

Celebrating Our People



2023 Year in Review

Welcome **Message**



2023 was Metro Water Recovery's year to produce a forward-thinking update to its Strategic Plan to focus on its people, workplace, and communities.

We are proud to stand on these three foundational pillars which are all interconnected and essential to achieving Metro's vision to be a leader, an innovative clean water partner, and overall, a great place to work. These three pillars guide Metro's direction and decision making.

With organizational values in Excellence, Collaboration, Integrity, and Inclusion, our focus is on people: those we serve in our communities and those who choose to embrace the public service work at Metro. As they live these core values daily, Metro's dedicated employees bring our organization's vision to fruition.

Two focus areas emerged from the Strategic Plan process: Employee Engagement and Growth, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We believe when employees can be their authentic selves in the workplace, they contribute to the mission in meaningful ways with freedom to creatively solve problems.

In testament to this philosophy, we are highlighting employees who received awards and accolades for being the best in the business. It is no accident Metro is a national and global leader in the clean water sector. Our employees are doing what they love in a culture that stimulates innovation. Our work environment allows them to thrive and grow as they support communities and healthy ecosystems in the South Platte River watershed.

On behalf of all of us at Metro, thank you for being a part of our community. It is our pleasure to provide clean water and protection for our natural environment.



Andrew Johnston
Board Chair



William J. "Mickey" Conway
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)



Board Members



Curt Aldstadt, Westminster

Peter Baertlein, Denver*

Bonnie Baird, Alameda**

Greg Baker, Aurora

Mike Barrett, Crestview

Clint Blackhurst, Brighton**

Travis Bogan, Denver**

Philip Burgi, Wheat Ridge

Nadine Caldwell, Aurora

John Chavez, Berkeley

David Councilman, Pleasant View

Deborah Crisp, East Lakewood

Clark Davenport, Northwest Lakewood

James DeHerrera, Aurora

Robert Duncanson, Denver*

Mary Gearhart, Denver

Jo Ann Giddings, Aurora

Joan Iler, Westridge

Sharon Israel, Arvada**

Andrew Johnston, Denver

Janet Kieler, Denver

Craig Kocian, Arvada

Laura Kroeger, Lakewood

Kathy Laurienti, Crestview*

Doug Lazure, Denver

Bob LeGare, Aurora

Marena Lertch, Aurora**

Charles Long, Thornton*

Martin Majors, Fruitdale

Miller, Charlie, Fort Lupton

Jamie Miller, North Table Mountain

Sarah Niyork, South Adams County

Steve Pott, Applewood*

Bill Ray, Arvada*

Josh Redman, Thornton**

Thomas Roode, Denver**

Robert Roth, Aurora*

Kim Schoen, Brighton*

Greg Sekera, Lakewood

Delbert Smith, Bancroft-Clover

Peter Spanberger, Denver

Mary Beth Susman, Denver

Amerigo Svaldi, North Washington Street

Dennis Towndrow, North Pecos

Scott Twombly, Thornton

Jennifer Williams, Denver

Ronald Younger, Denver

*retired during 2023 year; **joined during 2023

Metro Launches

Updated Strategic Plan

Metro Water Recovery's Strategic Plan is our collective roadmap for the future.

It serves as a compass, guiding us by outlining our direction. It helps us make informed decisions and work together towards our vision: to be a leader, an innovative clean water partner, and a great place to work.

Metro's 2016 Strategic Plan brought our organization great success. By 2022, Metro completed more than 90 percent of our goals set forth in the 2016 plan.



The plan guided us as we achieved significant milestones, including:

Expansion of service area through the Second Creek Pipeline, providing clean and reliable water services to more communities.

Construction of the world's largest phosphorus recovery system, showcasing our commitment to sustainability.

Focus on becoming an employer of choice, resulting in enhanced training opportunities and the launch of the Supervisory Academy.

Strategic rebranding with an outward focus, enabling us to serve as a valuable resource, engage with the public, and foster relationships.

The 2016 plan helped transform Metro into the organization it is today, but it became clear that we needed to begin planning for Metro's future. In 2022, our process to develop an updated strategic plan began. Employees were heavily involved in every step of the process.

- Early on, surveys and employee focus groups helped shape the plan. In fact, these focus groups led to the development of new pillars and values that would form the foundation of the plan.
- In 2023, employees were then invited to present their recommendations to Metro's Board of Directors for approval.
- In July, Metro announced the completion of our updated Strategic Plan.



Three Pillars

We have simplified our approach by focusing on three key pillars: Our People, Our Work, and Our Communities.

These pillars are foundational elements which guide Metro's direction and decision-making.

▶ **The Updated Strategic Plan** is a reflection of our employees and our organization – who we are today and who we want to become.



Four Core Values

We have also taken the time to update our core values to reflect our collective commitment. These values serve as the backbone of our organization.



EXCELLENCE



INCLUSION



COLLABORATION



INTEGRITY



Our People

Metro Water Recovery is a leader in attracting, developing, and engaging top talent who work together to foster an inclusive, professional, and productive work environment.

Developing Talent



Workforce Development Programs

Metro Water Recovery's workforce development programs prepare a qualified, diverse, and knowledgeable workforce with candidates prepared to fill critical positions.



Mechanical Industrial Technician (MIT) trainees fabricate and repair equipment, which includes welding, machining, pipefitting, and millwright work. An example would be fabricating recirculation tanks and retrofitting mixed liquor recycle pumps to conserve and reuse water.

Electrician/Instrumentation Technician (EIT) trainees perform preventative maintenance for power supplies, pumps, and generators. This includes maintenance for specialized equipment such as sensors for variable frequency drives, which allow plant operators to remotely monitor motors that use the drives.



Welcoming **Great Leaders**



Metro Water Recovery strives to be a local and national leader in wastewater treatment and beyond.

Based on the importance of innovation at Metro, the organization created a new role—Chief Innovation Officer (CIO)—to help lead us to success and collaborate closely with the Director of Technology and Innovation to develop a strategic direction for Metro.

After a competitive selection process to fill both roles, we're proud to welcome two great leaders in the industry: Tanja Rauch-Williams as our CIO and Dan Freedman as our Director of Technology and Innovation. Together, Tanja and Dan bring 31 years of wastewater expertise.

Tanja and Dan are already working on novel solutions to the challenges of resource recovery.



Dan Freedman
Director of
Technology and
Innovation



Beyond our two treatment plants and having a meaningful impact on the community—we work towards environmental solutions that don't even deal directly with wastewater, like energy usage, air quality, water quality and quantity—it's really exciting to be part of the solution to these challenges."



Tanja Rauch-Williams
Chief Innovation
Officer



Metro has the resources to think through some of these challenges and test how they could be better addressed in society," Tanja adds. "Not only on behalf of Metro but also on behalf of the industry, in Colorado, and nationwide."

Our People

Awards



Nickolette Honored With Board Chair Award

Jim Nickolette, Operations Work Planner Senior, was honored with Metro Water Recovery's 2023 Board Chair Award. Nominations for Jim were submitted by employees from numerous Metro departments, including Operations, Maintenance, and Engineering.

The Board Chair Award recognizes employees for consistently exceeding job expectations, working to meet department and division objectives, and collaborating with coworkers to complete tasks and create a positive work environment.



Jackson Earns NACWA President's Award

Emily Jackson, Chief Legal Officer, was presented with the 2023 National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) President's Award. Presented by NACWA President Tom Sigmund, the award is designated to an individual who has made significant contributions toward achieving NACWA's goals and objectives.

In selecting Emily for the award, Tom recognized her extensive work on Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), NACWA legal advocacy, and guidance with the association's Women in Water Network.

Verke Wins Analyst of the Year

Carl Verke, Lab Analyst I, was awarded Analyst of the Year at the 2023 Rocky Mountain Water Quality Analysts Association (RMWQAA) Symposium.



Our People

Awards



Employees Recognized at Regional Conference

Metro Water Recovery employees received prestigious awards during the 2023 Rocky Mountain Water Conference.



Arlisa Michael, Resource, Recovery and Reuse Work Planner Senior, earned the Outstanding Service Award, which recognizes an individual who continues to make significant contributions to Rocky Mountain Water Environment Association throughout their membership.

Jim Nickolette, Operations Work Planner Senior, received the William D. Hatfield Award, which is presented to operators of water resource recovery facilities for outstanding performance and professionalism.



Edyta Stec-Uddin, Senior Wastewater Infrastructure Planner, was honored with the Delegate Service Award. This award from the Water Environment Federation (WEF) recognizes the outstanding work by Member Association Delegates in the WEF House of Delegates.

Operations Challenge Teams Bring Home the Hardware

Metro's two Operations Challenge teams – **Double Duty** and **Elevated Ops** – competed for a national championship at the 2023 Water Environment Federation Technical Exhibition and Conference (WEFTEC).

Competing in Division I, Elevated Ops took home the 3rd place trophy. Competing in Division II, Double Duty took home the 2nd place trophy.





Our Work

Metro Water Recovery delivers high-quality services by continuously innovating and investing in our processes while upholding the highest standards of safety, financial stewardship, and environmental sustainability.

Goes Online

New Biosolids Dewatering and Storage Facility

Constructed in 1966, the original biosolids facility at Metro Water Recovery's Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility faced maintenance challenges and weather-related deterioration over the years. Our 2013 Facility Plan proposed a new building to improve process performance while also reducing the risk of failure and permit violations.



Construction of the new Biosolids Dewatering and Storage Facility began in 2018 and was completed in 2023, offering advanced features like eight centrifuges, four dewatered biosolids storage bins, new electrical transformers, a new control room, and two truck lanes that allow up to four METROGRO trucks to be loaded with biosolids simultaneously.

Historic Tie-In

To Serve the City of Brighton



On July 27, Metro Water Recovery’s Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) officially completed a tie-in with the City of Brighton to accept 100 percent of the flows previously treated by the Brighton treatment facility. The historic tie-in increased NTP’s influent flows by approximately 2.5 million gallons per day (MGD) to a daily average of roughly 8 MGD.



This effort was accomplished through a collaboration between several departments at Metro, including NTP Operations & Maintenance, the Control Systems Group, the Technology and Innovation Department, and Engineering.

NTP employees faced a massive rain event May 11, spurring an emergency response from the Operations team. Subsequent rain events throughout the spring sustained these high influent flows, creating pumping conditions that NTP had never experienced before.

Kim Cowan, NTP Director of Operations and Maintenance, stated that these challenges helped Metro understand how to refocus NTP for high-flow rates. “The silver lining was that it uncovered several issues with the plant’s control logic, which had previously been developed for low-flow conditions and had not been tested at these higher flow rates,” Cowan said.

Unprecedented Summer

At the METROGRO Farm



The summer presented unique challenges for Metro Water Recovery's annual harvest at the METROGRO Farm. This year shattered a 162-year record to become the wettest June on record at the farm. The farm saw 13 inches of annual rain occur over a 10-day period. METROGRO Farm Administrator Jason Zimbelman describes the 2023 season in a single word: unprecedented.

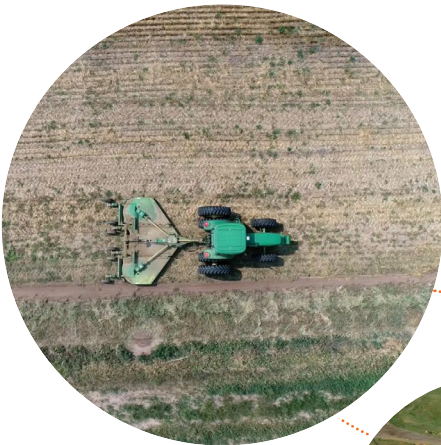
13"

of annual rain occur over a 10-day period



Wheat thrives on traditional hot summer days as it needs a period of heat-stress for an optimal quality crop. The wet summer resulted in one of the top five latest wheat harvest completion years in recorded history. With more moisture than usual, Metro delayed its harvest until August – a first for the METROGRO Farm.

Record-setting rain also posed challenges to maintaining the farm's 100 miles of interconnecting dirt and gravel roads. With routine truck deliveries of METROGRO® Cake from Metro's treatment facilities, Metro staff mined their own gravel from an on site gravel pit to fill and repair damaged roads.





Major Bypass at RWHTF

Replaces Aging Infrastructure

Installed in the 1960s and 1980s, aging infrastructure at Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility was susceptible to corrosion from hydrogen sulfide. In 2023, Metro Water Recovery completed a major rehabilitation of approximately 2,000 linear feet of major channels, conduits, and piping at the North Primary Clarifiers.

The project team employed cured-in-place pipe and sliplining methods to complete the rehabilitation of the pipe. To achieve the milestone, Metro embarked on a major flow diversion and bypass of the North Primary while continuing to maintain the treatment of the plant's 130 million gallons per day (MGD) flow.

This critical project was completed on time and on budget while maintaining 100 percent operation and zero environmental or safety incidents. Due to the project's success, the team was awarded with Project of the Year for Rehabilitation from Trenchless Technology, a major industry magazine.



channels, conduits, and piping



flow diversion



flow bypass



maintaining operation



environmental and safety incidents





Our Community

Metro Water Recovery positively impacts the communities we serve by maintaining strong relationships, communicating effectively, and aligning with our communities' environmental priorities.

Advocacy for

Ratepayers, Communities, and the Environment



Conway Testifies Before the U.S. House



Mickey Conway, Chief Executive Officer, testified May 16 on behalf of the wastewater sector and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) before the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee on the need for sensible and important regulatory reforms under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Conway is currently serving as the Treasurer of NACWA and a member of the NACWA Board of Directors Executive Committee.

During the hearing, Conway testified on three proposed reforms that would provide greater regulatory certainty to clean water agencies, improve transparency and due process, and help protect utilities against the increasing number of unwarranted CWA citizen suits.

Employees Lead Effort to Pass Wipes Labeling Bill

Senate Bill 23-150: Require Labeling Disposable Wipes requires manufacturers and distributors of nonwoven disposable wipes to label packages with the phrase “Do Not Flush.” The bill was signed by Colorado Governor Jared Polis on April 11 and the requirements went into effect on December 31. This bill, along with similar bills passed in California and Illinois, have increased pressure to act at the national level.

So-called “flushable wipes” have caused issues for wastewater treatment facilities for years. Anything flushed down sewer pipes – besides toilet paper – can be detrimental not only to Metro Water Recovery’s facilities, but also for customers’ pipes.

Erin Bertoli, Governmental Affairs Liaison, led Metro’s legislative efforts in support of SB23-150. Kim Cowan, Northern Treatment Plant Director of Operations and Maintenance, testified in both the State Senate and House of Representatives in support of the bill.



▶ Do Not Flush

Metro was active at the Colorado State Capitol during the legislative session, advocating for an important bill to shape what and how important information is presented on non-flushable wipes in the state of Colorado.

Building Positive Relationships

Metro Water Recovery supports our communities through sponsorships to local and regional organizations that align with our mission. Metro's sponsorship program helps us build positive relationships with the community while also allowing us to share our brand throughout our service area and beyond.

2023 marked Metro's first full year of administering our public sponsorship program. Over the course of the year, Metro supported our communities by sponsoring numerous events, including:

6

community events

Brighton Festival of Lights (Brighton)

Brighton Summer Fest (Brighton)

Children's Water Festival (Fort Lupton)

Deer Trail Rodeo (Deer Trail)

Sand Creek Regional Greenway's Night on the Greenway (Denver)

Sounds Exciting Summer Concert Series (Lakewood)

2

industry conferences

Rocky Mountain Water Conference (Denver)

Sustaining Colorado Watersheds Conference (Glendale)



Protecting

The South Platte River



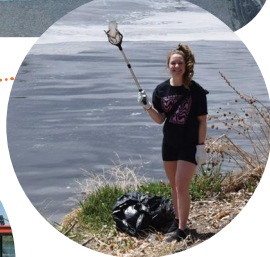
Employees Lead Volunteer River Cleanups



Employees at both the Robert W. Hite Treatment Facility (RWHTF) and the Northern Treatment Plant (NTP) led separate volunteer cleanup days in spring 2023 to help beautify the banks of the South Platte River.

Metro Water Recovery’s Strategy and Communication Department celebrated Earth Day by hosting a volunteer trash cleanup event along the South Platte River just north of the RWHTF outfalls. The department collected five 30-gallon bags of trash during the event.

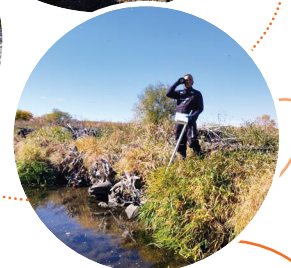
One month later, employees at Metro’s NTP led their own cleanup event of the riverbanks adjacent to the facility as part of an annual tradition. Employees collected a whopping 935 pounds of trash.



Metro Earns National Environmental Achievement Award

For decades, Metro has protected the South Platte River. Since the 1970s, data-driven research has guided decisions that have significantly restored the river’s quality of water, the fish population, and the environment.

To recognize our stewardship to the watershed, Metro received a National Environmental Achievement Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) for the South Platte River Aquatic Life/Habitat Improvements Project.



Budget Highlights

Metro Water Recovery ended the year with strong financials. Operating costs were higher than previous years due to an increase in service area, including the City of Brighton coming online, as well as inflation. Metro staff continue to optimize resources to keep costs as low as possible in light of current economic conditions.



\$1.1B

2023 Ending Net Position

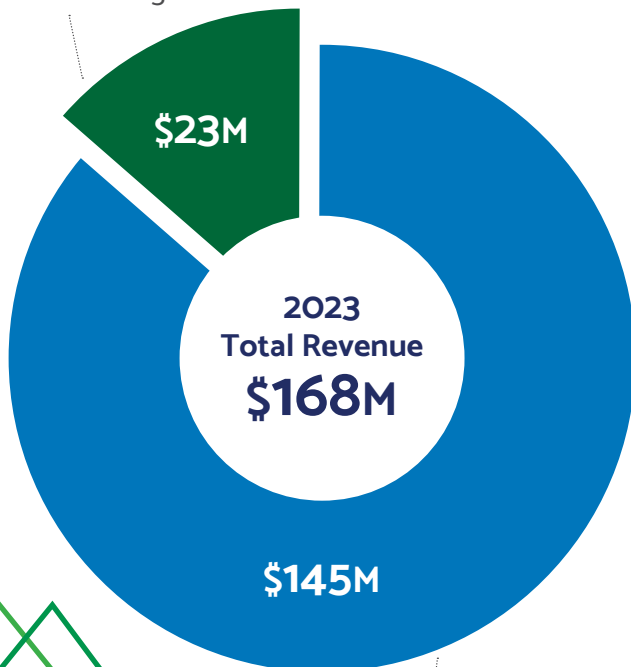


\$103M

Sewer Connection Charges

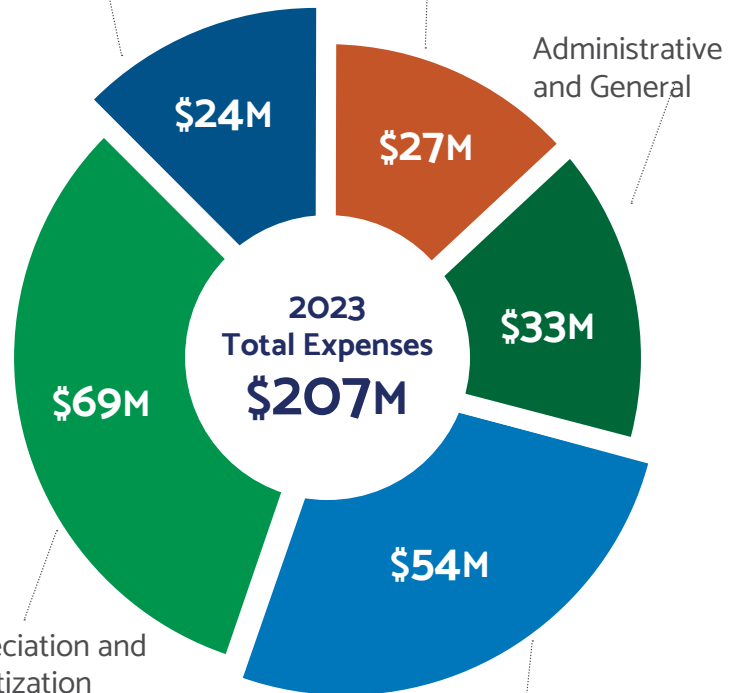
To successfully perform our mission, Metro must maintain reliable assets by sustaining current systems, replacing aging assets as needed, and adding new assets to address changing regulatory requirements. To that end, Metro is expected to spend over \$1.3 billion on capital asset replacement and new construction over the next ten years.

Other (includes investment gain)



Annual Charges to Connectors

Other



Depreciation and Amortization






Operations and Maintenance

Capital Assets and Construction

Metro Water Recovery’s net capital assets increased by \$18 million and include treatment plants, pipelines, buildings, vehicles, machinery, and equipment. Metro did a good job of getting capital in place and making progress, according to Molly Kostecky, Chief Financial Officer, with the largest project moving along in line with projections. Several large construction projects bring needed infrastructure to our Connector communities.

With inflation reaching a 40-year high, employees adjusted the Ten-Year Capital Expenditure Schedule to accommodate rising cost estimates. Metro plans to spend more than \$1.3 billion on capital assets through 2034, with a potential bond issue in 2024 or 2025. Metro’s long-term debt at year-end was \$580 million, and its credit ratings are excellent – Standard & Poor’s AAA and Moody’s Aa1.

Capital Expenditures

- 
\$29M
 Sand Creek and Second Creek Interceptors
- 
\$9M
 Interceptor rehabilitation
- 
\$12M
 South Thornton Lift Station
- 
\$11M
 Sludge Processing Building
- 
\$34M
 Other projects



Capital Assets

- 
\$1B
 Plant in service
- 
\$743M
 Vehicles and equipment
- 
\$243M
 Construction in progress
- 
\$47M
 Land, land improvements, and water rights
- 
\$6M
 Right-to-use equipment
- 
-\$709M
 Depreciation and amortization
- 
\$1.3B
 Total Net Capital Assets
- 
\$18M
 Increase in Net Capital Assets



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