

Attachment 6: Program Preferences

This attachment identifies the extent to which the Adopted Plan, or the Plan Update (with the implementation of the Work Plan included in Attachment 3) the WIRWP would meet or address the following Program Preferences and Statewide Priorities.

Program Preferences

Include Regional Projects or Programs

The Adopted Plan includes 12 projects intended to meet the regional objectives identified in the plan, and the benefits associated with those projects will accrue not only within the local project area, but to adjacent areas and the entire planning region via enhanced utilization of local resources, increased operational flexibility, and improved water supply reliability.

The Plan Update will include the identification, integration, and prioritization of an updated list of projects, including those that would provide direct benefits to DACs. Based on the current list of projects and objectives, it is anticipated that the new list of projects will address regional problems and conflicts, including enhanced water supply reliability, regional solutions for agricultural drain water, improved protection from flood risks, improvements to surface and ground water quality and preservation and conservation of habitat.

Effectively integrate water management programs and projects within a hydrologic region identified in the California Water Plan; the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) region or subdivision; or other region or sub-region specifically identified by DWR

The plan boundaries extend across two of the hydrologic regions identified in the California Water Plan (Tulare Lake and San Joaquin) and lies entirely within the area covered by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Plan Update will integrate water management programs and projects for the Westside – San Joaquin Integrated Regional Water Management Region, which was approved by DWR as IRWM Region No. 44 in May, 2009.

Effectively resolve significant water-related conflicts within or between regions

The overarching goal of the Adopted Plan is to minimize regional conflict by addressing the most problematic sources of tension affecting our agricultural, municipal, and environmental water use, namely water supply reliability, drainage, and water quality.

The evolution of the Adopted Plan was iterative and driven by stakeholder interest in minimizing conflict while maximizing resource efficiency and effectiveness. The Plan is reactive to the changing regulatory climate, including implementation of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, water quality regulations in the Bay-Delta, and Endangered Species Act provisions, all of which have reduced water supply reliability in the region.

In attempting to alleviate the chronic water shortages faced by the region, the Adopted Plan recognizes the importance of employing a variety of water management strategies. Given the Water Authority's diverse membership, it has become imperative to regionally address multiple opportunities and needs simultaneously. For example, ameliorating water shortages requires pursuing supply augmentation, conveyance expansion, groundwater management, storm water management, conservation, recycling, conjunctive use, water importation, surface storage, and transfers concertedly, as no single solution can sufficiently close the water supply gap. In addition, as opportunities are realized, consideration must be given to how best balance a project's benefits so as to attend to the diverse obligations of stakeholders to provide water supply reliability, habitat protection, recreation, water quality improvement, and wetlands enhancement. In this regard, many of the projects match opportunities created by some stakeholders with the needs of others.

The Adopted Plan includes 12 projects, including the Westside Regional Drainage Plan, which integrates several interdependent strategies into a single project that would eliminate discharge of sub-surface agricultural drainage water from about 90,000 acres of farmland. This project would improve water quality by eliminating selenium, boron, and salt discharges to the San Joaquin River, maintain the productivity of agriculture lands, and enhance water supplies for the region, and resolve long standing conflicts between neighboring water and drainage districts regarding localized impacts of sub-surface agricultural drainage.

Contribute to attainment of one or more of the objectives of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program

With respect to the CALFED objectives noted in the Proposal Solicitation Package (PSP) for this grant application (improve delta water quality; maintain and improve integrity of delta levees, reduce the mismatch between delta water supplies and beneficial uses demands; and improve ecological health of the Bay-Delta watershed), the Adopted Plan includes multiple projects, objectives, and Resource Management Strategies (RMS) which together would augment utilization of local water resources and could reduce water demand in the Region, which would contribute to the attainment of those objectives.

Although the CALFED Bay-Delta program (CALFED) has been subsumed by other efforts, it is worth noting that a variety of objectives were articulated, including four over-arching program objectives¹:

- Provide good water quality for all uses
- Improve fish and wildlife habitat and ecological functions
- Reduce the gap between water supplies and projected demand
- Reduce the risks from deteriorating levees

¹ California Department of Finance, 2005. Draft Report: Implementation Status of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, Years 1 through 5. November

The Adopted Plan would contribute to attainment of three of these four objectives, as discussed below

Provide good water quality for all uses

The Adopted Plan includes 12 projects, most of which would improve water quality and/or assure that good quality water is available for all uses, including agricultural, M&I, and environmental. These projects include

- Arroyo Pasajero Flood Control Project
- Level 2 & Level 4 Refuge Water Supply Diversification Program
- Los Banos Creek Conjunctive Use Project
- Pleasant Valley Groundwater Banking Project
- San Joaquin River – DMC Pipeline Connection
- San Joaquin River Exchange Contractors Water Authority and San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority Water Transfer Program
- San Luis Reservoir Low-Point Improvement Project
- Southwest Stanislaus County Regional Drainage Management Project
- Westside Regional Drainage Plan
- Westside Surface Storage Reservoir Project
- West Stanislaus Flood Control Project

The Adopted Plan includes the following objectives that are relevant to this CALFED program objective:

- Minimize risk of loss of life, infrastructure, and resources caused by significant storm events by utilizing uncontrolled flow beneficially.
- Maximize utility of Regional aquifers while reducing potential for overdraft.
- Capture storm water for higher beneficial use whenever practicable.
- Always promote and enhance water conservation
- Develop regional solutions that provide opportunity for water quality improvement
- Always promote and enhance water recycling

The Adopted Plan also identifies various Resource Management Strategies (RMS, identified in the Project Solicitation Package for Proposition 50, Round 1) which could improve water quality or assure that good quality water is available for all uses, including: groundwater management, imported water, improve and protect water quality, land use management, NPS pollution control, stormwater quality and flood management, water treatment, and water transfers.

It is anticipated that the Plan Update would include similar projects, objectives, and RMS relevant to water quality and thus could continue to contribute to attainment of this CALFED program objective.

Improve fish and wildlife habitat and ecological functions

The Adopted Plan includes 12 projects, many of which would improve fish and wildlife habitat and ecological functions, including:

- Arroyo Pasajero Flood Control Project
- Level 2 & Level 4 Refuge Water Supply Diversification Program
- Los Banos Creek Conjunctive Use Project
- Pleasant Valley Groundwater Banking Project
- Southwest Stanislaus County Regional Drainage Management Project
- Westside Regional Drainage Plan
- Westside Surface Storage Reservoir Project
- West Stanislaus Flood Control Project

The Adopted Plan includes the following objectives that are relevant to this CALFED program objective:

- Provide reasonable opportunity to advance ecosystem restoration through balanced project implementation.
- Develop regional solutions that protect environmental and habitat concerns and provide potential for improvement.
- When possible, align projects to complement existing wetlands

The Adopted Plan identifies the following Resource Management Strategies which are also applicable to this CALFED program objective: ecosystem restoration, improve and protect water quality, land use management, NPS pollution control, and stormwater quality and flood management.

It is anticipated that the Plan Update would include similar projects, objectives, and RMS relevant to water quality and thus could continue to contribute to attainment of this CALFED program objective.

Reduce the gap between water supplies and projected demand

All of the 12 projects included in the Adopted Plan would help to reduce the gap between water supplies and projected demand in the Region.

The Adopted Plan includes the following objectives that are relevant to this CALFED program objective:

- Develop regional solutions that protect environmental and habitat concerns and provide potential for improvement.
- Minimize risk of loss of life, infrastructure, and resources caused by significant storm events by utilizing uncontrolled flow beneficially.
- Maximize utility of regional aquifers while reducing potential for overdraft
- Capture storm water for higher beneficial use whenever practicable
- Always promote and enhance water conservation
- Develop regional solutions that provide opportunity for water quality improvement
- Always promote and enhance water recycling

It is anticipated that the Plan Update would include similar projects, objectives, and RMS relevant to water quality and thus could continue to contribute to attainment of this CALFED program objective.

Address critical water supply or water quality needs of disadvantaged communities within the region

As discussed in the Work Plan (Attachment 3), the Water Authority initiated a DAC outreach process 2009 to seek the involvement of interested groups and organizations. This included seeking assistance from environmental justice (EJ) groups that serve all, or parts, of the Region; two EJ groups (Community Water Center and Self Help Industries) have committed to assisting additional outreach efforts to DACs.

As part of this outreach effort, a survey of water management agencies identified twenty-two projects that would directly benefit DACs, as listed in Table 1 of the Work Plan (in Attachment 3). As part of the Plan Update process, the list of DAC projects will be reviewed and updated as needed with input from EJ groups, water agencies that serve DACs, city managers in which DAC populations are located, and other DAC stakeholders.

Using the project prioritization criteria developed in Task 7, the updated list of DAC projects will be prioritized. Given the amount of detail proposed to be included in the prioritization framework, it is anticipated that the ranking of some DAC projects may be adversely impacted by the availability of supporting technical information. The Water Authority will work with DAC representatives and the EJ groups to review the results of the initial project prioritization and to identify 7 projects that could have scored higher if additional technical information was available. The proponents of those 7 DAC projects will be offered technical assistance by the Water Authority to undertake the additional technical studies necessary to provide sufficient information to address the project prioritization criteria, including, but not limited to:

- Analysis of the technical feasibility of the project, including preliminary design
- Refinement of the work plan, budget, and schedule; and

- Economic feasibility, including quantification of water supply, water quality, flood damage reduction and any other benefits

The outcome of this task will be up 7 projects (depending on funding availability and the original status of the identified projects) that have sufficient technical information to address most, if not all, of the project prioritization criteria, which will enhance the competitiveness of those DAC projects and increase the potential for their inclusion in a future implementation grant application.

Effectively integrate water management with land use planning

Currently, consistent with the requirements of SB 610 and SB 221, substantive development proposals that exceed certain parameters (e.g., 500 residential units) require the preparation of a Water Supply Assessment and/or Water Supply Verification, and those water supply needs are factored into water demand projections of the relevant agencies. In addition, several Counties in the Region informally consult with local water agencies to assure that sufficient water supplies and infrastructure are available to meet the needs of smaller land use development proposals (that do not exceed the SB 610/221 thresholds). It is anticipated that the Plan Update will expand interaction between water agencies and local land use agencies, including any potential recommendations for land use agencies to consider integration of the resource management strategies (included in the Plan Update) in future General Plan updates.

Include actions designed to integrate the stormwater resource plan requirements specified in the CWC, Section 10562

The Adopted Plan already provides for multiple benefit projects intended to maximize water supply, water quality, and other environmental benefits. Several projects in the Adopted Plan are consistent with, and assist in, compliance with total maximum daily load (TMDL) implementation plans and applicable national pollutant discharge elimination system (NPDES) permits and are consistent with applicable waste discharge permits. In addition, these projects would:

- Increase water storage for beneficial use through a variety of on-site storage techniques.
- Increase groundwater supplies through infiltration, where feasible.

It is anticipated the Plan Update would serve a functionally equivalent stormwater resource plan that would expand community participation in plan development and implementation, and would:

- Augment local water supply through groundwater recharge or storage for beneficial reuse of stormwater;
- Implement source control for both pollution and stormwater runoff volume and expand reuse of stormwater;
- Reestablish natural water drainage systems, or mimic natural system functions;

- Develop or enhance habitat and open space with wetlands, parkways, and parks; and
- Direct stormwater to retention basins, cisterns and other storage areas for beneficial reuse.

Statewide Priorities

Drought Preparedness

The Adopted Plan will enhance the Region's preparedness for drought conditions, by reducing future reliance on imported water, expanding water conservation, expanding use of recycled water, increasing capture and recharge of stormwater runoff, and expanding treatment for contaminated groundwater. These practices will increase local water supplies, improve water efficiency, and expand groundwater supplies, all of which will increase drought preparedness. The Plan Update will similarly enhance the Region's preparedness for future droughts.

Use and Reuse Water More Efficiently

The adopted Plan includes specific measures to enhance ongoing water conservation measures and proposes to significantly expand the reuse of agricultural drain water within the Region. The Plan Update will include similar measures, plan objectives, RMS, and projects related to efficient use of water and the expanded reuse of water.

Climate Change Response Actions

Although the Adopted Plan does not specifically address climate change, as discussed above, it will enhance the Region's preparedness for future drought conditions, improve water supply reliability, and improve the Region's ability to accommodate flood water and reduce flood hazards. All of these measures increase the flexibility of water resource management and will make the Region more adaptable to future climate conditions.

The Plan Update will specifically provide:

- A discussion of the potential effects of climate change on the IRWM region and a qualitative check list assessment of the IRWM region's vulnerabilities to the effects of climate change (from the *Climate Change Handbook for Regional Water Planning*) and a discussion of potential adaptation responses to those vulnerabilities
- A list of prioritized vulnerabilities based on the vulnerability assessment and the Region's decision making process
- A plan, program, or methodology for further data collection and analysis of the prioritized vulnerabilities

Expand Environmental Stewardship

The Adopted Plan includes numerous opportunities to expand environmental stewardship throughout the Region through implementation of multi-benefit projects; the conservation of

open space and habitat areas, and improvements in wetlands and other aquatic habitats through water quality improvement and enhanced reliability of water supplies for wildlife refuges. The Plan Update will include similar measures, plan objectives, RMS, and projects which can expand environmental stewardship in the Region.

Practice Integrated Flood Management

The Adopted Plan identified several opportunities to enhance flood management, including the Westside Regional Drainage Plan which would implement integrated solutions for runoff from agricultural lands, and the Arroyo Pasajero and West Stanislaus projects, which would address areas of chronic flooding. These proposals would implement alternative approaches to flood management including both detention and retention basis, which would create opportunities for habitat creation and restoration. It is anticipated the Plan Update will include similar measures, plan objectives, RMS, and projects. Expanded outreach as part of the Plan Update process is anticipated to increase participation of flood management entities, such as the Westside Resources Conservation District, which promotes watershed management, drainage management, and terrestrial and aquatic habitat management. This will further expand the implementation of integrated flood management practices in the Region.

Protect Surface Water and Groundwater Quality

The Adopted Plan includes 12 projects, many of which would improve surface and/or ground water quality, including:

- Arroyo Pasajero Flood Control Project
- Level 2 & Level 4 Refuge Water Supply Diversification Program
- Los Banos Creek Conjunctive Use Project
- Pleasant Valley Groundwater Banking Project
- Southwest Stanislaus County Regional Drainage Management Project
- Westside Regional Drainage Plan
- West Stanislaus Flood Control Project

The Adopted Plan includes the following objectives that are relevant to water quality:

- Maximize utility of Regional aquifers while reducing potential for overdraft.
- Capture storm water for higher beneficial use whenever practicable.
- Always promote and enhance water conservation
- Develop regional solutions that provide opportunity for water quality improvement
- Always promote and enhance water recycling

The Adopted Plan also identifies various Resource Management Strategies (RMS, identified in the Project Solicitation Package for Proposition 50, Round 1) to improve water quality,

including: groundwater management, improve and protect water quality, land use management, NPS pollution control, stormwater quality and flood management, and water treatment.

The Plan Update will include similar measures, objectives, RMS, and projects to protect and enhance surface and ground water quality in the Region.

Ensure Equitable Distribution of Benefits

As discussed above, the Water Authority initiated a DAC outreach process 2009 to seek the involvement of interested groups and organizations, including (EJ) groups. As part of this effort, a survey of water management agencies identified 22 projects that would directly benefit DACs.

The previously-developed list of DAC projects will be reviewed and updated as needed with input from EJ groups, water and utility agencies that serve DACs, city managers in which DAC populations reside, and other DAC stakeholders. Using the project prioritization criteria developed in Task 7, the DAC projects will be prioritized. Given the amount of detail proposed to be included in the prioritization framework, it is anticipated that the ranking of some DAC projects may be adversely impacted by the lack of sufficient technical information.

The Water Authority will work with DAC representatives and the EJ groups to review the results of the initial project prioritization of DAC projects to identify 7 projects that could have scored higher if additional technical information was available. The proponents of those 7 DAC projects will be offered technical assistance by the Water Authority to undertake additional technical studies in order to address as many of the project prioritization criteria as feasible

The outcome of this task will be up to 7 projects (depending on the extent of funding and the original status of the project) that have sufficient technical information that can address the project prioritization criteria. This task will enhance the competitiveness of DAC projects, increase the potential for their inclusion in a future implementation grant application, directly address critical water supply or water quality needs of DACs, and ensure equitable distribution of benefits from project implementation.