

# OneWaterSF

Strengthening Livable  
Communities

December 2023



San Francisco  
**Water Power Sewer**  
Services of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission



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A scenic view of the San Francisco skyline at sunset, with the Golden Gate Bridge and various skyscrapers silhouetted against a warm, orange and yellow sky. The water in the foreground is dark and calm.

## Strengthening Livable Communities with **OneWaterSF**

The SFPUC has been at the forefront of innovation in San Francisco for over 100 years, helping shape the region's reputation as a great place to live, work, and play. Over this time, our programs have resulted in one of the lowest per capita water use rates in the State of California. We have also implemented green infrastructure to reduce the burden on, and carbon footprint of, our wastewater treatment systems, and introduced solar, wind, and hydroelectric power to serve clean, affordable, and reliable electricity for thousands of San Francisco residents and businesses.

Implementing and expanding these innovative resource management programs is crucial as we navigate challenges such as climate change, drought, and regulatory uncertainty. At the heart of this innovation is OneWaterSF—an approach to resource management that fuels creative problem-solving. This methodology empowers us to tackle challenges with ingenuity, ensuring better outcomes for both our customers and the environment.

Equally integral to the successful implementation of these vital resource management programs is actively partnering with our customers and the community to ensure that the outcomes of our work address community needs and interests. This year's brochure theme, "Strengthening Livable Communities," highlights how OneWaterSF helps us approach our projects and programs in ways that provide affordable and equitable outcomes for customers. Through OneWaterSF, we are able to strengthen livable communities by recognizing the importance of collaboration and partnership with the people we serve. We identify projects and programs that pursue multiple benefits to support balanced ecosystems and create healthy communities. We're seeing the results of this in our school solar program, expansion of our green infrastructure grant program to residents, and the recent, successful opening of the Southeast Community Center. These activities, which are highlighted in this year's brochure, have all relied on inclusive community engagement and the active involvement of our customers as a key component of their success.



Strengthening livable communities goes beyond innovative resource management. It requires us to safeguard affordability and accessibility as a primary component of delivering our services and to ensure that the outcomes and benefits of our actions are shared equitably across the communities we serve. OneWaterSF serves as a foundation for carrying out these important objectives, and with it, we will continue to reimagine resource management in ways that can serve customers in the most sustainable, reliable, and equitable ways possible. We hope that you will continue to partner with us on this journey.



DENNIS J. HERRERA



San Francisco  
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# Vision and Guiding Principles of **OneWaterSF**

OneWaterSF is a framework for how we approach our work at the SFPUC. OneWaterSF encourages us to collaborate and think holistically so that we can develop and implement projects, programs, and initiatives that maximize the efficient use of our resources. When we think about resources within the context of OneWaterSF, it includes not only water and energy resources, but also our financial resources, human resources, and community partnerships.

With OneWaterSF we take a more comprehensive view of our work so that we can increase opportunities for innovation and collaboration, and deliver projects and programs that provide environmental, economic, and social benefit to our customers and the environment. Ultimately, when individual activities and ideas are connected together through OneWaterSF, their outcomes are more powerful than if the work is done in silos. The OneWaterSF Vision and Guiding Principles are a critical element of this philosophy and serve as the foundation for developing and implementing projects and programs that advance OneWaterSF.

## **OneWaterSF Vision**

**With the OneWaterSF approach, the SFPUC will optimize our resources to create a more resilient future that balances community and ecosystem needs.**




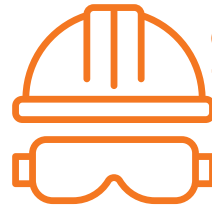




## OneWaterSF Guiding Principles

- 1 Practice a culture of collaboration.** Work across traditional boundaries to foster collaboration that results in the efficient use of our resources.
- 2 Connect with a community of partners.** Elevate and sustain partnerships with our communities to engage and exchange ideas that result in better stewardship of our resources.
- 3 Pursue multiple benefits.** Identify approaches and solutions across our enterprises and operations that provide benefit to multiple resource areas.
- 4 Expand the culture of innovation.** Encourage new ideas and partnerships that test creative business practices, pilot state-of-the-art technologies, and discover inventive solutions.
- 5 Match the right resource to the right use.** Reimagine what resources are available to serve our customers in the most sustainable and reliable way.
- 6 Plan for future uncertainties.** Build flexibility into our work so that the SFPUC can be resilient to a wide variety of situations, responsive to challenges, and adapt to future conditions.
- 7 Advance healthy communities.** Ensure affordable and reliable services in the communities we serve and promote the equitable distribution of both benefits and impacts of our operations, programs and policies.
- 8 Support balanced ecosystems.** Consider ways in which our work can better conserve resources and support ecosystems, including air quality and the health and quality of watersheds, San Francisco Bay, and the Pacific Ocean.

# Achieving Our Vision with **OneWaterSF**

Since OneWaterSF was launched in 2016, there have been many initiatives across the organization that have advanced the OneWaterSF Vision and Guiding Principles. Each year, with the OneWaterSF brochure, we have an opportunity to recognize the positive outcomes that OneWaterSF brings to all areas and aspects of our work and to highlight projects that embody the OneWaterSF Vision and Guiding Principles. The accomplishment icons below highlight measurable outcomes of important work from throughout the SFPUC that furthers the OneWaterSF Vision. The project highlights that are included on the following pages provide project examples of the OneWaterSF Vision and Guiding Principles in action.

All of these successes demonstrate how incorporating the OneWaterSF approach as part of the development and implementation of projects lead to us to outcomes that more successfully manage our resources in a manner that contributes to a more resilient and reliable future for the communities we serve and the environment. We are proud to highlight these innovative projects and programs so that we can spark increased innovation, foster wider collaboration with the community, and continue advancing the OneWaterSF Vision and Guiding Principles within the SFPUC and throughout the community.

<p>Received an <b>EXCELLENCE in Public Power Communications AWARD</b> for the "OUR CITY OUR POWER" public power expansion campaign</p> 	<p>Completed <b>more than 1 million work hours safely</b> during the construction of multiple projects &amp; operations <b>at the Southeast Treatment Plant</b></p> 	<p><b>TRANSLATED</b> Customer Assistance Program materials into <b>8 LANGUAGES</b>, increasing access to financial assistance by <b>249%</b></p> 
<p>DIVERTED <b>85 MILLION GALLONS</b> of stormwater through the Stormwater Management Ordinance, <b>PREVENTING EMISSIONS OF 134 TONS OF CO<sub>2</sub></b></p> 	<p>Under SFPUC's Onsite Water Recycling Program, San Francisco now has <b>44 ONSITE WATER REUSE SYSTEMS</b> that provide water for toilet flushing, cooling towers, and irrigation</p> 	<p><b>OVER 14,700 LEAK ALERTS</b> have been provided to customers through <b>AUTOMATED WATER METER technology</b>, which enabled <b>73 MILLION GALLONS of water to be SAVED</b> last year</p> 

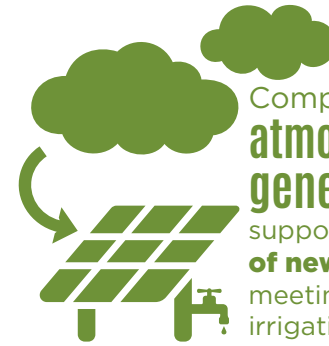


Received the **ENVISION PLATINUM AWARD**

for the Biodigester Facilities Project at the Southeast Treatment Plant, the highest certification for **sustainable, resilient, and equitable civil infrastructure**



Partnered with the **San Francisco Giants** for the second year to **promote water conservation**



Completed a pilot for **atmospheric water generation panels** supporting **development of new technologies** for meeting small-scale irrigation needs



Introduced **SUPERGREEN SAVER**, WHICH OFFERS **100% RENEWABLE ENERGY AT a 20% discount** to qualifying **LOW INCOME CleanPowerSF customers**

SECURED **\$2.4 MILLION** from the State to provide **BILL RELIEF** to **CleanPowerSF customers**



SFPUC water conservation programs helped **San Franciscans** **SAVE 24 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER** ENOUGH TO FILL **13,000** Olympic-sized swimming pools

Launched the **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS for HOMES**

PROGRAM to help San Franciscans manage or reuse stormwater on their properties to **create a more climate-resilient community**



THE **Green Infrastructure Grant Program** PROVIDED **\$17.82 MILLION** to **schools, parks, and churches** to manage **STORMWATER** on **ROUGHLY 19 ACRES** of impervious areas in San Francisco



Solar panels installed at Marina Middle School

## Achieving Our Vision

# School Solar Panel Installations

Climate change is a looming threat to the livability of our communities that both current and future generations must work together to stop. Recognizing this need for intergenerational cooperation, SFPUC and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) partnered to expand renewable energy and inspire the next generation of leaders..

In 2008, SFUSD committed to achieving carbon neutrality by 2040. To realize this goal, SFUSD teamed up with SFPUC to provide its schools with 100% clean energy through the Hetch Hetchy Power program. While all electricity supplied to SFUSD schools comes from renewable sources, some buildings still require natural gas for additional energy demands. The installation of solar panels on school rooftops could reduce SFUSD's natural gas usage by up to 50% by 2030, offering an effective way to achieve SFUSD's decarbonization goal.

Since 2012, SFPUC has installed affordable, rooftop solar systems at eight SFUSD schools. Recently, Visitacion Valley Middle School and Marina Middle School became the seventh and eighth solar installation projects at public-school sites, joining Alvarado Elementary School, Thurgood Marshall High School, Downtown High School, Cesar Chavez Elementary School, Starr King Elementary School, and Burton High School. The Visitacion Valley Middle School and

Marina Middle School solar systems are now part of SFPUC's growing solar portfolio, which collectively generates 9.5 megawatts of solar energy.

SFUSD's solar program provides a path towards decarbonization that will create healthier and more sustainable learning environments. Students can consider where their energy comes from, how they can reduce their carbon footprint, and be inspired to explore careers in clean energy. Both SFPUC and the SFUSD recognize that through collaboration, public agencies are best equipped to empower the next generation of leaders in creating vibrant, livable communities in San Francisco.



Burton High School solar installation

## Achieving Our Vision

# Customer Assistance Programs and Policies

The SFPUC has consistently recognized the importance of continued access to water and wastewater services, particularly in protecting public health and safety. Maintained access to services is crucial for the livability of a community, particularly in preventing additional financial burdens on those who can least afford it. The SFPUC has introduced several programs and policies to ensure that residents with low incomes have continued access to services, most notably the relaunch of the Customer Assistance Program (CAP) and a new shutoff and lien policy.

Since the early 2000s, CAP has provided a 25% discount on water and sewer bills and a 30% discount on power bills to customers with low incomes. Following the close of several emergency programs instituted during the COVID-19 Pandemic, CAP was relaunched with a streamlined application process with the goal of increasing enrollment by cutting out requirements that posed challenges to potential participants. A large scale, culturally competent outreach campaign was launched to increase awareness in the program and jumpstart enrollment, running from March 2022 to September 2022. The outreach campaign employed tactics such as modern, competent advertising on social and digital media, Spanish, Chinese, and Filipino language media platforms, MUNI bus ads, multi-lingual bill inserts, tabling at community events, communications kits for Community Based Organizations and the Board of Supervisors, geotargeted mailings and eblasts for communities facing structural barriers, and more.

The outreach was hugely successful, with 5,236 new applications approved through March 31, 2023, 4,471 of which came in languages other than English. This represented an 800% increase of in-language applications from the previous program. Additionally more than 25% of the applications came from San Francisco's southeast communities, adjacent to our Southeast Treatment Plant and where a disproportionate amount of utility debt is held.

A newer version of the CAP is launching September 2023, which will include several major changes, including a two-tier discount model, which provides 40% discounts for households with incomes equal to or below 30% of the Area



**減少25%水費帳單!**

低收入用戶可以參加我們全新的客戶協助計劃CAP, 獲得三藩市水利局(SFPUC)水費和排污費帳單25%折扣。

請立即至 [sfpuc.org/中秋省錢](http://sfpuc.org/中秋省錢) 申請。過程快又簡單!




**Community In first** Bill Relief Program

San Francisco Water Power Sewer  
San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

**Lower your utility bill by 25%**

Apply now to reduce your SFPUC water and sewer bill. It's quick and easy!  
[sfpuc.org/Discount](http://sfpuc.org/Discount)



**Community In first**

San Francisco Water Power Sewer  
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Median Income and 25% discounts for households between 31 and 50% of the Area Median Income. It will reinstate an income verification requirement last in use before the pandemic, but with a new vendor onboard to speed the application process.

The SFPUC also adopted new policies on April 11, 2023 to protect access to water service for those struggling to pay. The new policy indefinitely suspends late payment charges to single-family residential water and wastewater accounts, and establishes that all accounts with household incomes at or below 50% of Area Median Income that are enrolled in CAP and maintain engagement with the SFPUC are exempted from disconnection or lien due to nonpayment. The policy also exempts customers who are at or below 50% of Area Median Income and not enrolled in the CAP. This exemption will be in effect for at least one year, to allow time for analysis of program efficacy to support recommendations to continue or amend the policy from the General Manager or his designees.

The SFPUC's efforts to advance affordability reflect its commitment to ensuring that all residents have access to essential utility services without facing undue financial burdens. By implementing affordability assistance programs, engaging with communities, and fostering partnerships, the SFPUC strives to create an equitable and inclusive approach to providing vital services to its customers and continue to strengthen the livability of the communities it serves.



Outreach at Sunset Night Market

## Achieving Our Vision

# Green Infrastructure Grant Program

As part of its commitment to ensuring the safety and livability of residents, the SFPUC introduced a restructuring of its stormwater rate package, separating out the sewer and stormwater fees to more accurately and equitably calculate each customer's contributions to the combined sewer system. The new structure splits the sewer portion of customer bills into two parts so each individual customer pays based on their wastewater discharge and their property's stormwater runoff. The stormwater charge is calculated based on property size and the area of paved or impermeable surfaces that are unable to absorb excess rain. Customers with green infrastructure elements, including permeable pavements, rain gardens, or rainwater harvesting systems, could receive a credit on their bill for reducing their stormwater flows.

To help prepare residents for this change, the Green Infrastructure Grant Program (GIGP) expanded its eligibility to include a more diverse applicant pool. The GIGP provides funding for the design and construction of green infrastructure projects. The goals of the program are to improve the performance of the City's sewer system during wet weather while delivering benefits



that enhance the quality of life of San Franciscans. Previously, the GIGP was limited to property owners of parcels with at least 0.5 acres of impervious area. Starting with the Fall 2022 application cycle, eligibility was expanded to include private entities, non-profits, individuals, and government entities, provided they could ensure agreement with the property owner for the project.

The SFPUC is also launching a new pilot program to fund the construction of green infrastructure on small residential properties within the Outer Sunset, Sunset District, Parkside, Forest Hill, Bayview, and Visitacion Valley neighborhoods. Residents of the eligible neighborhoods are eligible if they have a single-family home or small apartment building with six or fewer units with a total parcel size of 6,000 square feet or less and have an active SFPUC service account. Eligible projects include rain gardens, permeable pavement, infiltration trenches, and cisterns.

With the expanded eligibility, the GIGP Program Team conducted further a robust outreach campaign to ensure newly eligible applicants were aware of the grant opportunity. The Program Team reengaged vendors to update the vendor list format, which now includes firm and staff bios, photo examples, and updated contact information. The Program Team conducted an in-person flyering outreach campaign, identifying and visiting eligible sites to introduce the program and invite potential applicants to attend workshops or join the stakeholder list. The in-person outreach specifically targeted districts that were underrepresented in the program to ensure the GIGP funds were being distributed equitably across the City. The Program Team hosted pre-application workshops prior to the Fall 2022 cycle and new Spring 2022 cycle to explain the application process and answer any questions and made presentations to several community groups.



## Achieving Our Vision

# Southeast Community Center

Thriving community hubs are a vital element in strengthening livable communities. The recent completion of the Southeast Community Center in the Bayview-Hunter's Point community is an example of the SFPUC's commitment to promoting the health, well-being, cultural, educational, and financial empowerment of southeast residents.

The original Southeast Community Center Facility at 1800 Oakdale Avenue was built in 1979 after Bayview-Hunter's Point community activists won construction of a community center as part of an agreement to offset the negative environmental effects of the Southeast Wastewater Treatment Plant on surrounding communities. This agreement was the result of strong environmental justice activism mobilizing residents in Bayview-Hunter's Point communities and serves as an inspiring example of civic leadership and advocacy.

When it became clear in 2015 that extensive repairs would be needed to the original center, SFPUC engaged in a large-scale campaign to solicit community feedback on whether the old center should be repaired or a new state-of-the-art center should be built. The results were overwhelmingly in favor of building a new center that would fully live up to the promises of the original agreement. From January through September 2016, the SFPUC received input from residents and stakeholders about their vision for the Southeast Community Center and how the SFPUC should invest its time and resources in the community.

Four engagement strategies were deployed to ensure maximum participation: grassroots outreach, partnerships with community organizations, communications content, and collaboration with the Southeast Team. The SFPUC worked with 16 community



Southeast Community Center



partners to collect 1,006 surveys, conduct 45 public meetings with a total attendance of 1,250 stakeholders, and reach 2,470 residences through door-to-door campaigns. The outreach campaigns were supplemented by an online survey that was available in four languages: English, Spanish, Chinese, and Filipino. Recommendations received through this process helped provide design elements and programming ideas for the new center.

The Southeast Community Center held its grand opening on October 22, 2022. The new center honors the legacy of “The Big 6” community activists who led the movement for the original center: Alex Pitcher, Harold Madison, Ethel Garlington, Dr. Espanola Jackson, Shirley Jones, and Elouise Westbrook. The state-of-the-art center features non-profit workspaces, several multi-purpose rooms and meeting rooms, the standalone Alex Pitcher Pavilion for community events, co-working spaces, local art, low-cost childcare through the Wu Yee Childcare Program, and the Hungry Café which provides fresh food and drinks. The open spaces include an amphitheater, gardens, outdoor dining areas, and play spaces for children. The new center also provides a wide range of social services supporting workforce development and education for southeast residents of all ages through its tenant partners. The Southeast Community Center also began a farmer’s market on Thursdays from June to November that brings fresh produce and bakery items to surrounding communities. The new Center has been embraced by the community: as of September 2023, less than a year after opening, the Southeast Community Center had hosted 1,164 events and 44,288 visitors. There are plans for additional events throughout the year, including a health fair, to bring important resources into the Bayview-Hunter’s Point community. The Southeast Community Center plays a major role in providing resources to support the growth and livability of Southeast communities.

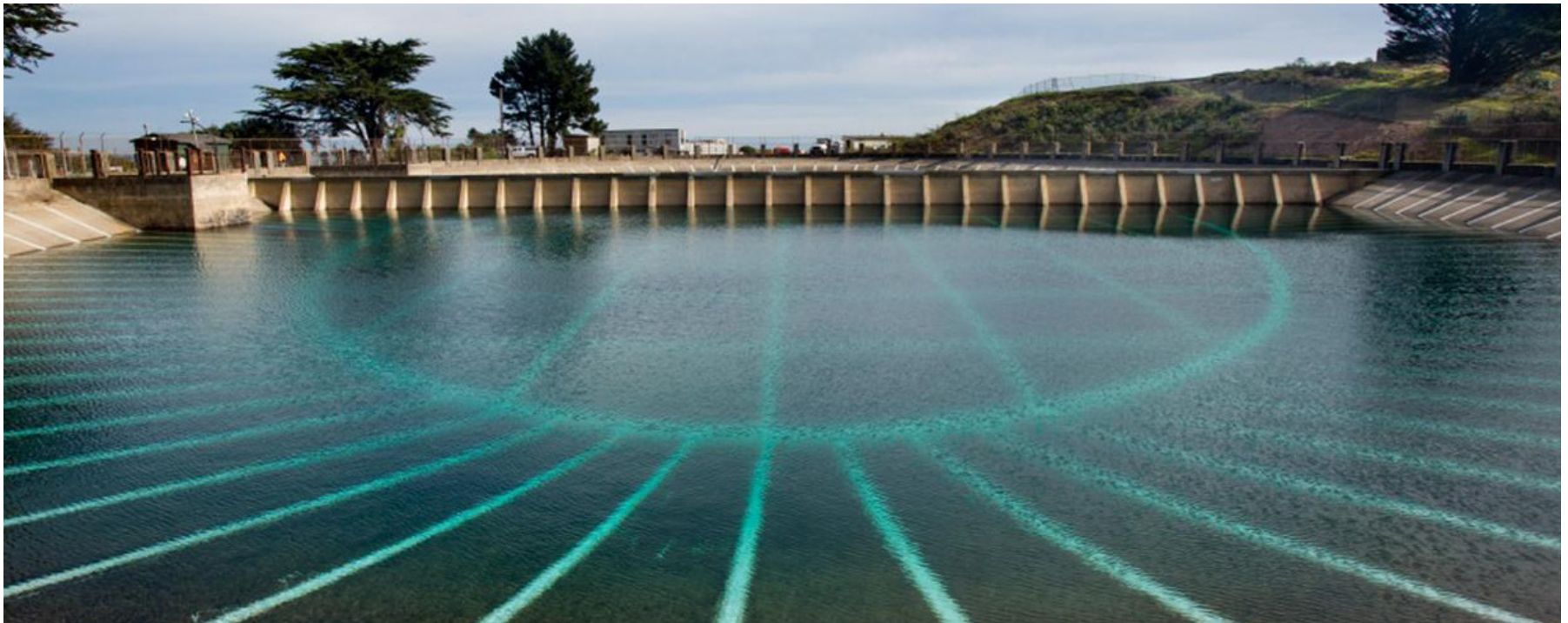


## Achieving Our Vision

# Climate Action Plan Water Supply Addendum

San Francisco first published a Climate Action Plan in 2004, leading the way on local climate action, environmental justice, and launching innovative community programs and outreach campaigns for residents and businesses. The most recent update of the Climate Action Plan consisted of 31 implementable strategies with 159 specific actions across six sectors: Energy Supply, Building Operations, Transportation and Land Use, Housing, Responsible Production and Consumption, and Healthy Ecosystems. The Climate Action Plan also came with the ambitious goal of net zero carbon emissions for the City by 2040.

The SFPUC has long been committed to climate mitigation and adaptation, with much of San Francisco's major environmental progress attributed to the SFPUC's longtime investments in clean energy and water sustainability. After the release of the 2021 Climate Action Plan, the SFPUC and San Francisco Environment Department (SFE) collaborated on the development of the Water Supply Addendum (Addendum), beginning in December 2021. The SFPUC and SFE worked together to draft the content of the Addendum and held a public workshop to share progress and receive feedback from interested San Franciscans. In Spring 2023, SFPUC Water Resources Division staff worked with SFPUC Equity staff to conduct a racial equity assessment for the draft Addendum using the Racial and Social Equity Assessment Tool (R-SEAT) that SFE created for the 2021 Climate Action Plan, which informed changes to proposed actions and the Addendum narrative.



Twin Peaks Reservoir



San Francisco released the updated Climate Action Plan in September 2023, adding the Water Supply sector and an additional 3 new strategies and 15 new actions through the Water Supply Addendum. The Water Supply strategies will drive investment in, and implementation of, demand management programs, innovative programs to reduce water use and develop new water supplies and supply augmentation programs. Each of the strategies lays out what success looks like, greenhouse gas reduction potential by 2030, estimated costs, climate metrics, and equity metrics to help San Franciscans better understand the impacts of the Addendum. The supporting actions in the Addendum also lay out the steps that the SFPUC is taking or will take to ensure progress towards the success of each of the strategies and the overall goal of net-zero carbon emissions. Charting the course for a more sustainable future exemplifies how the SFPUC focuses on strengthening livable communities both now and for generations to come.



# OneWaterSF

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