

Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W)

WORKING MEMORANDUM 10

CLIMATE ADAPTATION POLICY FRAMEWORK

January 2025

1 Introduction

In February 2023, the Board directed staff to integrate water resources, climate, and financial planning into a Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water (CAMP4W) and in October 2023, chartered a Joint Task Force of Board Members and Member Agency Managers to facilitate the development of CAMP4W in a timely and transparent process. CAMP4W includes: (1) Climate and Growth Scenarios, (2) Time-Bound Targets, (3) A Framework for Climate Decision-Making and Reporting, (4) Policies, Initiatives,¹ and Partnerships, and (5) Business Models and Funding Strategies. CAMP4W will increase Metropolitan’s understanding of the climate risks to water supplies, infrastructure, operations, workforce, and business model. CAMP4W will also provide decision-making tools and long-term planning guidance for adapting to climate change to ensure Metropolitan is mitigating that risk and ultimately strengthen its ability to fulfill its mission.

This Working Memorandum presents a Climate Adaptation Policy Framework to help guide implementation of CAMP4W, including the development and pursuit of new and enhanced policies, initiatives and partnerships. While much of the Board’s deliberations related to CAMP4W to date have focused on the development of the Climate Decision-Making Framework, Board policy direction is necessary to institutionalize climate adaptation across the agency.

Building on the climate adaptation priorities articulated in [Working Memorandum #2](#), which presents the Board-developed Themes and priorities, this Working Memorandum identifies five high-level policy objectives in the Board-identified priority areas of Reliability, Resilience, Financial Sustainability, Affordability and Equity that are included below in Section 3. These policy objectives are intended to guide future specific implementation actions for advancing climate adaptation, including future policies, initiatives, and partnerships. These future actions remain subject to Board deliberation and approval, wherever appropriate. The role of policy direction in the overall CAMP4W process is indicated below in **Figure 1**. This effort is linked to the next steps enumerated in the [CAMP4W Year One Progress Report](#).

¹ The term “initiative” is used to represent actions or strategies intended to address climate adaptation challenges, and can include programs, studies, projects, research, and other similar activities.

CAMP4W is a long-term adaptive management approach to systemically address the impacts of climate change. It includes a stepwise approach to assess climate risks and vulnerabilities, set goals and policy direction, develop strategies, and ensure alignment of implementation with overall adaptation priorities, financial planning, member agencies, and interested parties. A critical component of the adaptive management approach includes monitoring and reporting on real-world conditions, updated climate projections, and implementation progress to inform and adjust goals and priorities as needed. This memo focuses on overall policy direction for developing and integrating climate adaptation across the agency.

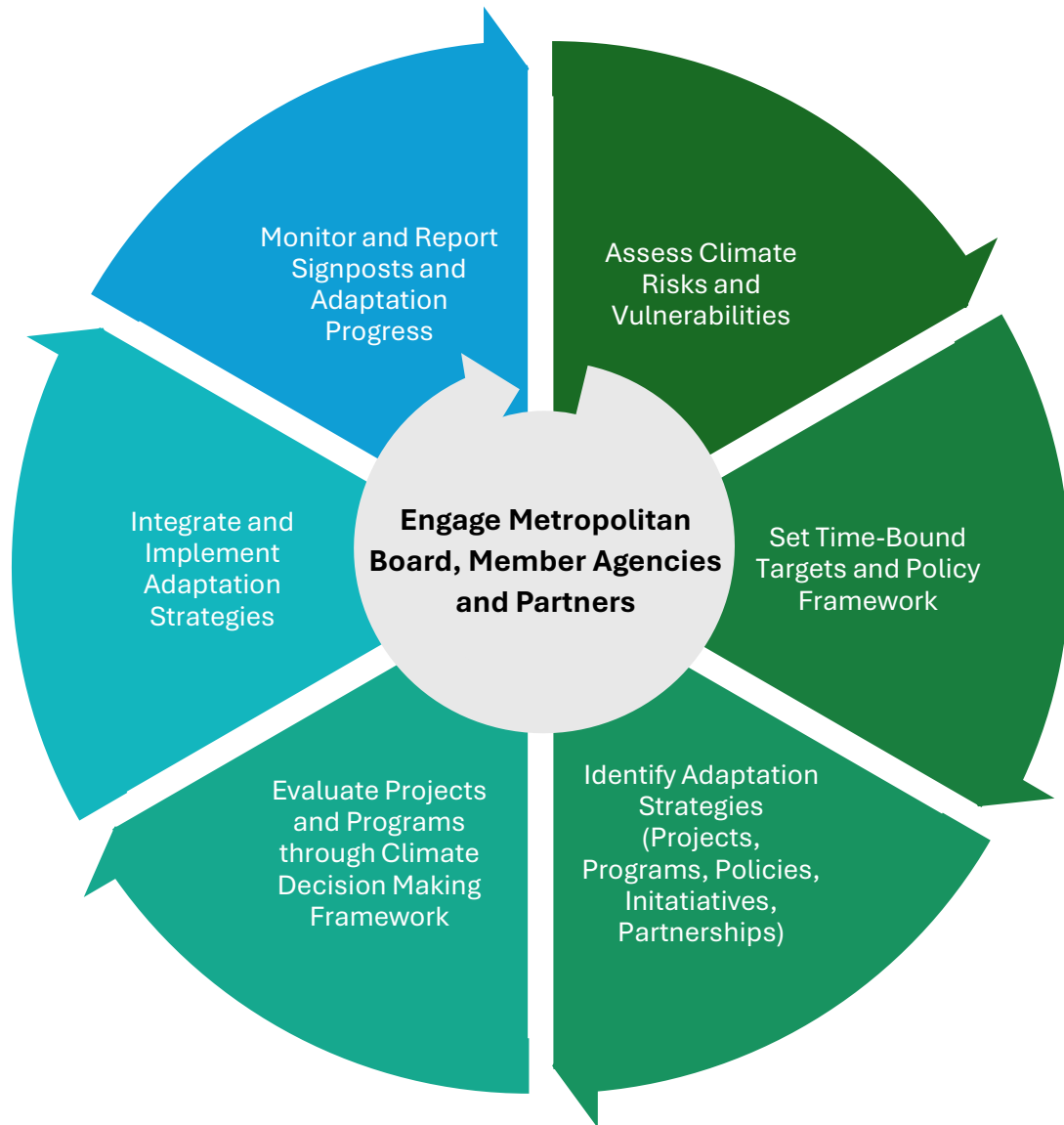


Figure 1. Climate Adaptation Master Plan for Water Implementation Process

2 The Role of the Climate Adaptation Policy Framework in Metropolitan's Planning

Metropolitan has identified acute and chronic climate hazards that are impacting its water and energy resources, infrastructure, and operations. In recent years, several unprecedented climate events have directly impacted Metropolitan's water supply and operations, including record weather conditions (extended drought conditions and historic snow and rain in California and record drought conditions in the Colorado River system), extreme precipitation and severe flooding, and significant wildfires (member agency mutual aid, water quality impacts, disruptions and public safety power shutdowns, danger to staff and facilities, ash, increased erosion and sedimentation). These extreme weather conditions as well as global climate science have presented Metropolitan with a preview of the challenges ahead. Recognizing these immediate threats and other future impacts, Metropolitan and its member agencies have incorporated climate risks and impacts into their integrated resources planning over time. Now, the District is taking additional steps through the CAMP4W process to evaluate climate risks and vulnerabilities and integrate climate, infrastructure and water resources planning with operations and financial planning.

Understanding that Metropolitan's mission and success relies on a complex network of natural and built systems that span across thousands of square miles and across multiple states, Metropolitan's climate adaptation efforts must also reach across multiple parts of the organization. As a core component of CAMP4W, the Climate Adaptation Policy Framework comprises a set of high-level policies to institutionalize climate adaptation across the District and provide guidance for proactively and explicitly integrating climate adaptation planning and implementation into Metropolitan activities. The Policy Framework informs the evaluation of current practices and the development of specific policies, initiatives, and partnerships to meet Metropolitan's immediate and long-term climate adaptation goals of Reliability, Resilience, Financial Sustainability, Affordability, and Equity. Metropolitan's activities, including efforts to advance policies, initiatives, and partnerships will continue to remain subject to Board deliberation and approval, wherever appropriate.

The following are the goals of the Climate Adaptation Policy Framework:

- 1) Systemically integrate climate adaptation to increase climate preparedness, deepen internal knowledge and understanding of impacts, and improve climate hazard response.
- 2) Update existing and set new policies to strengthen the role of adaptive management and climate adaptation in Metropolitan's initiatives and decision-making.
- 3) Underscore the value of the Metropolitan member agency cooperative and other partnerships in achieving regional climate resilience.

3 Climate Adaptation Policy Framework

The Climate Adaptation Policy Framework builds on the climate adaptation priorities articulated in [Working Memorandum #2](#), and specifically each of the Board-identified priority areas of Reliability, Resilience, Financial Sustainability, Affordability and Equity. In general, the policy objectives advance those priorities as described below:

- Reliability: Policy guidance to integrate climate adaptation into water supply reliability efforts
- Resilience: Policy guidance to achieve climate resilience of resources and infrastructure

- **Financial Sustainability:** Policy guidance to account for financial risks associated with climate change
- **Affordability:** Policy guidance to consider cost impacts of climate change and of adaptation planning and implementation
- **Equity:** Policy guidance to involve affected communities in climate adaptation

Based on these general approaches, staff drafted, and incorporated Board and Member Agency input, into the following Climate Adaptation Policy Framework.

Policy Framework	Implementation Examples
<p>Reliability Metropolitan will consider climate risks and integrate climate adaptation strategies into water supply programs, policies, planning, implementation, and operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Incentives for member agencies to increase regional water resilience → Infrastructure projects to improve access to water supplies → Watershed resilience projects to strengthen imported supplies → Programs to actualize benefits from wet weather years
<p>Resilience Metropolitan will integrate climate risk and vulnerability assessments for climate-related hazards, including drought, extreme heat and precipitation, sea level rise, flooding, and wildfire, using the best available climate science and climate change information into planning, implementation, and operations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Establish infrastructure performance criteria to achieve climate resilience → Assess power system vulnerabilities → Review workforce and equipment safety measures for climate risks → Update fire management plans for critical facilities
<p>Financial Sustainability Metropolitan will reduce short-term and long-term climate-related financial risks through periodic reviews and potential refinement of its business model, , active monitoring and managing of financial conditions, and by maintaining flexible financing alternatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Track financial implications of climate-induced expenses → Consider updates to reserve policy → Consider adjustments to fixed and volumetric rate structures.
<p>Affordability Metropolitan will continue to support retail user affordability efforts that support our mission to provide regional wholesale water service in the most economically responsible way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Identify new partnerships, grants, and revenue sources for climate adaptation → Work with Member Agencies to identify funds for statewide low-income rate assistance → Enhance water conservation incentives to reduce financial impacts
<p>Equity Metropolitan will engage with the diverse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Develop community engagement standards

<p>communities we serve to listen, communicate transparently, and co-create solutions for greater equity in climate adaptation planning and implementation.</p>	<p>→ Develop environmental justice and community benefits policy</p>
---	--

4 Conclusion and Next Steps

This Climate Adaptation Policy Framework will continue to develop based on Board direction and over time as specific policies, initiatives, and partnerships are pursued. Providing a structure to guide, track, and report on climate adaptation activities ensures transparency and continued alignment with the CAMP4W priorities and enables adaptive management in response to changing conditions, resources, and needs.

4.1 Next Steps for Climate Adaptation Policy Framework

In 2025, the CAMP4W Planning Team will provide a CAMP4W Implementation Strategy for Board review that will include high-level policy direction on climate adaptation. Next steps include:

- **Finalize Policy Framework:** Receive feedback and refine as appropriate;
- **Document the Framework:** Include Climate Adaptation Policy Framework in Master Plan Implementation Strategy;
- **Review Existing:** Systemically review existing policies, initiatives, and partnerships to align activities with Climate Adaptation Policy Framework and CAMP4W priorities and identify gaps;
- **Develop New:** Develop new policies, initiatives, and partnerships to implement the Policy Framework;
- **Implement:** Implement policies, initiatives, and partnerships to advance the Climate Adaptation Policy Framework in alignment with overall CAMP4W objectives; and
- **Report on Progress:** Annually report on implementation actions as part of the CAMP4W Annual Report.