



# Los Angeles County Water Resilience Plan



## WHAT IS THE WATER RESILIENCE PLAN?

In Spring 2016, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Public Works (DPW) to develop a Water Resilience Plan outlining integrated strategies to increase drought preparedness and local water self-reliance, improve water quality to protect public health and the environment, and advance and support communities' abilities to adapt to the effects of climate change.

The Water Resilience Plan will identify integrated strategies to capture more water locally, better manage our existing supplies, protect our beaches and oceans from contamination, green neighborhoods and parks, increase public access to rivers lakes and streams, and improve coordination among relevant government agencies.

A first draft of the Water Resilience Plan is expected to be completed in Summer 2017, but will continue to be developed with stakeholder input through 2018.

At the heart of the plan will be strategies that promote multi-benefit stormwater capture projects to boost and clean our local water supplies and catch more rainfall during big storms.

## WHY IS THE WATER RESILIENCE PLAN NEEDED?

Water management in Los Angeles County is vast, diverse, and complicated. With more than 10 million residents in 88 cities served by more than 200 water oversight agencies, the current system prevents the region from efficiently saving and best utilizing its water resources. The need for smart projects and integrated planning has become essential.

Our new climate reality is one of extreme weather cycles, escalating quickly from a severe drought to historic rainfall. The state's debilitating five-year drought had a tremendous impact; reservoirs were exhausted, groundwater basins were depleted, and imported water supplies were cut off or reduced to bare minimums.

Then, almost overnight, we faced record-breaking storms. While these weather extremes pose threats, they also provide opportunity.

LA County can currently capture enough water to supply more than 1.5 million people, but could double that amount with new investments – capturing enough water to meet the needs of nearly one-third of the county's residents, ensuring the region can capitalize on erratic and intense rain events.

Capturing more stormwater would also protect public health and the communities we live in by preventing large volumes of runoff from carrying trash, bacteria, chemicals, and debris through our rivers, and polluting our popular and iconic beaches and bays.

## HOW IS THE PLAN BEING DEVELOPED?

LA County is developing the Water Resilience Plan in coordination with other County departments, cities, water agencies, business stakeholders, non-profit organizations, school districts, and other regional stakeholders. The Plan is not intended to supplant existing water plans, but rather to identify opportunities and coordinate activities that better achieve regional objectives and long-term goals.

The Water Resilience Plan will offer options for essential investments in our infrastructure and underscore those water strategies that have the greatest potential for significant impact. It will also survey existing resources that might be leveraged or allocated more effectively and efficiently. Additionally, the Water Resilience Plan will outline broad-based education, outreach, and engagement programs to educate stakeholders and the public about County water issues.

Given the diversity, projected growth, and changing nature of water management within the region, the Water Resilience Plan will be a living document, intended to evolve

with infrastructure developments, shifting policies and governance, and – at a base level – the weather. It will serve to continually assess current and future water needs of the region, equipping our communities to better manage their water resources.

## HOW WILL THIS HELP CITIES WITH CLEAN WATER ACT COMPLIANCE?

The region is required to clean up stormwater as part of its compliance with the Federal Clean Water Act. The County, municipalities and local water agencies have developed watershed-based plans that include high-priority projects to capture and clean up stormwater, but most do not have the funding needed to build or maintain them. The State has authority to assess significant financial penalties if these projects are not built.

The Water Resilience Plan will integrate consideration of these needs into its framework and include recommendations for viable solutions that move the region towards compliance. In particular, the Water Resilience Plan will highlight the opportunities that stormwater capture presents not only for water quality, but also for water supply and community enhancement.

## HOW ARE STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS?

Recognizing the complexity of the issue and of the region itself, development of the Water Resilience Plan will only be successful with meaningful stakeholder engagement and input throughout this process. Not only will it need dedicated water professionals, it requires a diverse group of stakeholders coming to the table and rolling up their sleeves – lending their perspectives to the development of this critical effort.

County officials, staff, and consultant teams are meeting, and will continue to meet regularly, with stakeholder groups throughout LA County to gain their input and ensure both plans meet the needs of our communities – at both a local and regional level.