



# MEMORANDUM

FC 14 (01-02-07)

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Water Conservation and  
Demand Management  
Committee

**SUBJECT:** Water Conservation and Demand  
Management Committee Meeting Summary  
for August 30, 2021

**DATE:** September 14, 2021

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This memorandum summarizes agenda items from the Zoom meeting of the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee held on August 30, 2021.

**Attendees:**

Committee Board Members in attendance were: Committee Vice Chair, Director Nai Hsueh-District 5, Director Barbara Keegan-District 2, Committee Chair, Director Linda J. LeZotte-District 4.

Valley Water Staff members in attendance were: Joseph Aranda, Aaron Baker, Neeta Bijoor, Glenna Brambill, Justin Burks, Rick Callender, Theresa Chinte, Vanessa De La Piedra, Philip Dolan, Melissa Fels, Paola Giles, Vincent Gin, Samantha Greene, Jason Gurdak, Matt Keller, Candice Kwok-Smith, Jessica Lovering, Viet-Long Nguyen, Carlos Orellana, Melanie Richardson, Metra Richert, Don Rocha, Ashley Shannon, Sherilyn Tran, Toni Vye, Gregory Williams, and Jing Wu.

Guest Agencies in attendance were: Diane Asuncion (City of Santa Clara), Michael Bolzowski (California Water Service Company), Kurt Elvert and Bill Tuttle (San Jose Water Company), Anthony Eulo (City of Morgan Hill), Tim Guster (Great Oaks Water Company), and Katja Irvin (Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter).

Public in attendance was: Harris Siddiqui.

## **2. TIME OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM NOT ON THE AGENDA**

Ms. Katja Irvin, Water Committee Co-Chair of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, suggested that Valley Water's Landscape Program promote zero scaping and lower water use native landscaping.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **4.1 MONTHLY UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS VALLEY WATER RESOLUTION 21-68'S WATER USE REDUCTION TARGET AND DROUGHT-RELATED WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS**

Ms. Neeta Bijoor and Mr. Justin Burks reported on the following:

**Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:**

On June 9, 2021, the Board declared a water shortage emergency condition pursuant to California Water Code §350 and called for a countywide water use reduction of 15% compared to 2019 in Valley Water Resolution 21-68. The County followed suit by proclaiming an emergency due to drought on June 22, 2021. California's Governor included Santa Clara County as part of a drought emergency proclamation on July 8, 2021. Valley Water activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) for drought on June 16, 2021 to assist with resolution implementation and other drought-related efforts.

Valley Water has been conducting a wide array of efforts to meet the water use reduction target of 15% compared to 2019, including coordinating with cities and retailers to implement water use restrictions,

public messaging, and water conservation program implementation and expansion. An update on these efforts will be provided, and progress towards meeting the water use reduction target will be shared. In particular, the following items will be provided as requested by the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee on August 30, 2021:

#### Collaboration with Retailers and Cities

The Water Retailer Water Conservation Subcommittee and Drought Ad Hoc Retailer Subcommittee are meeting monthly to collaborate on public messaging and overall drought response. Valley Water has been working with municipalities to encourage the implementation of consistent restrictions. In addition, most cities have taken action in response to extreme drought conditions and to Valley Water's mandatory call to reduce water use by 15% compared to 2019 levels. These actions have ranged from adopting local emergency resolutions to advocating for voluntary water use reduction among constituents, as well as activating citywide Water Shortage Contingency Plans to immediately implement mandatory water-use restrictions and other conservation measures. Valley Water has also been working with cities to encourage the adoption of the Model Water Efficient New Development Ordinance (MWENDO) that was developed during the last drought. Additional details are included in the July Drought Report (Attachment 1), which has been edited since August 10, 2021 to include a revised Residential Gallons Per Capita Day (R-GPCD) table and updated hydrographs.

#### Water Waste Communication

Valley Water staff continue to collaborate on active and planned water waste restrictions from investor-owned utilities and municipalities, respectively. Valley Water has updated their water waste notification letters to provide direct links to water retailer's webpages on water waste rules. A one-sheet summary of active water waste rules to streamline communication is in development. Over 220 water waste reports were received in July 2021. This is 8-times higher than July 2020 participation, and additional staff are in recruitment to accommodate the increase.

#### Water Conservation Outreach – New Programs

##### **Shopping Cart (eCart)**

The latest efficiency improvement to the water conservation program is the online shopping cart feature in which residents and businesses can order, at no charge, water conservation tools and equipment. The eCart has been more successful than anticipated: over 2,600 orders have been placed since launching in April 2021, with over 820 received in July (nearly 50% higher than June 2021). Valley Water is working diligently to fulfill the high volume of orders as quickly as possible and has reduced the backlog from over four weeks to just under five days. Recruitment has been a challenge to find additional staff resources to support this program. Consequently, staff has identified a potential vendor to fulfill eCart orders and the procurement process has been initiated.

##### **Fixture Replacement Program**

The Fixture Replacement Program offers free direct installation services to commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family properties throughout Santa Clara County, including low-income or disadvantaged communities. This program replaces 1.6 gallon per flush or higher toilets with the most water efficient models compatible with a participating property. Through replacing inefficient showerheads, urinals, faucet aerators, and more water-using fixtures free of charge, this program will produce additional water savings. The Fixture Replacement Program provides an opportunity for providing efficient customer service with strong potential of cost-effective water savings for each participating property.

Valley Water's vendor has surveyed approximately 25 qualifying properties. In their surveys, they have identified more than 2,500 toilets that could potentially qualify to-date with potentially 8,000 by June 2022. Initial analysis indicates the program has sufficient funding for approximately 950 toilets. Valley Water is analyzing the vendor's progress and forecasting to determine whether there is sufficient

budget available to provide services throughout the fiscal year. This program has the potential to yield significant short-term savings.

### **Outdoor Conservation Field Services**

The outdoor conservation field services include the Landscape Rebate Program's pre-inspections, Water Waste Inspector Program, Water Wise Outdoor Surveys, and Landscape Maintenance Consultation Program. The current program relies on temporary and student intern support with high turnover. In addition, one fulltime staff member recently resigned. Staff is planning to recommend a single source contract with a vendor to support these field services.

### Landscape Committee

On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, Valley Water shared the latest outreach materials with the Landscape Committee. The Landscape Committee discussed the need for increased outreach and education to protect trees during drought. Valley Water has information on tree protection during drought on Valley Water's BeHeard page and has reached out to two local non-profits, Canopy and Our City Forest, to address this feedback. Valley Water created social media posts scheduled to recur bi-weekly on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter through the end of October using Canopy's toolkit to promote tree care during drought. Valley Water has boosted on Facebook and reports strong weekly metrics for the number of times links are clicked. Valley Water expects to receive about 7,000 clicks and reach 260,000 users. Additional suggestions from the Landscape Committee included researching re-circulating hot water heaters, adding water retailer information and links to Water Waste letters, reevaluating the rebate rate for large commercial Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers, and offering grant opportunities for new irrigation technology and plant materials. Valley Water has since implemented the Water Waste letter update suggestion and will explore the feasibility of the other suggestions as staff availability allows. Full minutes from the meeting have been provided in Attachment 2.

### Landscape Rebate Program Resources

The Landscape Rebate Program's Landscape Conversion Rebate was increased from \$1 to \$2 per square foot July 1<sup>st</sup>. Valley Water received nearly 600 applications for the Landscape Rebate Program in July, nearly doubling the calendar year total to date (1,223 applications since January 1<sup>st</sup>). Valley Water is on a trajectory to deplete the \$1 million in Safe, Clean Water Measure S funding for water conservation within the next few months. If these participation levels continue, the water conservation rebate budget is expected to be exhausted before the end of the fiscal year. Based on lessons learned from the last drought, it will be important to identify funding options to avoid the risk of waitlisting customers during this drought emergency.

### Communications

Valley Water is developing a "conservation tips contest" to further engage and reward the community in water-saving behaviors and increase water conservation awareness. Valley Water will provide a verbal update that details the summer outreach campaign and in-progress focus groups.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee discussed the following: surcharges, penalties, water use restrictions, allocations, Model Ordinance support and working with messaging on how to help the cities (this is an opportunity for Valley Water to engage with their constituents), long term planning on conservation is a way of life in California/Santa Clara County, land use intensification/additional water demands, energy component/water use, transportation and costs, fixture replacement program, Landscape Committee's idea of protecting trees and the meeting notes, and staffing shortages.

Mr. Don Rocha, Mr. Aaron Baker, and Ms. Melanie Richardson were available to answer questions.

Public Comment received:

Mr. Anthony Eulo (City of Morgan Hill) one of the primary authors/movers of the Ordinance noted there is a pool of jurisdictions that have not adopted the Ordinance. 1. The Ordinance is not a drought response activity, but it is a conservation as a way of life activity, 2. Recognize this is a difficult “lift for agencies,” many do not have water retailers and funding is not readily available to implement the ordinance, and 3. Building and Planning is 3<sup>rd</sup> level issue-housing crisis and climate change, reach codes, area of energy conservation, efficiencies, requiring batteries, etc. and water unfortunately is 3<sup>rd</sup> in that line. He is trying to revamp their Landscape Ordinance to require less plants in new developments and take a more zero scaping approach.

Additional Comment: Future planning for next year, assuming there isn’t a wet winter, and fear situation gets worse, efforts should be focused on promotional and public education an opportunity for enhanced cooperation, collaboration and re-emphasizing the message between retailers and Valley Water so potentially there won’t be a need for additional staffing resources but suggest having ‘ad buys” and development of collateral materials with a well-designed brochure to print a large quantity and cost of design will be same and that is where he would look for enhanced work in the future, While programs on the landscape side are on the “uptick” they may not have short-term savings during a drought.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

## 4.2 STANDING ITEMS REPORT

Committee Chair Linda J. LeZotte reported on the following:

### **Summary from Meeting Agenda Memo:**

Standing Items will allow regular reports from staff on subjects that may be of interest to the committee members.

Mr. Jason Gurdak gave a verbal update on Sustainable Groundwater Management Plan (SGMA):  
Recapped the July 26, 2021, WCadMC meeting:

- SGMA update 1. draft Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the north San Benito subbasin is available on San Benito County Water District and Valley Water websites, 2. San Benito County Water District is hosting a groundwater workshop on August 4, 2021, to review the GSP, 3. Valley Water is planning a public meeting on August 12, 2021, to discuss the SGMA Plan of the Santa Clara and Llagas subbasins.

August 30, 2021, Update:

Valley Water staff held 2 meetings on required 5-year update of Alternative Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Clara and Llagas Subbasins (the primary basins in our county):

1. August 12, 2021, Public meeting via Zoom, was a high-level overview of how Valley Water sustainably manages groundwater and recent conditions of groundwater, walked through the Plan contents, and the updates being made to the Plan, also many of the more substantial updates recommended by DWR, great public participation, and received positive feedback.
2. August 13, 2021, Special Meeting with GW Subcommittee of the Water Retailers, and an overview was provided of the updates to the Alternative Plan.
  - At both meetings, staff outlined the expected timeline to submit the updated Alternative to DWR, which is essentially the same timeline that was presented during the Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee’s (WCadMC) May meeting with the following report:
    - ✚ September 27, 2021, meeting, staff will provide a brief verbal SGMA update,
    - October 1, 2021, the draft Alternative Plan will be posted on Valley Water’s website, an email with the link will be sent to the list of interested parties, and instructions on public comment on the Plan,

- ✚ October 25, 2021, meeting, staff will present the updated Plan and hope to receive a recommendation from the Committee for the full Board's consideration on November 23, 2021, expected public hearing. The 2021 Alternative Plan for the Santa Clara and Llagas Subbasins is due to DWR by January 1, 2022, and
- ✚ November 22, 2021, meeting, staff will present an overview of the North San Benito GSP, which staff plans on taking to the full Board for consideration on December 14, 2021, expected public hearing. The North San Benito GSP is due January 31, 2022, to DWR.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee discussed the following:  
Questions regarding the retailer meeting, asked staff to bring back to Committee the Valley Water's SGMA authorities and processes (Resolution #18-04).

Ms. Samantha Greene reported on the following:

Flood MAR is Flood Managed Aquifer Recharge, capture storm flows off hillsides, etc. and recharging it on open space (looking at ag land but all open space as well). Staff has spoken with the Open Space Authority.

- A. Setting up such a program answers need to be addressed:
  - 1. where will the water come from?
  - 2. where is recharge able to happen so it can reach our groundwater table, as a lot of open space is located over confined groundwater area.
- B. Working with a team of professors and researchers from UC Water, this is a collaboration among several UC Universities working on water sustainability issues to do:
  - 1. create GIS based tool to determine best potential sites to implement Pilot Flood MAR Program where lands maybe able to capture runoff, and the types of projects set up there,
  - 2. answer institutional questions and based on what the tool says:
    - what are the water rights and what is going to be needed based on those properties with this approach?
    - what are incentives for those landowners to participate in this Program?
  - 3. Make sure there is a comprehensive list of questions to get the pilot program up and running. December 2022 is the target date and based on the results from the tool and the institutional needs, staff will determine if the pilot program can be instituted in the County, and will begin planning the actual pilot, if study shows it is a feasible idea after Board approval.

Agricultural Water Use Baseline Study update: the past consulting firm was unable to complete the study due to COVID. The Flood MAR UC Water subset team has now stepped in for this Study where the findings will be a lot stronger, using a remote-sensing based approach and will use the data in the Study to figure out water-use patterns and cross-type within County. There is a retired employee that worked with the agricultural community who has been hired to assist the study team and will determine if the recommendations of the potential water efficiency program/projects make sense for the Santa Clara County agricultural community. Data collection is moving along, and the target date of completion is December 2022.

The Water Conservation and Demand Management Committee took no action.

The next regularly scheduled meeting is Monday, September 27, 2021, 11:00 a.m., to be called to order in compliance with the State Emergency Services Act, the Governor's Emergency Declaration related to COVID-19, and the Governor's Executive Order N-08-21.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact me at, [gbrambill@valleywater.org](mailto:gbrambill@valleywater.org) or 1.408.630.2408.

Thank you!

Glenna Brambill, Management Analyst II,  
Board Committee Liaison  
Office of the Clerk of the Board