



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Water Plan Primer

Managing water in Los Angeles County is complicated. With a complex network of water systems that work to meet the needs of our communities and environment, many of the most pressing sustainability and resilience issues are best solved using a regional approach.

Facilitated by Los Angeles County Public Works (Public Works), the Los Angeles County Water Plan (CWP) seeks to initiate a planning process and platform that will provide an opportunity to think holistically and regionally about our water resources. The CWP aims to foster collaboration among stakeholders to enable the development and implementation of integrated solutions to key water management issues.

1.1 KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE CWP

The initial step in the CWP development was a Gaps Analysis. The Gaps Analysis provided a synthesis of water resources needs in LA County identified through review of local and regional planning documents, and discussions with stakeholders including the Green LA and OurWaterLA coalitions. The Gaps Analysis also incorporated input received during the OurCounty and the Safe Clean Water Program initiatives.

The Los Angeles County Water Plan will articulate a shared, inclusive, regional path forward to sustainably achieve safe, clean, and reliable water resources for Los Angeles County.

Through this Gaps Analysis, six key issues that affect water resources management in Los Angeles County were identified as focal for the initial iteration of the CWP. These key issues are described below.



1. Water Supply Resilience

Climate change, earthquakes, increasing demand, and groundwater quality are among many challenges to LA County’s water supply. Coordinated efforts to increase resilience are needed in all water sectors – stormwater, potable water, and wastewater.



2. Drinking Water Equity

Drinking water quality and cost are not equitable across the county.



3. Healthy Watersheds and Livable Communities

Surface water quality, mitigating flood risk, healthy habitats, and recreational opportunities are not consistently provided to support livable communities.



4. Public Education and Engagement

Enhanced communications and engagement are important to improve public and decision-maker understanding of water issues.



5. Small Water System Infrastructure

Some small water distribution systems lack the infrastructure and management systems to be resilient in the face of disruptions to supply and aging assets.



6. Regional Collaboration and Integration

There are more than 200 agencies with separate water management responsibilities and infrastructure. Improved cross-sector collaboration and infrastructure integration could improve water resources management and help meet regional water goals.

Table 1 (attached) summarizes the items identified in the Gaps Analysis that the CWP seeks to address, in relation to the six key issues. This table also provides a summary of challenges and opportunities related to the key issues that were identified during discussions with the OurWaterLA and Green LA coalitions.

1.2 PRINCIPLES TO CONSIDER IN THE CWP DEVELOPMENT

In the discussions with the OurWaterLA and Green LA coalitions, participants also recommended principles to be considered in the CWP development. These principles, grouped by theme, are summarized in **Table 2** below.

Primary Key Issues Addressed	Items to Address in CWP
Water Supply and Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Conservation should be prioritized » Reduce, restore, reuse » Desalination is unfavorable
Underrepresented Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Focus on areas of historical disinvestment—directly addressing, partnering with, or supporting these communities » Incorporate indigenous voices » Develop and implement an outreach plan for DACs
Nature-based Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Consider nature-based solutions and multi-benefit projects » Build on water quality and habitat goals lacking in Sustainability Plan
Policy, Governance, and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Create intersectionality with non-traditional departments » Integrate policies, beyond just referencing the nexus between policies
Implementation and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Leverage multiple funding sources and integrate planning » Pursue multi-benefit and no-harm options

1.3 PARTICIPATION IN THE CWP DEVELOPMENT

Public Works is holding listening sessions with organizations actively engaged in the Environmental and Environmental Justice areas to receive their input during CWP development. These listening sessions are designed to be small to enable each participant to be heard and to support meaningful discussions. Participants will include representatives from non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations with a direct interest in water resources.

At the first set of Environmental and Environmental Justice listening sessions, planned for the end of July 2021, participants will be asked to provide feedback on the items to be addressed under each key issue, as well as the principles to be considered in developing the CWP. At the second set of meetings, tentatively planned for early 2022, participants will review draft CWP content and provide feedback on whether it includes the right steps for making progress on the gaps and reflects community-driven principles.

The CWP will also host Stakeholder Workshops to engage a broader range of stakeholders in the CWP development process. The Stakeholder Workshops will be held in conjunction with the Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) meetings of the three existing IRWM programs in Los Angeles County, which include the Greater Los Angeles County Region consisting of five Sub-regions, the Antelope Valley Region, and the Upper Santa Clara River Region. All interested stakeholders will have the opportunity to participate and provide input through these workshops that will focus on soliciting sub-regional perspectives on the draft CWP content at different stages of development. The Stakeholder Workshops will be open to the public and all local community members, agencies, non-profit organizations, Tribes, and other interested stakeholders. Workshop information will be provided on the CWP Planning Portal at <https://www.lacountywaterplan.com>.

Below is a tentative schedule of stakeholder participation opportunities in the CWP development.



Primary Key Issues Addressed	Items to Address in CWP	Challenges	Opportunities
<p>Water Supply Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concerns regarding Climate Change » Challenging Groundwater Management conditions, need for data, research and planning » Demand tracking data » Insufficient supply to meet demand » Research or planning for stormwater, wastewater, and water supply 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Groundwater remediation, recharge and cleanup » Water Resilience Portfolio is not prioritized » Demand on recycled water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Integration with other plans for climate change and water systems » Stormwater capture and reuse for multi-benefit » Identify areas with lack of data and “problem areas” » Regional storage is increasing while demand is decreasing » Recycled Water
<p>Drinking Water Equity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ability to deliver safe, clean drinking water » Concerns regarding environmental justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Data gaps in drinking water quality, especially in Southeast LA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify specific “problem areas”
<p>Healthy Watersheds & Livable Communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Concerns regarding climate change » Flood risk increases; data and flood management-related research or planning » Impacted habitat; habitat- and ecosystem-related research or planning » Impacted surface water quality » Lack of recreation and open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Implementation of green streets projects in DACs 	
<p>Public Education and Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Coordination or collaboration needs » Increasing inclusivity and participation in regional planning » Project tracking data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Strategic communications 	
<p>Small Water System Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ability to deliver safe, clean drinking water » System consolidation needs » Water demands of small water systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Infrastructure investments and aging » Fractured governance with small water agencies » Water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Identify specific “problem areas”
<p>Regional Collaboration and Integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Regulatory decisions and inadequate or outdated policies » Funding or financing needs » Items described for each of the other Key Issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local planning efforts have a non-visionary approach to water management » Conflicting goals and priorities within agency/governance structure » Building up a new workforce as people are aging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Multi-agency work (e.g., climate workforce) that includes water, workforce, parks, public health, etc. beyond the usual partners