

Improving Program Performance by Addressing Friction Points

May 28, 2026

CalWEP Peer to Peer



What is a Friction Point?

A friction point is any moment where a customer, contractor or decision-maker gets delayed, confused, discouraged, or drops out before the intended water-saving action is complete.

Warm-up

- Grab a post-it on your table and answer the question:

*Think of one program you're running.
Where do customers get stuck?*

- Add your post-it to the sides of the table sign.
- Say hello to your table members and share your answers!



Who Knew?! Friction Points in the Real World

- In a 2025 study out of the University of Michigan, what percentage of customers reported not taking any action after completing an energy audit?
 - 50%
- In a 2018 AWE Landscape Transformation survey, what percentage of customers reported needing moderate to full assistance to complete a turf project?
 - 85%
- In a 2014 study published in the Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization, 79% of participants reported they believed they would redeem a mail-in rebate. What percentage *actually* redeemed the rebate?
 - 30%

Friction Point Busters



Ken Smith

Western Municipal
Water District



Madeline Wood

City of Santa Barbara

Redesigning the Customer Journey

Less friction. More participation. Better outcomes.

OLD TRADITIONAL

Customer Does the Work



Customer hears about program



Customer self-enrolls & completes forms



Waits for appointment



Site visit (outdoor assessment only)



Customer receives report (no or limited interventions)



Customer decides what to do next



- Multiple steps and forms
- Delays between outreach and site visit
- Low activity • No proven savings • Expensive



From a
Passive Program

to a
Proactive
Service Model

NEW WATER EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Utility Does the Work



Agency proactively identifies high-potential customers



Direct outreach to customer



Immediate work order creation



Single-visit comprehensive service (indoor/outdoor leak detection, irrigation tune-up, installs)



Repairs & installations completed onsite
For tougher repairs, connect to plumber



Streamlined follow-up & savings tracked



- Fewer steps • No waiting • Done for the customer
- Higher participation • Proven savings • Cost-effective



LESS EFFORT FOR THE CUSTOMER = MORE PARTICIPATION AND BETTER OUTCOMES

Traditional vs. New Water Efficiency Assessment Program

More activity. More repairs. More water saved.

OLD TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

Passive Program – Customer Does the Work



Median Assessments / Month **3**



Median Cost / Assessment **\$195**



Repairs Completed **0**



Median Water Savings / Assessment **1 HCF**

MEDIAN
ASSESSMENTS
PER MONTH

3 → **36**

12x
INCREASE IN
MONTHLY
ACTIVITY

NEW WATER EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (WEA)

Proactive Program – Utility Does the Work



Median Assessments / Month **36**



Median Cost / Assessment **\$451**



Repairs Completed **229**



Median Water Savings / Assessment **18 HCF**



KEY TAKEAWAY: While cost per assessment increased from \$195 to \$451, the redesigned model expanded program activity from 3 to 36 monthly assessments, delivered same-visit repairs, and increased median water savings from 1 HCF to 18 HCF per assessment.



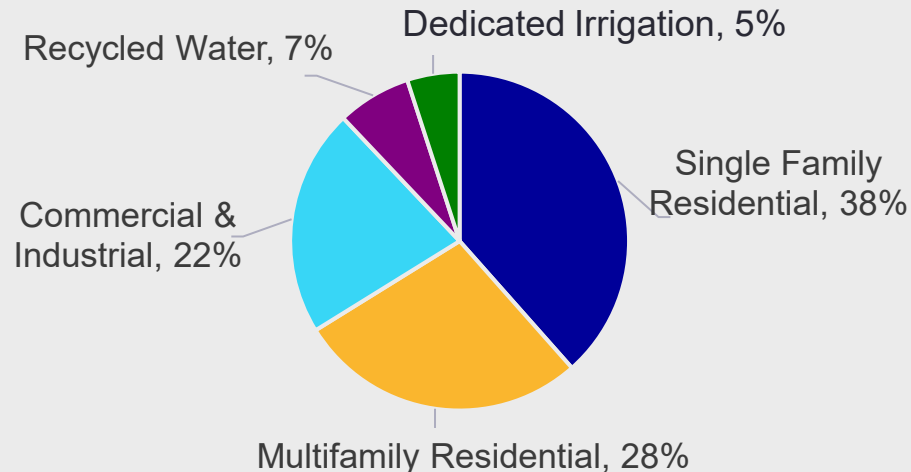
FRICION POINTS FOR LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMATION

PEER TO PEER 2026

Madeline Wood, City of Santa Barbara

About Us

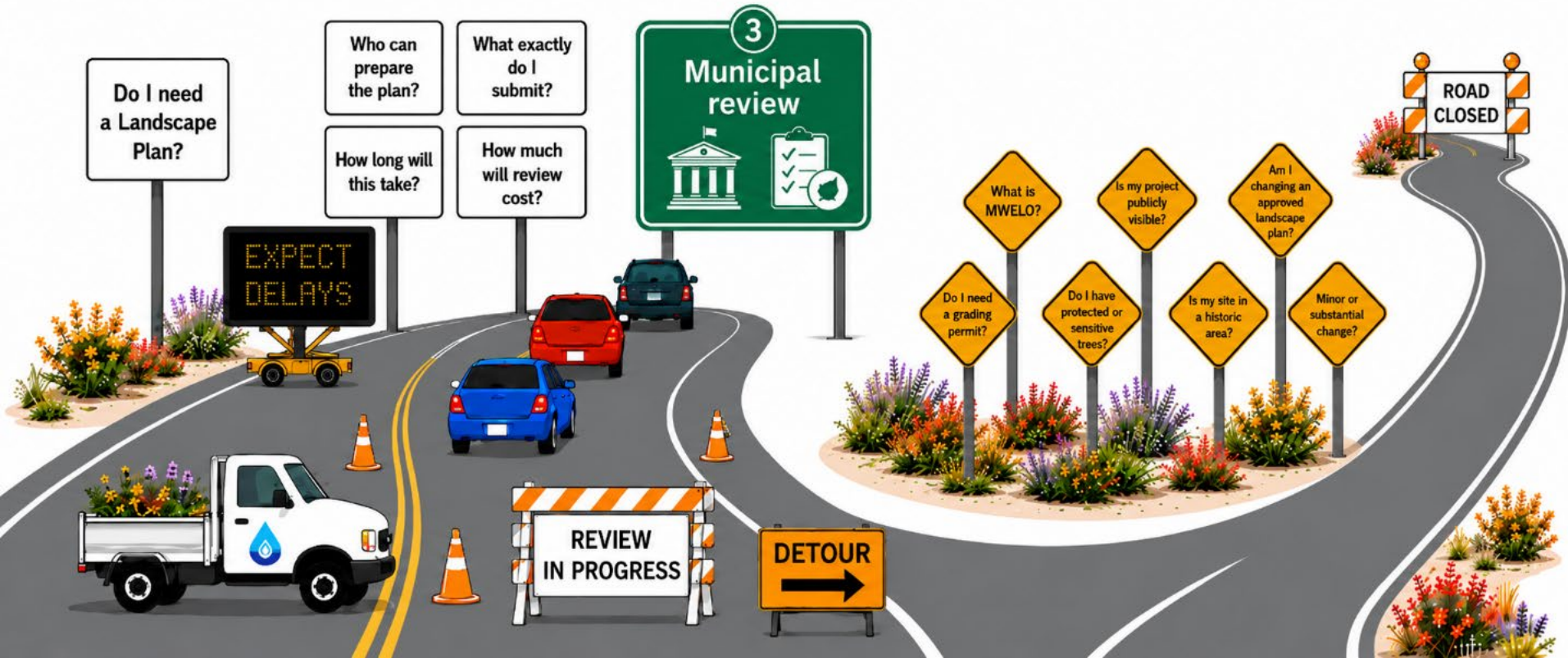
- 93,800 population
- 27,500 connections
- 8 diverse water sources
- Full-service City



Typical CII Landscape Transformation Journey



Hidden Permitting and Plan Review Friction Points



SB Landscape Transformation Readiness Initiative

- **Approval pathway** for landscape transformation projects, including review triggers, criteria, and roles.
- **Clear, consistent administrative review** process.
- **Approved plant palettes** to ensure high quality landscapes
- **Key implementation tools**, including guidelines, staff checklists, submittal requirements, and applicant materials.



A Vision for a Streamlined Municipal Review





Thank you!

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Activity Purpose

**Work through a program
friction point to
identify practical fixes and
some bold innovations**

Activity Instructions

1. Pick a recorder to complete the **Worksheet**
2. Select either the Scenario Card at your table, OR one of the friction points identified during the warmup.
3. Analyze the Problem
 - Customer experience
 - Root causes
4. Identify Solutions
 - Practical fixes
 - Bold innovations
5. Take notes on the Worksheet
6. Be ready to share!

Let's share out!





Thank you – come find us for a chat!

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Peer to Peer 10

Connect. Collaborate. Grow.



COMING UP NEXT:

Closing Plenary Session and Door Prize Winners

2:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Grand Ballroom