the Parks Needs Assessment, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Los Angeles River Master Plan²⁶. Each contributes spatial and thematic insight that informs the identification of opportunities. Additionally, community-stated priorities (gathered through the CSNA) are incorporated as their

²⁶ Note that the Los Angeles River Master Plan datasets referenced in this Initial Watershed Plan are based on regional analyses that included this WA.

own dedicated opportunity. This ensures that input from community members is considered on par with technical analyses when identifying where Projects and Programs are most needed.

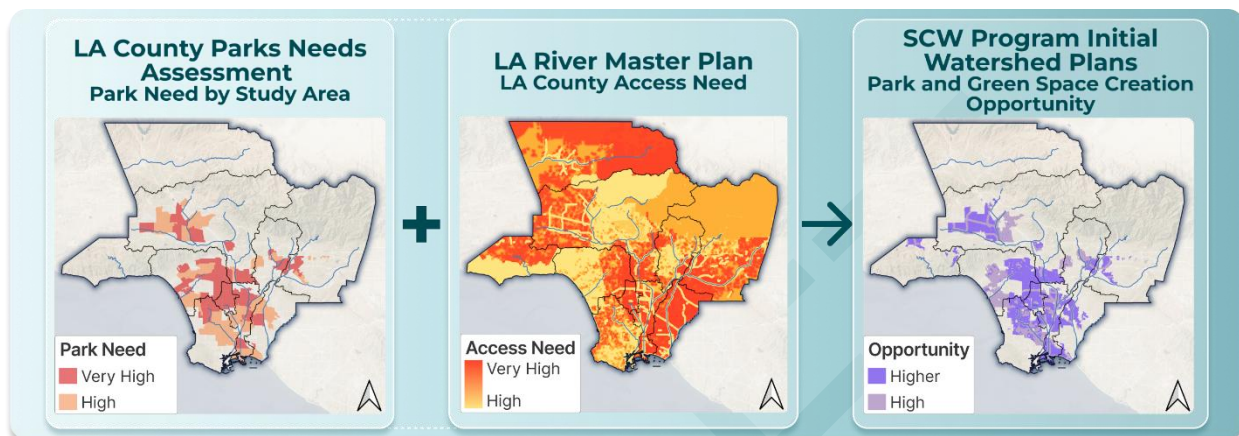


Figure 5-6. Example opportunity layer development

Figure 5-6 provides a visual of this process, using a single Indicator from the Improve Public Health planning theme as an example, where mapping layers from the Parks Needs Assessment and the Los Angeles River Master Plan are strategically combined using technical expertise and local knowledge to identify areas of opportunity for park and green space creation.

A key element of the SCW Program is to deliver multi-benefit Projects and Programs (rather than focusing on individual Planning Themes). As illustrated in Figure 5-7., by combining opportunities across Planning Themes to create “composite” opportunities, the Initial Watershed Plans serve as a strategic foundation for prioritizing investments with the greatest potential to deliver multi-benefit Projects and Programs. These composite layers (presented in the Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tool) provide a key resource for both the Regional and Municipal Programs to maximize return on investments.

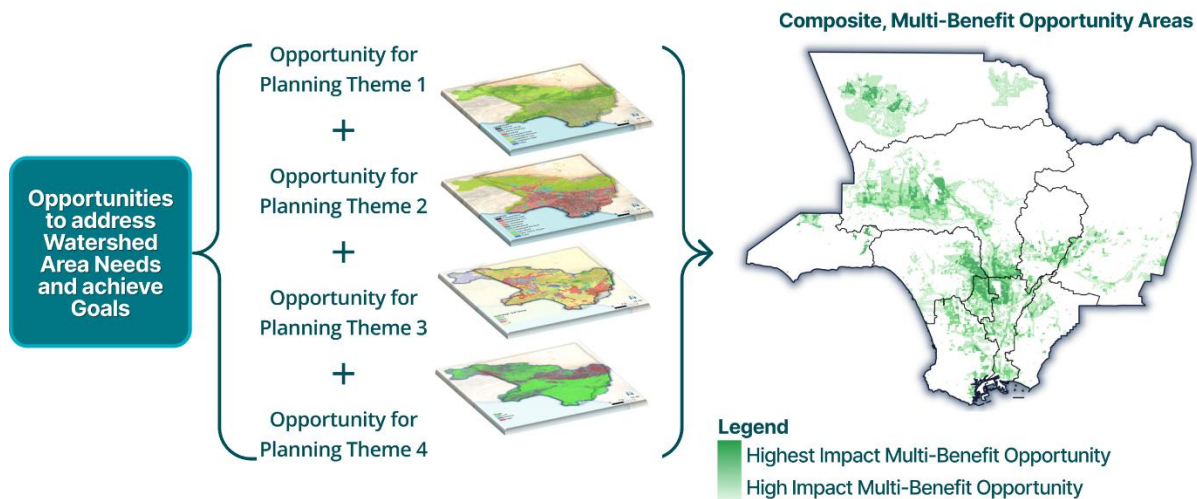


Figure 5-7. Conceptual example for identifying multi-benefit opportunities using “composite” layers

Appendix I provides details on opportunity analyses details and methods and Appendix J provides opportunity maps for each individual and composite opportunity for the NSMB WASC and its Municipalities and Supervisorial Districts. Over time as implementation progresses, data gaps are addressed, and as lessons are learned during implementation, the opportunities are envisioned to evolve.

5.2.1 Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities for the North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area

This section presents the strategies, actions, and opportunities²⁷ identified for the NSMB WA. These elements are designed to advance progress toward the 14 Goals and serve as a roadmap for coordinated, impactful implementation. Developed through technical analysis, interested party input, and alignment with other regional planning efforts, these strategies are intended to guide the NSMB WASC, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents in delivering effective, multi-benefit stormwater solutions. Hypothetical high-level estimates of the

²⁷ Strategies, actions, and opportunities may be broadly referred to in this Initial Watershed Plan as ‘strategies’ as they function as a cohesive unit to collectively describe pathways for addressing WA Needs and achieving Goals.

24-hour Project capacities²⁸ and areas²⁹ that could address the WA Needs in the NSMB WA for water quality, water supply, public health, and habitat are provided below and in Figure 5-8:

- Approximately 100 ac-ft of 24-hour Project capacity to improve water quality and 60 ac-ft of 24-hour Project capacity to increase local water supply through stormwater capture,
- 4 acres of park enhanced or restored,
- 1 acre of park or green space created,
- 38 acres of canopy, cooling, and shading surfaces,
- 13 acres of habitat created, enhanced, restored or protected, and
- 1 acre of green space created at schools.

The hypothetical Project capacities presented in this section are high-level approximations intended to translate water quality and water supply WA Needs (in lbs/year and ac-ft/year, respectively) into a more tangible and accessible metric. Project capacities and its values are not SCW Program Indicators or targets, nor are they compliance measures or definitive solutions. Rather, they provide general context for interested parties to illustrate the scale of implementation needed to address water quality and water supply WA Needs.

When capacity estimates are noted, the phrase “or equivalent” is implied—different Project types and configurations may achieve similar outcomes with greater or lesser capacity. Projects located in areas with high pollutant loads or runoff volumes may demonstrate enhanced performance, addressing WA Needs with smaller footprints or lower capacities. Conversely, Projects targeting dry-weather flows or areas with

²⁸ 24-hour Project storage capacity to meet the Water Quality and Water Supply WA Needs for the NSMB WA includes a Project’s structural capacity plus the additional capacity that can be treated over a 24-hour period through infiltration or other means. The SCW Projects Module calculates 24-hour capacity as the capacity captured during the 24-hour 85th percentile design storm, with the maximum capacity being 100% of the volume of the design storm. 24-hour capacity is the basis for Project scoring metric A.1 Water Quality Cost Effectiveness.

²⁹ The Project capacities presented in this section for addressing WA Needs (e.g., 164 ac-ft of Project to address WA needs for increasing local water supply through recharge) are approximations of the Project size required to address WA Needs. The Project capacities are not considered a SCW Program Indicator or target. Capacities are only used to translate load reduction WA Needs to a more tangible unit, providing context to interested parties regarding approximately how much Project implementation would result in WA Needs being addressed. When capacities are listed in this section, the term “or equivalent” should be inferred: varying Project types and configurations could address WA Needs with higher or lower Project capacities. Targets and WA Needs are the key planning metric for tracking and assessment of progress toward targets (not capacities). For more information on how capacities were approximated, please see Appendix H.

substantial runoff volumes may deliver greater water supply benefits at lower Project capacities. Progress should be tracked using WA Needs and targets, not capacity estimates. For details on how Project capacities were approximated, see Appendix H.

Each of the following sections (Sections 5.2.1.1 to 5.2.1.9; one per Planning Theme [Improve Water Quality, Increase Drought Preparedness, etc.]) presents details on initial strategies that encompass near-term actions, which can be implemented or prioritized immediately using existing resources and partnerships, and long-term actions that lay the groundwork for sustained progress over a five-plus year horizon. These sections include the following components:

- A **summary** that recaps the potential and challenges in the WA for achieving Goals under the given Planning Theme and highlights input from interested parties and the WASC to emphasize priorities and provide context to the strategies, actions, and opportunities presented on the pages that follow.
- **Strategy and action figures** outline the strategies and actions for achieving Goals under the given Planning Theme. WA Needs and their final target year are included in these figures for context. Additionally,
 - Actions are accompanied by suggested supporting entities (i.e., “who should be involved”) ranging from SCW governance bodies (e.g., Public Works, WASCs, Watershed Coordinators), to Municipalities, CBOs, and regulatory partners like the California State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The NSMB WASC, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents are encouraged to reference the “who should be involved” field to identify actions that their investment and implementation decisions may support.
 - As described in Section 5.1.1, the timeline for addressing WA Needs by achieving these actions or equivalent is by 2045 for all Planning Themes except Improve Water Quality, which has a target date of 2038. Interim targets are detailed in Section 5.1.1 and Appendix H, along with additional information on how Project capacities were approximated.
- **Spatial opportunity maps** (*when applicable*) that highlight areas with the most opportunity for new Projects or Programs to implement strategies and contribute to achieving Goals. Each map is accompanied by a short description of key data sources, relevant considerations for their use, and corresponding strategies. Note that full-sized versions of these maps, along with detailed information on data sources, methods, and classification criteria, can be found in Appendix I. All opportunity layers are also available for interactive exploration through the [Planning Tool](#).

- **Non-spatial opportunity tables** (*when applicable*) provide resources and references to support strategy and action implementation. Each entry includes a brief description of the opportunity and its intended use, the source, and a direct link for access.

Following the sections for *individual* Planning Themes, composite multi-benefit opportunities are presented in Section 5.2.1.10 to support the NSMB WASC and NSMB WA Municipalities in identifying areas with the greatest potential for delivery of Projects and Programs that provide both Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits and those that address *multiple other* Planning Themes, in addition to the Water Quality Benefit requirement.

These composite opportunities combine the individual opportunities developed for each Indicator, offering guidance for delivering multi-benefit Projects as required by the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance, which states:

- “[The Regional Program Infrastructure Program] shall implement multi-benefit watershed-based Projects that have a Water Quality Benefit, as well as, either a Water Supply Benefit or Community Investment Benefit, or both” (LACFCD 16.05.D.1)
- “Projects implemented through the Municipal Program shall include a Water Quality Benefit. Multi-Benefit Projects and Nature-Based Solutions are strongly encouraged” (LACFCD 16.05.C).

Section 5.2.1.11 builds on these composite opportunities with an example of how a Project proponent might align implementation choices with the strategies presented herein. This example illustrates how implementation choices can be aligned to meet SCW Program requirements, maximizing multi-benefit outcomes, and helping guide future Project planning and decision-making within the NSMB WA.

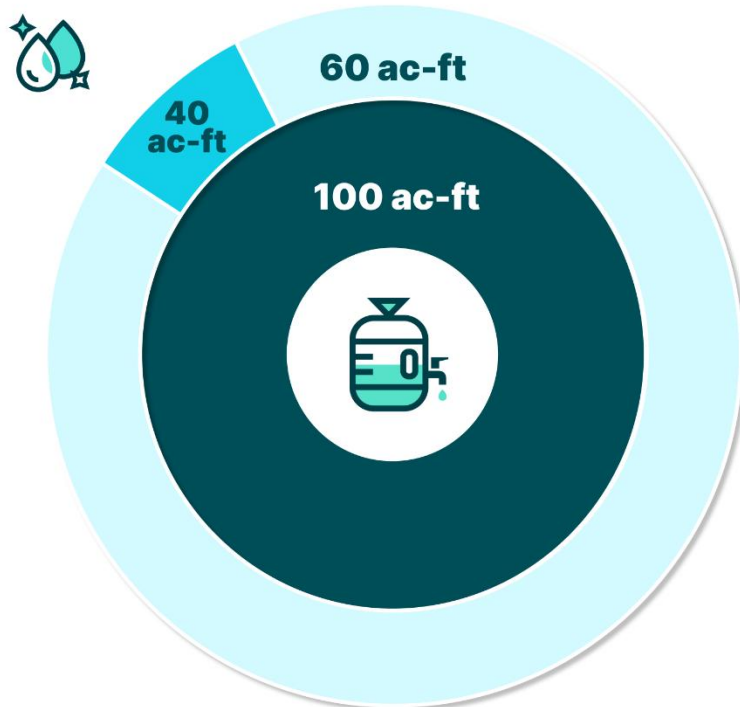


North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Summary of Estimated Project Sizes to Meet Watershed Area Needs

Project Storage Capacity
to improve water quality and increase drought preparedness by addressing water quality & water supply WA Needs *



The above implies all Projects should seek to include a Water Supply Benefit in addition to a Water Quality Benefit

- Improve Water Quality by addressing pollutant load reduction needs
- Improve Water Quality + Increase Local Supply
- Improve Water Quality (other stormwater capture fates)

* 24-hour Project capacities are approximate estimates of pollutant load and capture that would be achieved, and will vary depending on Project features. 24-hour storage capacity to meet the Water Quality and Water Supply WA Needs for this WA includes a Project's structural capacity plus the additional capacity that can be treated over a 24-hour period through infiltration or other means.

Project Footprint
to address WA Needs under *Improve Public Health and Deliver Multi-Benefits with NBS & Diverse Projects*

New Benefits



Net Area of Habitat Created, Enhanced, Restored, Protected
13 acres

Enhanced or Restored Benefits



Figure 5-8. Approximate Project capacities and areas that would address NSMB WA Needs

5.2.1.1 Improve Water Quality: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Improve Water Quality

SCW Program Goal A

The NSMB WA is home to several watercourses that discharge into the Pacific Ocean. Dense urbanization across inland and coastal areas (along with the impervious surfaces that accompany it) and the limited filtration capacity of local soils contribute to persistent and complex water quality challenges, particularly from urban runoff containing elevated levels of nutrients and bacteria. As a result, the watershed is subject to multiple regulatory TMDLs, including those established for Malibu Creek, Topanga Creek, and Santa Monica Bay Beaches. WMPs in the NSMB WA identify total phosphorus and bacteria as limiting pollutants. In turn, Initial Watershed Plans recognize total phosphorus and bacteria as the WA's priority pollutants.

While the SCW Program alone cannot fully achieve regional water quality goals, it plays a critical role in supporting progress toward them. The WASCs and the Regional Program financial outlooks (Section 2.3.1) have consistently emphasized the need to leverage other funding sources to maximize regional impact. Given the limited availability of Regional Program funding for large-scale Projects in the NSMB WA, promoting small-scale, distributed, nature-based Projects and maximizing leveraged funding is essential. These decentralized approaches (such as green buffers, cisterns, stream restoration, or rain gardens) not only improve localized water quality but also restore ecological functions that naturally filter pollutants, stabilize sediments, and enhance watershed resilience. Incorporating additional co-benefits alongside water quality improvements can also further enhance opportunities for leveraging outside funding.

Improving water quality is a core SCW Program Goal and a requirement for all funded Projects and Programs. The NSMB WASC recommends continued prioritization of multi-benefit Projects that integrate water treatment features mimicking natural processes—such as habitat restoration, rain gardens, and cisterns—to reduce pollutant loads while enhancing aesthetics, ecological connectivity, and public health. Looking ahead, water quality improvement strategies follow a watershed-scale perspective, emphasizing spatial distribution and cumulative benefits of funded Projects to achieve sustainable, long-term outcomes.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Improve Water Quality

SCW Program Goal A

Watershed Area Needs
(by 2038)

2,900
Total Phosphorus Load Reduction
(lb/yr)

100 ac-ft
Approx. 24-hr Project
Capacity to meet WQ
WA Needs

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
1.1 Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads	1.1.1 Implement Projects where stormwater runoff is not currently managed by an existing stormwater capture Project or major capture facility by referencing the <i>Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply</i> composite layer.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	1.1.2 Prioritize wet-weather Projects for a total estimated 24-hour Project capacity of approx. 100 ac-ft , and which are located in areas with the highest average annual load reduction opportunity for total phosphorous and bacteria. Reference the <i>Opportunity to Improve Water Quality</i> layer.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents
	1.1.3 Invest in research to evaluate and standardize the quantification of bacteria, total DDT, total PCBs, and trash in managed and unmanaged stormwater runoff.	NEAR TERM	Public Works
	1.1.4 Support Municipalities in implementing small-scale and distributed Projects and encourage Municipalities to bundle multiple small Projects into larger funding applications where appropriate to maximize cost-efficiency.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities
	1.1.5 Address knowledge gaps pertaining to BMP treatment effectiveness and new treatment technologies through Scientific Studies to bolster Project effectiveness.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Scientific Study proponents
	1.1.6 Establish an approach for using regional water quality monitoring data collected through MS4 Programs to assess trends with regards to hydrology and water quality.	NEAR TERM	Public Works
	1.1.7 Select and integrate post-construction monitoring metrics into Project reporting to support consistent evaluation and tracking of Project post-construction performance.	NEAR TERM	Public Works
1.2 Improve water quality and mitigate post-fire runoff through targeted Nature-Based Solutions	1.2.1 Implement small-scale, distributed nature-based Projects—such as riparian restoration, native vegetation reestablishment, vegetated buffers, and sediment control features—that reduce sediment and pollutant loads, stabilize soils, and support ecological resilience.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	1.2.2 Stabilize slopes and streambanks in priority runoff areas (including post-fire landscapes) with erosion control measures (e.g., native revegetation, mulch, wattles) to minimize sediment transport and protect downstream water quality.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities
	1.2.3 Implement dry-weather, low impact development Projects that capture and treat urban runoff through localized infiltration, reducing pollutants at the source, maintaining year-round soil moisture to support vegetation health, and helping reduce fire risk and post-fire sediment mobilization.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents

Figure 5-9. Improve Water Quality: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Improve Water Quality

SCW Program Goal A

Opportunity to Improve Water Quality (Figure 5-10)

This opportunity highlights areas of the NSMB WA with the most potential for new Projects to reduce bacteria and total phosphorus loads and improve overall water quality. These areas represent where stormwater runoff is not managed by a SCW Program wet-weather capture Project and where runoff volumes (used as a proxy for bacteria loads) and total phosphorus are highest. Areas not currently treated by a SCW Program funded Project offer potential for beneficial pollutant capture; Project and Program proponents should always perform local analyses to determine pollutant loading at the Project scale.

Most SCW Program wet-weather capture Projects are designed to manage runoff from the 85th percentile, 24-hour design storm event, as the majority of urban areas' annual runoff is produced by storms equal to or smaller than this storm event. This provides sufficient capture while keeping costs feasible. It is assumed that stormwater runoff from a Project's upstream capture areas is effectively captured and detained during such events. As a result, capture areas already managed by these Projects are excluded from this analysis. Individual pollutant load reduction opportunity maps are in Appendix J and the Planning Tool.

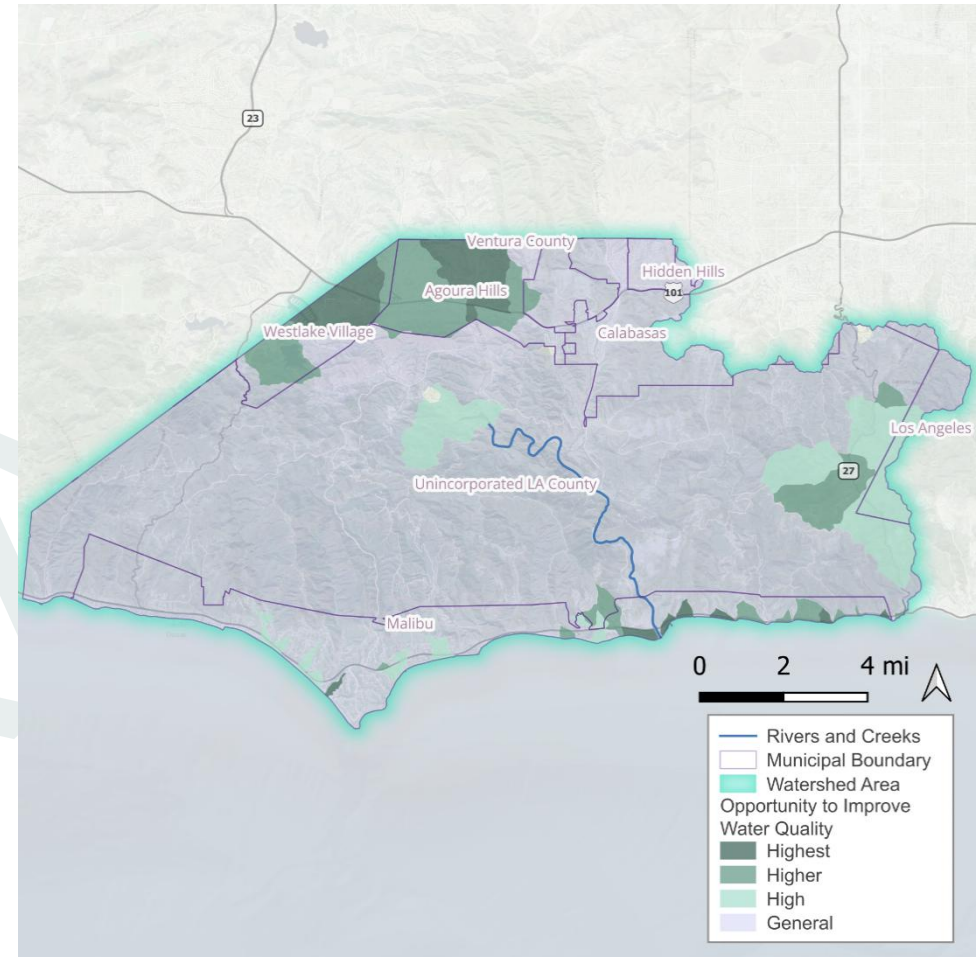


Figure 5-10. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality

Supports strategies:

- **1.1** Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads
- **1.2** Improve water quality and mitigate post-fire runoff through targeted Nature-Based Solutions
- **2.3** Maximize stormwater runoff capture and management for water supply



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Improve Water Quality

SCW Program Goal A

Table 5-1. Improve Water Quality: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Improving Water Quality				
Opportunity	Strategies	Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity to co-locate or coordinate investments with non-SCW Program existing and ongoing stormwater capture efforts	1.1, 1.2, 2.3	WRAMPS2 is a hub for LA County to report progress on watershed-based regulatory requirements and toward water capture goals. The Capture Dashboard presents real-time stormwater capture summaries by green infrastructure and water conservation facilities.	WRAMPS2	WRAMPS2 & Capture Dashboard

5.2.1.2 Increase Drought Preparedness: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



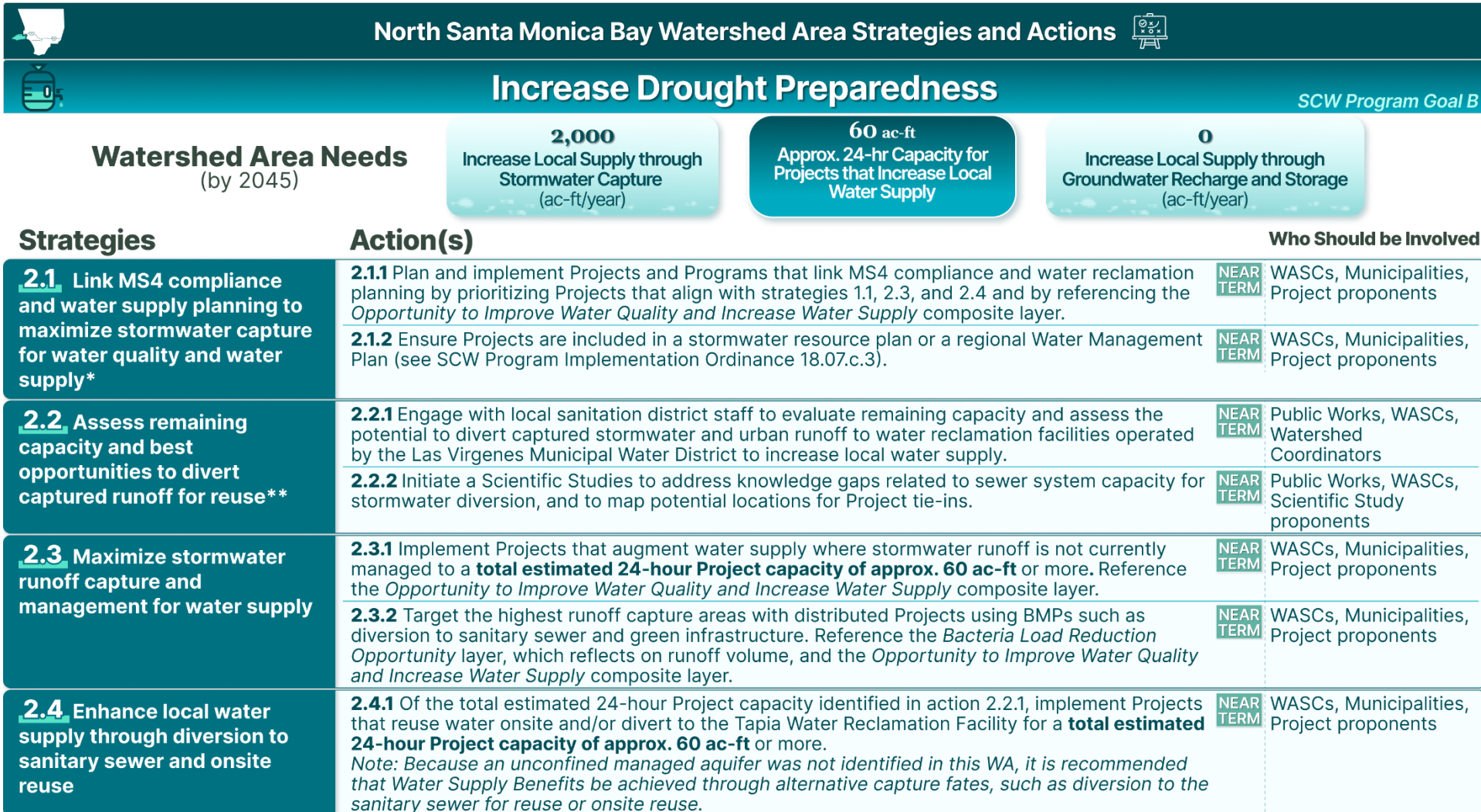
Increase Drought Preparedness

SCW Program Goal B

The NSMB WA's unique mix of dense urban development and sensitive ecological areas (such as Malibu Creek, Topanga Creek, and surrounding coastal and riparian habitats) presents both challenges and significant opportunities to enhance local water supply. To enhance locally available water supply, the County Water Plan highlights three complementary approaches to stormwater capture: decentralized solutions (small-scale, distributed Projects), centralized solutions (e.g., spreading grounds), and storage solutions (e.g., dams, reservoirs, and debris basins). Among these, decentralized solutions are applicable within the NSMB WA. As a result, strategies for increasing water supply in the NSMB WA focus distributing Projects across the urban landscape through Regional and Municipal Program investments. See also Section 2.2.2 for a summary of what is considered a new local water supply under the SCW Program.

To date, SCW Program funds allocated for the NSMB WA have delivered Projects that demonstrate a commitment to multi-benefit that leverage the WA's unique composition and characteristics, with many successfully using existing parklands, open spaces, schools, and public rights-of-way to implement distributed capture systems. These early successes provide a foundation for broader, scalable strategies moving forward. The prevalence of impervious surfaces in the clusters of dense urban development, steep terrain, and limited infiltration capacity of local soils have constrained the NSMB WA's ability to capture and reuse stormwater to support drought resilience. Given that the NSMB WA does not overlie a major adjudicated, unconfined groundwater basin, opportunities for increasing water supply through groundwater recharge are limited. Furthermore, the NSMB WA receives just a relatively small fraction of the SCW Program's total revenue, making the implementation of large-scale water supply augmentation Projects especially challenging. These factors underscore the need for innovative, decentralized solutions that promote local water self-reliance.

The NSMB WASC seeks to increase water supply through multi-benefit green infrastructure Projects that use water onsite or divert to the sanitary sewer system. Projects in the NSMB WA can increase local water supply through diversion via sanitary sewer to the Tapia Water Reclamation Facility for treatment and reclamation. Emphasis is placed on integrating decentralized Projects into the built environment in ways that simultaneously deliver multiple community co-benefits such as enhanced water quality, urban cooling through increased green space, reduced localized flooding, and improved public health outcomes. Given the NSMB WA's limited SCW Program funding revenue, large-scale Projects may not be realistic without substantial leveraged funding. Financial outlooks and planning guidance in turn point to the critical role of smaller, distributed Projects in advancing water supply objectives. By strategically investing in distributed Projects that meet both technical and community-defined needs, the SCW Program can contribute meaningfully to a more climate-resilient, equitable, and sustainable water future for the NSMB WA and the broader region.



Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-11. Increase Drought Preparedness: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



Increase Drought Preparedness

SCW Program Goal B

Opportunity to Increase Water Supply Through Stormwater Capture (Figure-5)

This opportunity highlights areas in the NSMB WA where stormwater is not currently captured by an existing SCW Program Project to communicate where there is potential for new wet- or dry-weather Projects.

The darkest blue represents areas with the highest potential for sitting either a wet- or dry-weather Project. While the darkest green areas represent areas with the highest opportunity to site a dry-weather Project. The lightest blue and green areas, though lower in potential, are not currently managed by an SCW Program Project and generally present opportunities for new Project implementation.

Supports strategies:

- **1.1** Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads
- **2.1** Link MS4 compliance and water supply planning to maximize stormwater capture for water quality and water supply
- **2.3** Maximize stormwater runoff capture and management for water supply
- **2.4** Enhance local water supply through diversion to sanitary sewer and onsite reuse

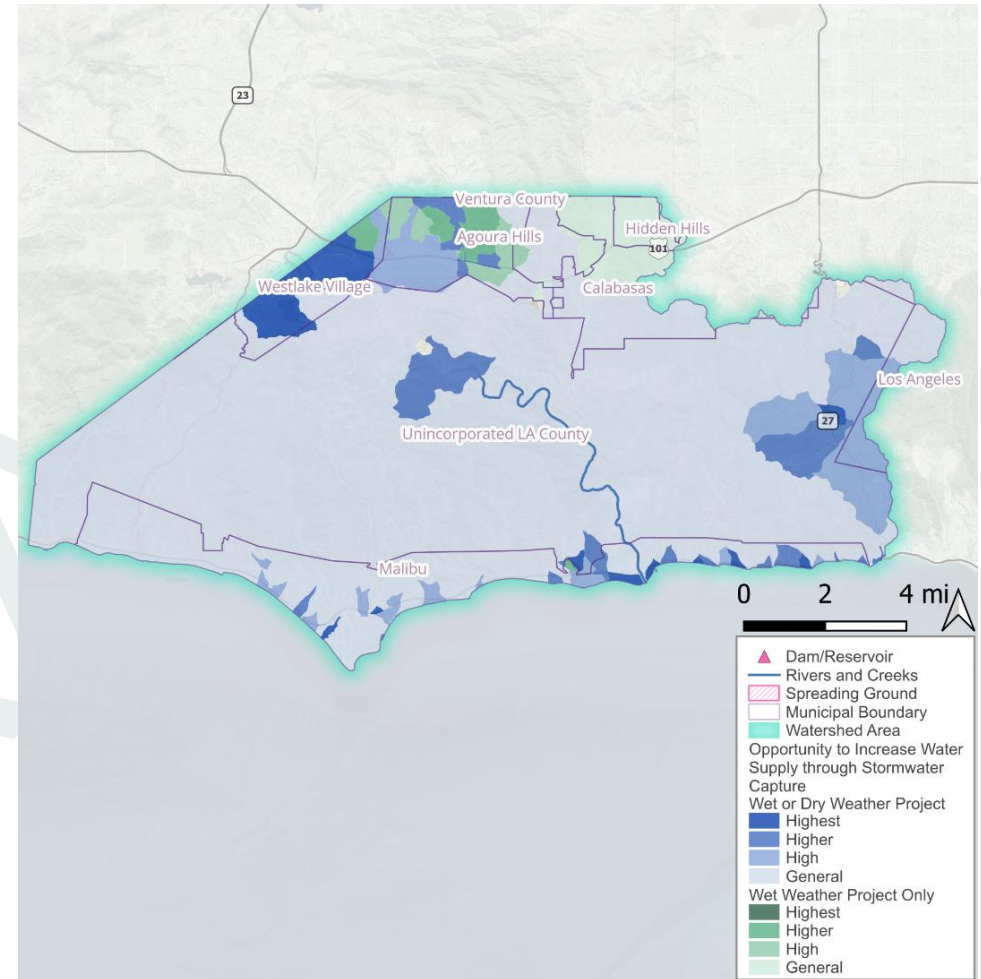


Figure-5-12. Opportunity to Increase Water Supply Through Stormwater Capture



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Increase Drought Preparedness

SCW Program Goal B

Table 5-2. Increase Drought Preparedness: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Increasing Drought Preparedness				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity to link MS4 compliance and bolster regional coordination via WRAMPS2 Capture Dashboard	2.1	Review locations of planned and completed MS4 program Projects using the WRAMPS2 Capture Dashboard.	Public Works	WRAMPS2 Capture Dashboard
Opportunity to divert captured stormwater to the sanitary sewer system for reclamation and reuse	2.2, 2.4	Coordinate with local wastewater purveyors to see if accommodation of captured stormwater within NSMB WA is possible at water reclamation facilities such as Tapia Water Reclamation Facility.	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District	Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

5.2.1.3 Improve Public Health: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

The NSMB WA is characterized by large areas of open space, which is preserved by state and federal agencies, and very low Parks Needs Assessment Park Need result. This means that there is not an urgent priority to create new park or recreational opportunities in the NSMB WA. Similarly, most of the local and regional parks in the NSMB WA have ‘good’ or better park condition ratings ([LA County Department of Parks and Recreation](#)), suggesting that enhancing or restoring park space is not a critical priority.

However, the NSMB WA faces environmental challenges, including extreme heat, wildfire risk, and limited ecosystem resilience, that can impact public health. Incorporating greening elements and nature-based solutions (NBS) into Projects can help mitigate these impacts by reducing temperatures, improving air and water quality, and enhancing climate resilience.

To address the above challenges, strategies and actions have been developed that align with NSMB WASC priorities, as well as key outcomes and goals set forth in ongoing efforts such as the Community Forest Management Plan, County of Los Angeles 2045 Climate Action Plan, and the LAUSD "Green Schoolyards for All" initiative. These strategies provide meaningful guidance to Municipalities and Project Proponents on integrating CIBs in their Projects to address identified WA Needs.

Given upstream urban development and existing riparian and marine environments, the NSMB WASC will prioritize Projects that improve public health by enhancing existing open spaces with NBS and restoring ecological connectivity. Equity remains central, with emphasis on prioritizing resources for communities disproportionately affected by environmental stressors or with limited access to open space.

However, under the SCW Program, these benefits must be pursued as co-benefits of Projects and Programs, —rather than standalone objectives—as all Projects are required to provide a Water Quality Benefit. These co-benefits should be integrated into Projects and Programs that are primarily designed to address stormwater and urban runoff pollution. During Project planning and design, Project proponents and Municipalities should proactively seek opportunities to incorporate features—such as nature-based solutions or multi-benefit green infrastructure—that meet both the water quality requirements of the SCW Program and the broader needs of the communities they serve. In urbanized areas, “leftover” spaces such as utility corridors and transportation right of ways can often be leveraged to increase shade plantings and to provide neighborhood green spaces.

Surface-based BMPs, including bioswales, rain gardens, tree wells, green streets, riparian corridor enhancements, and habitat restoration, generally provide more visible, community-accessible co-benefits than subsurface features, which tend to have fewer public-facing advantages.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Watershed Area Needs
 (by 2045)

1
 Net Area of Park and
 Green Space Created
 (acres)

1
 Net Area of Green Space at
 Schools Created
 (acres)

4
 Net Area of Park
 Enhanced or Restored
 (acres)

38
 Net New Area of Canopy, Cooling,
 and Shading Surfaces
 (acres)

Strategies

Action(s)

Who Should be Involved

3.1 Evaluate open space and large lot potential, particularly on school campuses*

3.1.1 Address spatial data gaps related to park land opportunities identified through the Parks Needs Assessment (see Chapter 7 for details).

NEAR TERM

Public Works

3.1.2 Invest in research such as a Scientific Study that evaluates open space and large lot potential for SCW Program Project implementation.

LONG TERM

Public Works, Scientific Study proponents

3.2 Create, enhance, or restore park and green spaces to improve water quality, increase water supply, and support ecosystem functions

3.2.1 Retrofit park areas to integrate surface stormwater features (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens, vegetated swales) into existing parks and green spaces to reduce runoff, improve water quality, and enhance access to open space, rather than expanding or creating new park footprints. Use the *Opportunity for Park and Green Space Creation and Opportunity for Park Enhancement or Restoration* layers to guide implementation.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

3.2.2 Prioritize Projects that use greening elements (e.g., green streets, riparian corridor restoration, vegetated buffers, tree wells, bioswales, rain gardens, cisterns) to improve water quality, increase water supply, and promote environmental restoration by increasing, restoring, or protecting vegetation and canopy, supporting ecosystem functions and resilience. See also related strategies under the *Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects* Planning Theme.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

3.2.3 Prioritize small-scale, distributed low impact development Projects in urban areas that utilize green infrastructure and NBS to manage runoff at the source.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

3.3 Help communities most affected by extreme heat mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change

3.3.1 Utilize green infrastructure that reduces hardscape and optimizes Project footprints to maximize tree canopy, urban cooling, and shaded surfaces, thereby enhancing climate resilience. Project types may include green streets, tree wells, and other surface-based stormwater capture features, such as vegetated areas designed with integrated water storage capacity.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

3.3.2 Implement multi-benefit Projects that prioritize expanding tree canopy, enhancing urban cooling, and increasing shaded surfaces in communities most vulnerable to climate change by referencing the *Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes* layer.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

3.3.3 Select tree species based on drought tolerance, community preferences, shade provision capacity, and contributions to local biodiversity. Prioritize the planting, establishment, and maintenance of trees according to industry best management practices, as outlined in the *Recommended Tree Species for Los Angeles County and Best Management Practices for Tree Care* guidelines.

NEAR TERM

WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

***SCW Program-wide and NSMB WASC Priority Strategy based on engagement**

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-13. Improve Public Health: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Opportunity for Park and Green Space Creation (Figure 5-14)

This opportunity builds on the Parks Needs Assessment and the Los Angeles River Master Plan regional analyses, which includes the NSMB WA, to highlight areas where multi-benefit Projects that create park and green space are most needed. Rather than identifying specific sites, the opportunity highlights areas that are in need of new park and green space and, therefore, areas where Projects can meaningfully improve community well-being.

The Parks Needs Assessment did not identify any High or Very High Park Need areas within the NSMB WA. However, several lower-need areas still fall below the OurCounty Sustainability Plan target of 3.3 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. While there is no urgent demand for new parks or large green spaces, incorporating NBS and greening elements into Projects can support efficient, effective stormwater management. In the NSMB WA, Projects may therefore prioritize creating green space rather than focusing on new recreational opportunities.

Green space creation can take many forms. As defined in MMS, green space refers to added vegetation such as habitat, turf, or lawn.

Supports strategies:

- **3.2** Create, enhance, and restore park and green spaces in to improve water quality, increase water supply and support ecosystem functions
- **6.1** Consider historic land use disparities and environmental justice metrics across the SCW Program area

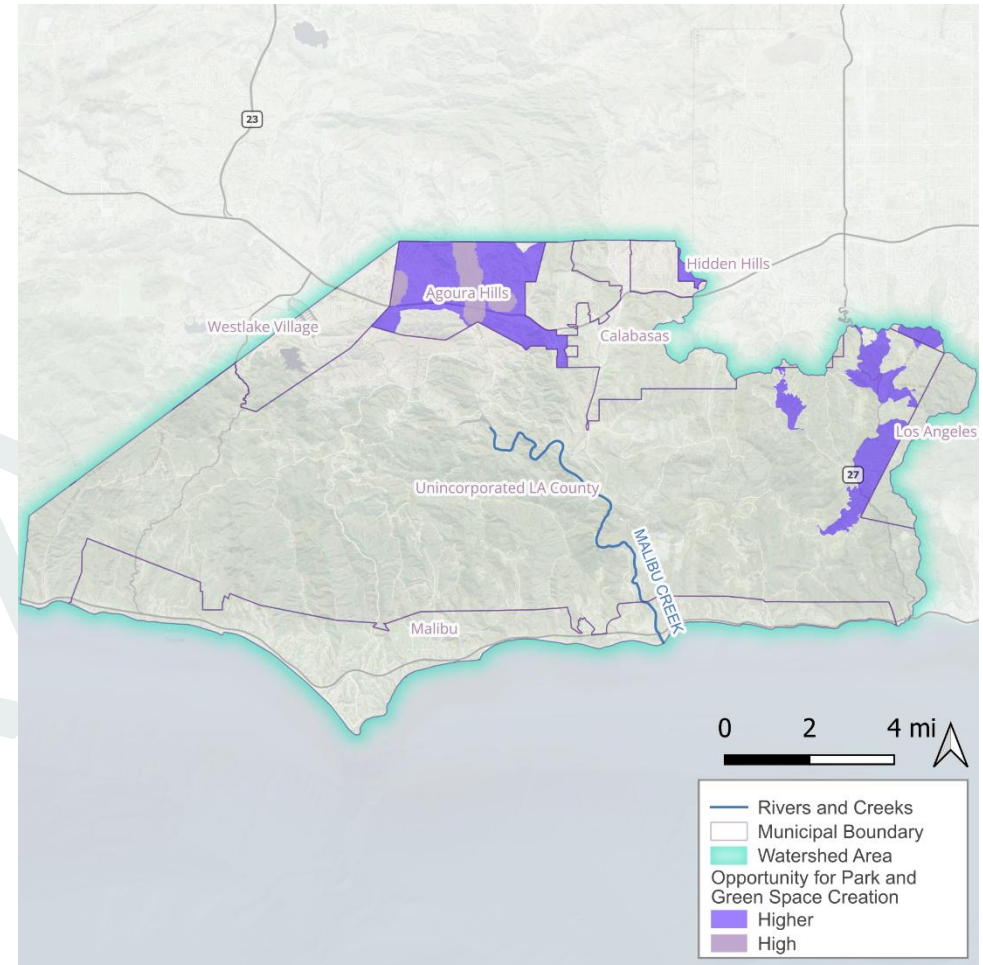


Figure 5-14. Opportunity for Park and Green Space Creation



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Opportunity for Park Enhancement or Restoration *(Figure 5-15)*

This opportunity builds from the Parks Needs Assessment, Los Angeles River Master Plan regional access need analysis, and the LA County Department of Parks and Recreation's existing parks and open space locations and conditions database to highlight where Projects that enhance or restore park are most needed. The park spaces highlighted by this opportunity prioritize investments in parks in poor or fair condition and where improved access to open space and waterways is needed.

The Parks Needs Assessment did not identify any High or Very High Park Need areas within the NSMB WA. However, there are still a few parks in poor or fair condition in the WA. Park enhancement and restoration should be a relatively low priority in the NSMB WA given the Parks Needs Assessment results and current park conditions.

Supports strategies:

- **3.2** Create, enhance, or restore park and green spaces to improve water quality, increase water supply, and support ecosystem functions
- **6.1** Consider historic land use disparities and environmental justice metrics across the SCW Program area

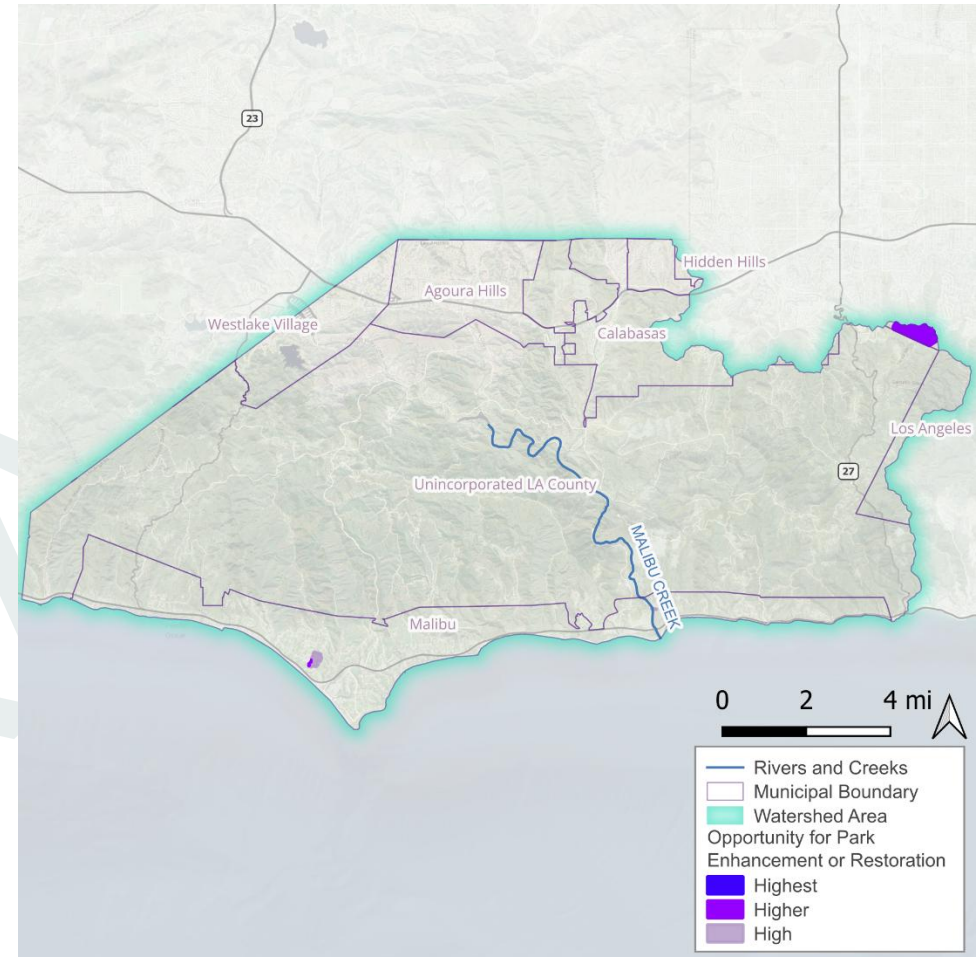


Figure 5-15. Opportunity for Park Enhancement or Restoration



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Opportunity to Create Green Space at Schools (Figure 5)

This opportunity highlights K-12 public, private, and charter schools with the most need for multi-benefit Projects that replace impervious areas to create green space. The layer aligns with methods and definitions presented by the LAUSD Green Schoolyards for All Plan to assign a Greening Index to schools countywide. As a result, this layer emphasizes the development of multi-benefit Projects at schools with highly impervious schoolyards and those located in vulnerable communities as determined by the CalEnviroScreen 2.0 and Extreme Heat Tool analyses. The development of Projects that create green space at the highlighted schools would address WAs Needs and help to implement the OurCounty Sustainability Plan and LAUSD's Green Schoolyards for All Plan.

Supports strategies:

- **3.1** Evaluate open space and large lot potential, particularly on school campuses
- **3.3** Help communities most affected by extreme heat mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change
- **6.1** Consider historic land use disparities and environmental justice metrics across the SCW Program area

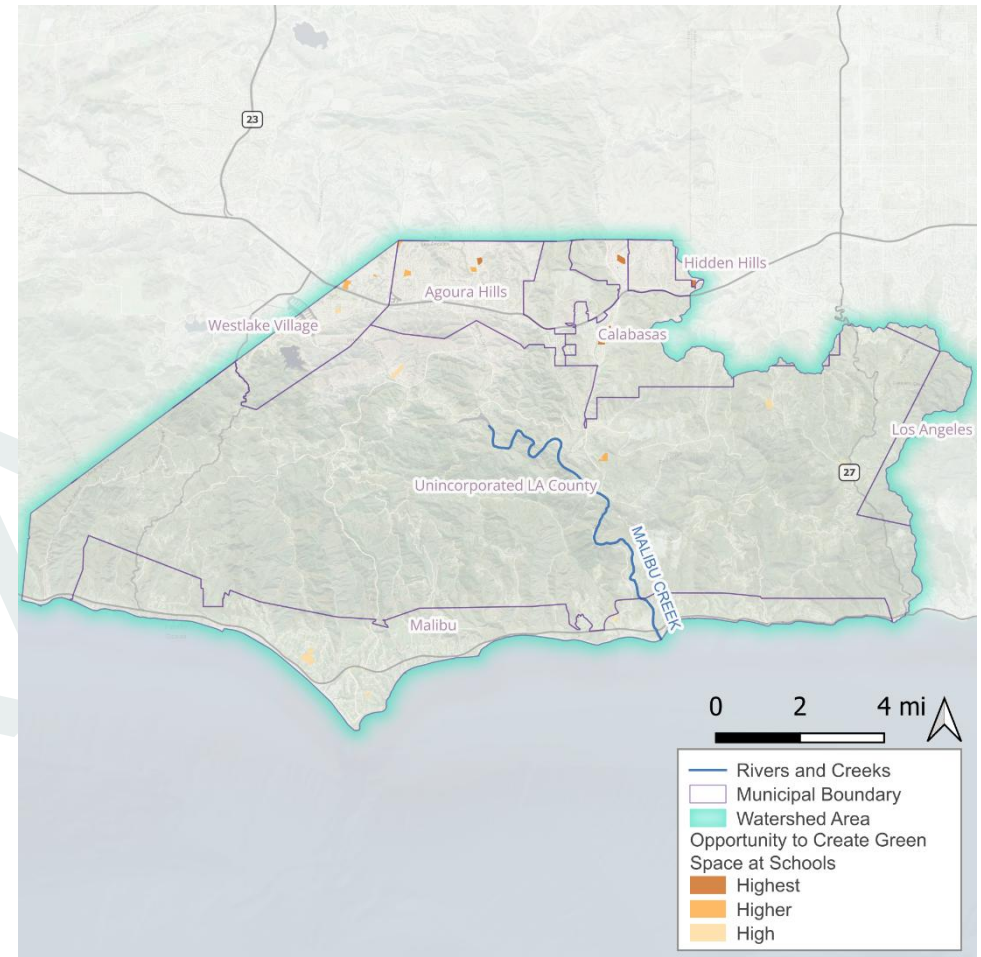


Figure 5-16. Opportunity to Create Green Space at Schools



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Opportunity to Create Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces *(Figure 5-17)*

This opportunity highlights areas with the most potential to improve public health and invest in vulnerable communities through new multi-benefit Projects that create tree canopy, cooling, and shading surfaces. This opportunity aligns with the County Community Forest Management Plan's canopy need analysis to provide a countywide layer that highlights areas with the lowest canopy coverage, and which are located in the most vulnerable communities, as indicated by the LA County Climate Vulnerability Assessment's (CVA) Social Sensitivity Index (SSI).

Supports strategies:

- **3.2** Create, enhance, and restore park and green space to improve water quality, increase water supply, and support ecosystem functions
- **3.3** Help communities most affected by extreme heat mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change
- **6.1** Consider historic land use disparities and environmental justice metrics across the SCW Program area

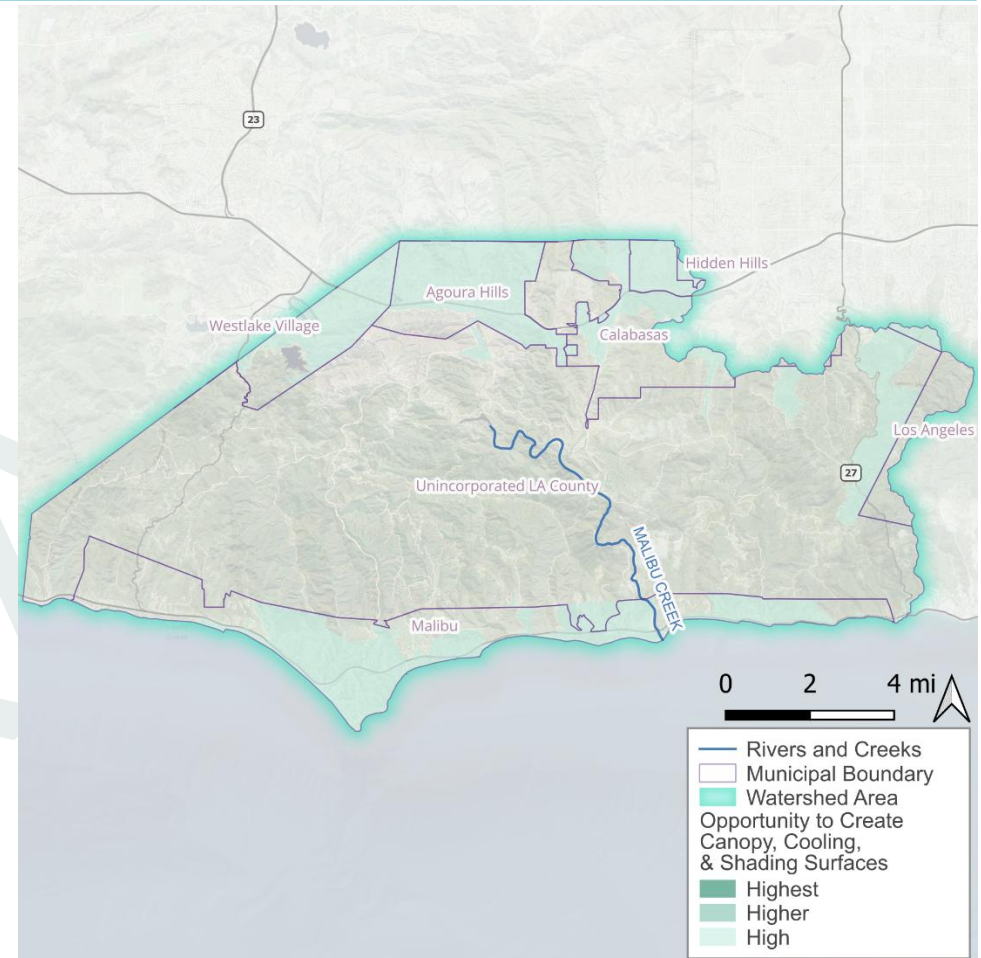


Figure 5-17. Opportunity to Create Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Improve Public Health

SCW Program Goal C

Table 5-3. Improve Public Health: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Improving Public Health				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Recommended Tree Species for LA County and Best Management Practices for Tree Care	3.2, 3.3	To ensure creation of resilient tree canopy, utilize the Community Forest Management Plan resources for support in planting and maintain regionally appropriate and climate-resilient trees with the highest chance for successful establishment and long-term survival.	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office (via the Community Forest Management Plan)	Community Forest Management Plan Resources [see 'Recommended Tree Species', Tree Management Practices', and 'Do Not Plant List']
Parks Needs Assessment Priority Areas	3.2, 3.3, 4.3	<p>The Parks Needs Assessment identifies several priority areas that can help guide the integration of co-benefits into SCW Program Projects, including Priority Areas for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing Access to Regional Recreation Increasing Access to Rural Recreation Environmental Restoration 	LA County Department of Parks and Recreation (via the Parks Needs Assessment)	Park Needs Assessment Plus - GIS Layers or Parks Needs Assessment Plus Final Report

5.2.1.4 Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program
Goals E, F, G

The NSMB WA is a combination of vast open space and pockets of residential communities, many natural creeks that carry stormwater and urban runoff directly into the Pacific Ocean. Urbanization has posed a wide array of challenges from water quality and supply issues, flooding potential, and riparian and marine habitat degradation. Addressing these complex and overlapping issues requires the implementation of multi-benefit, NBS that are tailored to the specific needs of local communities, especially those most vulnerable to climate and environmental stressors.

To date, nearly all funded SCW Program Projects in the NSMB WA incorporate small-scale NBS and LID features to capture stormwater and address water pollution ultimately entering the Pacific Ocean and impacting quality of local beaches. Additionally, funded projects include CIBs, informed by community-stated priorities, such as reduced litter at open spaces and beaches through open space enhancement and restoration, increased green space and shade tree cover, improved air quality, reduced localized flooding, and enhanced recreational opportunities.

Looking ahead, the NSMB WASC has emphasized the importance of continuing to prioritize the development of multi-benefit Projects that integrate BMPs that restore natural hydrological function of habitat that is vital for public and environmental health, with a priority of clean beaches. They recognize the importance of beach benefits for Watershed Planning, considering their WASCs potential for planning for sea level rise. Investments in beaches and open spaces are also important for cooling and providing open space in NSMB WA, since the majority of open space is preserved by state and federal agencies and are within buffer zones or the wildland-urban interface which typically not ideal locations for stormwater capture and treatment Projects that would provide meaningful water quality and community benefits. Outcomes from the MMS will further support such Projects by providing clear guidance and definitions around creating, enhancing, and restoring habitat and green space under the SCW Program.

Strategies to guide the design and delivery of future Projects and Programs are informed by broader interested party engagement, as well as alignment with regional and local planning efforts—including the Parks Needs Assessment, of Los Angeles 2045 Climate Action Plan, California NBS Climate Targets, County Water Plan NBS Task Force, and the OurCounty Sustainability Plan. Across these efforts, a consistent message has emerged: multi-benefit Projects must prioritize community-wide outcomes, align with community-stated priorities, and support the growth of small-scale, distributed BMPs that can be integrated throughout the NSMB WA.

Ultimately, nature-based, multi-benefit Projects in the NSMB WA must be designed not only to achieve technical and regulatory performance targets but also to create tangible, lasting improvements in community quality of life, restore ecological functions, and build a more resilient, inclusive, and livable watershed for future generations.

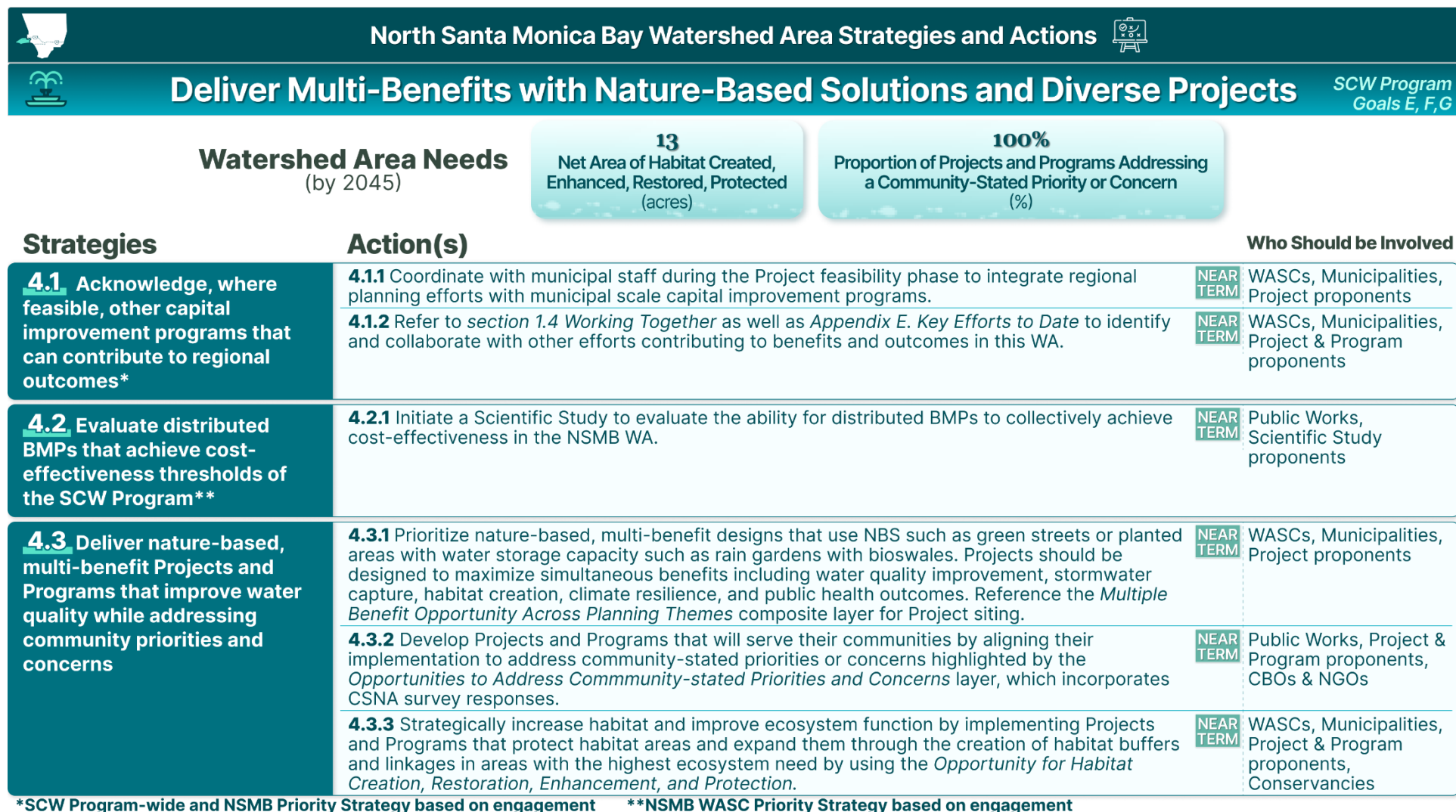


Figure 5-18. Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program
Goals E, F, G

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
4.4. Advance fire-adapted communities by implementing multi-benefit Projects that employ NBS to reduce wildfire risk and enhance ecosystem resilience	4.4.1 Implement green infrastructure Projects that, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid planting highly flammable ornamental species and remove invasive plant species to reduce fuel load • Plant native, fire-resistant vegetation that support regenerative landscapes and adaptive recovery, • Enhance habitat for ecological resilience to aid in post-fire recovery and landscape stabilization, • Create green space and tree canopy that can serve as fire breaks and cooling zones, • Support soil moisture, through infiltration, mulching and shading techniques, and wetland creation, to reduce flammability by making vegetation and soil less likely to ignite during dry conditions, and • Use firewise planting principles to create defensible space around infrastructure while maintaining ecological function and stormwater performance. 	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	4.4.2 Use fire risk maps alongside other opportunity layers to implement Projects that can deliver co-benefits such as infiltration and cooling in high-risk wildfire zones. Reference the <i>Opportunity to Create Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces</i> specifically to identify climate-vulnerable communities which are in need of resilience-building infrastructure.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-18. Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals (continued)



Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program
Goals E, F, G

Opportunity for Habitat Creation, Restoration, Enhancement, and Protection

(Figure 5-19)

This opportunity highlights the most impactful areas to improve ecosystem function through biodiversity protection and enhancement, creation of new habitat, as well as linkages between habitat areas. This layer is derived from the Los Angeles River Master Plan, which assessed regional ecosystem needs (including those within the NSMB WA) by evaluating habitat areas, buffers, linkages, confluences, and unprotected lands. The analysis identifies areas with the greatest opportunity to implement multi-benefit Projects that leverage NBS to support healthy, resilient ecosystems. This opportunity combines the need to protect existing habitat with the need to expand these habitat areas through habitat buffers. Areas where habitat creation, restoration, enhancement and/or protection should be considered for incorporation into Project design (if technically and financially feasible) are depicted in Figure 5-19.

Supports strategies:

- **4.3** Deliver nature-based, multi-benefit Projects and Programs that improve water quality while addressing community priorities and concerns
- **4.4** Advance fire-adapted communities by implementing multi-benefit Projects that employ NBS to reduce wildfire risk and enhance ecosystem resilience

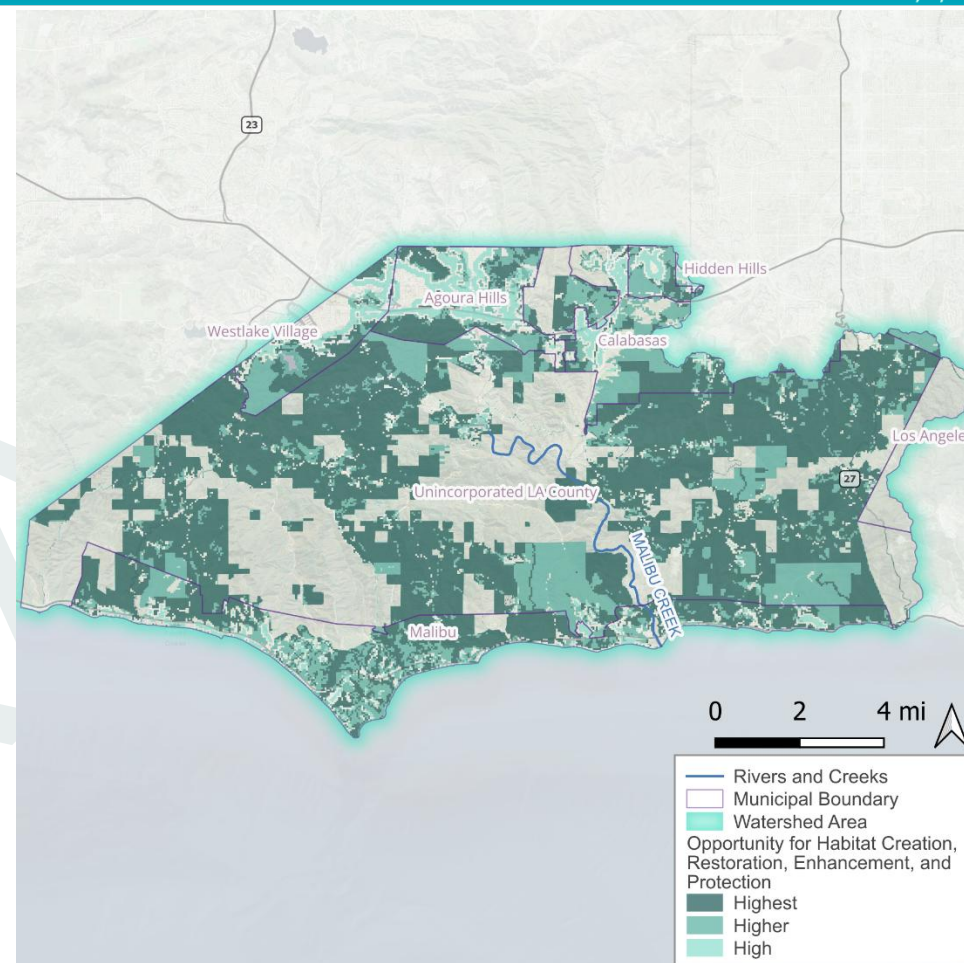


Figure 5-19. Opportunity for Habitat Creation, Restoration, Enhancement, and Protection



Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program
Goals E, F, G

Opportunities to Address Community-stated Priorities and Concerns *(Figure 5)*

This opportunity compiles community-identified priorities and concerns to help guide the development of Projects and Programs that directly serve local needs. The points on the map are from responses to the [CSNA](#) Survey, which includes outdoor areas identified by community members that are in need of beautification (see green points), and drainage issues submitted by Municipalities through the Los Angeles County Drainage Needs Assessment Program (DNAP). For best use, this layer should be viewed through the [Planning Tool](#), allowing users to review individual survey responses in detail. It is important to note that the CSNA dataset is dynamic and will continue to grow over time as more community members take the survey. Additionally, survey responses should not be extrapolated across broad spatial boundaries; instead, they are intended to be reviewed individually, especially when evaluating responses near proposed Projects and Programs.

Supports strategies:

- **4.3** Deliver nature-based, multi-benefit Projects and Programs that improve water quality while addressing community priorities and concerns



Figure 5-20. Opportunities to Address Community-stated Priorities and Concerns



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects

SCW Program
Goals E, F, G

Table 5-4. Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions and Diverse Projects: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Delivering Multi-Benefits with Nature Based Solutions & Diverse Projects				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity to address community-stated priorities via the Parks Needs Assessment Study Area Profiles	4.3	Reference the Parks Needs Assessment Study Area Profiles to view and incorporate community suggestions for increasing and improving visits to rural parks and facilities, such as more shade, improved infrastructure, or expanded recreation amenities, into Project and Program implementation.	LA County Department of Parks and Recreation (via the Parks Needs Assessment)	Parks Needs Assessment Appendix A: Study Area Profiles Parks Needs Assessment+ Appendix A: Individual Regional Study Area Profiles, Appendix B: Individual Rural Study Area Profiles, and Appendix E: Survey Results
Opportunity to site Projects that utilized NBS to provide multiple benefits	4.3, 4.4	Use the Greater Los Angeles NBS Assessments developed by the Nature Conservancy to determine the optimal places to site NBS to support biodiversity, manage stormwater and provide a variety of additional benefits to nature and people.	The Nature Conservancy	Greater Los Angeles NBS Assessments
Opportunity for aligning natural and engineering processes to provide multiple benefits	4.3, 4.4	The Engineering with Nature program within the US Army Corps of Engineers provides resources, research, and guidelines for integrating NBS that serve as engineering solutions while providing additional economic, environmental, and social benefits.	US Army Corps of Engineers'	Engineering With Nature
Opportunity to prioritize Project siting in communities vulnerable to extreme changes in climate and wildfire risk	3.3, 3.4 4.4	The LA County Climate Vulnerability Web Tool provides several climate hazard related layers including those which illustrate wildfire projections.	LA County CVA	LA County Climate Vulnerability Web Tool – Wildfire Projections for LA County

Other Opportunities for Delivering Multi-Benefits with Nature Based Solutions & Diverse Projects				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity to enhance ecosystem resilience and biodiversity	3.3, 3.4, 4.3, 4.4	The Biodiversity Analysis in Los Angeles (BAILA) was created with the intention of improving awareness of biodiversity across Greater Los Angeles County and enhance regional conservation. The Biodiversity Assessment dashboard displays the BAILA Urban Typology map, showing differences in urban habitat across LA, and may be used in development of multi-benefit Projects that employ NBS and enhance ecosystem resilience.	The Nature Conservancy, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County	Biodiversity Assessment dashboard BAILA Final Report

5.2.1.5 Leverage Funding and Invest in Research and Development: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development

SCW Program Goals D, H, I

The NSMB WA is influenced by several factors that impact the feasibility of stormwater capture Projects and community needs. The extensive preserved open space within the NSMB WA (much of which is either restricted or unsuitable for stormwater Projects) combined with the WA's limited Measure W (SCW Program) tax revenue, constrains the feasibility of large-scale infrastructure. As a result, improving water quality and delivering community-driven benefits will require sustained investment in distributed BMPs within urbanized areas, where water quality degradation is most concentrated.

Addressing these multifaceted needs requires not only thoughtful planning and design but also strategic financial investment and research to address knowledge gaps. Securing leveraged funding from State, federal, private, and philanthropic sources is a critical strategy for amplifying the impact of SCW Program investments. Leveraged funding can help offset capital and operational costs, enabling the development of more ambitious, cost-effective, and equitable multi-benefit Projects and Programs.

To date, NSMB WA Regional Program Projects have secured approximately 69% of their funding from leveraged sources, such as grant awards from California's Proposition 1 (Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014). To meet the leveraged funding target of 50%, future Regional Program Projects that can leverage at least half of Project costs, if not more, should be more readily considered for SCW Program funding than other Projects that leverage less than 50% of Project costs. Note that the Indicator associated with this target, "Proportion of Project Costs Attributed to Leveraged Funding", is measured at the WA scale. This means that while individual Projects are encouraged to meet the 50% target, the WA target can also be achieved collectively across all Projects within the WA.

The Regional Program's Scoring Criteria maximum points to Projects that have secured 50% or more of leveraged funding based on the Project's total cost, which also informed leveraged funding target-setting in this Planning Theme. However, given the NSMB WA's limited SCW Program revenue, future Projects should aim to secure more than 50% of Project costs from leveraged sources. This reinforces the need to proactively pursue external funding sources and highlights the growing importance of bolstering Municipal Program efforts to deliver cost-effective distributed BMPs and community-scale improvements. Proactive pursuit of additional funding streams can increase the financial feasibility of larger or high-impact Projects in the NSMB WA.

Further, the NSMB WA should prioritize investment in research through the SCW Program Scientific Studies Program and use findings from these studies to better understand the region's unique challenges and opportunities. The NSMB WASC has also expressed interest in fostering deeper interdisciplinary partnerships to strengthen collaboration and understanding of funding

opportunities and otherwise in the area. While these and future studies will not directly identify eligible funding avenues, their findings may inform the design of Projects in ways that enhance Project efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Several Initial Watershed Plan gaps and limitations, outlined in Section 7.1, highlight the importance of additional research and data collection to strengthen the SCW Program's ability to refine implementation efforts, track progress, and assess achievement of Goals. Addressing these gaps through Scientific Studies and other research efforts will help strengthen decision-making and support the selection and development of Projects across the NSMB WA. Multiple strategies within the Planning Themes also call for expanded research and Scientific Studies to support Project and Program design and accelerate progress toward Goals.

Embedding leveraged funding strategies early in Project development, supported by robust research, continuous data collection, and innovation, will help ensure long-term sustainability, fiscal efficiency, and community value. This integrated approach reinforces the SCW Program's commitment to delivering holistic, multi-benefit solutions while advancing innovation and technological progress in stormwater management.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development

SCW Program Goals D, H, I

Watershed Area Needs
 (by 2045)

at least 50%
 Proportion of Project Costs Attributed
 to Leveraged Funding
 (% additional)

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
5.1 Bolster SCW Program and regional coordination to support identification and communication of alternative funding sources and opportunities	5.1.1 Address knowledge gaps surrounding the availability of alternative funding sources by enhancing the SCW Program Portal to maintain and communicate a regularly updated database of applicable funding opportunities which compiles sources identified through previously funded Projects and Programs, the SCW Program Leveraged Funding Reports, and Watershed Coordinator-identified sources.	LONG TERM	Public Works
	5.1.2 Utilize the <i>SCW Program Leveraged Funding Reports</i> , which are available through the SCW Program website, to evaluate the potential for alternative funding sources.	NEAR TERM	Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	5.1.3 Coordinate with Watershed Coordinators for assistance in identifying and applying for leveraged funding sources (see also strategy 4.1).	NEAR TERM	Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	5.1.4 Coordinate with Caltrans to identify opportunities within Caltrans right of ways that contribute runoff to impaired waterways. Partner on the design and funding of NBS that treat stormwater at the source, reduce pollutant loads, and support natural flow regimes while providing habitat and community benefits.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents, Caltrans
	5.1.5 Leverage local, state, and federal funding sources to implement multi-benefit Projects that improve water quality and enhance coastal resilience—such as wetland restoration, bluff stabilization, and nature-based stormwater and urban runoff capture near shorelines. Prioritize efforts that address sea level rise, erosion, flood risk, and habitat loss while delivering water quality, climate adaptation, and community access co-benefits.	LONG TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents
5.2 Bolster the Scientific Study Program through enhanced review, coordination, and dissemination of results	5.2.1 Convene a scientific advisory board to review Scientific Study applications and compile and summarize potential areas for future study (<i>as suggested in the 2024 SCW Program Biennial Progress Report</i>).	NEAR TERM	Public Works
	5.2.2 Summarize and disseminate SCW Program funded Scientific Study results through the SCW Portal and future Adaptive Watershed Plans, to inform future study as well as Project and Program implementation and selection. <i>Note that outcomes from Scientific Studies completed to date have been incorporated throughout this Initial Watershed Plan, where applicable.</i>	NEAR TERM	Public Works

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-21. Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development

SCW Program Goals D, H, I

Table 5-5. Leverage Funding & Invest in Research & Development: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Leveraging Funding & Investing in Research & Development				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
SCW Program Leveraged Funding Reports	5.1	With support from the Watershed Coordinators, the SCW Program Regional Coordination team publishes quarterly Leveraged Funding Reports which provide an overview of recent funding policy highlights and shares active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program Projects. In the near-term, Municipalities and Project and Program developers can reference these reports and can work with Watershed Coordinators to identify potential leveraged funding sources. Two of the most recent reports available at the time of this Initial Watershed Plan are linked here for reference. For the latest updates, please visit the SCW Program website.	SCW Program	Q3 – January 2025 SCW Program Funding - Matrix Quarter 1 Funding Report

5.2.1.6 Equitably Distribute Benefits: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Equitably Distribute Benefits

SCW Program Goals J, K

Although there are no Census Block Groups in the NSMB WA that meet the DAC threshold, the NSMB WASC remains committed to equitable investment and distribution of Projects and Programs. Median household figures often mask underlying disparities. For example, in the NSMB WA, some older residents struggle on fixed incomes, while many who work in the Santa Monica Mountains earn minimum wage or are part of the working class. These realities highlight the need for targeted research and community engagement to identify and support vulnerable populations.

Further, communities may experience disadvantages not solely due to income, but also due to heightened climate vulnerability, limited access to resources, or disproportionate exposure to environmental stressors such as pollution, wildfire risk, or flooding.

The NSMB WASC seeks to prioritize Projects and Programs that directly benefit communities disproportionately exposed to environmental stressors and threats such as impaired waters, hazardous waste, and poor air quality. These communities can be identified through locally directed research or existing tools such as the CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Indicator maps. Additionally, while there are no DACs in the NSMB WA, the WA's coastal and riparian recreational spaces are widely used by visitors from across the Los Angeles Region, including those who reside in DACs. Protecting and maintaining the ecological health, accessibility, and recreational value of these natural areas is essential, not only for the well-being of local residents but also for the broader regional population that depends on these spaces for recreation.

In response, the following strategies and opportunities recommend prioritizing underserved and climate-vulnerable communities by supporting Projects that deliver multi-benefit outcomes, such as improved water quality, enhanced green spaces, urban cooling, flood reduction, recreational opportunities, and local job creation. These benefits should be accessible, visible, and responsive to the needs of local residents. Community-informed planning is central to equitable implementation; as such these strategies are supported by those under the Prioritize Meaningful Engagement Planning Theme.

Ultimately, equitable distribution of SCW Program benefits is about more than geography, it requires intentional design, community partnership, and long-term commitment to addressing disparities in environmental quality, infrastructure, and public health. These strategies, when implemented alongside those under the other Planning Themes, can not only support the NSMB WA in meeting its technical goals, but also advances justice, inclusion, and well-being for all its communities.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Equitably Distribute Benefits

SCW Program Goals J, K

Watershed Area Needs
 (by 2045)

 N/A
 DAC Benefit Ratio
 (%)

 at least 70%
 Proportion of Municipal Funds
 Spent on New Projects or Programs
 (%)

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
6.1 Consider historic land use disparities and environmental justice metrics across the SCW Program area*	6.1.1 Prioritize Projects and Programs in historically underserved communities and those with heightened vulnerability to climate hazards. Reference resources such as the <i>Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) Social Sensitivity Index (SSI)</i> and <i>Parks Needs Assessment Composite Population Vulnerability</i> layers to guide equitable Project and Program planning and implementation.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
6.2 Advance equity and prioritize new investments particularly in communities not currently served by a SCW Program Project or Program	6.2.1 In combination with 6.1, provide benefits to communities that are not currently receiving CIBs. Prioritize high-impact Projects and Programs located in areas with the greatest potential to deliver multiple benefits across Planning Themes, as identified in the <i>Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes</i> layer. Recall that all SCW Program Projects and Programs must provide <i>Water Quality Benefits</i> .	NEAR TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	6.2.2 Municipalities are to ensure that at least 70% of Municipal Program funds received are spent annually on eligible expenses related to new Activities (i.e., Projects or Programs implemented on or after November 6, 2018), as specified in Chapter 18 - SCW Program Implementation Ordinance, Los Angeles County Flood Control District Code.	NEAR TERM	Municipalities
6.3 Advance regional environmental equity by protecting shared natural resources	6.3.1 Prioritize implementation of high-impact water quality Projects and Programs (see strategy 1.1) in impaired coastal areas, particularly where runoff impacts beaches used by visitors from across the Los Angeles region, including those from DACs.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	6.3.2 Implement Projects that utilize NBS that support wildfire resilience, habitat restoration, and long-term ecological health, recognizing the intergenerational and regional importance of these natural systems.	NEAR TERM	Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
	6.3.3 Enhance access and amenities at parks, beaches, and trailheads—such as signage or stormwater-integrated public facilities—to better serve underserved regional visitors.	NEAR TERM	Municipalities, Project & Program Developers

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-22. Equitably Distribute Benefits: strategies, actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Equitably Distribute Benefits

SCW Program Goals J, K

Table 5-6. Equitably Distribute Benefits: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Other Opportunities for Equitably Distributing Benefits				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Advice for Projects and Programs designed to achieve the equitable impact sought by the SCW Program.	6.1, 6.2, 9.1, 9.2	The <i>Equity in Stormwater Investments White Paper</i> white paper provides critical context and recommendations for strengthening equity outcomes for SCW Program Projects including advice for engagement. <i>Note that recommendations have been incorporated in this Initial Watershed Plan, where applicable.</i>	University of California, Los Angeles	Equity in Stormwater Investments White Paper
Opportunity to support communities sensitive to climate-related hazards	6.1, 6.3	The CVA SSI is a tool used to evaluate how vulnerable a community is to climate-related hazards. This dataset can also be applied beyond the DAC context to highlight non-DAC areas that are sensitive to climate hazards and may benefit from infrastructure investments.	Los Angeles County Chief Sustainability Office	Los Angeles County Climate Vulnerability Assessment - Web Tool

5.2.1.7 Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways

SCW Program Goal M

The NSMB WA presents significant opportunities for strategic investment in the local workforce to support SCW Program Projects and Programs. Given the breadth of the SCW Program's 14 Goals, workforce strategies must be multifaceted and inclusive. Key approaches include targeted hiring, skills training, and career pathway development that align with existing and emerging green infrastructure Projects. These strategies build upon the findings of the SCW Program's Workforce Development white paper, which includes a comprehensive literature review of workforce training programs, models, and other resources that can be leveraged to cultivate a stable, skilled, and locally sourced labor force.

The NSMB WASC, the ROC, advocates, and the ROC CIB and Benefits Ratio Working Group emphasized the importance of prioritizing "high quality" jobs, especially 'green' jobs (those that offer stability, living wages, and benefits) over low quality and temporary jobs that lack those kinds of benefits. Notably, engagement with OurWaterLA, a local agency comprised of experts in green jobs and workforce equity, identified public sector maintenance roles as more desirable than private sector alternatives, due to their reliability and long-term potential.

Additionally, workforce development efforts should be coordinated with partners such as the Los Angeles County Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) or Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) – Youth and Community Training Programs, which is actively engaged in expanding access to meaningful employment and training pathways within the region. Additionally, collaboration with local agencies and organizations that have interest in invested in the region's ecological integrity and watershed function, such as the Los Angeles Conservation Corps (LACC), Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), and The Bay Foundation may open pathways for on-the-ground training in habitat restoration, wildfire resilience, and green infrastructure maintenance. By connecting job creation to environmental justice and community well-being, the SCW Program can serve as a catalyst for both ecological resilience and economic empowerment in the NSMB WA. The NSMB WASC expressed interest in linking O&M spending with workforce development.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways

SCW Program Goal M

Watershed Area Needs
(by 2045)

180
Total Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)
Jobs Created
(#)

100%
Proportion of Projects Entered
in a Project Labor Agreement
(PLA) (where applicable)
(%)

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
7.1 Prioritize smaller Projects for which construction and maintenance jobs are more likely to come from a local labor force	7.1.1 Prioritize the implementation of small-footprint distributed BMPs, such as green streets and lower impact development Projects, particularly in areas where they are cost-effective and community-supported, to encourage the creation of jobs for the local labor force that support multiple benefits.	NEAR TERM	WASCs, Municipalities, Project proponents
	7.1.2 Utilize the <i>SCW Program Portal Bid and Project Schedules</i> page and related <i>Reporting Module</i> functionality to solicit job opportunities and promote open procurement.	NEAR TERM	Municipalities, Project & Program proponents
7.2 Invest in research and Programs that promote permanent career pathways	7.2.1 Initiate a Scientific Study, building from the Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA) Workforce White Paper, that investigates the resources required to establish permanent career pathways within SCW Programs Projects and Program implementation and O&M.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Scientific Study proponents, ARLA, CBOs
	7.2.2 Establish a job training and certification program to create a career pathway for the SCW Program workforce.	LONG TERM	Public Works, DEO
7.3 Coordinate job placement and partner with workforce training and pre-apprenticeship programs	7.3.1 Collaborate with local training providers (e.g., Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy, Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education, community colleges) to support the establishment or expansion of pipelines for underrepresented communities into green careers, including stormwater BMP maintenance, landscape restoration, and water quality monitoring.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Watershed Coordinators
	7.3.2 Utilize the SCW Program Portal—including the Planning Tool—to spatially view current and proposed SCW Program Projects in the WA to identify near- and long-term workforce demands, with a focus on O&M and construction labor needs. Consider resource pooling across multiple Municipalities or Project sponsors when appropriate and feasible.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Watershed Coordinators
	7.3.3 Partner with regional workforce programs such as the California Conservation Corps, Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority, and The Bay Foundation to provide on-the-ground training in habitat restoration, wildfire resilience, and green infrastructure maintenance.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Watershed Coordinators

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-23. Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways

SCW Program Goal M

Table 5-7. Promote Green Jobs and Career Pathways: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Opportunities for Promoting Green Jobs and Career Pathways				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
SCW Program Portal – Bid Opportunities and Project Schedules Page	7.1, 7.2	Centralizes information submitted by Developers and Municipalities for upcoming bid opportunities for SCW Program Projects and Studies.	SCW Program	SCW Program Portal - Bid and Project Schedules

5.2.1.8 Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects

SCW Program Goal N

The long-term viability, performance, and community value of SCW Program-funded Projects in the NSMB WA depend on robust and sustainable operations and maintenance (O&M) strategies, particularly given the region's emphasis on restoring natural hydrologic function through stream and wetland restoration and advancing coastal resilience in the face of flooding and sea level rise. Sustained O&M is essential to ensure that Projects continue to deliver intended multi-benefit outcomes such as water quality improvements, flood risk reduction, wildfire resilience, and enhanced public spaces throughout their operational life cycle. Recognizing this, the SCW Program has prioritized comprehensive O&M planning as a core requirement in Project applications, encouraging proponents to demonstrate not only strong initial design but also feasible, long-term stewardship frameworks. To date, all seven Projects submitted under the SCW Program within the NSMB WA include formal O&M plans to ensure their continued functionality and benefit delivery over time.

The following strategies are designed to support the development of a qualified, well-trained workforce, embed industry best practices in asset management, and promote adaptive maintenance approaches. These strategies closely align with broader concepts previously discussed under the Leverage Funding and Invest in Research and Development Planning Theme (with particular alignment with strategy 5.1) recognizing that strategic and leveraged funding can and will be necessary to strengthen long-term O&M capacity.

Embedding O&M considerations into the earliest stages of Project planning, design, and budgeting is essential. Proactively integrating these elements will ensure that each Project not only meets its initial objectives but continues to provide reliable, resilient, and equitable benefits for the communities it serves for decades to come.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects

SCW Program Goal N

Watershed Area Needs
(by 2045)

100%
Quantity of O&M Plans Sustaining
Intended Project Benefits
(%)

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
8.1 Maintain a skilled, local workforce to ensure quality construction and comprehensive O&M	8.1.1 Initiate a Scientific Study that can establish specific construction and O&M best practices for varying BMP and footprint types, and can aggregate lessons learned from constructed Projects that can be used in future Project planning. See related strategy 5.1.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, WASCs, Scientific Study proponents
	8.1.2 Develop and expand workforce pipelines for O&M personnel, with a focus on local hiring and job training programs that support career pathways in water infrastructure, green maintenance, and environmental monitoring. See related strategy 5.1.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Municipalities
8.2 Ensure sufficient resources are set aside for Project O&M and monitoring	8.2.1 Leverage external funding sources—such as state and federal infrastructure and climate adaptation grants—to support long-term O&M costs by establishing funding pathways for O&M and monitoring requirements and best practices, thereby reducing reliance on limited SCW Program funds for recurring expenses. See related strategy 5.1.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Project proponents
	8.2.2 Embed O&M into the early planning, design, and funding stages of Projects to ensure adequate funds are allocated, set clear expectations and responsibilities for O&M, and identify cost-effective design choices that reduce future maintenance burdens.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Project proponents
	8.2.3 Develop partnerships with public agencies, CBOs, and maintenance contractors to establish coordinated approaches and share resources where feasible.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Municipalities
8.3 Promote wildfire resilience through fire-resilient O&M protocols for Projects	8.3.1 Manage fire fuel by incorporating into O&M plans the regular removal of dry, excess biomass and dead plant material, particularly during fire season.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Project proponents
	8.3.2 Maintain and promote use of dual-use infrastructure—such as stormwater channels that can function as fire fuel breaks or emergency access paths.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities
	8.3.3 Incorporate adaptive O&M plans in Project planning and implementation that account for increased sediment and debris loading following wildfires.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Project proponents
8.4 Integrate post-construction monitoring data into O&M plans	8.4.1 Promote adaptive maintenance which integrates post-construction monitoring data for Projects into O&M schedules and plans, ensuring that these metrics directly inform maintenance activities and that issues are addressed proactively.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Municipalities, Project proponents

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-24. Ensure Ongoing Operations & Maintenance for Projects: strategies, actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

5.2.1.9 Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Prioritize Meaningful Engagement

Meaningful engagement is not only a cornerstone of equitable Project and Program planning but is essential for the long-term success of multi-benefit initiatives that seek to address environmental, social, and infrastructural challenges. To date, 43% of SCW Program Projects funded in the NSMB WA have reported ‘Good’, ‘Better’, or ‘Best’ levels of community engagement, while 13% have reported similar levels of engagement with tribes. These Projects have collectively received 5 letters of support and conducted almost 18 different engagement activities ranging from online media to community presentations.

A recurring theme raised by interested parties is the need for accessible and culturally relevant education to help community members understand the SCW Program’s funding mechanisms, Project timelines, and anticipated changes. While achieving widespread community awareness and support can be challenging, well-designed engagement and educational initiatives (especially those delivered in partnership with trusted local entities such as Watershed Coordinators, CBOs and WASCs) can build trust and bridge communication gaps. Engagement with the Watershed Coordinators, advocates, and some WASCs highlighted the value of continued collaboration with federally and non-federally recognized Tribal Nations, underserved populations, Municipalities, and other public agencies.

Interested parties not only want to see visible, tangible improvements but also want assurance that their concerns are being heard and addressed. This underscores the need for ongoing dialogue, transparent decision-making, and education that addresses both the opportunities and challenges associated with watershed improvements. The NSMB WA’s engagement strategies reflect an inclusive, informed, and community-driven approach, ensuring that residents are not just beneficiaries but active partners in the transformation of their local environment.



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Prioritize Meaningful Engagement

Watershed Area Needs
 (by 2045)

100%
 All Projects to Meet a Minimum
 "Level of Achievement"
 (%)

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
9.1 Promote meaningful and sustained outreach and engagement through regional coordination and expertise	9.1.1 Integrate findings from prior engagement efforts—such as the CSNA and other Countywide and local initiatives—into Project and Program-specific outreach strategies. Tailor engagement activities to reflect and acknowledge community-identified priorities, concerns, and aspirations. By building on existing input, this approach fosters trust, avoids redundancy, and ensures that engagement efforts are both responsive and relevant to the communities they aim to serve.	NEAR TERM	Project & Program proponents
	9.1.2 Utilize the SCW Program Engagement Calendar to identify and align with existing local and Countywide events, meetings, and outreach efforts. By coordinating participation in already-established community gatherings, Project and Program proponents and Watershed Coordinators can increase visibility, reduce outreach fatigue, and engage residents in familiar, trusted spaces.	NEAR TERM	Project & Program proponents
	9.1.3 Develop a centralized, user-friendly online platform—coordinated in partnership with Watershed Coordinators—to serve as a Clearinghouse for outreach and engagement resources and which will be integrated with the SCW Program Portal. This platform would include a directory of potential partnership opportunities, funding leads, and event calendars.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
	9.1.4 Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the SCW Program Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program to assess its effectiveness in advancing the Program's Goals. This evaluation should analyze the reach, impact, and inclusivity of funded initiatives. Based on the findings, consider extending and enhancing the Grants Program to support sustained, community-driven engagement and education efforts.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
9.2 Develop and bolster existing resources and support for Project and Program-specific engagement	9.2.1 Enhance the existing engagement assessment criteria, such as the Good/Better/Best framework, to ensure consistent and effective engagement across the SCW Program. This enhancement should involve developing clear metrics, incorporating feedback mechanisms, and providing guidance and trainings for proponents to apply the enhanced framework effectively.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
	9.2.2 Establish a roster of CBOs and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that could support engagement and Project Concept development (<i>as suggested in the 2024 SCW Program Biennial Progress Report</i>).	LONG TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
	9.2.3 If established (see 9.2.2), refer to the SCW Program's roster of CBOs and NGOs to seek technical support for Project Concepts as well as support with engagement, particularly in DACs.	LONG TERM	Project & Program proponents, Municipalities

Figure 5-25. Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Strategies and Actions



Prioritize Meaningful Engagement

Strategies	Action(s)		Who Should be Involved
9.2. Develop and bolster existing resources and support for Project and Program-specific engagement (continued)	9.2.4 Strengthen the role of Watershed Coordinators by utilizing their expertise in engagement, education, and capacity building to support the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and communicate community priorities by analyzing CSNA findings to understand key community-stated priorities, concerns, and community-identified Project locations. Share these insights with the WASC and incorporate into the Strategic Outreach and Engagement Plans to inform Project and Program development and prioritization. Facilitate coordination among Project proponents and Municipalities to identify synergies, address overlapping or nested Projects, and promote right-sized or co-planned Projects that maximize benefits and avoid conflicts. Provide support and trainings for SCW Program Portal Tools (e.g., Planning Tool, Projects Module, Reporting Module) and to share best practices for meaningful engagement. This includes helping Project proponents and Municipalities understand and apply the Good/Better/Best engagement framework. Organize collaborative forums, training sessions, and workshops to help interested parties navigate SCW Program processes and reduce participation barriers. 	LONG TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
	9.3.1 Promote community workshops or engagement programs that explain how green infrastructure can support wildfire resilience.	NEAR TERM	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
9.3. Promote fire-adapted communities through enhanced education and outreach	9.3.2 Emphasize co-benefits of stormwater investments—like cooling, vegetation health, and fire safety—to increase public awareness and support.	LONG TERM	Public Works, Project & Program proponents
	9.3.3 Collaborate with fire agencies, emergency managers, and fire risk mitigation experts during Project implementation, especially when Projects are sited in wildland-urban interface or high-risk zones.	LONG TERM	Project & Program proponents, Municipalities

Note: Although the strategies and actions under this Planning Theme may not explicitly reference water quality, it is important to remember that, in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16), all SCW Program funded Projects and Programs are required to include a Water Quality Benefit.

Figure 5-25. Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: strategies and actions to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals (continued)



North Santa Monica Bay Watershed Area Opportunities



Prioritize Meaningful Engagement

Table 5-8. Prioritize Meaningful Engagement: other opportunities to address NSMB WA Needs and achieve Goals

Opportunities for Prioritizing Meaningful Engagement				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity for community members to provide input on their priorities and concerns	9.1, 9.2	The CSNA survey is a key engagement tool of the SCW Program. The survey provides an opportunity for individuals to directly inform the planning and implementation of SCW Program investments. There is ongoing coordinated distribution of the survey by Watershed Coordinators and other entities. All individuals are encouraged to take the survey.	SCW Program CSNA	CSNA Survey
Advice for Projects and Programs designed to achieve the equitable impact sought by the SCW Program	6.1, 6.2, 9.1, 9.2	The <i>Equity in Stormwater Investments White Paper</i> provides critical context and recommendations for strengthening equity outcomes for SCW Program Projects including advice for engagement. <i>Note that recommendations have been incorporated in this Initial Watershed Plan, where applicable.</i>	University of California, Los Angeles	Equity in Stormwater Investments White Paper
Opportunity to coordinate with existing outreach and engagement meetings and event	9.1	Reference the SCW Program SCW Program Watershed Coordinator Engagement Event Calendar to align Project and Program engagement with planned and ongoing meetings and events.	SCW Program	SCW Program Watershed Coordinator Engagement Event Calendar

Opportunities for Prioritizing Meaningful Engagement				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Opportunity to review existing regional and local engagement results	9.1	The CSNA Dashboard provides survey response trends from the CSNA Survey (2024-present), SCW Program Watershed Coordinator Surveys (2020-2024), and WaterTalks Needs Assessment (2018-2023). This collection of community thoughts should be referenced to inform future Project and Program engagement, reduce burden on community members, and increase the impact of SCW program Projects and Programs.	SCW Program; CSNA Dashboard	CSNA Dashboard – Survey Participation Layers
		The Parks Needs Assessment included extensive engagement to identify community suggestions and priorities. Refer to the following engagement outputs to understand efforts and community suggestions identified by the Parks Needs Assessment in your community to date.	LA County Department of Parks and Recreation (via the Parks Needs Assessment)	Parks Needs Assessment Appendix A: Study Area Profiles Parks Needs Assessment+ Appendix A: Individual Regional Study Area Profiles, Appendix B: Individual Rural Study Area Profiles, and Appendix E: Survey Results
		Align Project and Program implementation with key engagement takeaways from the OurCounty Sustainability Plan.	LA County Chief Sustainability Office (via the OurCounty Sustainability Plan)	OurCounty Stakeholder Engagement Summary Report

Opportunities for Prioritizing Meaningful Engagement				
Opportunity	Strategies	Description & Purpose	Source	LINK
Fire Hazard Reduction Opportunity	3.4, 9.3	Resource guide that legally declares areas that show improved and unimproved properties as a public nuisance, and where necessary, requires clearance of hazardous vegetation to create a defensible space against wildfires.	Cal Fire	Defensible Space Guidelines Los Angeles County Defensible Space Inspection Program LAC Fire Code Inspection Informational Guide
	3.4, 9.3	Visually details the most critical landscape conditions and clarifies what should be done to prepare residential homes for the greatest chance for survival.	LAC Fire Department	A Guide to Defensible Space: Ornamental Vegetation Maintenance

5.2.1.10 Composite Strategies and Opportunities for Providing a Spectrum of Benefits

Projects and Programs that deliver multiple benefits (such as a Water Quality Benefit alongside a Water Supply Benefit and/or CIB, or both) are a cornerstone of the SCW Program. Synergies exist across strategies to address SCW Program Goals; these strategies support individual Goals on their own but are most effective in supporting Goals when enacted jointly. For example, strategies related to NBS, CIBs, and equity frequently overlap and mutually reinforce one another³⁰.

Consider the following example: creating, enhancing, and restoring park and green space to improve water quality, increase water supply, and support ecosystem functions (strategy 3.2) through the delivery of nature-based, multi-benefit Projects and Programs (strategy 4.3) also helps communities most affected by extreme heat (strategy 3.3). At the same time, it contributes to equitable outcomes by considering land use disparities and environmental justice metrics (strategy 6.1). When these green spaces utilize native vegetation and are sited on previously impermeable surfaces, they go beyond satisfying strategy 3.2 by mitigating the urban heat island effect and offering climate resilience benefits, especially when sited in climate-vulnerable areas.

Similarly, strategies to improve water quality and increase water supply are closely interconnected. Strategy 2.1 explicitly reinforces this linkage. For example, maximizing stormwater runoff capture and management for water supply (strategy 2.3) goes hand-in-hand with prioritizing high-performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads (strategy 1.1). Projects that augment water supply through diversions to sanitary sewers, or onsite reuse must first treat that stormwater runoff using Project BMPs or existing wastewater treatment and water reclamation facilities. To support the implementation of these synergies, the Initial Watershed Plans introduce two composite opportunities:

- **Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes**
- **Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply**

These composite opportunities provide guidance to the NSMB WASC, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents by highlighting areas within the NSMB WA and each Municipality, with the most potential to align strategies to deliver multiple benefits and support multiple Goals.

²⁴ Recall that in accordance with the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §16) all Projects and Programs must include a Water Quality Benefit, and all Regional Program Project must have both a Water Quality Benefit and/or a Water Supply Benefit or CIB, or both. Municipal Program Projects that incorporate multiple benefits and NBS are strongly encouraged.

Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes

This multiple benefit composite opportunity (Figure 5-26) serves as a critical planning and communication tool for the NSMB WASC, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents. Its purpose is to highlight areas within the NSMB WA and its Municipalities that offer potential for leveraging multiple strategies to efficiently and effectively deliver community and environmental benefits that address multiple Goals and maximize cumulative benefits rather than addressing needs in isolation. Specifically, this composite opportunity highlights locations where multi-benefit Projects and Programs could most effectively provide Water Quality Benefits while supporting two or more of the following Goals and strategies:

- **Improve Public Health (Goal C)**
 - **3.3** Create, enhance, and restore park and green spaces to improve water quality, increase water supply, and support ecosystem functions
 - **3.4** Help communities most affected by extreme heat mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change
- **Deliver Multi-Benefits (Goal F)**
 - **4.3** Deliver nature-based, multi-benefit Projects and Programs that improve water quality while addressing community priorities and concerns

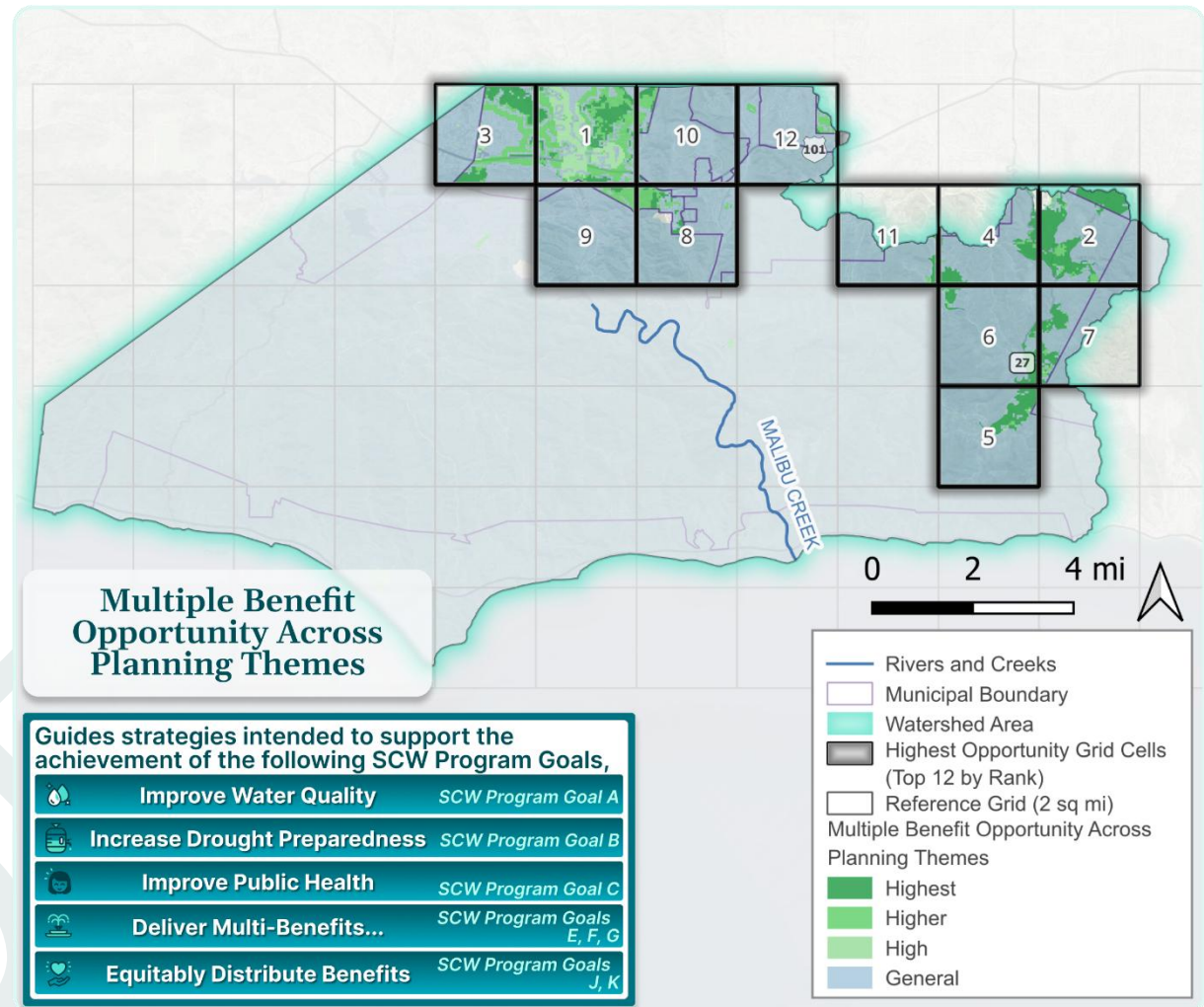


Figure 5-26. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes

To clearly identify areas with the greatest potential, the NSMB WA was divided into 2-square-mile grid cells and ranked based on their capacity to address multiple WA Needs, improve water quality, and advance two or more other SCW Program Goals across Planning Themes. The top two grids in the NSMB WA for the Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes are shown in Figure 5-27 to highlight the highest-scoring areas in the NSMB WA and guide the NSMB WASC and Project and Program proponents toward locations with the most strategic and cumulative impact.

A detailed explanation of the analysis is provided in Appendix I, while full-page versions of the maps for the top twelve grids for this Opportunity within the NSMB WA are included in Appendix J. A layer with the top twelve grids for the NSMB WA for the Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes is also available for interactive exploration through the [Planning Tool](#).

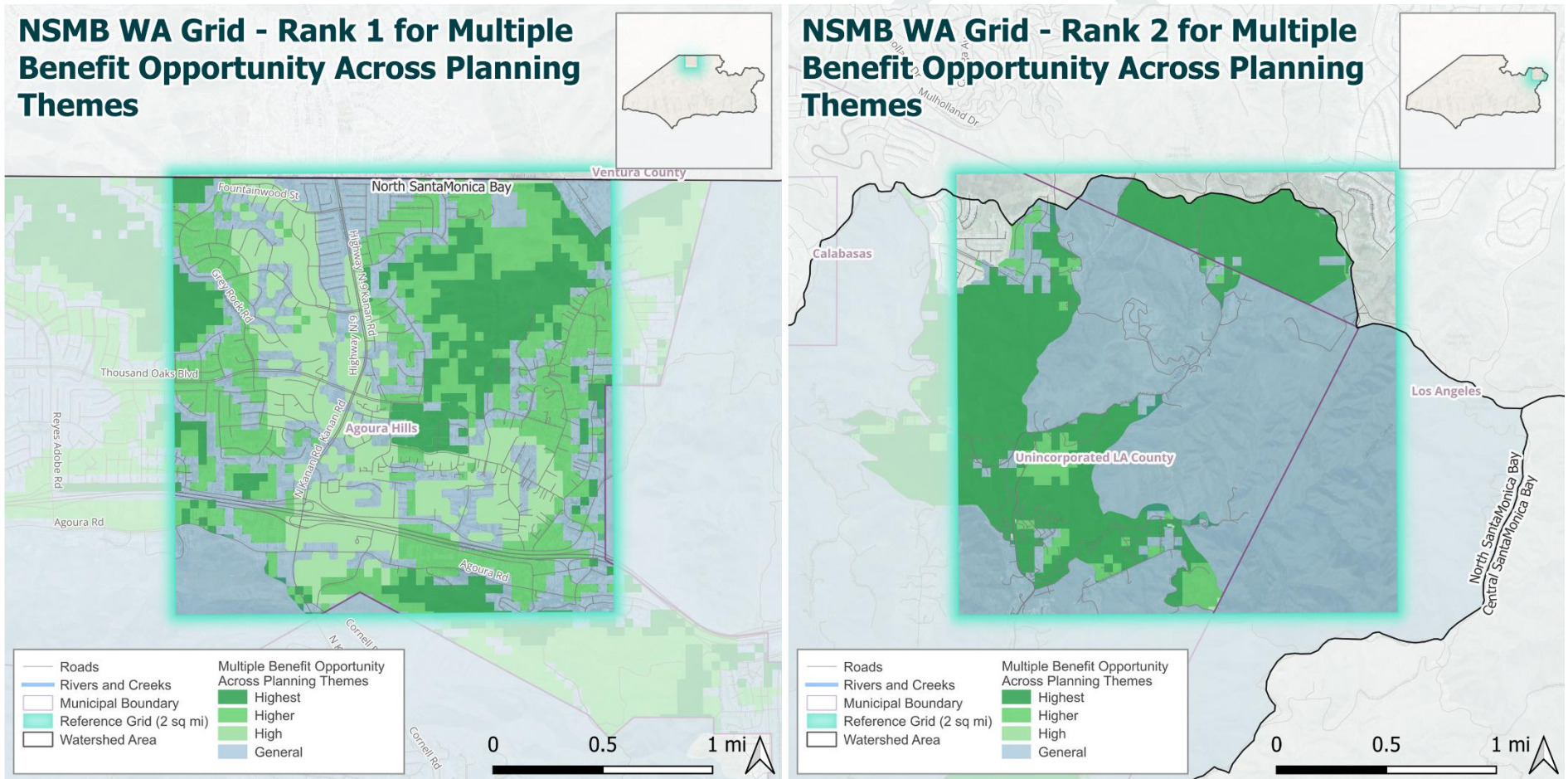


Figure 5-27. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes: top two grid areas with the most opportunity

To support targeted implementation by Municipalities, the Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes was reindexed at the Municipal scale to highlight the relative opportunity levels (high, higher, and highest) within each Municipality. This localized scaling approach ensures that every Municipality, regardless of size or baseline conditions, can identify and prioritize areas with the greatest potential to deliver cumulative, cross-thematic benefits aligned with SCW Program Goals. Figure 5-28 provides an example of the results of this spatial analysis for the Cities of Agoura Hills, Malibu and Calabasas, which have varying opportunity levels and spatial distribution. A detailed explanation of the analysis is provided in Appendix I, while full-page versions of the maps for the top twelve grids for this Opportunity within the NSMB WA are included in Appendix J. This layer is also available for interactive exploration through the [Planning Tool](#).

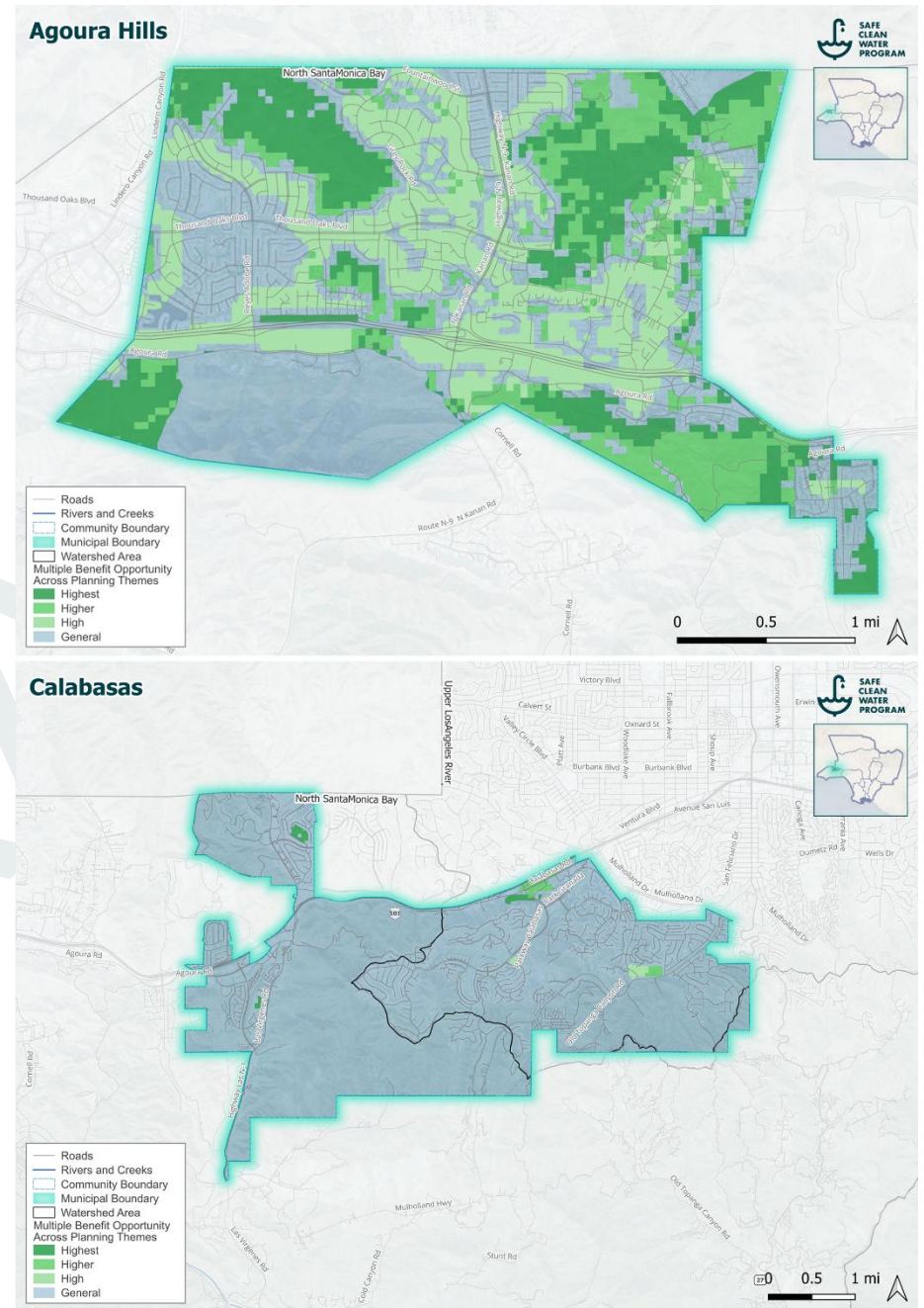
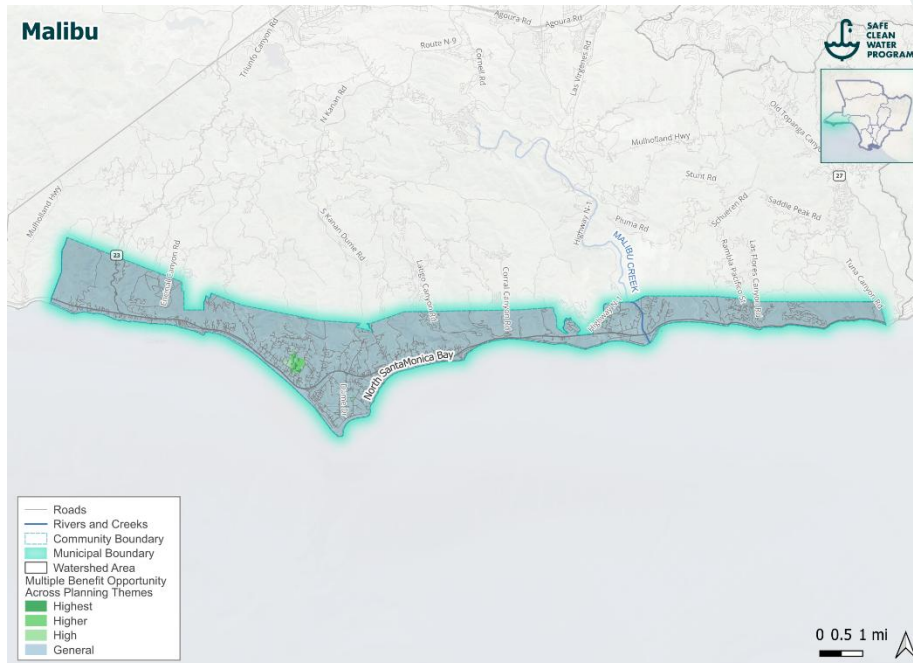


Figure 5-28. Multiple Benefit Opportunity Across Planning Themes: scaled by Municipality

Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply

This composite opportunity integrates the Opportunity to Improve Water Quality (Figure 5-10) and Opportunity to Increase Water Supply through Stormwater Capture (Figure-5) to identify unmanaged capture areas with the greatest potential to achieve both key objectives: reducing pollutant loads to improve water quality and enhancing local water supply through stormwater capture. Its purpose is to highlight areas within the NSMB WA, its communities, and its Municipalities that offer the highest potential for implementing high-impact Projects and Programs,

- **Improve Water Quality (Goal A)**
 - **1.1** Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads
- **Increase Drought Preparedness (Goal B)**
 - **2.1** Link MS4 compliance and water supply planning to maximize stormwater capture for water quality and water supply
 - **2.3** Maximize stormwater runoff capture and management for water supply

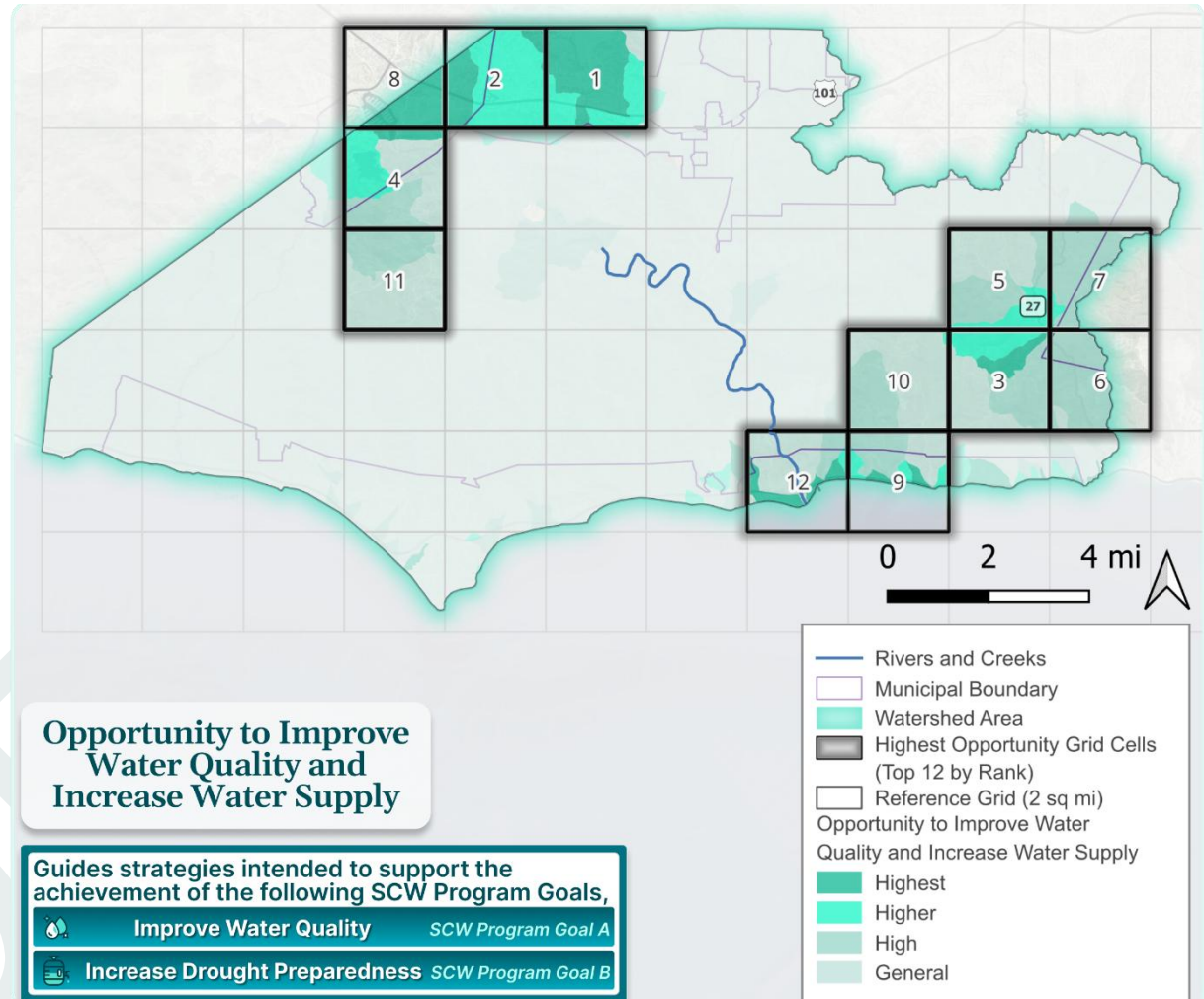


Figure 5-29. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply

In Figure 5-29, teal areas indicate locations with dual-benefit potential, where Projects can simultaneously improve water quality and augment water supply. Within the NSMB WA, all areas identified as opportunities for improving water quality also have potential for increasing water supply.

To clearly identify areas with the greatest potential, the NSMB WA was divided into 2-square-mile grid cells and ranked based on their capacity to both improve water quality and increase drought preparedness. Each of the top two grids in the NSMB WA is highlighted in Figure 5-30 for the *Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply*.

A detailed explanation of the analysis is provided in Appendix I, while full-page versions of the maps for the top twelve grids for this Opportunity within the NSMB WA are included in Appendix J. This layer is also available for interactive exploration through the [Planning Tool](#).

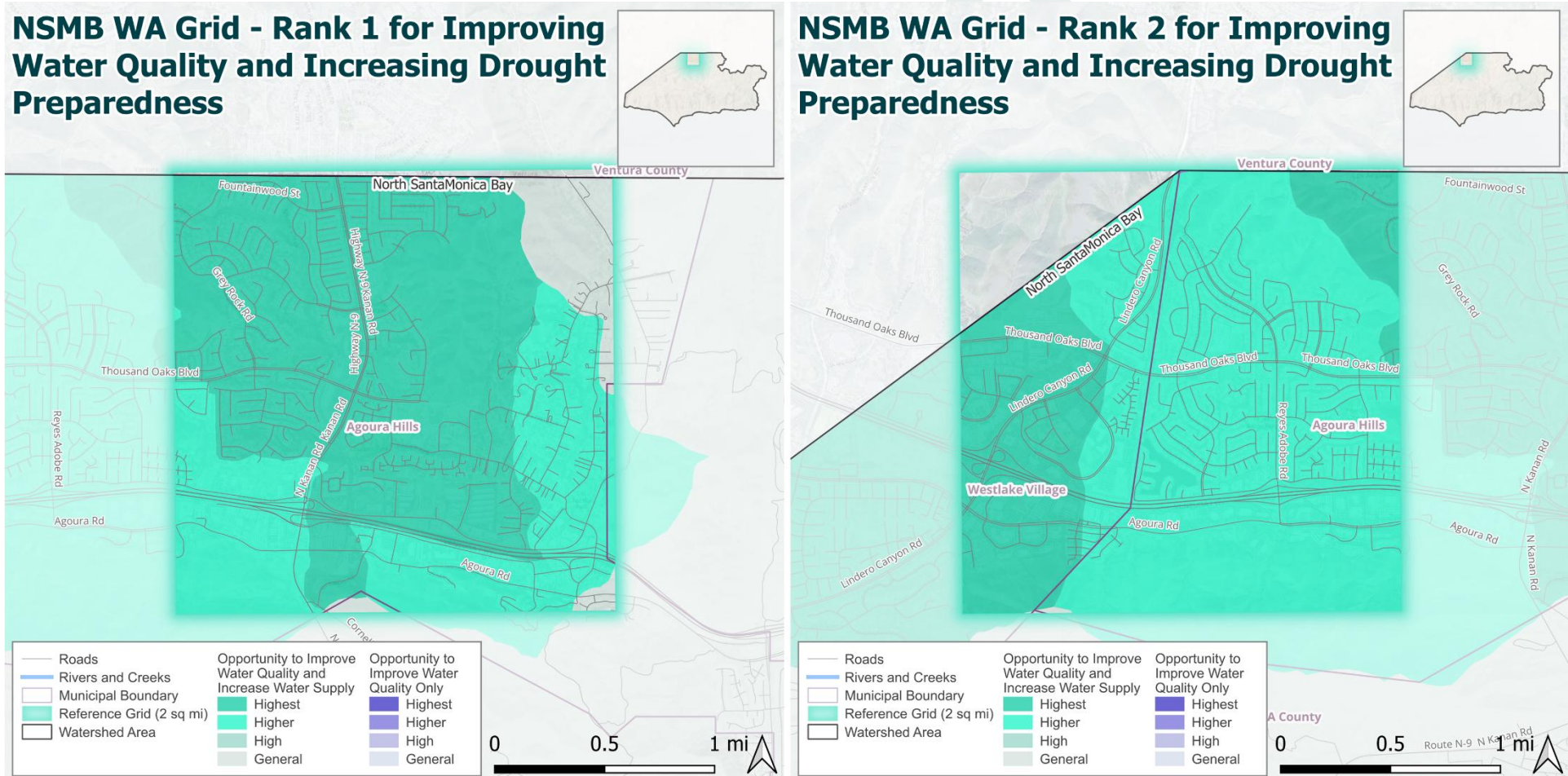


Figure 5-30. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply: top two grid areas with the most opportunity

To support targeted implementation by Municipalities, the Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply was reindexed at the Municipal scale to highlight the relative opportunity levels—high, higher, and highest—within each Municipality. This localized scaling approach ensures that every Municipality, regardless of size or baseline conditions, can identify and prioritize areas with the greatest potential to improve water quality and increase water supply. Figure 5-31 provides an example of the results of this spatial analysis for the Agoura Hills, Malibu and Calabasas, which have varying levels and distribution of opportunity.

A detailed explanation of the analysis is provided in Appendix I, while full-page versions of the maps for the top twelve grids for this Opportunity within the NSMB WA are included in Appendix J. This layer is also available for interactive exploration through the [Planning Tool](#).

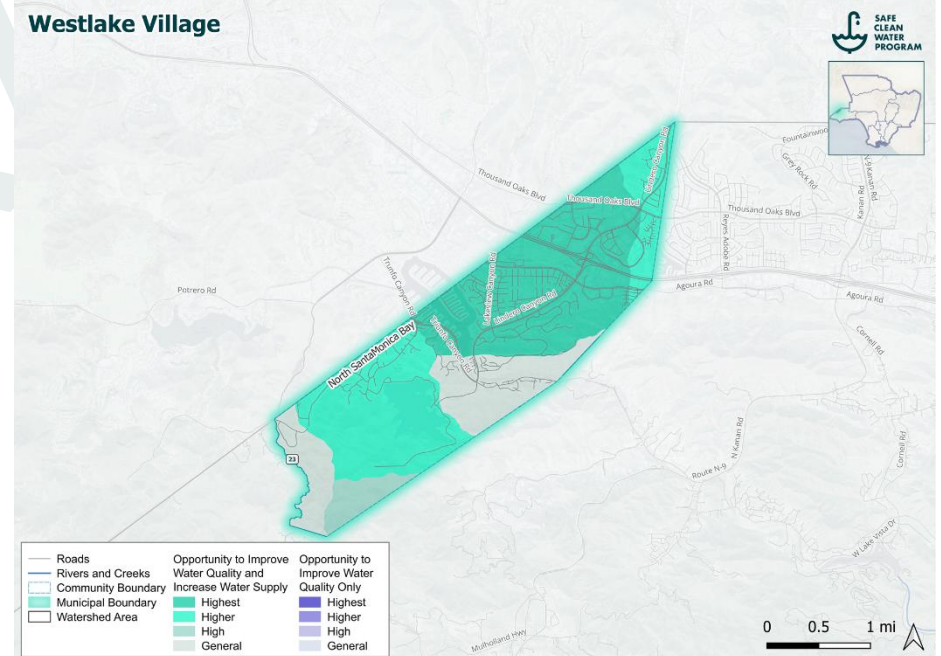
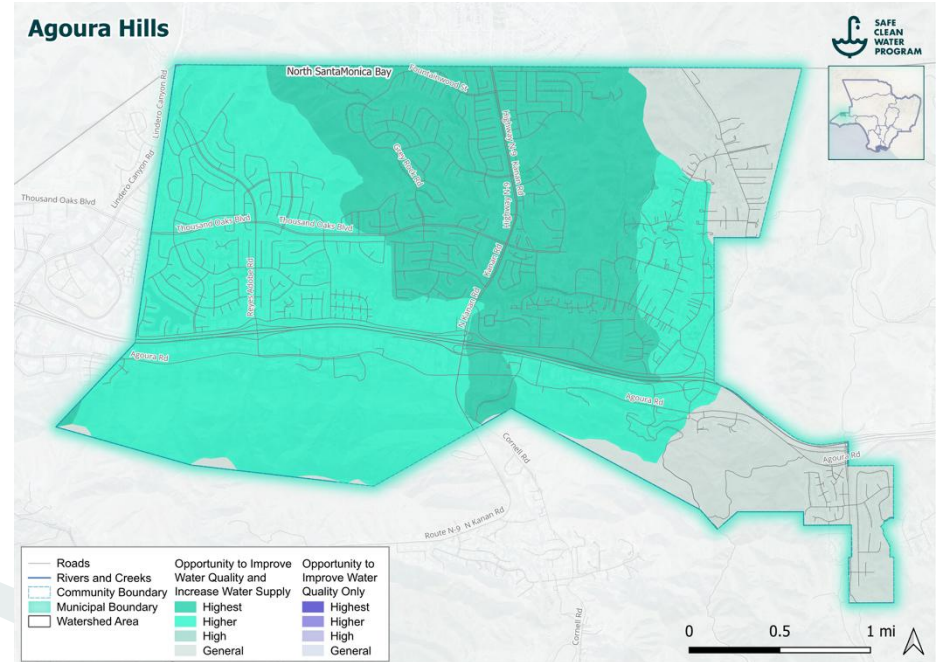
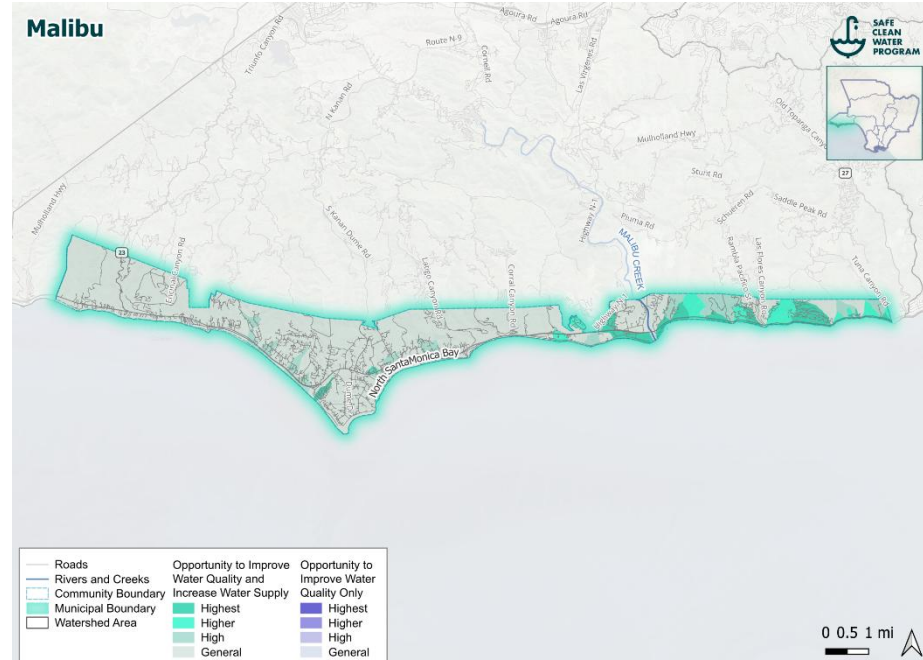


Figure 5-31. Opportunity to Improve Water Quality and Increase Water Supply: scaled by Municipality

5.2.1.11 Aligning Projects with Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities

The SCW Program funded Cornell-Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project serves as an example to illustrate how Municipalities and Project proponents can select Project design features that align with the NSMB WA Needs and strategies identified in this Initial Watershed Plan. This Project demonstrates how integrated planning can deliver multiple benefits, including improvements to water quality, water supply, and community well-being, while directly supporting several WA Needs and Goals.

As shown in Figure 5-32, Project components similar to those of the Cornell-Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project such as subterranean treatment sites, shade trees and native landscaping can be selected not only for their stormwater management utility, but also for their ability to:

- Improve water quality by targeting pollutants such as zinc,
- Enhance local water supply through infiltration to underlying groundwater basins,
- Increase urban greening and tree canopy to reduce heat island effects, and
- Provide recreational, ecological, and educational amenities.

Example features and benefits of the Cornell-Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project strategically align with the strategies and identified in the NSMB WA Initial Watershed Plan are outlined under the following four main Planning Themes:

- **Improve Water Quality (Goal A)**
- **Increase Drought Preparedness (Goal B)**
- **Improve Public Health (Goal C)**
- **Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions & Diverse Projects (Goal E, F, G)**

This example offers context for how other potential Projects can be designed to utilize a range of strategies to fulfill multiple WA Needs. While the Project benefits and strategies shown in this example are not exhaustive or prescriptive, the Cornell – Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project:

- Demonstrates multi-strategy alignment through deliberate feature selection,
- Highlights the potential of integrated design to address community and environmental priorities simultaneously, and
- Serves as a demonstration for Municipalities and Project proponents to build on this example by tailoring innovations to the unique water quality and other needs of their own communities.

Municipalities and Project proponents are encouraged to use this example as a starting point which can be expanded creatively to support various Goals in addition to improving water quality and to develop customized, high-impact, multi-benefit solutions.



Aligning Projects with Initial Watershed Plan Strategies, Actions, and Opportunities



Cornell-Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project

Current Phase: Construction

Project Description:

The Cornell-Mulholland Highway Green Improvement Project will deliver a range of benefits to the local community and environment. The Project is located within the Santa Monica Mountains at a key intersection of Cornell Road and Mulholland Highway, where runoff from surrounding hillsides and residential areas contributes to pollutant loading in nearby creeks and downstream water bodies. The main Project component is the installation of four subterranean treatment sites that will capture run-off from existing storm drains, treat it and then discharge the treated water into local creeks and ultimately the Pacific Ocean. The Project will also **incorporate nature-based solutions** by improving habitat along the roadside, adding drought tolerant plants, and where feasible selecting native species to support local habitat restoration.

Example Project Benefits Organized by Alignment with Initial Watershed Plan Strategies

Improve Water Quality (Goal A)

1.1 Prioritize high performance Projects and Programs in areas with the highest pollutant loads (e.g., action 1.1.1)

- Example Project Benefits:**
- 65.4% phosphorus removal, 85% removal of toxics including reduction of sediment and sediment associated with DDT and PCBs
 - 1.14 ac-ft of 24-hour Project treatment capacity
 - Provides treated clean water in to the Malibu Creek Watershed ecosystem

Increase Drought Preparedness (Goal B)

2.1 Link MS4 compliance and water supply planning to maximize stormwater capture for water quality and water supply (e.g., actions 2.1.1, 2.1.2)

2.3 Maximize stormwater runoff capture and management for water supply (e.g., action 2.3.1)

- Example Project Benefits:**
- Maintains local supply to local creek ecosystem
 - Promotes infiltration by reducing impervious areas

Improve Public Health (Goal C)

3.3 Help communities most affected by extreme heat mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change (e.g., actions 3.3.1, 3.3.2)

- Example Project Benefits:**
- New Areas of Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces (native and drought tolerant vegetation) to reduce urban heat island effect
 - 10 new trees for shade and urban cooling

Deliver Multi-Benefits with Nature-Based Solutions & Diverse Projects (Goal E, F, G)

4.3 Deliver nature-based, multi-benefit Projects and Program that improve water quality while addressing community priorities and concerns (e.g., action 4.3.1)

- Example Project Benefits:**
- Nature-based solutions by improving roadside native habitat

Figure 5-32. Example multi-benefit Project benefits, organized by alignment with Initial Watershed Plan strategies

Chapter 6. Watershed Planning Tool

The [Planning Tool](#) is a living, interactive version of the Initial Watershed Plans that communicates progress and strategies to support WASCs, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents in making strategic funding decisions.

The Planning Tool will live and evolve in the long term to reflect new and potential investments, best available data, and updates to the Initial Watershed Plans or Adaptive Watershed Plans (Chapter 7). The Planning Tool joins a variety of web-based tools that have been developed since the start of the SCW Program, which are currently used to support the administration and implementation of the SCW Program. These tools collectively comprise the SCW Program Portal, which promotes transparency, communicates progress through public-facing modules, and supports decision making by the SCW Program's governance committees, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents.

The Planning Tool seamlessly integrates Initial Watershed Plan outputs throughout the SCW Program Portal, providing updates that are responsive to new Projects and Programs and status updates. For example, at the close of each Regional Program Call for Projects cycle, the Planning Tool will be updated with information from Projects and Programs that are under funding consideration, utilizing data submitted through the Projects Module.

To support WASC deliberations, the Planning Tool will be integrated with the SIP Tool scenario-building functionality. This integration will allow WASCs to use the Planning Tool to visualize and compare different combinations of Projects under funding consideration. As part of this process, WASCs will be able to evaluate how each potential scenario aligns with their WA's targets, strategies, and priorities as outlined in this Initial Watershed Plan. The integration will also enable assessment of each Project's anticipated benefits ensuring that funding decisions are guided by data and aligned targets and strategies.

Additionally, through its connection to the Reporting Module, the Planning Tool will automatically update Project and Program information in each Regional Program Mid-Year and Annual Report and Municipal Program Annual Plan and Report cycles, to reflect current benefit, status, and expenditure updates. Figure 6-1 provides a description of each SCW Program Portal page and Module, including the Planning Tool while Figure 6-2 through Figure 6-4 outline key Planning Tool functionality to showcase how it will support the uses outlined in Figure 6-1.



SCW Program Portal

The SCW Program Portal hosts several modules and tools that work together to promote transparency, quantify and communicate progress, support report generation, broadcast opportunities, and facilitate decision making.



Public-facing Portal Elements

The public-facing SCW Program Portal elements promote transparency and tracking of progress and expenditures.

Map

The Map allows users to view the locations and details of funded and under consideration Projects and Programs. The Map is interactive, and users can pan, zoom, and toggle mapping layers.

Dashboard

The Dashboard provides transparency to the Program and allows for filtering and visualization of program information in an intuitive manner.

Reporting Repository

This repository promotes program transparency by enabling users to quickly access all progress reports and expenditure plans that have been completed to date.

Bid and Project Schedules

This page compiles and publishes information on potential future bid opportunities and Project schedules to enable identification and tracking of upcoming job opportunities.

Watershed Planning Tool

The Planning Tool serves as a living, interactive version of the Initial Watershed Plans. The Planning Tool defines Indicators and Performance Measures (PMs), illustrates benefits expected and realized by Projects and Programs funded to date, supports progress tracking, and communicates priorities.

Planning Map

The Planning Map spatially illustrates Projects and Programs funded to date as well as those under consideration. Opportunity layers help users understand where in the Watershed Area (WA) Projects or Programs could align with strategies and contribute to SCW Program Goals.

Planning Dashboard

The Planning Dashboard provides details on Planning Themes, Indicators, and PMs as they relate to SCW Program Goals. The Planning Dashboard quantifies the cumulative benefits of Projects in terms of each Indicator and PM and provides illustrative visuals that communicate progress to date.



Stormwater Investment Plan (SIP) Tool

The SIP Tool is the centerpiece for facilitating funding decisions by the Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) by enabling the WASCs to develop and compare funding scenarios. The SIP Tool summarizes Regional Program Projects, Project concepts, and Scientific Studies that were previously funded or are under consideration by the WASC and reports the projections of funding and estimated budgets remaining for each WASC.



Projects Module

The Projects Module provides key functionality for Regional Program funding applicants to submit Project, Project concept, and/or Scientific Study applications, streamlines scoring through automated calculations, and supports Watershed Planning through the collection of PM data.



Reporting Module

The SCW Program requires multiple levels of reporting across the Regional, Municipal and District Programs. The Reporting Module provides key functionality to Project Developers and Municipalities for generating reports and enables Public Works to promote transparency and consistency for expenditures and progress. The Reporting Module also supports Watershed Planning through the collection of PM data.



Watershed Coordinator Module

The Watershed Coordinator Module facilitates consistency and transparency with the Watershed Coordinator program while also providing technical tools to support Coordinators in tracking engagement and outreach meetings and events, funded and potential Project concepts, leveraged funding opportunities, interested parties, and more.

Figure 6-1. SCW Program Portal overview

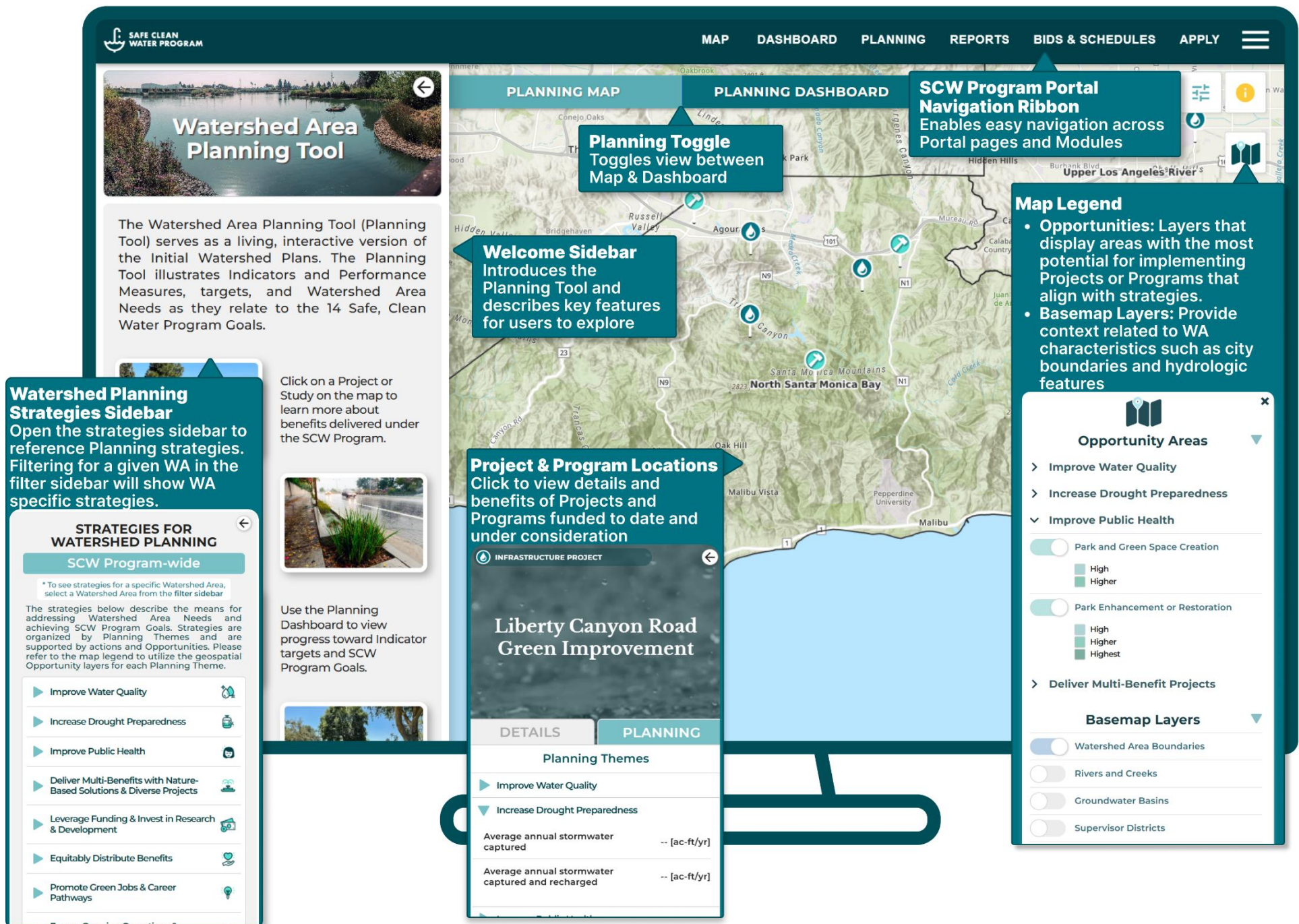


Figure 6-2. Planning Tool Map summary of functionality



Figure 6-3. Planning Tool Dashboard landing page



Figure 6-4. Planning Tool Dashboard Indicators and PMs progress chart examples

Chapter 7. Next Steps and Recommendations

Watershed Planning is an adaptive, evolving process informed by lessons learned, best available data, evolving needs, next steps identified in this Initial Watershed Plan and continued interested party engagement. The delivery of the Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tools marks a new phase in the SCW Program where these resources can support strategic decision-making, Project and Program planning, and progress tracking. Drawing from concepts in the USEPA's *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters* (2008), this chapter outlines how an Adaptive Management approach will be applied in both the near and long term. Recommended next steps for advancing Watershed Planning, summarized in Figure 7-1, deliver incremental updates to the Initial Watershed Plans, and through the development of future Adaptive Watershed Plans that incorporate new planning elements as needs evolve.

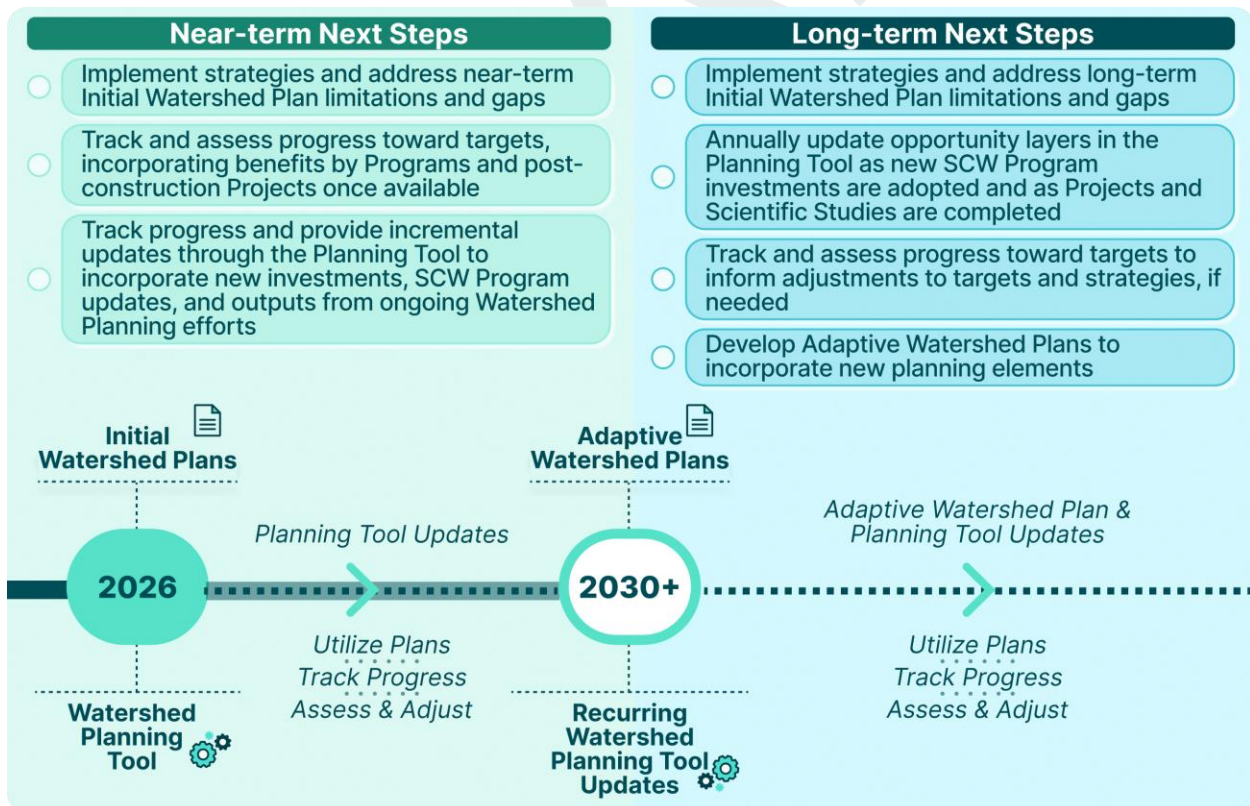


Figure 7-1. Watershed Planning near and long-term next steps

Adaptive Management is an integral component of the SCW Program (Goal L) and is defined as an iterative, incremental approach that is defined by continuous enhancements and adjustments to SCW



SCW Program Goal (18.04.L)

Implement an iterative planning and evaluation process to ensure adaptive management.

Program planning, implementation, and progress tracking and assessment. This process allows the SCW Program to evolve over time through the application of lessons learned, the incorporation of new data from SCW Program Project, Program, and Scientific Studies as well as outputs from other countywide and local efforts as they become available. Figure 7-2 illustrates SCW Program's Adaptive Management approach highlighting where the Initial and Adaptive Watershed Plans fit into this cycle of planning, implementing, tracking, and assessing that will continually improve the SCW Program to reflect ongoing developments and efforts.

Adaptive Management is an iterative, incremental approach to making decisions and adjustments in response to new learnings

Watershed Planning is a key component in ensuring effective Adaptive Management of the SCW Program

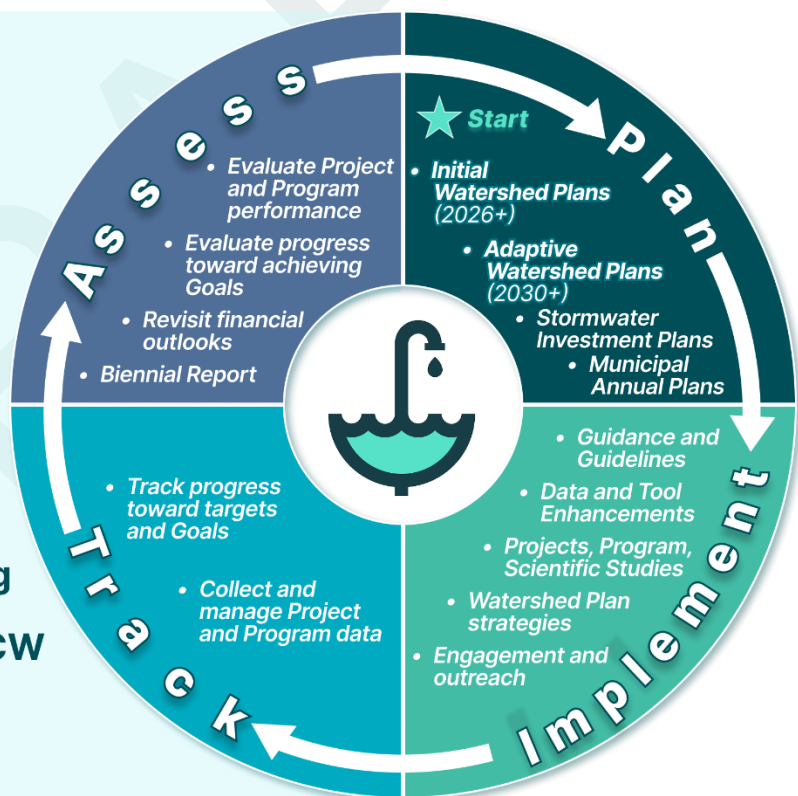


Figure 7-2. SCW Program Adaptive Management conceptual process

To date the following Adaptive Management efforts have been completed as part of SCW Program development (Figure 7-3):

- Development and adoption of Program guidelines
- Interactive Programming and mapping tools
- Launch of an online application Portal
- Data solicitation and tracking enhancements
- WA-specific and regional studies (Appendix E)

Recent SCW Program Adaptive Management Efforts	
2023	Transfer Agreements Update New SCW Tools Module
2024	Ordinance Revision Update Revised Regional Reporting and Call for Projects frequencies
	Metrics and Monitoring Study (MMS) Indicators, Performance Measures, Recommendations for SCW Program Adaptive Management
	Early Performance Measures for Further Incorporation/Evaluation ROC Strategy Session on MMS Outputs
	Technical Resources Program Update \$300k to \$400k allocation for developing a Feasibility Study
	Project Modification Guidelines Update Clarification and examples of modifications
	Public Education & Community Engagement Grants Program Program Launch and subsequent/ongoing collection of proposals
	RFSQ 2.0 Watershed Coordinators New proposals being evaluated; new WCs to start in 2026 (post-SIP approval)
	Municipal Program New Administration New Public Works team to administer and lead new collaborations
	Watershed Planning Framework Process, progress, & Initial Plans / online Planning Tool key elements
	Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA) Launch Collect responses from communities served by SCW Program
2025	Regional Program Reporting Module Update New Mid-Year Reports, Metrics & Measures section, new Performance Measure guidance
	Municipal Program Reporting Module Update Metrics & Measures section
	WASC SIP Programming Guidelines Enhanced financial oversight, prioritization, considerations
	Default Provisions and Lapsed Funding Guidelines Default vs good standing, lapsed funding, repayment of SCW funds
	Watershed Planning Supplemental Guidance Key definitions
	Scoring Criteria Pilot Adaptations Water Quality, Water Supply, Project phases, future considerations
	Interim Guidance Update Pilot scoring with phased revisions to 2022 Interim Guidance, to align with Watershed Planning
	Supplemental Guidance to Support Feasibility Study Guidelines Scoring Criteria pilot adaptations, Feasibility Study requirements
2026	Regional Program Reporting & Projects module Updates Projects Module QA/QC, updated Annual Reports
	Post-Construction Monitoring Guidance Initial Watershed Plans & Planning Tool 9 Initial Watershed Plans and a Watershed Planning Tool

Watershed Planning related effort

Figure 7-3. Recent SCW Program Adaptive Management

Watershed Planning efforts are informed through the assessment of progress towards Goals and input from SCW Program implementers (e.g., Public Works, Municipalities, Project and Program proponents), governance committees (e.g., ROC, Scoring Committee, WASCs), and interested parties (regional partners, community groups, and the public).

The following sections outline how Watershed Planning will adapt over time through similar Adaptive Management efforts that aim to address key gaps and Initial Watershed Plan limitations (gaps; Section 7.1). It will also reflect new investments and evolving priorities; both in the near-term through Initial Watershed Plan and in the long-term through Planning Tool updates and Adaptive Watershed Plans.

7.1 Key Gaps and Limitations

Watershed Planning efforts to date have identified several data gaps and limitations that would strengthen the SCW Program's ability to refine implementation efforts, track progress, and assess achievement of Goals. Watershed Planning defines a gap as a lack of information that is definitionally, temporally, or spatially, needed to create or refine a baseline, target, or opportunity or assess progress towards achieving a Goal. Gaps identified to date fall within five categories:

- Definitional Gaps
- Community Data Gaps
- SCW Program Project & Program Data Gaps
- Knowledge & Spatial Data Gaps
- Other non-SCW Program Activity Data Gaps

Identifying and addressing near-term gaps is the first and most critical step in advancing Watershed Planning. Continuous engagement, intensive data collection, updated guidance and guidelines, and/or Scientific Studies that aim to formulate and understand evolving topics will be vital in addressing long-term gaps as the Program progresses. Figure 7-4 and onward on the following pages describe the near and long-term gaps identified within each of the five categories above as well as the recommended approaches or efforts to address them.

Definitional Gaps

Establishing a shared language and gaining clarity on policy language and metric definitions is needed to appropriately quantify metrics and develop clear and concise Adaptive Watershed Plans. Addressing the following definitional gaps through engagement with SCW Program governance committees and other interested parties in the near-term will support effective communication and watershed planning assessments as the Initial Watershed Plans are advanced to Adaptive Watershed Plans

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Nature-Based Solutions	Create definitions, standards, and criteria - including potential Indicator and/or PMs based on pending panel discussion in mid-2025. CWP NBS Task Force is slated to provide insight and support.	Engagement, Technical Workshops, Regional Coordination	Near-term	Public Works, CWP NBS Task Force
Habitat	Confirm definition and needs related to habitat creation, enhancement, and restoration through engagement with non-governmental organizations and academic experts and coordination with regional planning efforts like the Los Angeles River Master Plan.	Engagement, Technical Workshops, Regional Coordination	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs
Tree canopy	Confirm definition and needs related to mature tree canopy and guidance for developers to estimate it through engagement with state agencies like CAL FIRE, county departments like Parks and Recreation, and regional planning efforts like the County Community Forests Management Plan (CFMP).	Engagement, Technical Workshops, Regional Coordination	Near-term	Public Works, OWLA
Green jobs	Ensure Performance Measures and Indicators reflect career quality, advancement opportunities, various job classification/ labor distributions, and other input from the ROC and Accelerate Resilience Los Angeles (ARLA).	Engagement, Technical Workshops	Near-term	Public Works, ROC, ARLA
Other activity Indicators and Performance Measures	Define guidance for estimating Performance Measures for SCW Program funded non-structural Activities, and engage with Scoring Committee to determine how funded activities impact co-located Projects. The "Maximizing Impact of Minimum Control Measures" Scientific Study explores the improvement of tracking and optimization of stormwater management to align more efficiently with Watershed Area Goals, increasing their impact and cost-effectiveness, and may be referenced to address this gap.	Engagement, Technical Workshops	Near-term	Public Works, Scoring Committee
Environmental Water Benefits	Refine definition of Environmental Water Benefits in terms of Community Investment Benefits (CIBs) and Water Quality Benefits to support this gap, as Environmental Water Benefits do not count towards Water Supply Benefits.	Engagement, Technical Workshops	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs

Figure 7-4. Summary of and recommendations for addressing definitional gaps

Community Data Gaps

Community-based perspectives are needed to understand community strengths to reinforce and needs to address. The following community data gaps aim to recognize that community-based perspectives and engagement efforts continuously react and evolve with recent events. These gaps represent long-term considerations for Watershed Planning and Adaptive Management and aim to emphasize the importance of ongoing engagement and thoughtful guidelines.

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Compilation of existing community data	Outcomes of past and ongoing Countywide and local engagement efforts are widespread but identifying and aggregating these efforts and their outcomes is difficult. The compilation of engagement outcomes to date is critical to understanding community needs and avoiding redundancy. A central site that streamlines outcomes and/or resources would help to close this gap and support Project and Program implementation that is in alignment with their communities.	Data collection, Tool updates, Regional Coordination, Guidance & Guidelines	Long-term	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
Continuously evolving community perspectives	Community-based perspectives may adapt over time based on changing conditions and other events, while engagement effort outcomes inherently represent snapshots in time. Revised and expanded SCW Program engagement guidance that recognizes the adaptive nature of community-based perspectives would support this gap. Recommended guidance may set standards for repeated engagement efforts, and assessments for how to engage both community members who have not participated previously, to capture evolving strengths and needs while avoiding redundancy. Revised guidance should integrate considerations from watershed planning efforts, metrics, past engagement, and the CSNA.	Engagement, revised Guidance & Guidelines	Long-term	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
Inherent bias in engagement efforts	Inherent bias in engagement efforts is critical to recognize and address in every engagement effort. Outcomes drawn from engagement inherently favor the opinions of community members who both have access to the engagement effort and have the resources to engage with the proprietors of it, while the needs of those that do not participate are no less critical to the engagement process. Revised and expanded SCW Program engagement guidance and resources would support this gap in the long-term by integrating considerations from watershed planning efforts, metrics, past engagement, and the CSNA that are centered around minimizing bias in engagement efforts.	Revised Guidance & Guidelines	Long-term	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators
Reconciliation of general input vs. Project-specific data	CSNA results provide general perspective on community priorities, but in order to more accurately understand community needs and provide support, Project-specific engagement data will also need to be collected. Findings will support Project and Program-specific outreach strategies to reflect and acknowledge community-identified priorities and concerns to foster trust and ensure that engagement efforts are both responsive and relevant to the communities they aim to serve.	Engagement, Data collection, Tool updates, Regional Coordination	Long-term	Public Works, Watershed Coordinators

Figure 7-5. Summary of and recommendations for addressing community data gaps

Community Data Gaps (*continued*)

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program data collection	Through a partnership with the Water Foundation, the SCW Public Education and Community Engagement Grants Program will provide funding to support education and community engagement efforts related to stormwater and urban runoff capture within the LACFCD. Data collected by this Program should also be considered to support community data gaps.	Data collection, Tool updates, Regional Coordination	Long-term	Public Works, Water Foundation

Figure 7-5. Summary of and recommendations for addressing community data gaps (*continued*)

SCW Program Project & Program Data Gaps

While many Project metrics were collected for the Initial Watershed Plans, there are a few outstanding gaps surrounding quantification methods that need to be addressed to enable effective tracking and assessment of progress.

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Load and load reduction quantification for bacteria, DDT, and PCBs	Adoption and use of additional hydrologic simulation criteria for bacteria, dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), and Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) load generation in stormwater runoff and the load reduction by Projects. Engage with Scoring Committee to assess the impact of new criteria on Project scoring. The "LRS Adaptation to Address the LA River Bacteria TMDL for the ULAR Watershed Management Group" Scientific Study explores hydrologic simulation of bacteria levels in the LA River, and may be employed as a resource for addressing this gap.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs, Scoring Committee
Load and load reduction quantification for trash	Standardization of the methods for quantifying trash generation in stormwater runoff and trash reduction by Projects. Developing a standardized approach for quantifying trash captured and removed by SCW Program Projects will enable comparisons and consistent progress tracking with the program. Added technical workshops with the WASCs, WMGs, and Scoring Committee to agree upon an approach and develop corresponding guidance that may be used by the SCW Tools and Adaptive Watershed Plans is recommended.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates, Technical Workshops	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs, Scoring Committee
Water Supply fate quantification via simulation	Simulated BMP performance that specifically parses water supply fate; that is, Projects that offer multiple Water Supply Benefits should be accurately simulated to ensure consistent quantification and efficient progress tracking of benefits across SCW Tools and Adaptive Watershed Plans.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC
Project monitoring data and post-performance metrics	Selection and integration of post-construction monitoring and performance metrics developed by MMS are not yet confirmed. Establishing a standardized set of metrics and incorporating them into the Reporting Module and Planning Tool will support consistent evaluation and tracking of Project post-construction monitoring and performance. Integration of these metrics and results into future Adaptive Watershed Plans is recommended to ensure alignment across SCW Program tools and planning efforts.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC

Figure 7-6. Summary of and recommendations for addressing SCW Project & Program data gaps

SCW Program Project & Program Data Gaps (*continued*)

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Methods and data to quantify benefits provided by non-structural activities	While the Initial Watershed Plans define Indicators and PMs for Projects, to fully understand the benefits provided by the SCW Program and progress toward Goals other non-structural Activity metrics and benefits need to be defined and quantified.	Guidance & Guidelines, Data Collection, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, Municipalities
DAC CIB ratio user-defined service areas	Support for user-defined DAC and CIB ratio service areas is currently not available within the Planning Tool. At present, the Tool assigns default service areas to Projects based on the benefits they provide, which may not reflect locally defined priorities or service area boundaries. Addressing this gap through the development of clear guidance and guidelines, along with updates to the Planning Tool to accommodate user-defined service areas, is recommended to enhance flexibility.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works
Pollutant reductions by dry-weather Projects	Dry-weather Projects are not currently modeled or scored for pollutant load reduction in the SCW Program Portal. Pollutant load reduction performance of dry-weather Projects is not well characterized or standardized, as these reductions are highly site-specific and depend on localized conditions such as flow volumes, pollutant concentrations, and treatment system design. At present, estimating pollutant load reductions for dry-weather Projects relies primarily on site-specific monitoring data rather than predictive modeling, which is not currently available or integrated into the SCW Program Portal. Addressing this gap would improve the ability to quantify and compare pollutant load reductions of dry-weather Projects and more fully capture their potential contributions to watershed pollutant reduction.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, Scoring Committee

Figure 7-6. Summary of and recommendations for addressing SCW Project & Program data gaps (*continued*)

Knowledge & Spatial Data Gaps

To support future Adaptive Watershed Planning, the Initial Watershed Planning process identified critical gaps in the spatial coverage of key data layers and research areas where improved understanding would directly advance progress toward SCW Program Goals. Addressing these gaps will require comprehensive data collection efforts and targeted research initiatives.

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Sewer system capacity for diversion for reuse BMPs	Assess, through engagement with local sanitation district staff, sewer system and reclamation plant capacities for additional stormwater diversions	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, Sanitation Districts
Aquifer and groundwater recharge locations	The LACFCD and the United States Geological Survey (USGS) is initiating a collaborative study, "Stormwater Recharge Efficiency in the Greater Los Angeles Region", focused on this topic. Its primary purpose is to enhance the understanding and management of stormwater capture and infiltration for groundwater recharge across the Los Angeles region. The study is expected to span four years and will provide enhanced planning resources such as models and tools that identify effective stormwater recharge opportunities. Once available, Watershed Planning can address this gap and enhance related strategies using this study's outputs.	Guidance & Guidelines, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASC, Water Masters
Leveraged funding sources	The identification of leveraged funding sources and grant opportunities has been a long standing knowledge gap which is frequently echoed by engagement input. While the SCW Program published a Leveraged Funding Report once a quarter, this resource should be enhanced through SCW Program Portal updates and a public-facing page which continuously updates as sources are identified or expire.	Data Collection, Tool Updates	Near-term	Public Works, WASCs, State Agencies, Federal Agencies, NGOs
Wildfires' impacts on major capture facility and Project performance and O&M	While it is understood that wildfires have both immediate and long-term impacts on infrastructure and water quality, specific implications and remedial actions for stormwater facilities and Projects are not well defined. Regionally coordinated post-fire monitoring data collection and research is recommended to support implementation of post-fire O&M practices and Watershed Planning in the long-term. The "Fire Effects Study in the ULAR Watershed Management Area" seeks to evaluate the downstream pollutant loading impacts of wildfires and create BMP models to support water quality objectives, and elements may be used to support this gap; however, Study reviewers report that the Study may lack some key details on objectives and clarity about which contaminants will be measured and how. This Study may be referenced, but additional research may be required.	Guidance & Guidelines, Data Collection	Long-term	Public Works, WASC, SWRCB, CAL FIRE

Figure 7-7. Summary of and recommendations for addressing knowledge and spatial data gaps

Knowledge & Spatial Data Gaps (*continued*)

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Geotechnical and soil infiltration rate spatial data	As acknowledged by the SCW Program funded Scientific Study, the Gateway Area Pathfinding Analysis, soil infiltration rates at Project sites are highly uncertain, not well predicted by available datasets, and require geotechnical investigation to accurately estimate. Aggregating site-specific geotechnical estimations from funded Projects would offer added context for WASCs and Project developers who have yet to conduct investigations themselves, enabling more informed Project planning and prioritization that maximizes Water Supply Benefits. “Ground truth: guiding a soils-based strategy for impactful nature-based solutions” is a Scientific Study that primarily explores LLAR soil capacity, but its methods may be applicable across other Watershed Areas as well. The 2024 Scientific Study, “Evaluation of infiltration testing methods for design of stormwater drywell systems,” may also be helpful in evaluating infiltration test methods and understanding how drywells can be utilized to manage stormwater and improve water quality.	Data Collection, Tool Updates	Long-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs
Site-specific Project opportunities and prioritization information	While the Initial Watershed Plans identify areas of opportunity for Project and Program implementation, Adaptive Watershed Plans may identify and prioritize site-specific Project opportunities. To date there have been several SCW and non-SCW Program key efforts, such as Scientific Studies (e.g., Gateway Area Pathfinding Analysis) or other Countywide and local planning efforts, that have identified site-specific Project opportunities. These datasets should be compiled and made available within the SCW Program Portal to support WASCs, Municipalities, and Project and Program proponents in the near-term, and the development of Adaptive Watershed Plans in the long-term.	Data Collection, Tool Updates, Adaptive Watershed Plans	Long-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs
Regional water quality monitoring data tracking and assessment	The SCW Program currently lacks a unified, long-term approach for tracking, integrating, and assessing regional water quality monitoring data—such as receiving water and outfall monitoring required by MS4 permits—across all Watershed Areas. Without consistent evaluation of this data, it's challenging to track hydrologic trends, assess water quality improvements, and inform long-term planning for SCW Program-funded Projects. To address this, the Program could establish a long-term framework for tracking, analyzing, and utilizing regional monitoring data to support strategic decision-making and Adaptive Management.	Data Collection, Tool Updates	Long-term	Public Works, WASC, WMGs, Municipalities, SWRCB
Environmental flows	Compile resources on environmental flows like the California Environmental Flows Framework (CEFF; https://ceff.ucdavis.edu) and consider possible benefits Projects and Programs can lend to improvement of environmental flows.	Guidance & Guidelines	Long-term	Public Works, WASC, SWRCB

Figure 7-7. Summary of and recommendations for addressing knowledge and spatial data gaps (*continued*)

Other non-SCW Program Activity Data Gaps

The following gaps describe the data needed to quantify benefits provided by other non-SCW Program Projects and other activities.

Gap	Summary & Recommendations	Effort to Address	Timeline	Who Should Be Involved
Non-SCW Program funded Projects and their benefits	<p>The SCW Program's current Watershed Planning framework does not yet account for non-SCW Program-funded Projects that contribute to Water Quality and Water Supply Benefits. While target setting has considered some efforts—such as GLAC IRWMP and MS4 Program Projects—many other significant stormwater capture initiatives (e.g., Prop O, and local agency investments) are not currently integrated into SCW Program performance assessments or opportunities. <i>(Note that major centralized capture facilities such as dams, spreading grounds, reservoirs, and low flow diversions are already accounted for in baseline and opportunity analyses; this gap is specific to decentralized Projects.)</i></p> <p>The omission of these Projects from both the baseline and opportunity analyses limits the ability to fully understand cumulative watershed-scale outcomes, such as the total volume of stormwater captured and treated. This can affect how accurately SCW Program targets are evaluated and how future investments are prioritized, especially in areas where non-SCW Projects are delivering substantial benefits.</p> <p>To address this gap, future updates to the SCW Planning Tool may include non-SCW Projects from other major funding programs to provide a more comprehensive picture of regional stormwater management efforts. In the near term, narrative data and Project-level details gathered directly from Project proponents can help inform assessments of non-SCW contributions and interactions, enhancing the understanding of upstream/downstream interactions and refining Project selections and programmatic evaluations.</p>	Regional Coordination, Data Collection, Tool Updates	Long-term	Public Works

Figure 7-8. Summary of and recommendations for addressing other activity data gaps

7.2 Next Steps and Recommendations for Watershed Planning

As SCW Program implementation progresses, it is essential to continuously refine and enhance Initial Watershed Plan outputs to ensure they remain effective and relevant. This Section outlines the recommended next for advancing Watershed Planning (Figure 7-9).

In the near term, each of the nine Initial Watershed Plans will be adopted in 2026 by the LACFCD Chief Engineer to serve as SCW Program guidance documents and support future decision-making by the Regional, Municipal and District Programs. The Planning Tool will also be used to communicate progress and implementation updates in the near term. Long-term Watershed Planning includes the development of Adaptive Watershed Plans that will integrate updates and new planning elements based on an assessment of progress, emerging priorities, and evolving watershed dynamics. Adaptive Watershed Plans will be considered on five-year intervals and will be developed on an as-needed basis. The assessment criteria for prompting updates to Initial Watershed Plan updates through an Adaptive Watershed Plan are outlined in Section 7.2.3.

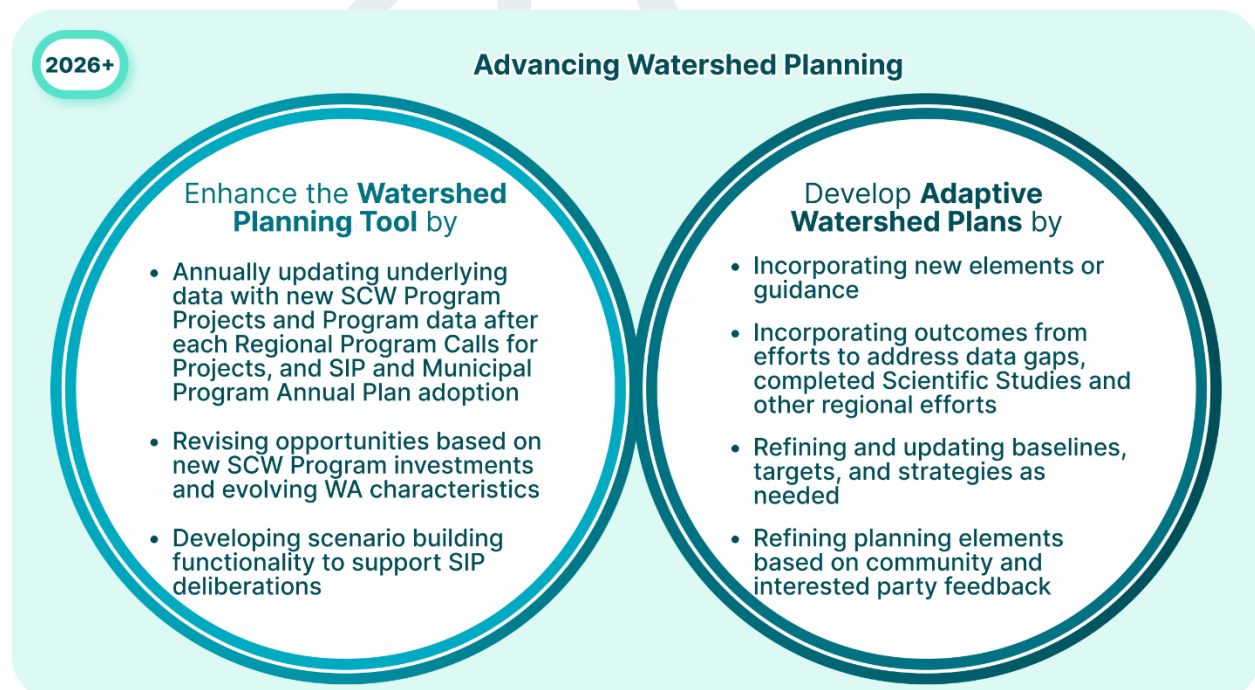


Figure 7-9. Next steps for Watershed Planning

Through an Adaptive Management approach, Watershed Planning will seek to address gaps, assess progress, and adjust targets and strategies in five-year intervals. The following recommendations (Figure 7-10) for the Adaptive Management of Watershed Planning provide near-term and long-term direction for implementation, tracking, and assessment to inform future Watershed Planning efforts.

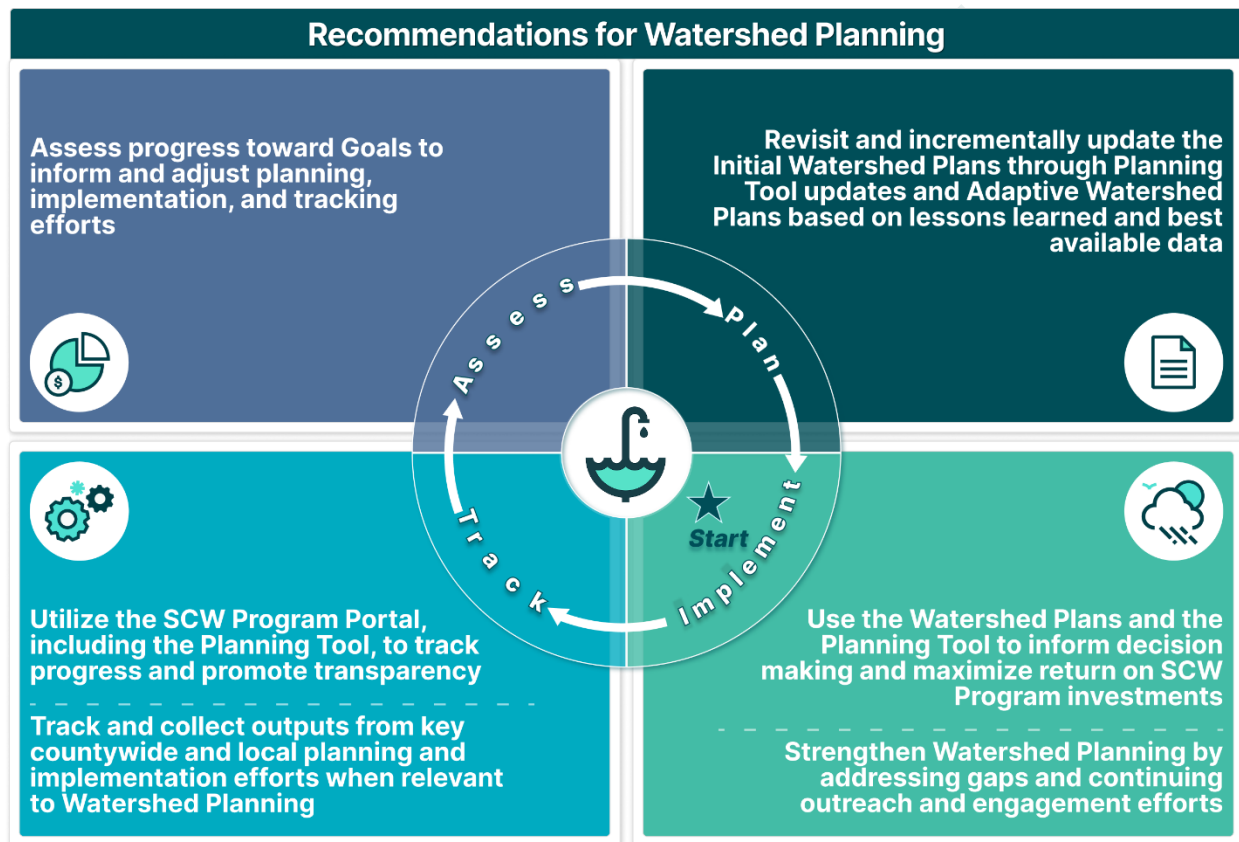


Figure 7-10. Long-term recommendations for Watershed Planning

7.2.1 Implement Strategies



Implement

This subsection provides recommendations to execute strategies to make informed funding decisions and direct funding toward the highest value multi-benefit Projects and Programs



Use the Watershed Plans and the Planning Tool to inform decision making and maximize return on SCW Program investments, including the following:

- WASCs, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents should use the Initial Watershed Plans and Planning Tool to inform funding and implementation decisions **(near-term)**³¹: As described in Figure 1-7, WASCs, Municipalities, Public Works, and Project and Program proponents should use the Initial Watershed Plans to understand WA Needs and strategies to address them. The Planning Tool will serve as a living version of the Plans and is a great resource for Public Works, WASCs, Municipalities, Project and Program proponents, and community members to evaluate progress, understand priorities, and interact with composite opportunities to clearly identify areas with the most potential for delivering multiple benefits across Planning Themes and Goals. In combination with the Initial Watershed Plans, Public Works, WASCs, and Municipalities can reference the Planning Tool to inform Project and Program funding and implementation decisions. This guidance will be further strengthened by integrating the Planning Tool to the SIP Tool (described in Figure 6-1), enabling WASCs to gain a better understanding of potential funding scenarios and the cumulative impacts of Project selections.
- Implement Projects, Programs, and Studies that align with strategies and that address gaps (as described under the following recommendation) **(near-term/long-term)** To address WA Needs and make progress toward targets, WASCs and Municipalities should prioritize Projects and Programs that align with Watershed Planning strategies, especially those that are situated where there is the most opportunity to provide multiple benefits across Planning Themes and Goals, to provide the greatest cumulative benefits. Public Works and the WASCs may prioritize Scientific Studies and other activities such as,

²⁵ While referencing the Initial Watershed Plans and utilizing its outputs is encouraged, it is not a SCW Program requirement.

but not limited to, technical studies, monitoring, modeling, and other similar activities to help address gaps outlined in Section 7.1.

- **Convene a Public Works led Scientific Study panel to consider studies that support planning, as below (*near-term*):** There have been 23 unique Scientific Studies funded by the SCW Program from FY20-21 to FY25-26. It is recommended that Watershed Planning be strengthened by the incorporation of standardized periodic review of Scientific Study outputs by a Public Works led panel as an element of Adaptive Management. As funded Scientific Studies reach completion, it is recommended that their findings be tracked and assessed for integration into Initial Watershed Plan or Adaptive Watershed Plans.
- **Update the SCW Program Feasibility Study Guidelines (*near-term*):** Update the [SCW Program Feasibility Study Guidelines](#) to include a new 20th requirement ensuring that applicants demonstrate alignment of their Projects and applications with the Initial Watershed Plans. This addition will help strengthen coordination between proposed Projects and WA-specific strategies, supporting more effective and regionally consistent stormwater investments. These Guidelines, which describe the minimum requirements for Feasibility Studies, may be periodically updated as deemed necessary or appropriate by the Chief Engineer of the LACFCD per section 18.07.B.3 of the SCW Program Implementation Ordinance (LACFCD Code §18.07.B.3). Feasibility Studies must meet all established requirements, including this proposed alignment criterion, to be eligible for consideration and scoring under the SCW Program. Projects failing to meet these requirements will not advance for further evaluation or funding consideration.



Strengthen Watershed Planning by addressing gaps and continuing outreach and engagement efforts, including the following:

- **Address gaps through new guidance and guidelines, SCW Program Portal updates, outreach and engagement, research, and data collection (*near-term/long-term*):** Gaps identified in the Initial Watershed Plans should be addressed per Section 7.1. Addressing these gaps will likely result in the publication of new guidance and guidelines, SCW Program Portal enhancements, SCW Program Spatial Data Library updates, outreach and engagement events or meetings, research, data collection, technical working group sessions, etc. Gaps flagged as near-term items, particularly those that are essential for quantifying baselines and refining strategies, should be

prioritized and incorporated as part of Initial Watershed Plans and corresponding Planning Tool updates.

- **Continue outreach and engagement efforts to capture shifting priorities (*near-term/long-term*):** As described in Figure 7-5, continued, long-term engagement is critical to Watershed Planning such that evolving community and SCW Program governance committee perspectives and priorities are captured by strategies and reflect ongoing developments in the WAs and Los Angeles region. Watershed Coordinators will take the lead in facilitating engagement to build trust and bridge communication gaps between Project and Program proponents and interested parties.

7.2.2 Track Data



Track

This subsection provides recommendations to collect data and track progress by efforts to date to provide the data necessary for assessing past implementation and for driving future decision making



Utilize the SCW Program Portal, including the Planning Tool, to update baselines, track progress, and promote transparency, including the following:

- **Utilize the Planning Tool to track progress toward meeting targets and achieving Goals (*near-term/long-term*):** Annually update progress to reflect the benefits realized by completed Projects and Programs as well as benefits anticipated by new SCW Program Projects and Program that are under consideration by or funded through SIPs and Municipal Annual Plans and Reports.
- **Support Municipalities and Project proponents and bolster data consistency with enhanced SCW Program Portal Tools (*near-term*):** Enhance the SCW Program Portal—including the Planning Tool—to improve the tracking of Projects and Programs benefits. Portal enhancements should integrate Indicators and PMs, streamline data collection and summaries, and facilitate data validation. For example, improved water quality and water supply modeling capabilities would enable more consistent and reliable benefit estimates while simplifying data entry and reporting for Municipalities and Project proponents.

To promote transparency and support comprehensive progress tracking, the Portal should also be enhanced to better reflect the contributions and funding

allocations of non-structural Programs, such as Municipal Program Activities (e.g., O&M, outreach and engagement, and post-construction monitoring) and Regional Program Scientific Studies.

Integrating Indicators and PMs throughout the SCW Program Portal and across all SCW Program components—including Municipal, Regional, and District Program data inputs, reporting outputs, and public-facing summaries—will improve coordination and consistency, and enable robust, SCW Program-wide tracking of progress and outcomes.

- **Streamline progress tracking and reporting through the SCW Program Portal (*near-term*):** Update reporting outputs such as the Regional Program Mid-Year and Annual Reports, the Watershed Area Regional Program Progress (WARPP) Report, and Municipal Program Annual Plans and Reports to incorporate Indicators and PMs and promote consistency across the SCW Program.



Track and collect outputs from key countywide and local planning and implementation efforts when relevant to Watershed Planning, including the following:

- **Bolster regional coordination by tracking and compiling outputs by countywide and local planning and implementation efforts that are relevant to Watershed Planning (*near-term/long-term*):** The Initial Watershed Plans identified several countywide and local planning and implementation efforts whose goals align with those of the SCW Program. While many of the outputs from these efforts were considered and incorporated into Initial Watershed Plan outputs, several efforts are still ongoing but are expected to produce outputs relevant to the SCW Program. For example, the LA County CFMP includes action items to identify opportunities for depaving and priority tree planting projects which could serve as opportunities for meeting the target for the Indicator *Net New Area of Canopy, Cooling, and Shading Surfaces*. Additionally, water quality monitoring performed and reported by Municipalities and local regulatory updates related to environmental flows from California SWRCB Department of Water Rights will be tracked for impacts to regulated waterbodies with habitat beneficial uses. The development of an approach for compiling and assessing this data will be developed in the long term.

Tracking and compiling of these efforts facilitate the SCW Program's commitment to regional partnerships and bolsters the shared vision of

achieving countywide targets. Tracking this information will support progress assessment and corresponding adjustments to targets and strategies such that the best available data is iteratively incorporated.

- **Track non-SCW Program contribution to countywide targets (*near-term*):** Watershed Planning will consider tracking and updating estimates of contributions to countywide targets made by non-SCW Program stormwater capture programs such as MS4 programs and Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs). This data will support assessments of SCW Program targets and strategies and inform adjustments if needed.
- **Compile results and key findings from Scientific Studies and other relevant research efforts (*near-term*):** In addition to SCW Program funded Scientific Studies, there are several studies underway that may have impacts for SCW Program strategies and WA characteristics. Watershed Planning will compile key findings from SCW Program funded Scientific Studies and consider those of other relevant research efforts.
- **Enhance the SCW Program Portal to track and summarize leveraged funding sources and opportunities (*near-term*):** The need for leveraged funding opportunities is voiced regularly by Project and Program proponents and reiterated in SCW Program governance committee meetings. The importance of leveraged funding opportunities is emphasized by financial outlooks (Appendix F), which show that as Projects are completed, an increasing share of Regional Program funding may be allocated toward O&M to ensure the long-term effectiveness of these Projects and achievement of SCW Program Goal N.

With support from the Watershed Coordinators, the SCW Program has published quarterly Leveraged Funding Reports which provide an overview of recent funding policy highlights and shares active and upcoming funding opportunities that may be relevant to SCW Program Projects. Tracking of these funding opportunities should be enhanced through updates to the SCW Program Portal such as a new element on the public-facing Portal which displays funding opportunities and is automatically updated as new opportunities are identified or as deadlines pass. This page could directly pull from the Watershed Coordinator Module, through which Watershed Coordinators can maintain a list of known and upcoming funding opportunities.

7.2.3 Assess Progress



Assess

This subsection provides recommendations to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate data collected to assess progress and adjust planning, implementation, and tracking



Assess progress toward Goals to inform and adjust planning, implementation, and tracking efforts, including the following:

- Compare progress and realized benefits with their targets and evaluate progress toward achieving Goals (***near-term/long-term***): Watershed Planning will continuously assess the cumulative benefits anticipated and realized by SCW Program Projects and Programs to assess progress toward meeting targets and achieving Goals. To support this process and ensure effective implementation of Watershed Planning efforts, this recommendation incorporates the *USEPA's Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters* (2008) concept of an evaluation framework. Evaluation frameworks are important tools in the Adaptive Management process that support the documentation of outcomes, evaluation of what works and why, and inform continual changes to plans and efforts. Evaluation frameworks consider three components (inputs, outputs, and outcomes) to demonstrate progress and inform improvements.

The inputs represent the processes needed to implement Watershed Planning (e.g., Initial Watershed Plans), the expected Initial Watershed Plan outputs to be performed (e.g., strategies), and the anticipated outcomes from implementing those activities (e.g., meeting targets and achieving Goals). Figure 7-11 outlines an evaluation framework for Watershed Planning to illustrate how Watershed Planning will live and evolve in the long-term through regular progress assessments which inform adjustments to targets, strategies, and the Planning Tool to reflect ongoing developments in the region.

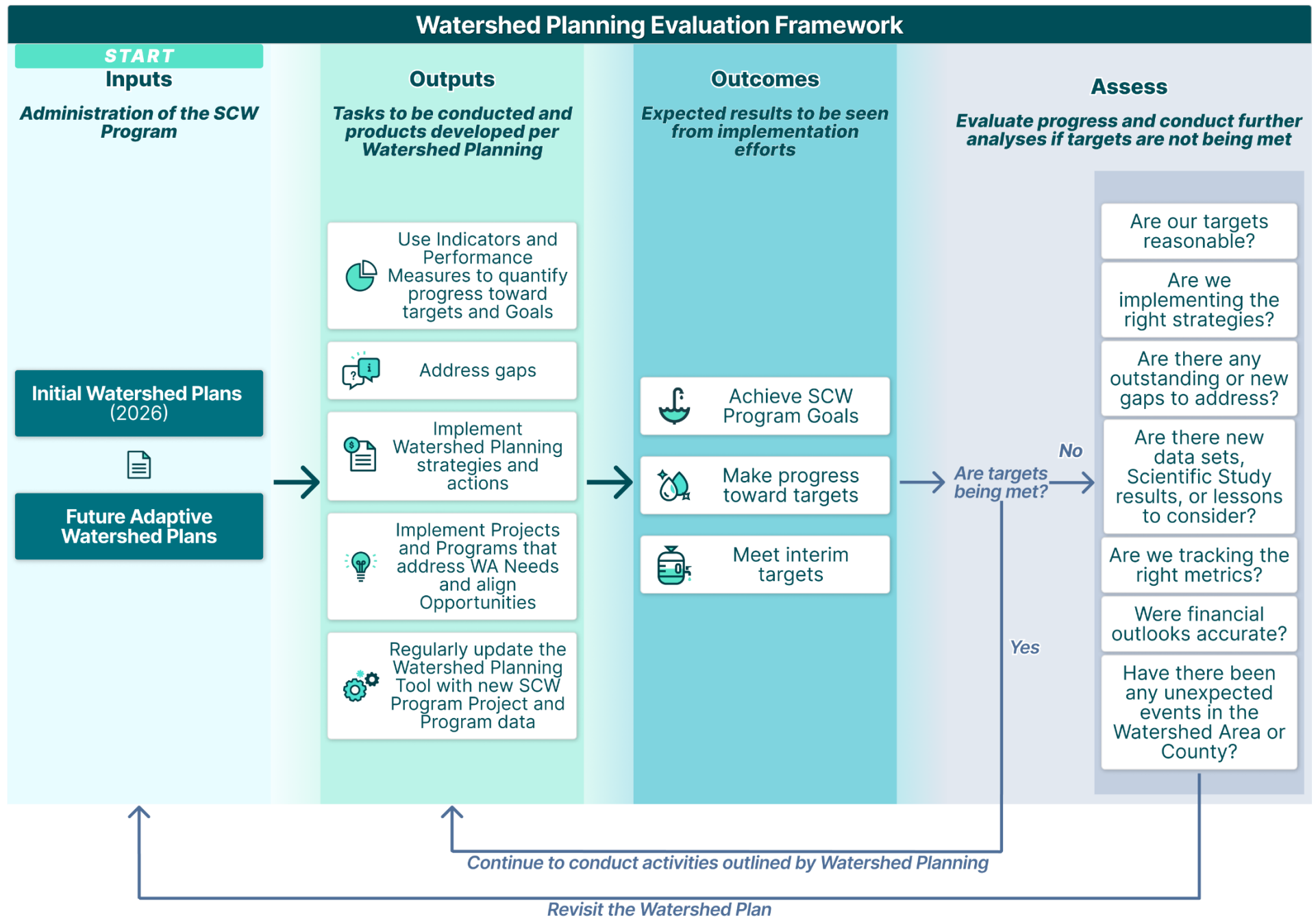


Figure 7-11. Watershed planning evaluation framework

- Compare realized benefits to their targets and evaluate progress toward achieving Goals (continued) (*near-term/long-term*): Referencing the evaluation framework outlined by Figure 7-11, in the event that interim targets are not being met or progress is otherwise not as expected, there are several assessment questions that can be used to determine how best to adjust planning, implementation, and tracking to accelerate progress. Before adjusting planning, implementation, or tracking efforts, the following questions should be asked and assessed:
 - *Are our targets reasonable?* Targets may be revisited and adjusted to reflect ongoing developments in the WAs and region. Target timelines and interim target values can also be evaluated alongside financial outlooks to determine if more time is needed before we can reasonably expect to meet targets. A more robust integration of the Regional Program Project financial models with target-setting may also be considered to determine if targets remain realistic and achievable.
 - *Are we implementing the right strategies?* If strategies are being implemented as expected but progress towards addressing needs and meeting goals is limited or absent, the strategies and their identified opportunities should be adjusted. There may have been gaps addressed, or new data and resources made available that warrant revisions to strategies.
 - *Are there new data sets, Scientific Study results, or lessons to consider?* As more Projects and Programs are funded and completed, Projects and their realized benefits will evolve, and strategies may need to be adjusted to better direct future investments to the right opportunities based on ongoing developments in the WAs. Results from scientific studies should similarly be continuously evaluated for incorporation in underlying data and strategies.
 - *Are we tracking the right metrics?* Consider reviewing Indicators and PMs and their quantification to ensure that they are accurately capturing progress to date. For example, the methods for quantifying proportionality of benefits accruing to DACs may need to be reevaluated and adjusted if progress is less than expected. Additional or revised metrics may need to be considered to ensure a comprehensive summary of progress.
 - *Were financial outlooks accurate?* Funding budgets and allocations are published annually via the Regional Program SIPs and Municipal Annual Plans are developed annually. The Projects and Programs reflected in these plans contribute to an assessment of expected progress. If there is

a shortfall in anticipated funding or unforeseen expenses, benefits may not be realized as quickly as expected. An assessment of financial outlooks will provide insight on why progress is less than expected and inform how targets or strategies may need to be adjusted to reflect current conditions and realities of the WAs and SCW Program.

- **Have there been any unexpected or recent events in the WA or Los Angeles region?** Before revising targets and strategies, unexpected or recent events will be considered to determine if they contributed to a lack of progress. Unusual weather, climate disasters, or shifting regulatory or funding conditions for example may impact implementation of strategies and the SCW Program's ability to make progress as expected.
- **Evaluate realized benefits provided by completed Projects and compare to their expected benefit (*near-term/long-term*):** Prior to completion, Project proponents predict benefits to be achieved; at post-construction, the realized benefits will be reported. A critical part of assessment will be evaluating expected vs actual benefits to evaluate differences and reasons for them. Progress may be updated and assessed using Project post-construction monitoring metrics and data reported via Annual Reports.
- **Establish an approach for assessing monitoring data (*near-term*):** As recommended under 'Track', water quality monitoring data will be tracked in the long-term to support an assessment of trends with regards to hydrology and water quality across the SCW Program and its WAs. An approach for how water quality monitoring data will be assessed to inform SCW Program progress and associated strategies will be developed in the long term.

7.2.4 Revisit the Watershed Plans



Plan

This subsection provides recommendations to revisit Watershed Plans and reexamine earlier assessments to apply lessons learned and update outputs through Planning Tool updates and Adaptive Watershed Plans



Revisit and incrementally update the Initial Watershed Plans, Planning Tool updates, and Adaptive Watershed Plans based on lessons learned and best available data, including the following:

- Refine targets and strategies based on findings from ongoing Adaptive Management and other non-SCW Program planning efforts (***near-term***): As needed, the Watershed Planning team will provide incremental updates to targets and strategies. There are several ongoing Adaptive Management and non-SCW Program planning efforts whose goals and outputs align with those of the SCW Program and Watershed Planning. While the timing of these efforts did not align with the Initial Watershed Plans, the incorporation of their outputs would strengthen Watershed Planning by addressing key near-term gaps, improving progress tracking, and refining strategies. Identified topics of interest for Watershed Planning include:
 - [County Water Plan Blue-Ribbon Panel](#) outputs
 - Post-fire relief and water quality monitoring
 - Enhanced water quality modeling and pollutant time series for bacteria, PCBs, and DDT and quantification of trash
 - Quantification of benefits provided by SCW Program investments other than Projects (e.g., Municipal Activities, Regional Program Scientific Studies)
 - [Stormwater Recharge Efficiency in the Greater Los Angeles Region](#)
 - Public Works O&M working group
- Adjust targets and strategies based on lessons learned and assessment results (***near-term/long-term***): As new resources become available, Projects, Programs, and Scientific Studies are completed, priorities shift, and progress toward achieving Goals is continuously tracked and assessed, incrementally adjust targets and strategies through Adaptive Watershed Plans. This recommendation incorporates earlier assessment findings to ensure that targets and strategies are adjusted accordingly and that the Plans as well as the Planning Tool continue to serve WASCs, Municipalities, and Project and

Program developers in making strategic funding and implementation decisions that maximize SCW Program return on investment.

- Consider the development of Adaptive Watershed Plans based on tracking and assessment results (*long-term*): Based on assessment results and shifting priorities, the development of Adaptive Watershed Plans may be considered every five years in collaboration with each WASC and the ROC. Adaptive Watershed Plans would support the integration of new elements or guidance such as site-specific opportunities and prioritization and will be developed on an as-needed basis.

This Initial Watershed Plan marks a historic milestone in the timeline of the SCW Program. Over time, the planning, tracking and assessment data and methodologies can be refined and improved to incorporate learnings, leverage the best available science, and adjust to reflect evolving community priorities. The key to success will be adoption of the Watershed Planning framework including the Planning Tool to maximize the benefits delivered through the Regional and Municipal programs by bringing forward and funding Projects and programs that are strategic, efficient, multiple-benefit and community-supported. During SCW Program implementation, Public Works is committed to supporting adoption of the Watershed Planning framework through continued engagement and facilitation across all facets of the SCW Program, thereby ensuring continuous incremental improvement over the coming years.