



WATER VIEWS

SERVING THE PUBLIC, RESPECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

THE INFRASTRUCTURE EDITION

INVESTING IN INFRASTRUCTURE

A CONVERSATION WITH HANNAH FORD, ETWD DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING

? Why is it important for ETWD to invest in water, wastewater and recycled water infrastructure?

ETWD's infrastructure is the backbone of our community, delivering clean, safe drinking water and reliable wastewater service every day. When you turn on the tap, you expect water to be there — and when you flush, you expect wastewater to be safely carried away. Ongoing investment ensures that reliability continues uninterrupted.

Most of ETWD's infrastructure is out of sight. It's buried underground or located behind secured facilities, which makes it easy to take for granted. We often only think about infrastructure when something goes wrong. However, when we do our job well, service continues seamlessly—even during emergencies.

Proactive investment today helps prevent costly failures tomorrow and ensures uninterrupted service for our community. Maintaining infrastructure before a crisis occurs protects public health, supports fire protection and emergency response, and ensures long-term reliability for our community.

? How does ETWD invest in infrastructure?

We invest in infrastructure every day. Our operators actively maintain our water, wastewater and recycled water systems through daily inspections, preventative maintenance and repairs. Through our Capital Improvement Program (CIP), we rehabilitate, and replace infrastructure as it reaches the end of its useful life.

We prioritize improvements based on criticality, condition, operator input, regulatory requirements, and safety to ensure reliable service for our community.

? How does ETWD staff balance and prioritize what gets done first?

We use a comprehensive asset management program to evaluate our infrastructure based on condition, risk and criticality. Some assets can safely operate until the end of their service life, while others require proactive replacement because a failure could significantly impact public health, safety or service reliability. By carefully balancing these factors, we deliver the highest level of reliability while keeping rates as affordable as possible.



Hannah Ford
ETWD Director of Engineering



? What are the benefits that ETWD's approach to infrastructure investment provides to the community?

Investing in infrastructure provides:

- Reliable, safe drinking water.
- Effective wastewater treatment and sanitation.
- Environmental protection.
- Emergency preparedness and resilience.
- Long-term cost stability for customers.

? Has ETWD recently secured grant funds to support project development?

Yes. ETWD received \$617,668 in Integrated Regional Water Management Drought Relief grant funding to support the R-2 Exterior Reservoir Recoating Project.

We are also pursuing over \$12.5 million in funding from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for a new generator, lift station improvements and sewer force main resiliency projects to strengthen emergency preparedness.

EL TORO WATER DISTRICT

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Key Current and Upcoming ETWD Infrastructure Initiatives

ASSET MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

ETWD's Asset Management Program helps the District plan infrastructure improvements for the next 10 years. As the District's infrastructure ages, the need for optimization and defensible replacement and rehabilitation planning grows. As directed by the District's Strategic Plan, the District has enhanced its asset management practices, particularly in the 10-year capital planning efforts, as part of a more formal Asset Management Program.

What's included:

- [Water and Sewer Master Plan update.](#)
- [Asset inventory development.](#)
- [Pump Station Asset Management Plan.](#)
- [Water Recycling Plant Asset Management Plan.](#)
- [Fleet Asset Management Plan.](#)
- [IT Master Plan.](#)
- [Distribution System Asset Management Plan.](#)
- [Sewer Force Main Asset Management Plan\(current work\).](#)
- [Collection Systems Asset Management Plan \(future work\).](#)

WATER RECYCLING PLANT HEADWORKS AND SECONDARY CLARIFIER

\$13 Million Project

ETWD's Water Recycling Plant (WRP) transforms wastewater into treated secondary effluent for disposal in the Pacific Ocean and recycled water for irrigation. The oldest structures at the plant, a secondary clarifier and the surrounding waste activated cell, are more than 60 years old and have deteriorated significantly. The structure does not meet current seismic codes, which means it is vulnerable to earthquake damage.

The WRP's Headworks, built in the early 1980s, exhibits considerable wear and no longer has sufficient capacity to manage routine peak wastewater flows. A key component of the system known as a dimminutor, is failing, and some parts have become obsolete. The condition poses a significant operational risk—any additional flow beyond normal conditions or a mechanical failure could lead to a sanitary sewer overflow and resulting environmental harm. To address these issues, ETWD completed a WRP Optimization and Headworks Rehabilitation Study in 2022, and the project is currently in the construction phase.



ALISO CREEK LIFT STATION

\$8.6 Million Project

Built in 1966, the Alisos Creek Lift Station (ACLS) is a below-ground structure with aging equipment and capacity limitations. It is located in a sensitive area close to residents, a walking trail and Aliso Creek. Due to the age of the pumps, the station suffers from degraded pump performance resulting in inadequate capacity for flooding and severe storm events.

An upcoming ETWD project will construct a new lift station and supporting infrastructure within the existing site. The project will also improve visual impact to the community. The project is in the design phase with an expected construction start date of 2028.

SOCWA EXPORT TRANSMISSION MAIN PROJECT

\$12 Million Project

The South Orange County Wastewater Authority (SOCWA) is advancing a project to replace a critical pipeline that conveys approximately 15 million gallons per day of treated wastewater from El Toro Water District (ETWD) and Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) for ocean disposal. The existing pipeline, constructed of Techite, has experienced multiple failures since 1997 due to material vulnerabilities. Some of these failures have resulted in environmental impacts, highlighting the need for a more reliable system. To address this risk, SOCWA, ETWD, and IRWD are working together to replace the aging pipeline with a more durable material. The project will improve system reliability and help protect public health and the environment.

STATE AND REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS



ETWD's drinking water comes from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). ETWD customers benefit from MWD-led infrastructure projects, which bolster regional water reliability. ETWD rates help fund statewide infrastructure through pass-through charges via MWD and the Municipal Water District of Orange County. MWD manages over 50 construction and engineering contracts simultaneously, totaling more than \$300 million per year to upgrade water treatment, enhance infrastructure, and incorporate renewable energy sources such as solar. A few key projects include:

- **Pure Water Southern California, a massive regional water recycling program expected to produce 150 million gallons of purified water daily, serving 15 million people is currently being evaluated.**
- **Sepulveda Feeder Pump Stations Project, a \$280 million project that allows MWD to reverse water flow and deliver Colorado River water to areas in LA/Ventura counties usually dependent on the State Water Project.**
- **Delta Conveyance Project, a proposed modernization of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to improve water capture and movement, strengthening drought resilience.**
- **Regional water reliability, including ongoing rehabilitation of the 242-mile Colorado River Aqueduct and maintenance of 24 dam safety systems.**

Join us at the next ETWD Community Advisory Group Meeting

Get the latest updates on water, wastewater, and recycled water at ETWD's quarterly Community Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting.

Thursday, May 14, 2026
11:30 am - 1:30 p.m.

Lunch will be provided. Scan the QR code to sign up for CAG Meeting invitations.



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Michael Miazga
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGER

Supporting critical infrastructure and public service operations through technology

Inspiration

"I was drawn to the essential nature of the work," Mike says. "Water is something every community depends on, and being part of an organization that provides such a vital service is both meaningful and motivating. ETWD's commitment to reliability and service excellence, along with its role as an integral member of the community, makes my work personally fulfilling."



BEHIND THE SCENES AT ETWD

Experience

28 years in the water industry, including 23 as an ETWD employee and five as a consultant.

Top Priorities

Working to ensure ETWD's technology systems are secure, reliable and accessible so staff can focus on serving customers.

"Technology works best when it supports people. My goal is always to help create systems that are dependable in the background so our teams can stay focused on serving the community."



FIX A LEAK

How to spot and fix leaky infrastructure at home

Small household leaks add up to nearly 1 trillion gallons of water wasted across the U.S. every year. ETWD invites customers to spend a few minutes checking their homes for common leaks and making quick repairs. Common culprits include worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, leaking showerheads and faulty valves. Many of these issues are easy to fix with basic tools and inexpensive parts, and the water savings can quickly add up!

Here are a few simple ways to check for leaks:



Take a look at your water usage during a colder month. If a family of four exceeds 16 ccf's or 12,000 gallons per month, there are serious leaks.



Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter changes at all, you probably have a leak.



Examine faucet gaskets and pipe fittings for any water on the outside of the pipe to check for surface leaks.

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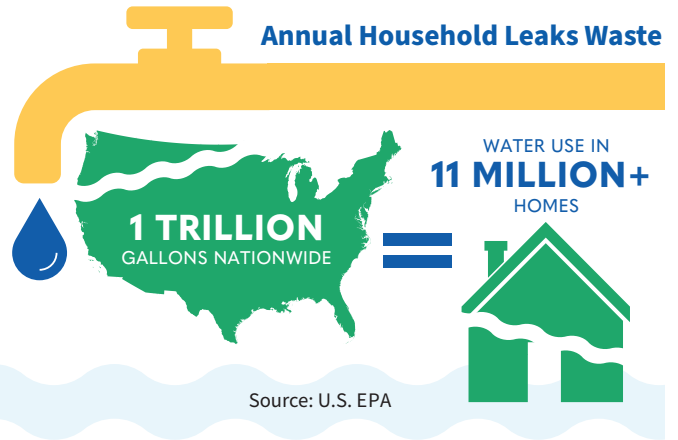
Dennis P. Cafferty

The Board of Directors meeting takes place on the fourth Thursday of the month, and the Engineering and Finance Committee meets on the Monday before the Board of Directors meeting at 7:30 a.m. in person and via Zoom teleconference.

We encourage you to join us. Meeting agendas are posted on our website and include teleconference access and instructions. Learn more: [etwd.com/governance/meetings-agendas-minutes](https://www.etwd.com/governance/meetings-agendas-minutes)

ETWD delivers drinking water, recycled water and wastewater services to customers in the City of Laguna Woods and portions of the cities of Lake Forest, Mission Viejo, Laguna Hills and Aliso Viejo

Have questions? Call us at (949) 837-7050 or email us at district@etwd.com.



Free Toilet Leak-Check Tabs

Identify toilet leaks with free toilet leak-check tabs. If any color shows up in the bowl after 10 minutes, you have a leak. You can pick up a toilet dye tab at the District's customer service office located at 24251 Los Alisos Blvd., Lake Forest, CA 92630.

