

Valley Water Board of Directors and Senior Staff
June 21, 2024
Subject: June 24, 2024, Agenda Item 3.4
Board of Directors of Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) Update Master Plan

Dear Valley Water Board of Directors and Senior Staff:

Thank you for this major update planning for the future, which has a strong framework. Using this lens, certain information needs to be clarified, integrated and refined. Before accepting this report, I urge the Board to direct staff to come back with the following additional information for the three-points as follows-

1. The report supplies no updated information on factors arriving at and determining future water demand (Report states: *depending on the projected demand*).

Future water demand is governed by population growth by age and type of residency, commercial and industrial use and agriculture use in the County.

In using an adaptive approach going forward, the demand side of the mathematics must be updated and sourced with data references. The District Board should require staff to release information on the methods and sources in predicting future water demand in the County.

(Recent trends show weaker growth than forecast in the past and major changes in demographic. https://socialservices.sccgov.org/sites/g/files/exjcpb701/files/SCC_Population_Growth_Projections_Older_Adults.pdf)

Taking into account a possible lower demand forecast, a more flexible mix of supply may be more cost effective and more readily available.

2. There are probabilities related to each of the potential additional water supply sources.

For each potential new or additional water source, probabilities should be factored into ranking potential projects. Not all alternatives have equal probability given varying factors of uncertainty and risk, adverse impact of climate change, potential lawsuits, and other external factors recognized for risks. Factored in should be likely consequences of climate change and costs of litigation related to on-going challenges to the EIR. The framework should be expanded to include data modified and modeled showing these probabilities and risks.

3. Costs for each of the alternatives water resources are a subject for reappraisal.

Each of these projects should have costs broken down entered as data for : planning, permits, consultants, construction, financing fees and legal fees. Without this information, the assumptions are not transparent.

In summary, thank you for the opportunity comment on this important report. Before accepting this draft Water Master Plan. Valley Water Board should require of staff more information and disclosure on 1) updated examination of forecast for future water demand, 2) probabilities of realization for each project given risks and 3) disaggregated costs.

Sincerely,
Rita Norton

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