

# 2026 Key Focus Areas for Future Call for Projects

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In 2023 the Safe, Clean Water Program (SCWP) established the Watershed Planning Initiative with the goal of enhancing and tracking SCWP progress. This ongoing effort uses data, collaboration, and community input to inform SCWP decisions, reduce redundancies, and enhance accountability across the region. In early 2026, the SCWP produced the [Initial Watershed Plans](#) (IWPs) and the online interactive [Watershed Planning Tool](#) (Planning Tool) which provide detailed information on Program-wide and Watershed Area-specific targets, needs, strategies, and opportunities within the scope of the SCWP. The Watershed Area Steering Committees (WASCs) and project developers will use the IWPs and Planning Tool as important resources to help guide future project development and Regional Program investments.

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the following Program-wide key areas of interest are presented to guide future Call for Projects in support of continued progress toward Watershed Area targets and broader SCWP goals.

- IP Projects and TRP Project Concepts that deliver multiple benefits and address SCWP goals as reflected by magnitude-based Indicators with limited progress or substantial remaining needs toward their targets (for graphical representations and opportunity area maps, visit the Planning Tool Dashboard).
- IP Projects and TRP Project Concepts that address SCWP goals as reflected by percent-based Indicators with limited progress or substantial remaining needs towards their targets.
- SS using accepted scientific protocols that may additionally address one or more of the data gaps and limitations identified in Chapter 7.1 of the IWPs, which include the following gap categories (Note: Not all identified gaps may be applicable to the SS Program and each Watershed Area):
  - Definitional
  - Community Data
  - SCWP Project and Program Data
  - Knowledge & Spatial Data
  - Other non-SCW Program Activity Data
- IP Projects, TRP Project Concepts, or SS that incorporate and/or address community-stated priorities or concerns as identified in the [Community Strengths and Needs Assessment](#) and/or from other community engagement efforts.
- IP Projects or SS that maximize leveraged funding to support alignment with the SIP Programming Guidelines and the 2026 Biennial Progress Report

recommendation for each SIP in aggregate to include not less than 25% in leveraged funds.

- IP Project or SS applications that are financially structured to fit the WA Watershed Area's available funding capacity and monetary cap considerations.

Additionally, each WASC conducted a facilitated discussion to identify WASC specific key areas of interest, which are further described in the subsequent sections of this document. For additional information, refer to the IWPs and the Planning Tool (opportunity areas are updated after SIPs are approved by the Board of Supervisors).

The Program-wide and Watershed-specific key areas of interest described in the document may inform community outreach, Project development, and future Project Concepts and guide upcoming Call for Projects cycles to ensure that future SIPs continue to advance the Watershed Areas needs and SCWP's Goals.

## Central Santa Monica Bay

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Central Santa Monica Bay (CSMB) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects led by, or partnered with, Los Angeles Unified School District, including off-site capture and school greening.
- Projects that create or expand open space opportunities, including small or distributed open space.
- Projects that respond to Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA)-identified priorities, including climate resilience, safety, and open space.
- Projects that consider optimal locations within the Watershed Area, especially for infiltration opportunities.
- Wet weather projects.
- Projects that incorporate distributed BMP approaches, including depaving strategies.
- Projects, especially those with Disadvantaged Community Benefits, that demonstrate meaningful community engagement and strong partnerships.
- Public-private partnerships with clear agreements, whether they are formal partnerships or municipal-led projects.

- Projects that went through the Technical Resource Program (TRP) that are transitioning into the Infrastructure Program (IP).

## Lower Los Angeles River

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Lower Los Angeles River (LLAR) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that incorporate and/or advance nature-based solutions.
- Project concepts that support school greening.
- Projects that engage with the Water Replenishment District early to determine the feasibility of infiltration alternatives.
- Projects that leverage additional funding, particularly for Infrastructure Program projects.
- Infrastructure Program projects prioritized over Scientific Studies.
- Projects, especially smaller ones, that demonstrate early engagement with community-based organizations (CBOs) and collaboration with larger entities as appropriate.
- Projects that provide Disadvantaged Community Benefits and address community members' top concerns as identified through the Community Strengths and Needs Assessment (CSNA).
- Projects located in areas identified through the Watershed Planning Tool as high opportunity but with fewer existing projects.
- Scientific Studies that address watershed-specific science, technical, or data gaps in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.

## Lower San Gabriel River

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Lower San Gabriel River (LSGR) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that demonstrate or pursue 50% leveraged funding contributions.
- Projects that are shovel-ready.
- Projects with inter-municipal project partnerships.
- Projects that pursue phased implementation approaches, including separate funding requests for design and construction funding where appropriate.
- Projects that align with Watershed Planning Tool targets and language.
- Projects that include or support nature-based solutions, particularly those that are visibly tangible, such as bioswales, native vegetation, and tree canopy enhancements.
- Projects that rely on proven approaches and are straightforward to operate and maintain, especially given that O&M phase projects have limited leveraged funding opportunities.
- Scientific Studies investigating BMP construction and O&M performance to identify the most cost-effective strategies for maximizing stormwater capture and pollution reduction outcomes in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.

## North Santa Monica Bay

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the North Santa Monica Bay (NSMB) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that account for NSMB watershed conditions, including limited infiltration capacity, lack of groundwater basins, clay soils, and constrained storage and treatment capacity.
- Projects that support phased implementation approaches, including pilot-scale validation prior to large-scale infrastructure commitments (as discussed in relation to diversion-related projects).
- Projects that demonstrate diversion and water supply feasibility considerations, subject to regulatory and operational constraints.
- Projects that respond to localized watershed constraints and opportunities, including flooding issues and stormwater management needs in identified areas such as Topanga Canyon, Westlake Village, and Zuma Creek.

- Projects that support open space, restoration, and related infrastructure improvements, including lagoon restoration, creek restoration, dune restoration, and coastal parking lot retrofit concepts.
- Projects that support operations and maintenance feasibility, including sediment management, pretreatment needs, and long-term maintenance requirements.
- Scientific Studies that support NSMB WASC priorities and comply with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines, including:
  - Diversion feasibility
  - Hydraulic mapping
  - Urban runoff contributions
  - Wet weather Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) compliance
  - Ecological flow studies
  - Water quality comparisons between sewered and non-sewered areas
  - Watershed impairment identification
- Scientific Studies that incorporate participation or collaboration opportunities for high school students.
- Scientific Studies which are funded proportionally to available funding, watershed size, and/or benefit.

## Rio Hondo

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Rio Hondo (RH) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals (note, discussion in this WASC was limited due to time constraints):

- Projects led by smaller cities within the watershed area.
- Scientific Studies that focus on the reduction of contamination on stormwater quality from manufactured products in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.

## Santa Clara River

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Santa Clara River (SCR) WASC identified the following key

areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that respond to local drought impacts and groundwater supply shortages, including impacts to domestic wells in unincorporated communities.
- Projects that serve unincorporated, low-density communities with limited local resources.
- Projects that can be implemented quickly and reflect community/public needs.
- Projects located at or in partnership with schools and educational institutions.
- Scientific Studies led by local academic institutions.

## South Santa Monica Bay

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the South Santa Monica Bay (SSMB) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that incorporate leverage funding and attract outside financial contributions. Especially for projects entering construction or requesting additional funding (Project Modification Requests).
- Projects that have acquired leverage funding proportionate to project scale. Greater flexibility to be considered for smaller projects, projects located in smaller cities, projects that benefit disadvantaged communities, or projects with limited funding capacity.
- Projects that demonstrate strong operations and maintenance (O&M) planning and long-term performance considerations.
- Projects located in areas identified by the IWP as high opportunity but with few existing projects, such as portions of the Dominguez Channel watershed, northern and eastern watershed boundaries, San Pedro, Wilmington, Lennox, West Carson, and unincorporated areas.
- Projects that improve water capture and beneficial reuse in areas with significant ocean discharge.
- Projects that incorporate drainage area mapping, infiltration analysis, and jurisdictional coordination to avoid redundancy with existing projects.
- Projects that demonstrate strong coordination among agencies, Councils of Governments, and local jurisdictions.

- Projects which expand green space and nature-based solutions in underserved and heavily built-out communities.
- Projects that increase collaboration opportunities with schools and educational institutions.
- Scientific Studies that emphasize regional efficiencies and coordinate with multiple appropriate stakeholders and agencies.
- Scientific Studies that focus on green space opportunity areas, vacant lots, and underutilized parcels for watershed benefits in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.

## Upper Los Angeles River

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Upper Los Angeles River (ULAR) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that achieve groundwater recharge and storage benefits.
- Projects that provide flood prevention benefits, with continued emphasis on Disadvantaged Communities.
- Projects that include impervious surface removal.
- Projects that support school greening.
- Projects that provide community benefits such as living infrastructure, green space, and biodiversity.
- Scientific Studies that investigate pollutant load reduction in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.
- Projects that provide Disadvantaged Community benefits, including underserved areas such as portions of the West San Fernando Valley outside the cities of Calabasas and San Fernando.
- Projects that demonstrate coordination between Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and larger institutions.
- Projects that incorporate ideas from communities surrounding the project location while the project is still in the planning phase.
- Projects that demonstrate strong operations and maintenance (O&M) planning and long-term performance considerations.

- Projects that pursue phased implementation approaches, including separate funding requests for design and construction funding where appropriate.
- Continuing projects with additional funding requests (Project Modification Requests) are expected to seek leveraged funding.
- Projects that demonstrate realistic construction schedules and implementation timelines, including consideration of external constraints such as major regional events and market conditions.
- Projects that are shovel-ready and cost-effective.

## Upper San Gabriel River

Based on current progress toward targets, available funding capacity, and key data and knowledge gaps, and desired alignment with strategies and opportunities identified in the IWPs, the Upper San Gabriel River (USGR) WASC identified the following key areas of interest to guide the next Call for Projects and support continued progress toward watershed goals:

- Projects that involve municipalities that have not yet applied for SCW Program funding or that lack resources to become project developers.
- Projects in collaboration with the Los Angeles County Parks Department or LA County Parks and Open Space District, especially in underserved areas.
- Projects which accommodate the State of California's water conservation requirements for non-functional turf and collaborate with municipalities, companies, and communities to advance compliance.
- Projects that are small- to medium-sized and easily replicable across the watershed.
- Scientific Studies related to operations and maintenance in compliance with the Interim Scientific Studies Program Guidelines.
- Scientific Studies that investigate nature-based solutions while establishing a clear, direct, and measurable connection to an increase in Stormwater and Urban Runoff capture and/or pollution reduction.