



Legislation and Communications Committee

Update on research and framework for a community benefits program for Pure Water Southern California

Item 6b

October 13, 2025

Update on research and framework for a community benefits program for PWSC

Subject

Update on research and framework for a community benefits program for Pure Water Southern California

Purpose

Share information on research findings and a potential approach framework to implement a community benefits program for Pure Water Southern California

Next Steps

Obtain feedback and determine next steps for advancing a community benefits program

Background: Development of a Potential Community Benefits Approach Framework



Research
Findings
Key Findings

What are Community Benefits?

- Voluntary commitments
- No legal definition for “community benefits”
- Started in 1960s and evolved from parks & trees to address environmental justice and impacts to underserved communities
- Complement environmental justice requirements in NEPA, CEQA and grants



Internal Context Factors: Metropolitan Projects

Metropolitan Projects with Community Benefits

- **Diamond Valley Lake: Recreation Funding Program**
 - Multi-agency agreement formed to develop recreational opportunities for local & regional communities, including on water activities and trails
- **Rotational Land Fallowing Partnership with PVID Community Improvement Fund & Enhancement Collaborative**
 - Community Development & Workforce Development Opportunities for communities in the Palo Verde Valley





Internal Context Factors: Metropolitan Programs

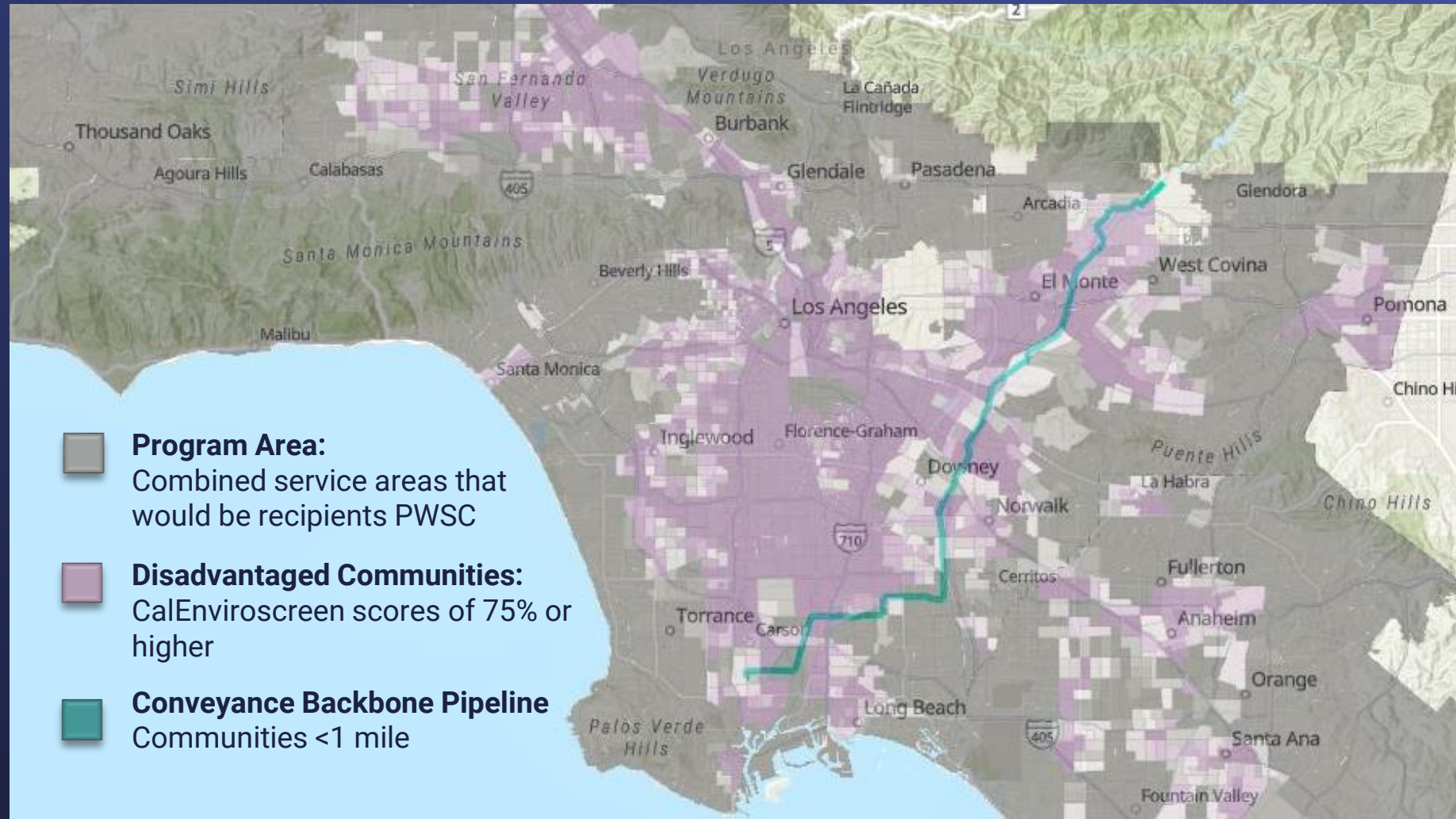


Metropolitan Programs with Community Benefits

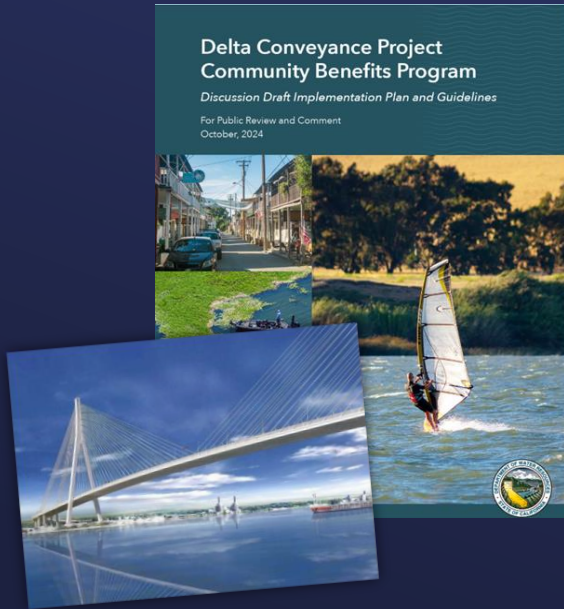
- **Project Labor Agreement**
 - Provisions include fair wages, local hiring goals and promotes small business opportunities
- **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Framework**
 - Framework establishes goals and initiatives for workforce development, industry fairness, and community inclusion
- **Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water**
 - Equity is reflected and a component of CAMP4W's Policy and Climate Decision-Making Framework, and Evaluative Criteria

Program Area: Underserved & Disadvantaged Communities

- 40% of PWSC Program area
- 70% of PWSC Residents <1 mile of pipeline



Research Findings External Examples



Peer Infrastructure Projects:

LA Metro's West Santa Ana Branch Corridor Community Benefits Strategic Implementation Plan:

- Framework guiding station-area investments, technical assistance program, and grants

DWR's Delta Conveyance Project

Delta Community Fund:

- Local improvement projects for infrastructure or recreational facilities, job training & local hiring targets

Michigan Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority's Gordie Howe Bridge Project

Community Benefits Plan:

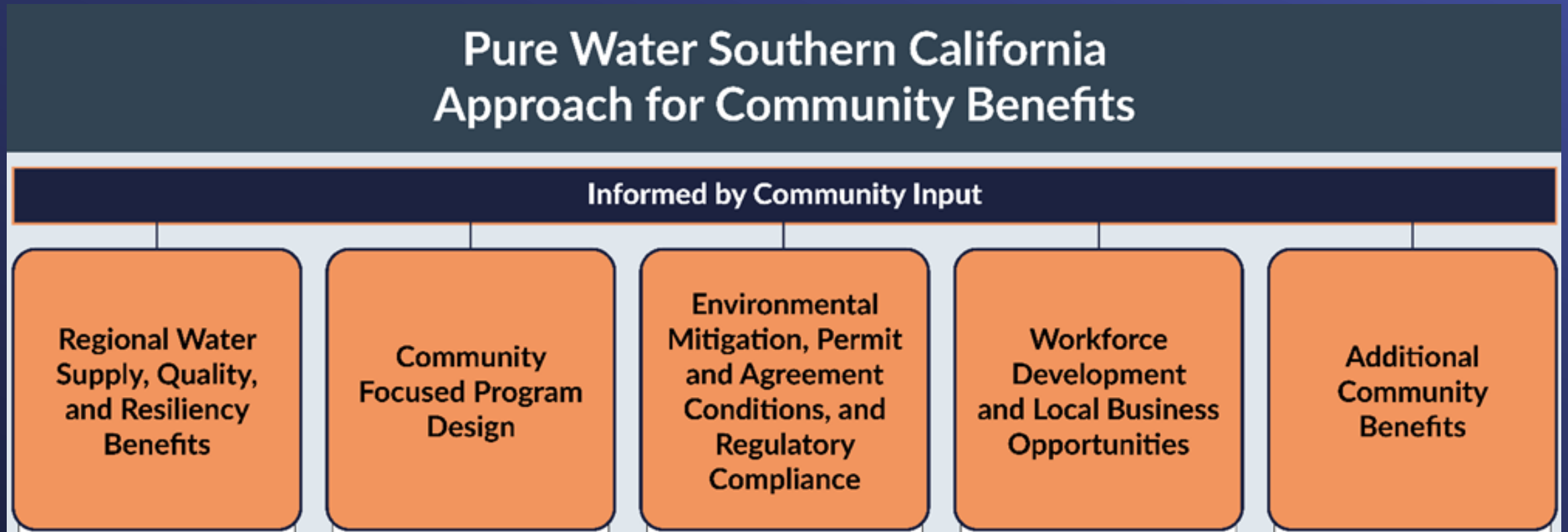
- Workforce development, training & apprenticeships, infrastructure funds for local community investments & improvements

Developing a Potential Community Benefits Approach Framework

Framework Objectives

- ✓ Balances region-wide program benefits with local impacts
- ✓ Helps address potential residual impacts
- ✓ Prioritizes community input
- ✓ Considers various context factors
 - Internal precedents
 - Policy drivers
 - Equity data

Result: Five-Part Approach Framework



Framework Components: Water Supply & Design Benefits



Pure Water Southern California Approach Framework for Community Benefits

#1

Regional Water Supply, Quality & Resiliency Benefits

- Increases water resiliency
- Replenishes groundwater basins
- Provides a sustainable local supply of water

#2

Community Focused Design

- Integrates community input in design
- Prioritizes alignment with least impact
- Embeds equity & culture

Framework Components: Program Requirements Benefits



Pure Water Southern California Approach Framework for Community Benefits

#3

Environmental Mitigation, Permit Agreement
Conditions, and Regulatory Compliance

- CEQA/NEPA Mitigation: Avoid, reduce, or monitor construction impacts
- Permit Conditions: Restore streets, parks, and utilities to equal or better condition
- State/Federal Regulatory Compliance: Meet all water-quality, air-quality, and worker-safety standards

Framework Components: Jobs & Small Business Opportunities



Pure Water Southern California Approach Framework for Community Benefits

#4

Workforce Development and Local Business Opportunities

- Project Labor Agreement: 60% local-hire and 15% transitional-worker goals
- Equitable Procurement: Business Outreach program sets targets for small, local, and diverse firms
- Carson Workforce Training Center: Programs leading to careers in treatment, conveyance, and other water-sector trades
- Career Pathway Outreach: Engagement with local communities to showcase Metropolitan employment opportunities

Pure Water Southern California Approach Framework for Community Benefits

Framework Components Additional Voluntary Commitments



#5

Additional Community Benefits

- **Enhance communities near program facilities**
- **Prioritize underserved corridors**
- **Align with the Envision Certification's well-being & community standards**
- **Direct Actions** – Metropolitan-funded projects (e.g., park upgrades, traffic-calming, noise buffers) selected with local input
- **Community Benefits Funds** – grants guided by community advisory committees to advance health, jobs, and resilience goals

Community Benefits Research Results

Summary of Takeaways

- **Benefits:**
A community benefits program can enhance water supply benefits
- **Metropolitan's Precedent:**
History of projects and programs demonstrate the Board's strong stewardship
- **Draft Framework:**
The five-part, research-based framework is ready for the Board's review and guidance

Next Steps

- Obtain and incorporate board feedback
- Determine next steps for advancing community benefits
- Update community benefits program cost allocation

