CITY OF SANTA CRUZ
809 Center Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

WATER COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

November 4, 2024

7:00 P.M. GENERAL BUSINESS AND MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST, COUNCIL CHAMBERS (809 CENTER STREET, SANTA CRUZ)

The City of Santa Cruz does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. Out of consideration for people with chemical sensitivities, please attend the meeting fragrance free. Upon request, the agenda can be provided in a format to accommodate special needs. Additionally, if you wish to attend this public meeting and will require assistance such as an interpreter for American Sign Language, Spanish, or other special equipment, please call Water Administration at 831-420-5200 at least five days in advance so that arrangements can be made. The Cal-Relay system number: 1-800-735-2922.

APPEALS: Any person who believes that a final action of this advisory body has been taken in error may appeal that decision to the City Council. Appeals must be in writing, setting forth the nature of the action and the basis upon which the action is considered to be in error, and addressed to the City Council in care of the City Clerk. Appeals must be received by the City Clerk within ten (10) calendar days following the date of the action from which such appeal is being taken. An appeal must be accompanied by a fifty dollar ($50) filing fee.

Agenda and Agenda Packet Materials: The Water Commission agenda and the complete agenda packet containing public records, which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the California Public Records Act, are available for review on the City's website: https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/water/city-water-commission and at the Water Department located at 212 Locust Street, STE A, Santa Cruz, California, during normal business hours.

Agenda Materials Submitted after Publication of the Agenda Packet: Pursuant to Government Code §54957.5, public records related to an open session agenda item submitted after distribution of the agenda packet are available at the same time they are distributed or made available to the legislative body on the City's website at: https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/government/city-departments/water/city-water-commission and are also available for public inspection at the Water Department, 212 Locust Street, STE A, Santa Cruz, California, during normal business hours, and at the Council meeting.

Need more information? Contact the Water Department at 831-420-5200.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Statements of Disqualification - Section 607 of the City Charter states that...All members present at any meeting must vote unless disqualified, in which case the disqualification shall be publicly declared, and a record thereof made. The City of Santa Cruz has adopted a Conflict of Interest Code, and Section 8 of that Code states that no person shall make or participate in a governmental decision which he or she knows or has reason to know will have a reasonably foreseeable material financial effect distinguishable from its effect on the public generally.

Oral Communications

Announcements

Consent Agenda (Pages 1.1 – 2.7) Items on the consent agenda are considered to be routine in nature and will be acted upon in one motion. Specific items may be removed by members of the advisory body or public for separate consideration and discussion. Routine items that will be found on the consent agenda are City Council Items Affecting Water, Water Commission Minutes, Information Items, Documents for Future Meetings, and Items initiated by members for Future Agendas. If one of these categories is not listed on the Consent Agenda then those items are not available for action.

1. City Council Actions Affecting the Water Department (Pages 1.1 - 1.2)

   That the Water Commission accept the City Council actions affecting the Water Department.

2. Water Commission Minutes from October 7, 2024 (Pages 2.1 – 2.7)

   That the Water Commission approve the October 7, 2024 Water Commission Minutes.

Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

General Business (Pages 3.1 – 4.19) Any document related to an agenda item for the General Business of this meeting distributed to the Water Commission less than 72 hours before this meeting is available for inspection at the Water Administration Office, 212 Locust Street, Suite A, Santa Cruz, California. These documents will also be available for review at the Water Commission meeting with the display copy at the rear of the Council Chambers.

3. Clarification of Council Forest Management Policies on Water Department Watershed Lands (Pages 3.1 – 3.21)

That the Water Commission support staff's recommendation to City Council to approve the modification of Council Policy 11.3 to include specific old growth tree characteristics and clarify standards for commercialization of forest products on City of Santa Cruz watershed lands.

4. Water Supply Augmentation Implementation Plan (WSAIP): Preliminary Adaptive Water Supply Road Map (Pages 4.1 – 4.19)

That the Water Commission review and provide comments on the preliminary adaptive road map for the implementation of supply augmentation projects.

Subcommittee/Advisory Body Oral Reports (Pages 5.1 – 5.3)

5. Santa Cruz Mid-County and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agencies Advisory Body Report (Pages 5.1 – 5.3)

That the Water Commission receive information on the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency.

Director's Oral Report

Information Items (Pages 6.1 – 6.2)

Adjournment

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WATER COMMISSION
INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: 10/30/2024

AGENDA OF: 11/04/2024

TO: Water Commission

FROM: Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director

SUBJECT: City Council Actions Affecting the Water Department

RECOMMENDATION: That the Water Commission accept the City Council actions affecting the Water Department.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

October 22, 2024

Request to Hire a CalPERS Retired Annuitant to Fulfill Interim Water Assistant Finance Director Duties During and After Recruitment (HR)

Motion **carried** to approve a contract to hire a CalPERS Retired Annuitant to fulfill Interim Assistant Finance Director duties for the Water Department while position is vacant and during recruitment and after for cross-training.

Councilmember Watkins moved, seconded by Councilmember Kalantari-Johnson, to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously with the following vote. AYES: Councilmembers Newsome, Brown, Watkins, Brunner, Kalantari-Johnson; Mayor Keeley. NOES: None. ABSENT: Vice Mayor Golder. DISQUALIFIED: None.

Amending the City of Santa Cruz Personnel Complement and Classification and Compensation Plans for the Economic Development and Housing, Finance, Fire, Human Resources, Information Technology, Parks and Recreation, Planning and Community Development, Police, Public Works, and Water Departments (HR/FN)

Councilmember Brown moved, seconded by Councilmember Brunner, to:

- **Adopt Resolution No. NS-30,400** amending the City's Classification and Compensation Plans for the FY 2025 budget personnel complement by implementing approved compensation adjustments and position changes in multiple departments as identified in Exhibit 1; and

- **Adopt Resolution No. NS-30,401** amending the FY 2025 budget in the amount of $1,866,590 to fund compensation increases related to the 2021 Compensation Study as identified in Exhibit A.

The motion carried unanimously with the following vote. AYES: Councilmembers Newsome, Brown, Watkins, Brunner, Kalantari-Johnson; Mayor Keeley. NOES: None. ABSENT: Vice Mayor Golder. DISQUALIFIED: None.

PROPOSED MOTION: Accept the City Council actions affecting the Water Department.

ATTACHMENTS: None.

MINUTES ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED BY THE COMMISSION

Water Commission
7:00 p.m. – October 7, 2024
Council Chambers
809 Center Street, Santa Cruz

Summary of a Water Commission Meeting

Call to Order: Chair Burks called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Roll Call

Present: J. Burks (Chair); T. Burns (Vice Chair); M. Goddard; J. Lear; and J. Rhodes.

Absent: D. G. Baskin, with notification; and S. Ryan, with notification.

Staff: C. Coburn, Deputy Water Director/Operations Manager; H. Luckenbach, Water Director; S. Mitchler, Administrative Assistant III; S. Perez, Principal Planner; and I. Rivera, Deputy Water Director/Engineering Manager.

Others: Claudia Llerandi, Consultant from Kennedy Jenks; Rachelle Thompson, Consultant from Kennedy Jenks; and three members of the public.

Statements of Disqualification: None.

Oral Communications:

At 7:00 p.m. Chair Burks opened Oral Communications and the following person spoke:

Becky Steinbruner

Chair Burks closed Oral Communications at 7:04 p.m.

Announcements: None.

Consent Agenda:

1. City Council Items Affecting the Water Department

2. Water Commission Minutes from August 5, 2024

3. Water Supply Augmentation Implementation Plan Quarterly Report

Is it true that the possible contamination of Beltz 12 with mercury may result from the lab analysis instead of environmental factors?

- Yes, that is correct. There is a question as to whether or not the appropriate testing

method was used and a thorough data analysis review has been recommended, along with the use of two testing methods going forward to ensure accuracy.

Chair Burks opened public comment. There were no speakers, and Chair Burks closed public comment.

Vice Chair Burns moved approval of the Consent Agenda, and Commissioner Lear seconded.

Chair Burks abstained from voting on Item 2: Water Commission Minutes from August 5, 2024.

VOICE VOTE: MOTION CARRIED
AYES: All
NOES: None
DISQUALIFIED: None

Items removed from the Consent Agenda: None.

General Business

4. 2024 Update to the City of Santa Cruz Long-Range Demand Forecast and Water Supply Evaluation

Water Director Luckenbach introduced Sarah Easley Perez, Principal Planner, who presented the 2024 Update to the City of Santa Cruz Long-Range Demand Forecast and Water Supply Evaluation.

All the charts showing our supply and demand in the presentation slides for this item appear to show an excess instead of a shortage. Should the demand be greater than the supply, resulting in a shortfall?

- It is possible that the charts are listed in reverse order. They will be reviewed, and staff will confirm the order.

What does AMBAG stand for, and what is the AMBAG forecast?

- AMBAG is the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments, and this agency produces periodic forecasts for our region. AMBAG's 2026 draft forecast was provided to the Planning Commission for review and was analyzed in the technical memorandum prepared by David Mitchell of M.Cubed. AMBAG's projections are typically used for transportation planning purposes, and while the State of California's numbers from the Fair Share Housing Plan are distributed by AMBAG, the two processes are not necessarily well-coordinated.

Why doesn't the AMBAG forecast always match the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) numbers?

- AMBAG could be underestimating population growth. Local planners are seeing significant growth in proposed housing, so there remains some question as to why the projections would be as low as AMBAG is forecasting.

Why was the Confluence model used for this evaluation, even though we are transitioning to the University of Massachusetts (UMass) model?

- There was already existing modeling data from the Confluence model at the 2,900 million gallon per year level, and that data was used rather than creating new scenarios in the UMass model.

How would this work help start the 2025 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP)?

- If the demand forecast holds, the major benefit is that it wouldn't need to be redone for the 2025 UWMP.

What factors led to the decision to prepare a Water Supply Analysis, despite the fact that it was not a requirement for the Downtown Plan Expansion Project?

- The water supply evaluation was prepared to analyze the impacts of the Downtown Plan Expansion Project and other projects proposed within our water service area. While the Downtown Plan Expansion Project would not formally trigger preparation of a Water Supply Assessment under the water code because it is a planning document rather than a proposed development project, we followed precedent from the City of Santa Cruz (City)'s General Plan 2030 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and consulted our California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) attorney.

Can staff recall another instance or period when the City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD or Department) saw a 10% jump in demand across planning scenarios?

- The Department has seen demand drop by 10%, but not increase.

What is required in terms of water rights, and given how slowly that process can progress, is having them in place an essential requirement to meet the goals the SCWD is setting?

- The suite of water rights changes proposed in the Santa Cruz Water Rights Project are needed to support our augmentation strategies. They will facilitate Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) as well as water transfers and are a critical piece for the Department's ability to provide fish flows for the anadromous salmonids as well as to meet our water supply objectives. The water rights petitions are pending with the State Water Resources Control Board, and staff are hopeful that an update will be received in the next few months.

  One significant water rights change would be the place of use modifications for all of the Department's water rights which would allow water transfers and ASR in both basins. Another would be the ability to utilize the Felton water rights at the Tait Diversion so that benefit can be provided to the habitat between the Felton Diversion and Tait Diversion and then the water could be picked up at the Tait Diversion. These are critical to managing the habitat in a positive way while also augmenting supply.

Chair Burks opened public comment and the following person spoke:

Becky Steinbruner

Vice Chair Burns closed public comment.

No motion was required for this item as it was informational only.

5. Water Supply Augmentation Implementation Plan (WSAIP): Preliminary Findings for Water Supply Portfolios 1, 2, and 3

Water Director Luckenbach introduced Claudia Llerandi, Consultant from Kennedy Jenks, who presented Water Supply Augmentation Implementation Plan (WSAIP): Preliminary Findings for Water Supply Portfolios 1, 2, and 3.

How will staff use the Water Commission's feedback for future work?

- The Water Commission's feedback will be used to clarify the portfolios and the criteria for accuracy and understandability, confirm the criteria are the correct criteria to use, and potentially remove some of the criteria which staff are suggesting no longer be considered because they don't differentiate between the different portfolios or projects.

Does Alternative D offer any benefits compared to Alternative C in exchange for the higher cost?

- These Alternatives were selected from modeling data generated from the groundwater model, which used machine learning to look at thousands of variations. What was compared between Alternative C and Alternative D was the benefits and costs of either expanding ASR and using the ASR wells for extraction or using transfers from Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD) for filling the water supply gap.

Where is the 2.4 million gallons per day (mgd) of water in Alternative B coming from?

- That is water transferred from SqCWD to the City.

Does the model show that there will be an excess of groundwater supply in the basin with the expansion of the Pure Water Soquel Project (PWS)?

- Yes, the groundwater model evaluated what would be the optimal size for both projects to meet basin sustainability objectives as well as to help augment the City's supply gap.

Is it known for certain that there will be excess of groundwater supply in the basin from PWS or is it being speculated that this is a possibility?

- The groundwater modeling indicates there will be excess. Once additional wells are built and are being operated, it will be possible to see if data from the basin aligns with the modeling, how the basin is performing, and how quickly the basin meets the sustainability goals.

Is the ASR program using chlorinated or dechlorinated water, and was the wait time for using chlorinated water considered in the model?

- ASR uses chlorinated water. As part of the ASR pilot and demonstration studies, sampling was performed to track the reactions of chlorine in the basin, resulting trihalomethanes (THMs), and when the reactions were complete.

Does the SCWD have an agreement with SqCWD?

- Currently, there is no long-term water transfer agreement with SqCWD. The City does have an agreement that is piloting sending water to SqCWD in order to understand impacts on their distribution system, but sending water back to the City is not part of that agreement. Discussions are ongoing with SqCWD as part of the Optimization Study.

Is the calculation for PWS netting out the grants already received and including the remaining $100 million in costs with the potential for future cost-sharing?

- Yes, for the purpose of these analyses, it is assumed in the Optimization Study that cost-share negotiations would be around the portion of the current PWS project not funded through grants.

How is cost-sharing represented in the table on slide 12 of this presentation?

- The cost for the PWS Project in Portfolio 1A to 1E includes costs for the expansion of PWS above 1,500 acre-feet per year (AFY). To date, no discussions have been held with SqCWD on this topic.

Why would transfers from SqCWD to SCWD be reduced in these Portfolios in exchange for increasing the other capital projects?

The Optimization Study alternatives consider transfers from Soquel to the City in a range from 1.4 mgd to 5.5 mgd. WSAIP Portfolio 1 considers transfers from Soquel to the City in a range from 0.5 mgd to 1.4 mgd. Transfers for Portfolio 1 were limited to 1.4 mgd, the capacity of the current intertie. Transfers above 1.4 mgd require improvements to the intertie capacity and to the City water distribution system up to approximately$54 million, which is comparable to the capital cost estimate of $53.5 million for the City's project to convert the 4 Beltz wells to ASR and larger than the cost estimate to construct the intertie between the City and Scotts Valley Water District. Keeping the intertie costs fixed allowed for a closer look at the other component costs and the contribution to filling the gap.

How much water are the ASR wells listed on slide 12 providing in mgd?

- In Portfolio 1A, the four ASR wells provide 1.9 mgd on average over 6 months; adding a fifth well provides 2.3 mgd for Portfolio 1B and 2.9 mgd in Portfolio 1C; and adding a sixth well in Portfolio 1D provides 3.7 mgd.

Since the SCWD is piloting and progressing with ASR, what is the value of evaluating a portfolio such as Portfolio 3 that does not include ASR?

- Portfolio 3, which includes desalination, is the only project that can fully fill the gap without another supply project so it really comes down to a choice of how confident staff are that non-desalination projects will successfully fill the gap. Decisions will need to be made prior to each increment of supply augmentation.

Have the risks of each portfolio been compared, including factors like public perception?

- There is currently a summary of the risks and opportunities of the portfolios, and the upcoming work will involve diving into the details of the evaluation criteria.

If indirect potable reuse (IPR) is chosen, would PWS be leveraged at current or expanded capacity, and if direct potable reuse (DPR) is selected, could a facility be designed to transition from DPR into a desalination plant in the future?

- Yes, with an IPR project there is the flexibility to expand PWS at the same location. For DPR, both expansion of the PWS site and also expansion at the City's Wastewater Treatment Facility are being considered, which would allow the evaluation of where the treatment and storage of the treated water could be located. Converting a DPR facility to

desalination presents a few issues including the need to evaluate the potential end-use in the EIR as a potential future action, which could make it difficult to receive approval for the initial use; the desire to consider the cost-effectiveness of this strategy as both treatment scenarios are expensive; and the site requirements of a DPR facility may be different than a desalination facility.

The DPR expansion of PWS has been considered, however, because PWS is an IPR project with a different treatment train, the PWS expansion alternative has been kept simply as IPR.

How would SCWD expand the use of wastewater sources?

- Other sources may include the San Lorenzo Valley and potentially storm capture, but a cost-benefit and water rights analyses would need to be performed as part of the initial feasibility work.

Is there a time component to consider, and if rapid implementation were needed, would any option be easier to establish than the others?

- The Department has guidance from the Securing our Water Future Policy and the Water Supply Advisory Committee. In the near term (2-5 years), ASR and the intertie will continue to be implemented. The other alternatives require further conversations with neighboring agencies, regulators and other stakeholders to assess timeliness.

Should the climate get much worse, will the project be able to adapt?

- The portfolios include projects with multiple sources with varying ability to adapt. Only the desalination option is not source limited.

Were rising energy costs considered and what would that look like for desalination?

- All of the costs were calculated at the current market rate in 2024. In addition to rising energy costs, the cost of materials, equipment, and labor are also on the rise – all of which will require additional analysis in order to keep costs as low as possible.

Regarding the cost estimates for expanding for PWS, were those costs just to add the new treatments trains or were there other things that went into that?

- Depending on the alternative, the costs include adding new treatment trains as well as seawater intrusion wells.

Chair Burks opened public comment and the following people spoke:

Becky Steinbruner
Melanie Mow Schumacher

Chair Burks closed public comment.

No motion was required for this item as it was informational only.

Subcommittee/Advisory Body Oral Reports

6. Santa Cruz Mid-County and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agencies Advisory Body Report

The Santa Cruz Mid-County and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agencies Advisory Body Report included in the agenda packet was not discussed.

Director's Oral Report:

Water Director Luckenbach announced the start of the new Water Year, and that the Department is currently recruiting for a Chief Financial Officer replacement.

Information Items:

Information items included in the agenda packet were not discussed.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

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WATER COMMISSION
INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: 10/28/2024

AGENDA OF: 11/04/2024

TO: Water Commission

FROM: Chris Berry, Watershed Compliance Manager

SUBJECT: Clarification of Council Forest Management Policies on Water Department Watershed Lands

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RECOMMENDATION: That the Water Commission support staff's recommendation to City Council to approve the modification of Council Policy 11.3 to include specific old growth tree characteristics and clarify standards for commercialization of forest products on City of Santa Cruz watershed lands.

BACKGROUND: The City of Santa Cruz Water Department (SCWD, Water Department, or Department) manages nearly 4,000 acres of property in the San Lorenzo River and Laguna Creek watersheds for the purposes of drinking water source protection by the Water Department. Forest management is of utmost importance in the City of Santa Cruz (City)'s efforts to protect its drinking water supplies.

Historic Forest Management Practices

During the early twentieth century, most of this property was clearcut by previous owners and subsequent regrowth of vegetation is significantly denser and more prone to catastrophic wildfire than prior to that activity. Since acquiring these properties[1], SCWD has applied several strategies to manage the health of the forest including conifer and hardwood thinning, dead and dying tree removal, invasive/exotic weed removal, ladder fuel removal along key fire breaks and access routes, and coordination with fire agencies on training, access, and infrastructure needs.

The Department has not pursued additional forest management activities, in part because of the de facto policy established by the City Council in 2002 which included a recommendation to refrain from timber harvesting. Additional guidance for forest management activities is provided in Council Policy 11.3, which provides criteria for identifying old growth trees. It has become apparent that the criteria are no longer appropriate based on contemporary standards, as many of the second and third growth trees on the City's watershed properties would qualify as old growth now under the standards provided in this policy, yet they do not exhibit true old growth features beyond their large diameter. This presents a fundamental challenge for forest management and

[1] These properties were all acquired at different times with the effort being largely initiated in the 1950s

overall forest health in that large, but not necessarily old growth trees, cannot be cut even if forest health goals would benefit from it. Therefore, it is recommended that more widely accepted characteristics of old growth trees be incorporated into the policy.

While the existing policy language was originally intended to preserve important specimen trees and overall ecosystem functions, minor modifications are required to be reflective of current forest science and local forest conditions, to allow for more effective forest management, and to ultimately ensure long-term forest health and resiliency, thereby helping to secure protection of our drinking water sources and overall future ecosystem functions.

Climate Change and a Revised Approach to Forest Management
In 2019, SCWD hired Sicular Environmental Consulting and Natural Lands Management (Sicular) to evaluate opportunities and constraints for improved forest management on all of the City's watershed lands. The need for increasingly active forest management on these properties is further underscored by improved understanding of fire dynamics in redwood-dominated forest stands subsequent to the CZU fire.

In 2021, the Water Commission supported a staff recommendation to proceed with exploration of an Integrated Production and Restoration forest management alternative on the watershed properties that would entail, among other things, increased focus on fuel management and restoration of more resilient late-seral forest conditions including some limited commercial timber harvest (see Attachment 1). This was one of several alternatives included for consideration in the report from Sicular. Other alternatives evaluated in the Sicular report include:

- Custodial Management
- Fire Hazard Mitigation
- High-Yield Timber Production

Since the October 2021 Water Commission meeting, the Department contracted with Auten Resource Consulting (ARC) to operationalize the broad recommendations of the Integrated Production and Restoration alternative. ARC has recently provided the Department with its final recommendations for initiating implementation of the Integrated Production and Restoration management regime on the Newell Creek watershed lands (Attachment 2). Broadly speaking, these recommendations include a range of forest management activities such as forest density reduction/large tree restoration and forest health fuel reduction.

The Department has not initiated implementation of these recommendations due to constraints within existing City policy language contained within Council Policy 11.3 - *Timber Harvests in Watershed Area and Preservation of Old Growth Trees* and recommendations accepted by City Council at their meeting on November 12, 2002, under an item titled Preliminary Watershed management Technical Advisory Task Force Consensus Recommendations.

DISCUSSION: While forest health and source protection have always been the primary motivating factors for the management of these properties (including previous commercial timber harvests), clarification of Council Policy 11.3 and the recommendations that were accepted by the City Council in 2002 is required to ensure that transparency is maintained as forest health work on these properties increases in coming years. One consequence of some of

this work will be the commercialization of forest products, although this work will never be driven by that. Instead, the focus will be on maintaining and improving forest health and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire caused in part by a changing climate.

Modifications to Council Policy 11.3 will create the policy language needed to perform the forest management work as described in the Integrated Production and Restoration alternative. Below is the existing and proposed policy language.

Existing language:

Council Policy 11.3
Timber Harvests in Watershed Area and Preservation of Old Growth Trees Policy

> "Timber Harvests
>
> City staff will notify the Council of any requests for timber harvest permits, which would have the potential to cause negative impact in the City's watershed area.
>
> Preservation of Old Growth Trees
>
> The City Council of the City of Santa Cruz hereby declares it to be its policy that old growth trees and specimen trees on City-owned forest lands are to be preserved unless safety factors dictate their removal, or if the Council makes a specific exception.
>
> Further, it is the policy of the City Council that residual trees will be harvested only in cases where silvicultural guidelines indicate their harvest would benefit the health and vigor of the stand, or if safety or extraneous factors dictate their removal.
>
> For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:
>
> "Old Growth Tree" means a tree which is at least 40 inches in diameter at breast height and/or is over 200 years old.
>
> "Residual Tree" means a tree which was alive during the initial harvesting of the old growth forest, but either was a younger (smaller) tree at that time or was a suppressed tree in that forest."

Proposed new language:

Council Policy 11.3
Timber Harvests in Watershed Area and Preservation of Old Growth Trees Policy

> "Timber Harvests
>
> Commercial Timber harvesting shall be allowed where it is consistent with the primary goals of maintaining forest health and drinking water source protection. Revenue generated from commercial harvest will be directed into dedicated accounts to be utilized for the purposes of furthering forest health, ecosystem resilience to fire and climate change, drinking water

source protection, or other related Water Department ecosystem management goals. All commercial timber harvest plans shall be reviewed by the Water Commission and City Council prior to implementation.

Preservation of Old Growth Trees

The City Council of the City of Santa Cruz hereby declares it to be its policy that old growth and residual trees on City-owned lands are to be preserved unless safety factors or critical infrastructure needs dictate their removal, or if the Council makes a specific exception.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions will apply:

Old Growth Tree means a tree that is greater than 300 years old and has some or all of the following characteristics:

- Outline of the live crown is irregular
- Broken-off or spike top is present
- Epicormic branching or reiterations are present
- Large horizontal branches (>8") are present in the upper half of the tree
- Cavities (goosepens), broken limbs or other "defect" present
- Burn scars are visible on the trunk

Residual tree means a tree which was alive during the initial harvesting of the old growth forest but was small and not harvested during those harvests."

The minor modifications to these standards being proposed will allow the City to more proactively manage its property and thereby help to ensure forest health and drinking water source protection into the future as climate change increasingly threatens water supply reliability and overall environmental health.

FISCAL IMPACT: The Watershed Section budget has sufficient funds in the Fiscal Year 2025 budget to initiate implementation of these policy changes.

PROPOSED MOTION: Motion to support staff's recommendation to City Council to approve the modification of Council Policy 11.3 to include specific old growth tree characteristics and clarify standards for commercialization of forest products on City of Santa Cruz watershed lands.

ATTACHMENTS:

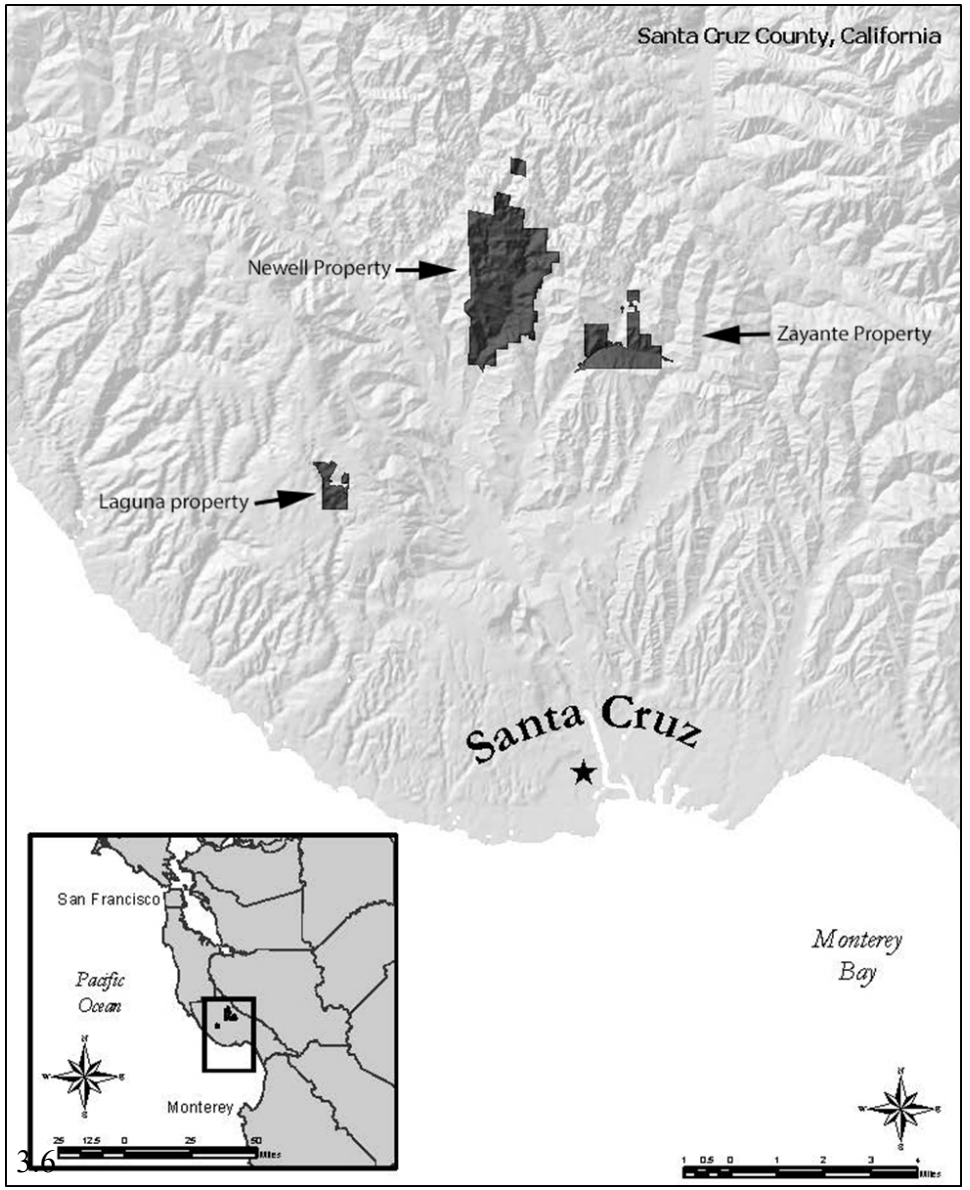
1. October 4, 2021 Water Commission Watershed Lands Forest Management Update: https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showpublisheddocument/86410/637686001735000000
2. Newell Creek Watershed Forest Stewardship Recommendations: https://www.cityofsantacruz.com/home/showpublisheddocument/102183
3. Clarification of Council Forest Management Policies on Water Department Watershed Lands Presentation Slides


City of Santa Cruz Water Department Watershed Lands
Forest Management Policy Updates
Chris Berry – Watershed Compliance Manager
Our Water, Our Future
SANTA CRUZ
Water Department

Watershed Lands Overview

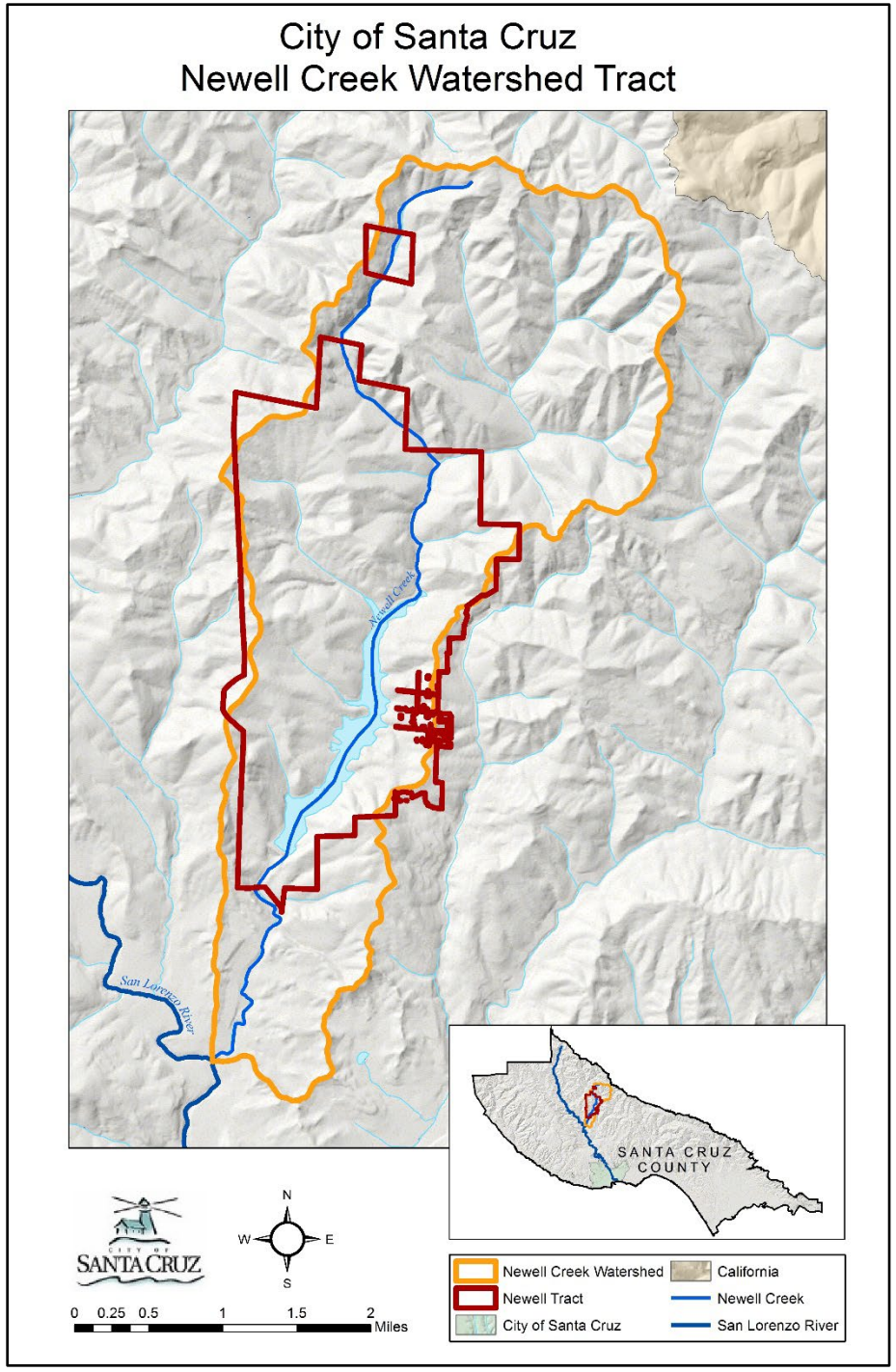
- Almost 4,000 acres*
- Managed for drinking water source protection purposes
- Includes Loch Lomond Recreation Area
- Other properties not open to public
- High ecosystem value due to relatively large acreage and connectivity to other open space

*The Water Department also manages portions of Pogonip, Carbonera Creek and “Riparian License Areas” along the lower San Lorenzo River



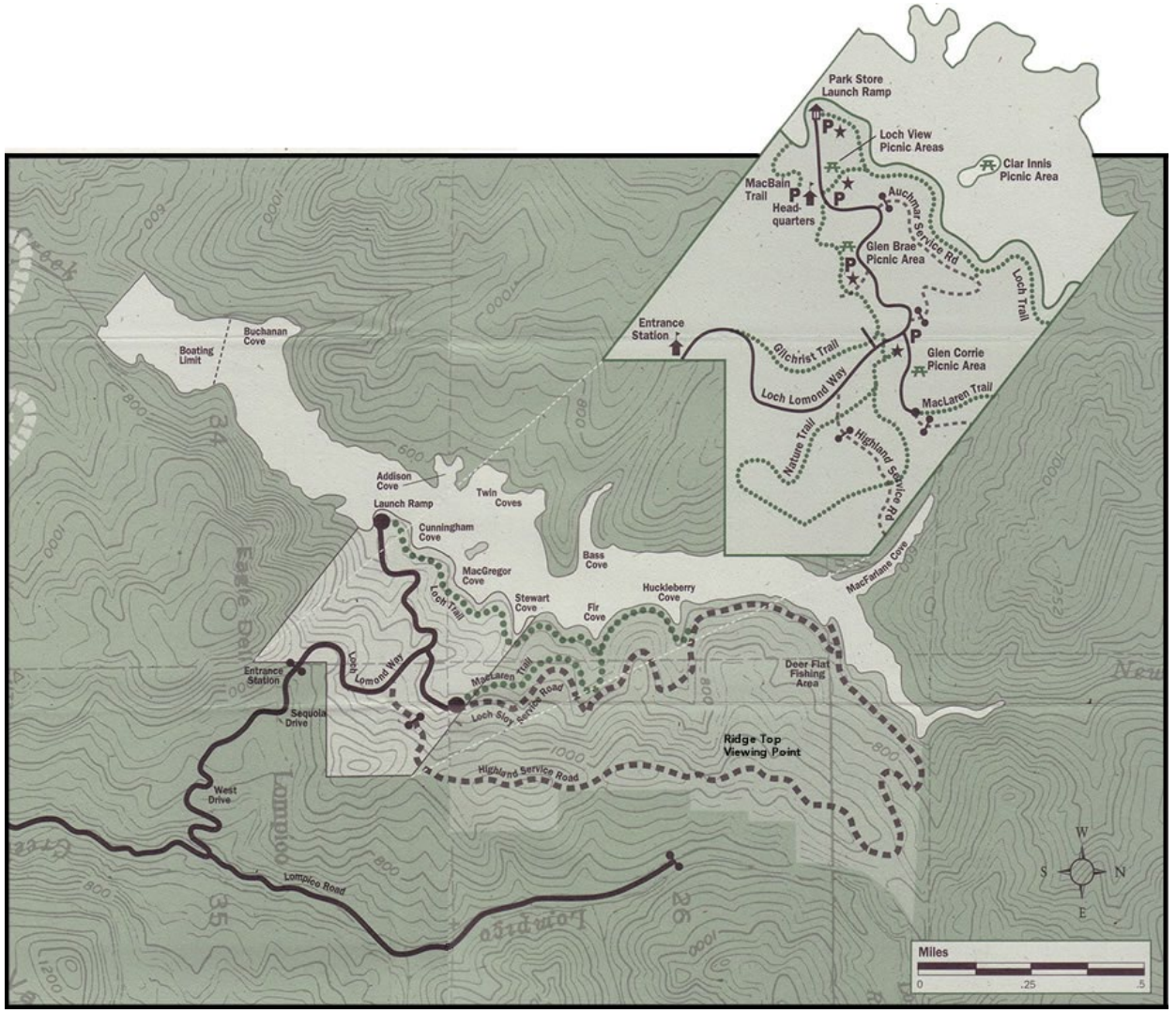
Newell Creek Watershed Property

- The City owns approximately 2,880 acres in the Newell watershed including the Loch Lomond Recreation Area - approximately 50% of the total watershed area
- Upstream land uses include agricultural, timber production, mountain residential
- Downstream land uses are primary rural residential/suburban
- Greatest potential for fire at Loch Lomond from starts outside the property in the rural/urban interface



Loch Lomond Recreation Area

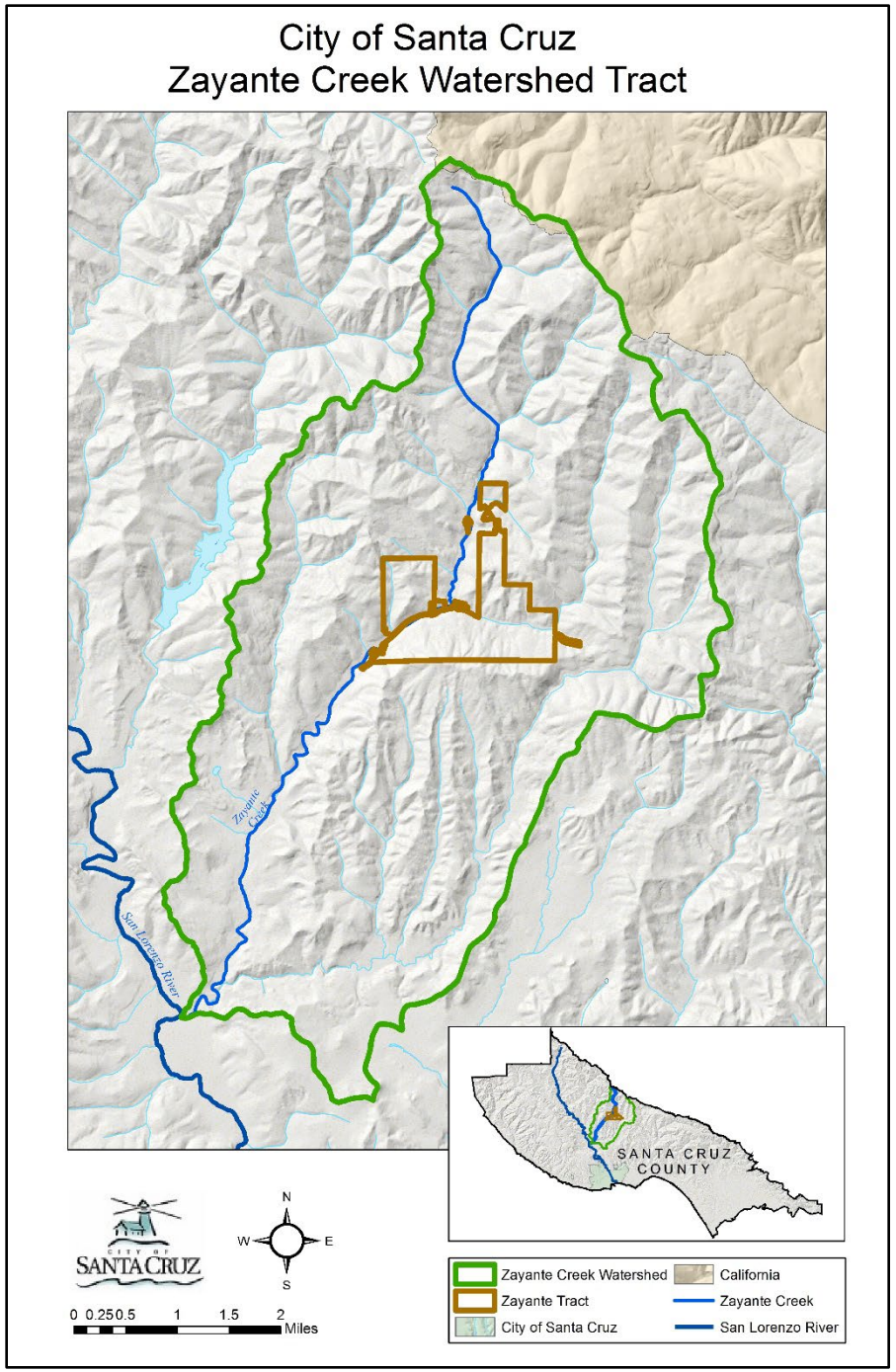
Though the City has an obligation to manage the property for recreation, “drinking water source protection” is the primary consideration for our operations at Loch Lomond Recreation Area (LLRA).



Loch Lomond Recreation Area

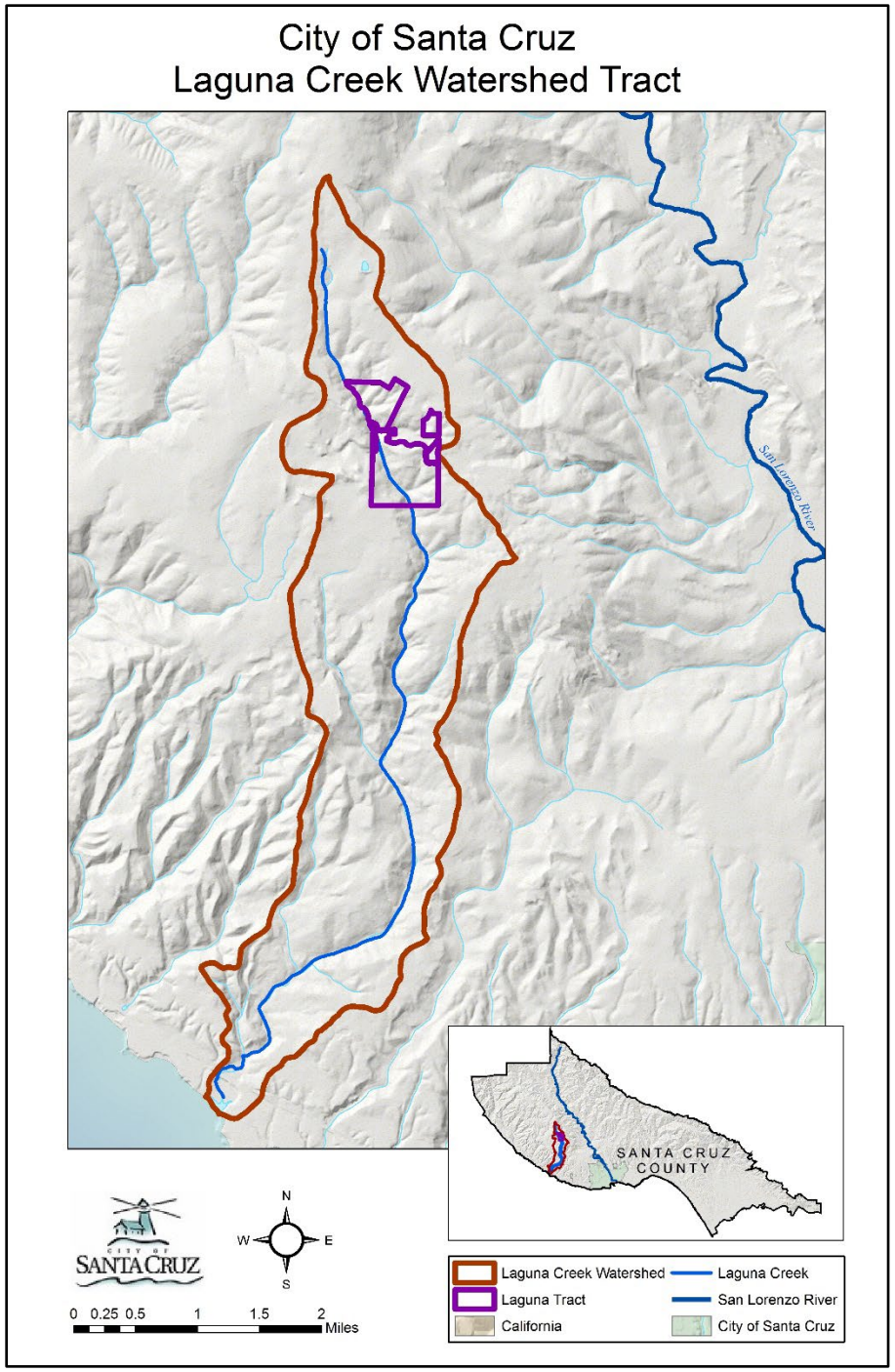
Zayante Watershed Property

- The City owns approximately 880 acres in the Zayante watershed
- Former proposed site for Zayante Reservoir
- Last City commercial conifer timber harvest occurred here



Laguna Watershed Property

- The City owns approximately 240 acres in the Laguna watershed
- Another former proposed reservoir site
- Never logged by the City (though it has been by others)
- Biodiversity - HCP mitigation site
- Significant cultural resources on property
- Significant acreage burned during Martin and CZU August Lightning Complex fires



Historic Management

- All properties clearcut around turn of 20th century (with few residual trees retained) by previous landowners
- Re-entry by City and others to varying degrees thereafter.
- Management focus on Newell and Zayante tracts
- More recent management focused on single tree selection, development of fire preparedness infrastructure, recreation management @ (LLRA)

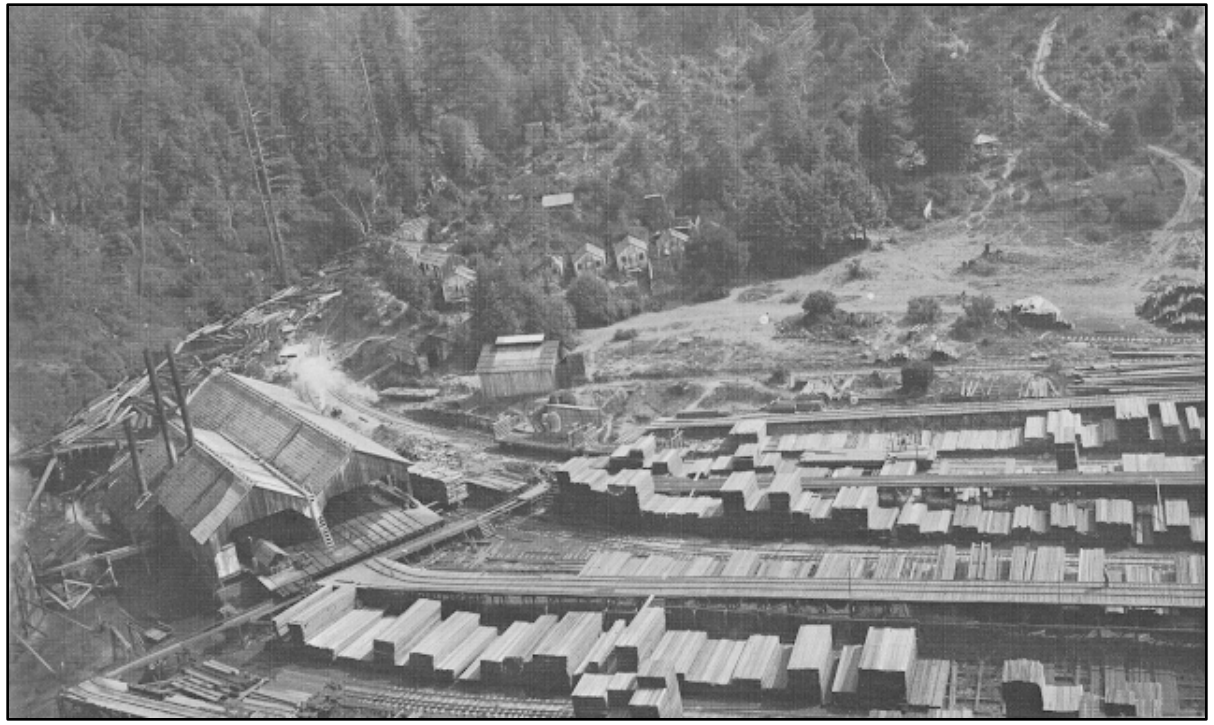


Photo: Newell Lumber Mill courtesy of Bruce MacGregor

Historic Management

- Properties periodically suffered substantial trespass and associated damage
- Rangers and forest management staff support property security
- Minimal invasive species management or interpretive focus in the past
- Lesser focus on drinking water source protection than current due to regulatory climate
- Most recent commercial timber harvest ~2002

Photo: Eradication of guerilla cannabis grow. City of Santa Cruz files.

Recent Management

- Focus on “custodial management”
- Fire preparedness improvements
- Recreation @ LLRA
- Interpretive
- Invasive species management
- Initiating focus on mitigation
- Loch Lomond Reservoir more important than ever for water supply…

Photo: Fire preparedness tour. City of Santa Cruz files.

Recent Management

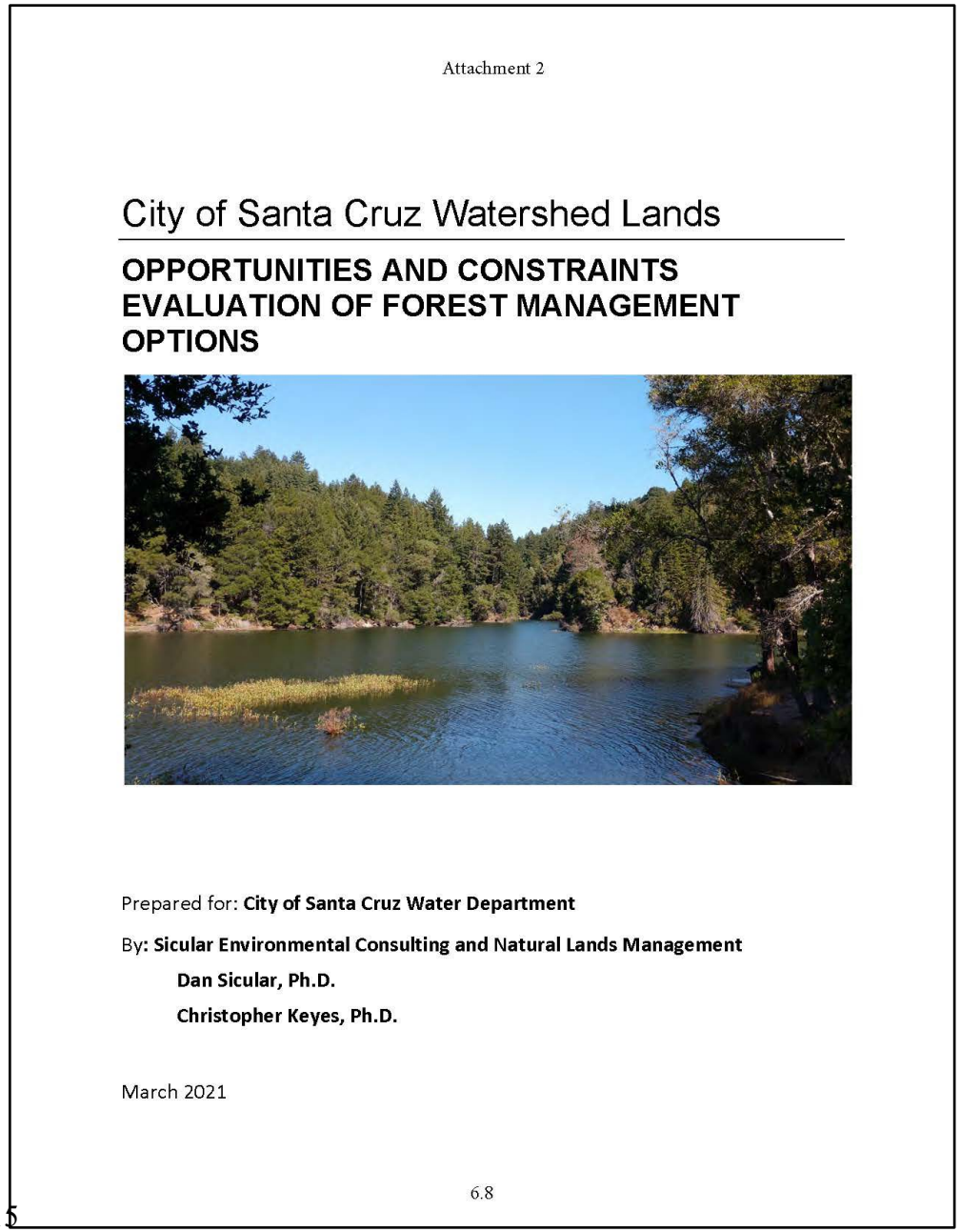
Fire Preparedness Improvements:

- Staff training
- Increased ranger presence
- Surveillance cameras
- Recreation area closure during peak fire conditions
- Fire agency outreach
- Improved/expanded fuel breaks at Loch Sloy, Highland, Eagle's Roost, Fern Ridge Road, etc.
- Installed water storage tanks
- Expanded water access
- Mile marker, gate number and road sign installation
- Dead and dying wood removal
- Trail reflective markings
- Helicopter landing development
- Sicular 2021 Opportunities and Constraints Report
- ARC 2024 Forest Stewardship Recommendations

Photos: Top – installing water storage tank on Newell property. Bottom – Portable water storage tank demo. City of Santa Cruz files.

Future Management

- Fire Preparedness
  - Expanded fire and fuel breaks
  - Regional planning
  - Staff training
  - Equipment improvements
  - Forest stand thinning/late seral restoration (Integrated Production and Restoration)
- Recreation
- Interpretive
- Mitigation
- Recreation @ LLRA
- Overall Drinking Water Source Protection!



Attachment 2

City of Santa Cruz Watershed Lands

OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS EVALUATION OF FOREST MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

Prepared for: **City of Santa Cruz Water Department**

By: **Sicular Environmental Consulting and Natural Lands Management**

Dan Sicular, Ph.D.

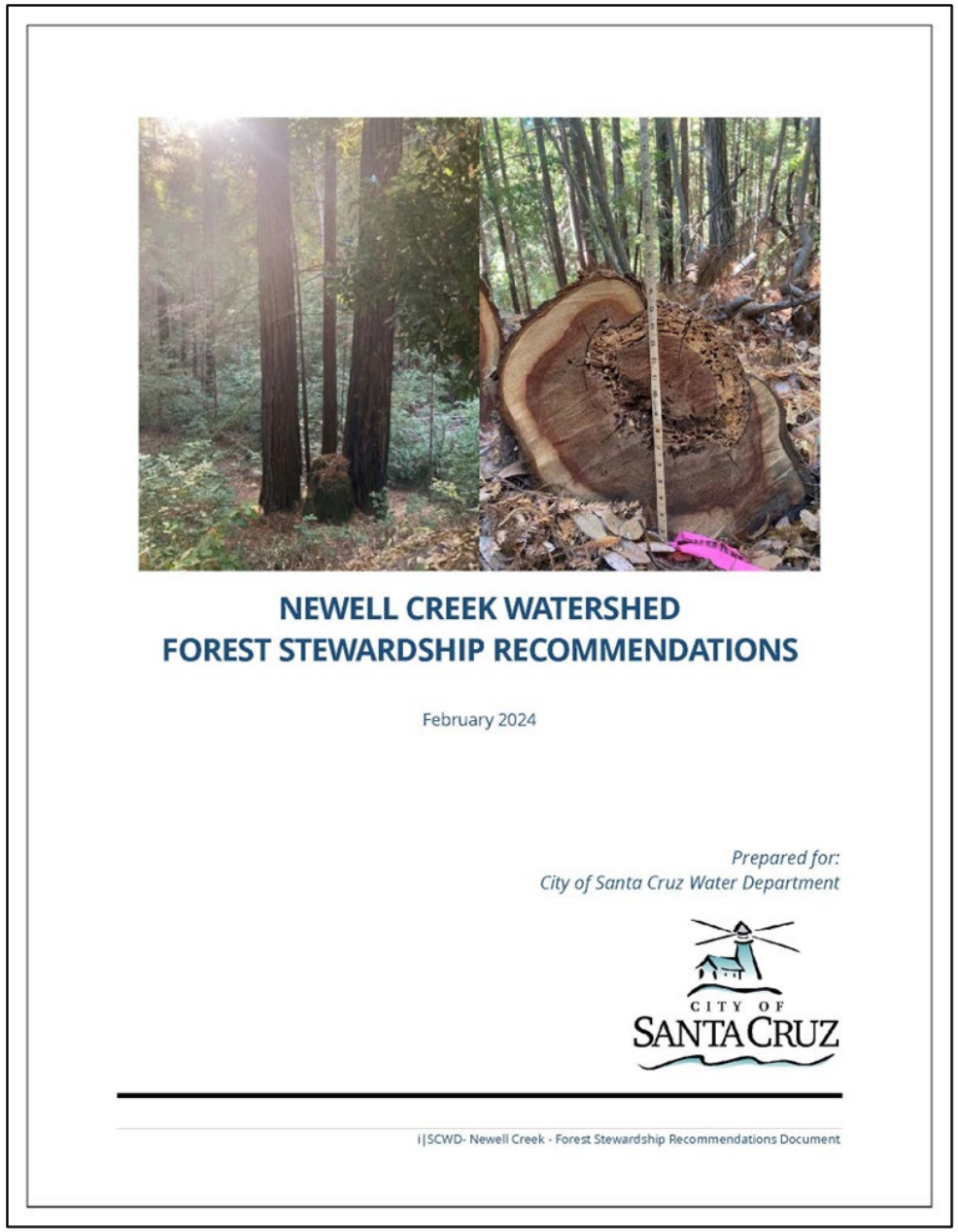
Christopher Keyes, Ph.D.

March 2021

6.8

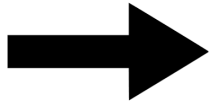
Future Management

- Current policies challenge proactive forest management
- Historic management resulted in numerous, vigorous, (now) larger trees
- Need to enable cutting of bigger trees (not old growth or residual trees with old growth features) and clarify allowable commercialization of forest management activities



Future Management

Integrated Production and Restoration:



Photos: Overstocked, fire - prone second growth stand on left, released residual tree on right. City of Santa Cruz files.

What is “Old Growth?”

Old Growth Tree means a tree that is greater than 300 years old and has some or all of the following characteristics:

- Outline of the live crown is irregular
- Broken-off or spike top is present
- Epicormic branching or reiterations are present
- Large horizontal branches (>8") are present in the upper half of the tree
- Cavities (goosepens), broken limbs or other "defect" present
- Burn scars are visible on the trunk
- Old growth redwood stores more carbon than any other forest type
- More fire resistant than dense, second growth
- Higher ecosystem value than dense second growth

Current policy conflict with managing big, non-old growth and non-residual trees

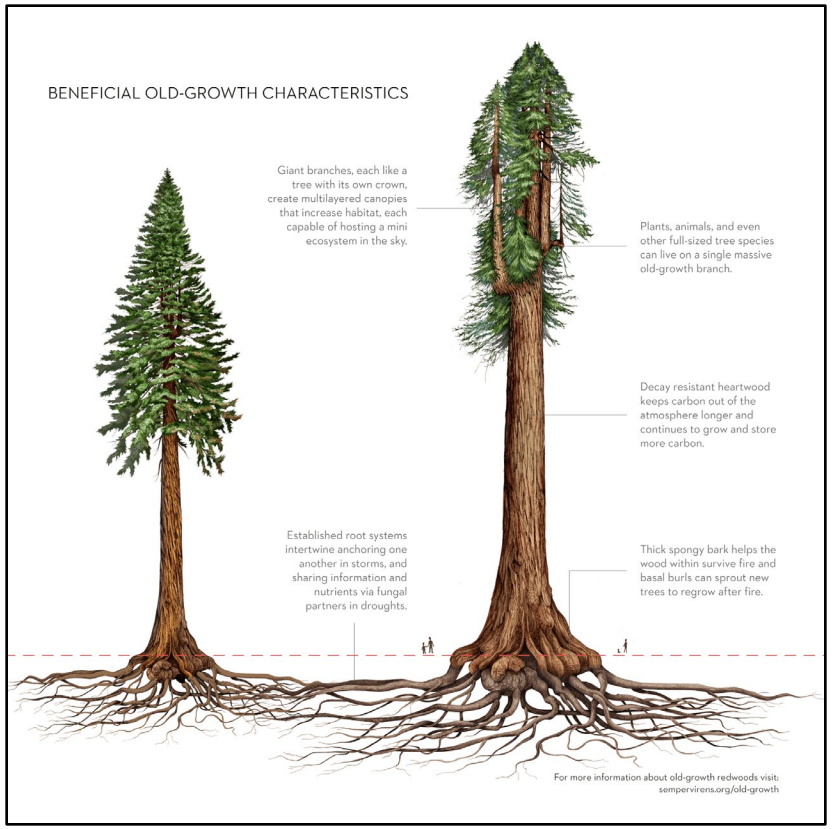


Image courtesy of the Sempervirens Fund

Financial

- Historic revenue
  - Average $230K/year (mid-90s) commercial timber harvest revenue
- Future revenue
  - “Apples and oranges” comparison between past and future management as well as market conditions, so comparisons and future projections are challenging, however this work should ultimately be revenue positive
  - Future work will generate revenue that could be reinvested into other forest health or related maintenance and restoration work
  - Having a revenue source and active forest health management program will better position City for receipt of outside funding

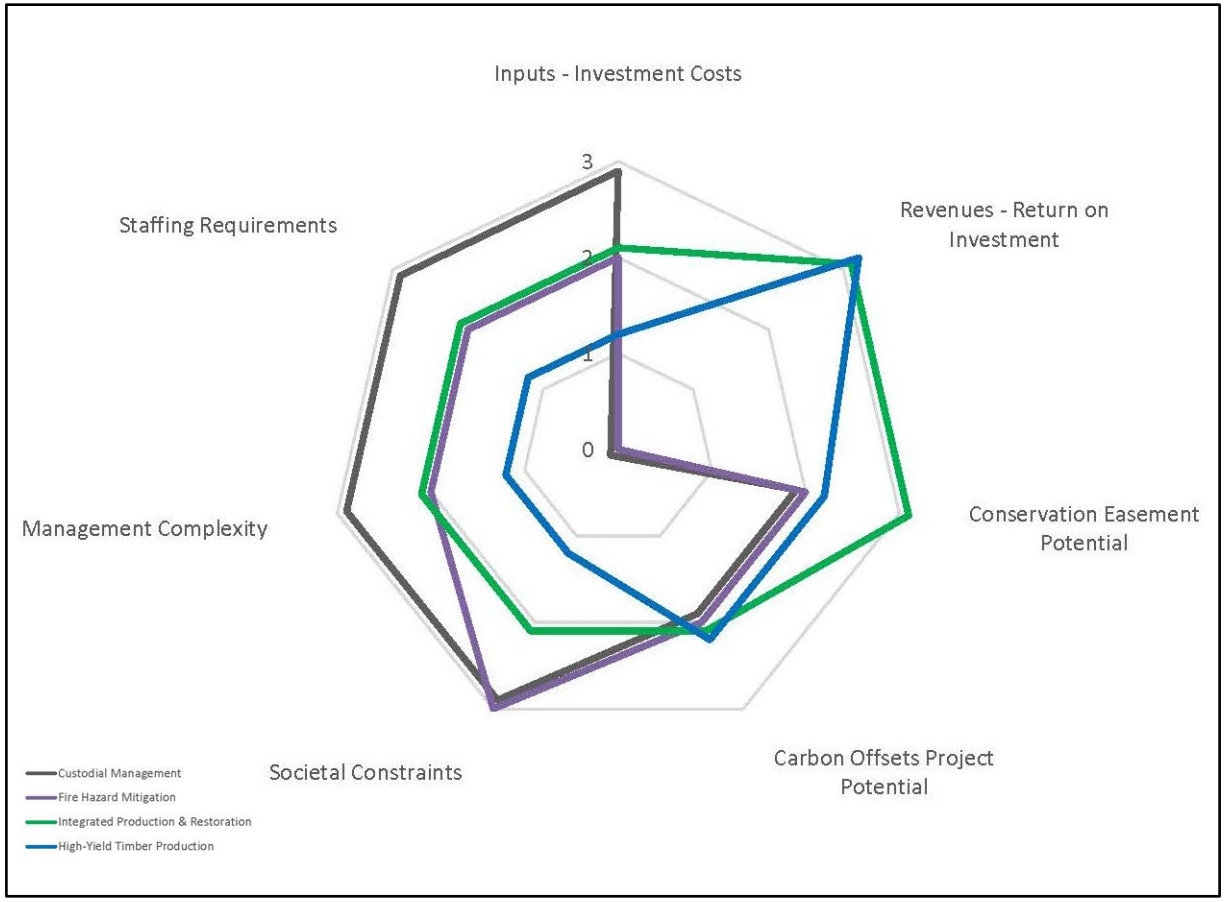


Figure: Relative benefits of various management scenarios, Sicular and Keyes 2021

Next Steps

- Council policy change approval
  - Winter 2025
- Plan development – Summer 2025
  - East Loch Lomond restoration pilot exemption project
  - West Loch Lomond forest density reduction/large tree restoration commercial project
- Implementation – Fall/Winter 2025

Two panoramic photos comparing conditions in an old growth forest (top) and a neighboring second growth forest (bottom) in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Redwoods in the second growth forest suffer from high competition and lack the fully develop canopies seen in the old growth forest. The large multilayered canopy of an old growth redwood allows these trees to grow so large and provide critical habitat for wildlife. | Photo by Andrew Slack. Courtesy of Save the Redwoods League.


THANKS!
QUESTIONS?
Our Water, Our Future
SANTA CRUZ
Water Department

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WATER COMMISSION
INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: 10/29/2024

AGENDA OF:	11/04/2024
TO:	Water Commission
FROM:	Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director
SUBJECT:	Water Supply Augmentation Implementation Plan (WSAIP): Preliminary Adaptive Water Supply Road Map

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RECOMMENDATION: That the Water Commission review and provide comments on the preliminary adaptive road map for the implementation of supply augmentation projects.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION: At the October Water Commission meeting, staff presented the three Portfolios being considered for securing the water future of the community served by the City of Santa Cruz Water Department. Attachment 1 includes slides from that meeting for reference to:

1. Review the project concepts from the Optimization Study (for background and context);
2. Summarize the three WSAIP Portfolios; and
3. Share the agreed-upon criteria.

The attached draft road map begins to contemplate the decision points needed to reach the goals of the Water Supply Advisory Committee and the City Council adopted Securing Our Water Future policy.

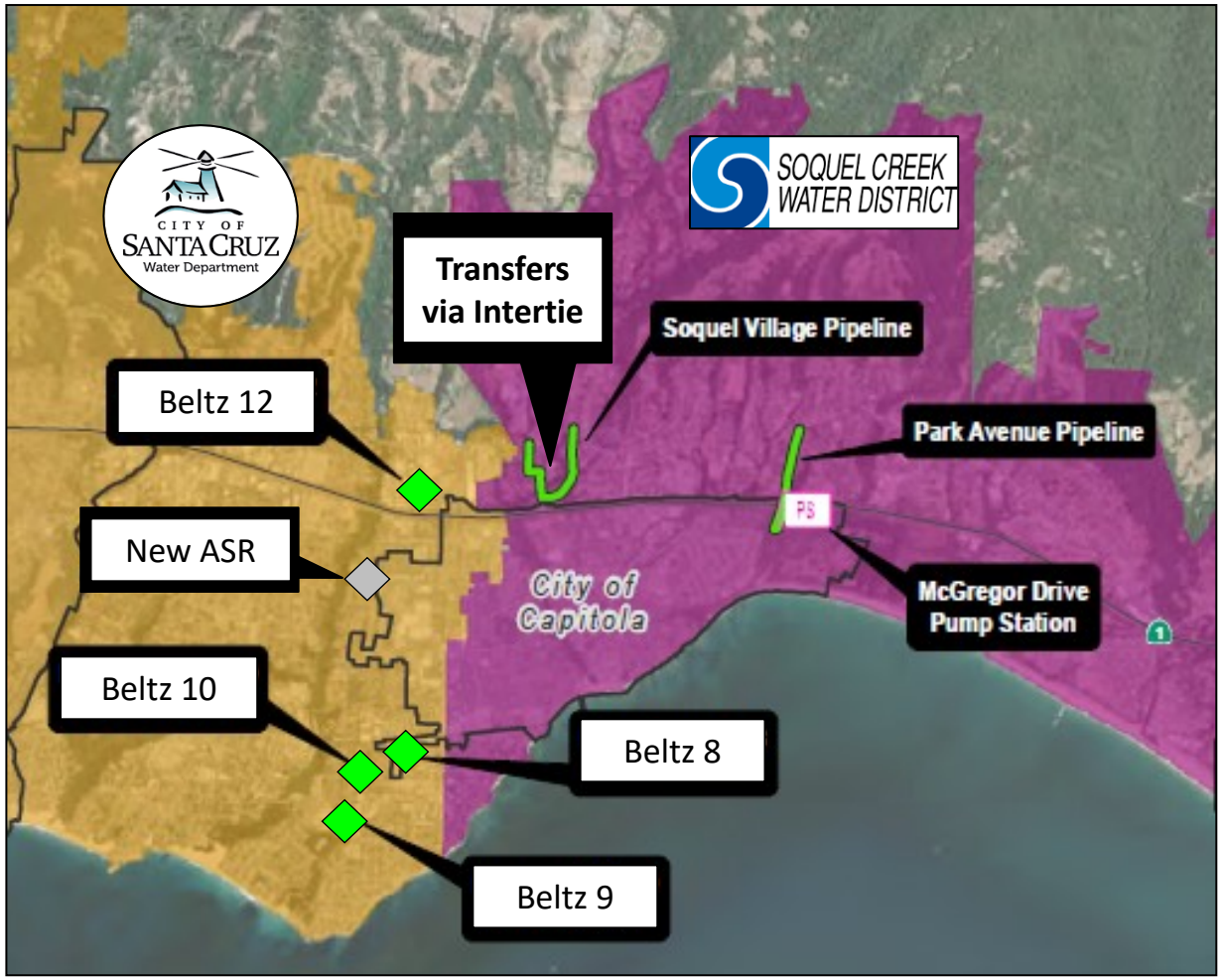
FISCAL IMPACT: None.

PROPOSED MOTION: Receive information and provide feedback to staff on the material presented.

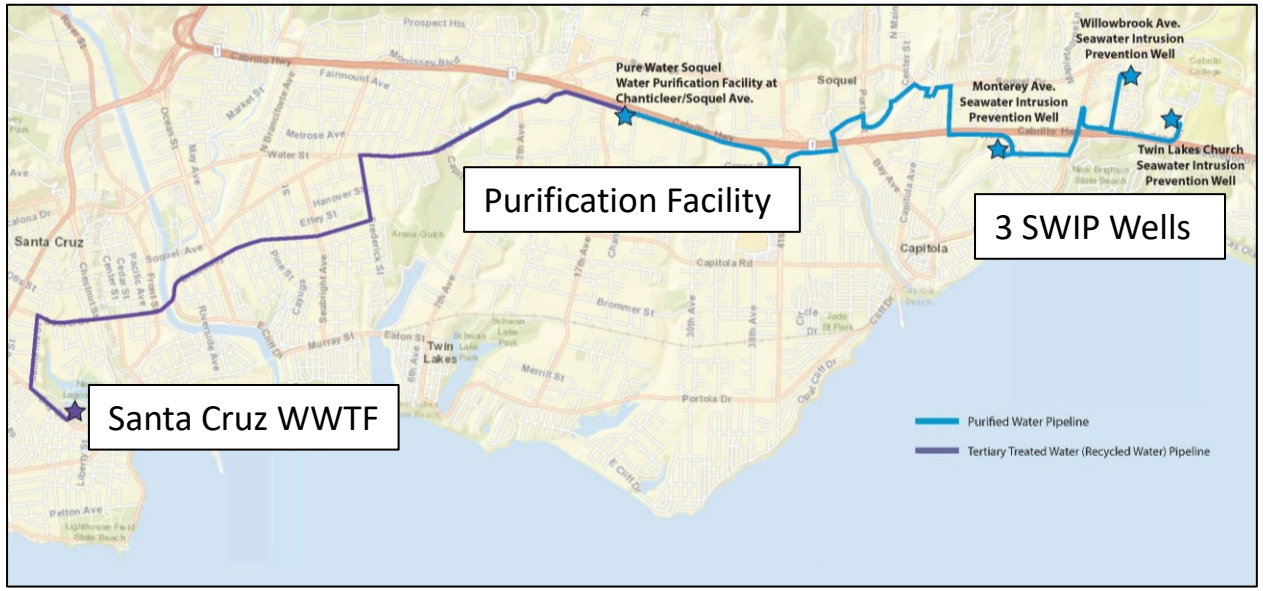
ATTACHMENTS:
1. Selected Slides from October 2024 Water Commission Meeting
2. Draft WSAIP Adaptive Water Supply Road Map

Optimization Study Alternatives Components

City ASR Project & Transfers



Pure Water Soquel Expansion



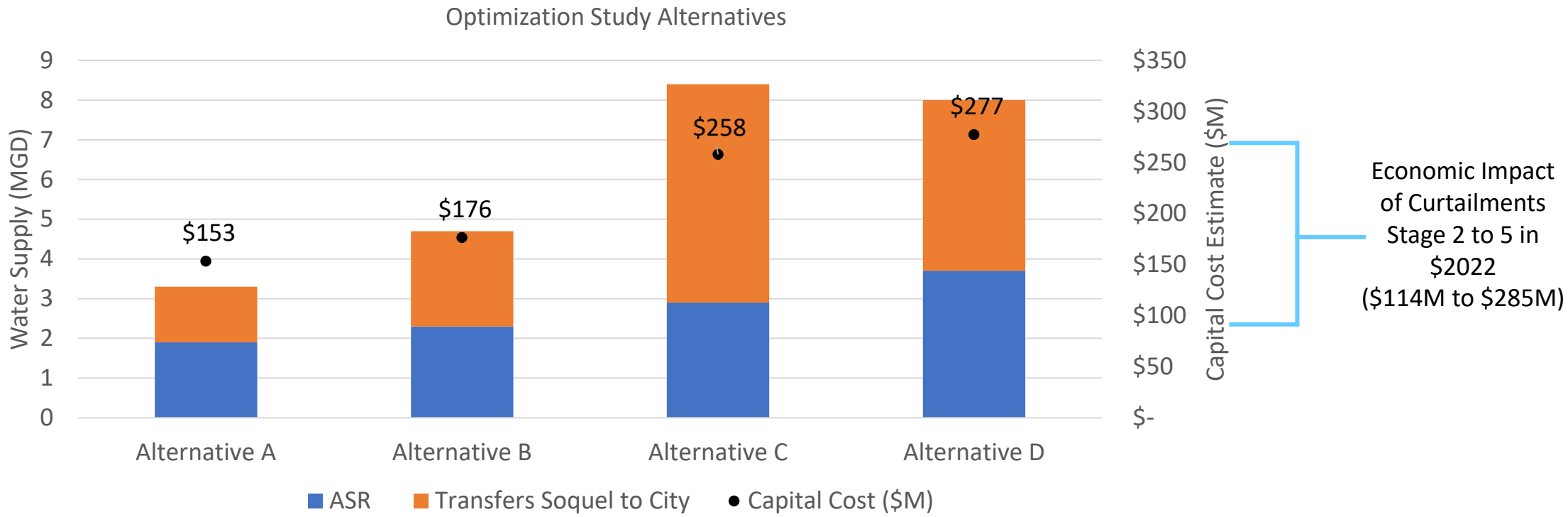
Planned Production = 1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)
Max Future Production = 3,000 AFY (2.6 MGD)
Locations for additional SWIP wells to be determined

Optimization Study Alternatives Summary

Optimization Study		Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
ASR		4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells
			1 New Capitola Well	1 New Capitola Well	2 New Capitola Wells
PWS		1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)	1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)	1,900 AFY (1.7 MGD)	2,100 AFY (1.9 MGD)
		3 SWIP Injection Wells	3 SWIP Injection Wells	4 SWIP Injection Wells	5 SWIP Injection Wells
Transfers	City to Soquel	1.2 MGD	0 MGD	0 MGD	0 MGD
	Soquel to City	1.4 MGD	2.4 MGD	5.5 MGD	4.3 MGD
Water Supply Gap Met					
Catalog Climate		79%	92%	100%	100%
R1270		74%	86%	100%	100%
Capital and O&M Cost Estimate					
Capital Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$153 ($126 to $207)	$176 ($138 to $253)	$258 ($179 to $416)	$277 ($188 to $455)
Annual O&M Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$9.5 ($7.5 to $13.5)	$9.9 ($7.7 to $14.2)	$12.1 ($8.8 to $18.6)	$12.6 ($9.1 to $19.6)

By Brown & Caldwell and Optimization Team

Optimization Study Alternatives Summary



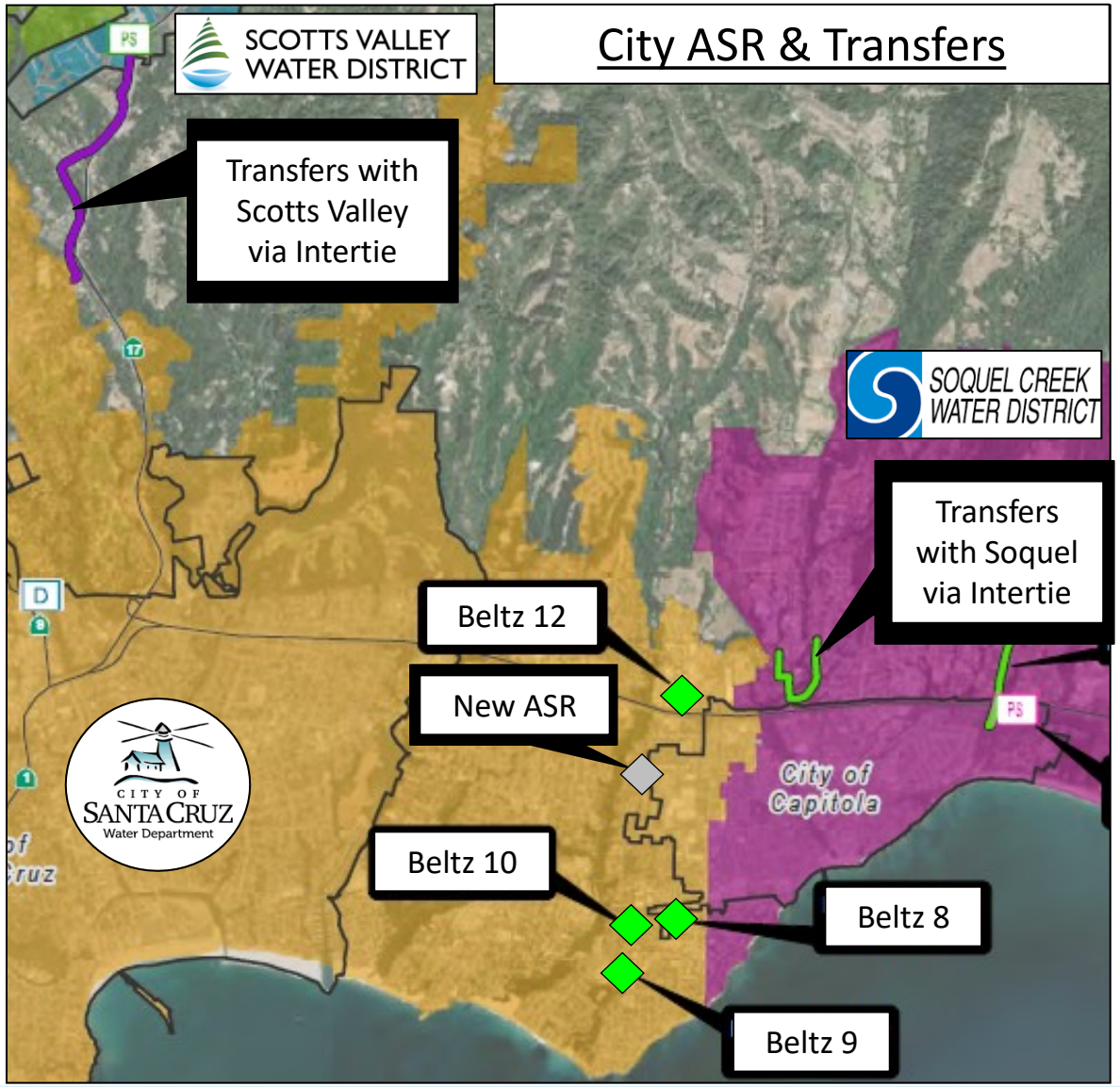
No increase in Pure Water Soquel

Increase in Pure Water Soquel

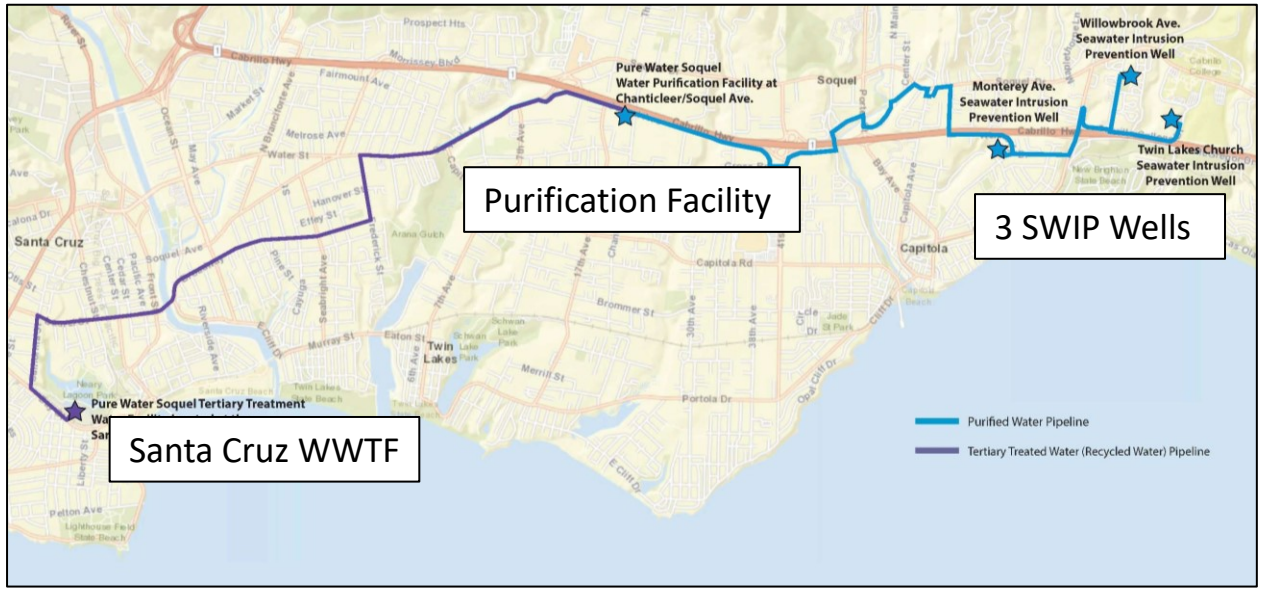
Costs:

- Include development of Pure Water Soquel Project to 1,500 AFY
  - $195M project cost, $95M covered by grants, $100M cost included for alternatives
- Do not include ocean outfall improvements or distribution treatment improvements.
- Do not account for cost sharing between agencies or costs for water transferred.

Portfolio 1 – Regional ASR & Pure Water Soquel Expansion



Pure Water Soquel Expansion



Planned Production = 1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)
Max Future Production = 3,000 AFY (2.6 MGD)
Locations for additional SWIP wells to be determined

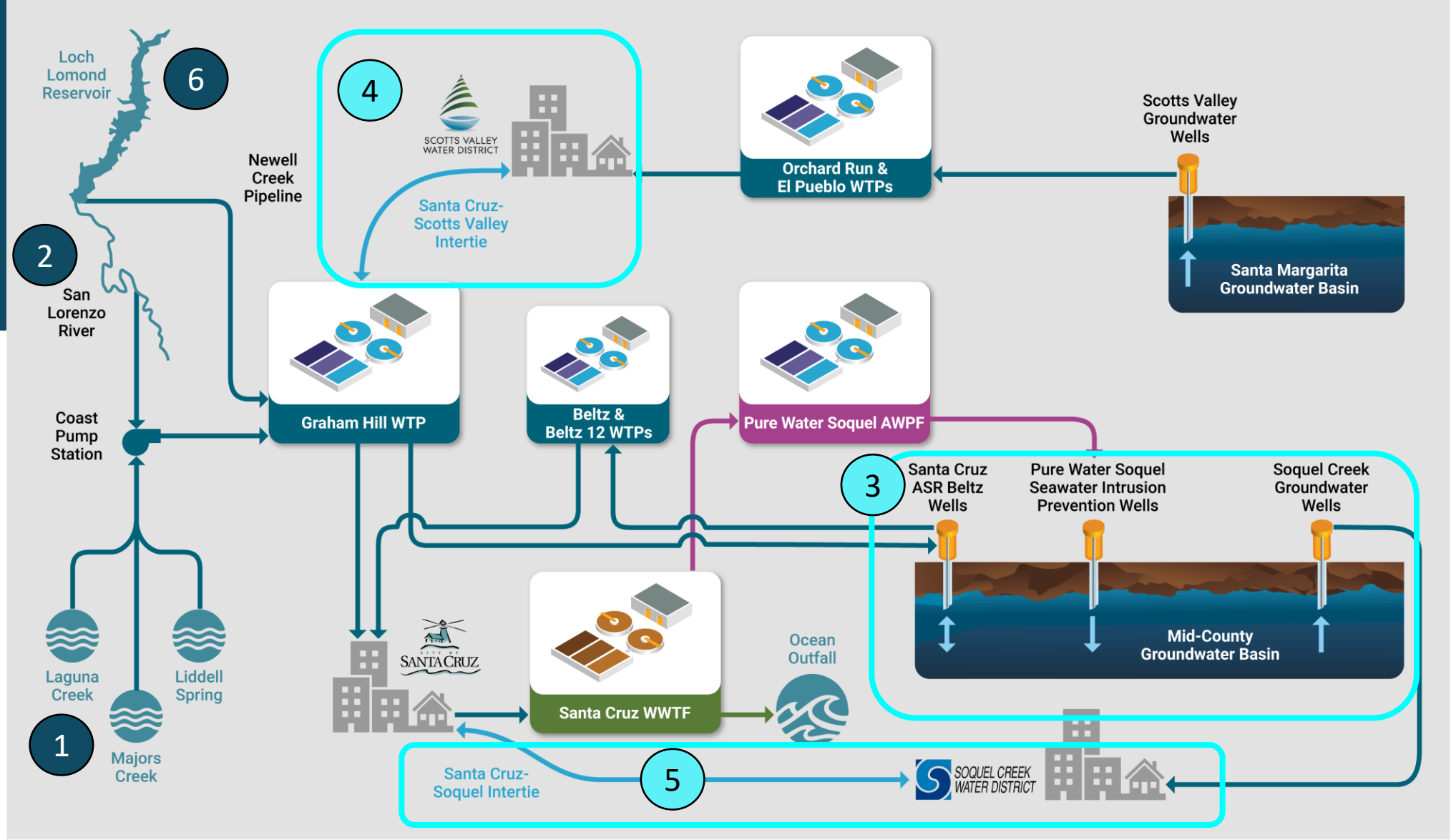
Water Supply Portfolio 1

New Components:

- ✓ ASR
- ✓ Expansion of Pure Water Soquel
- ✓ Regional Transfers

Existing Source

New Source

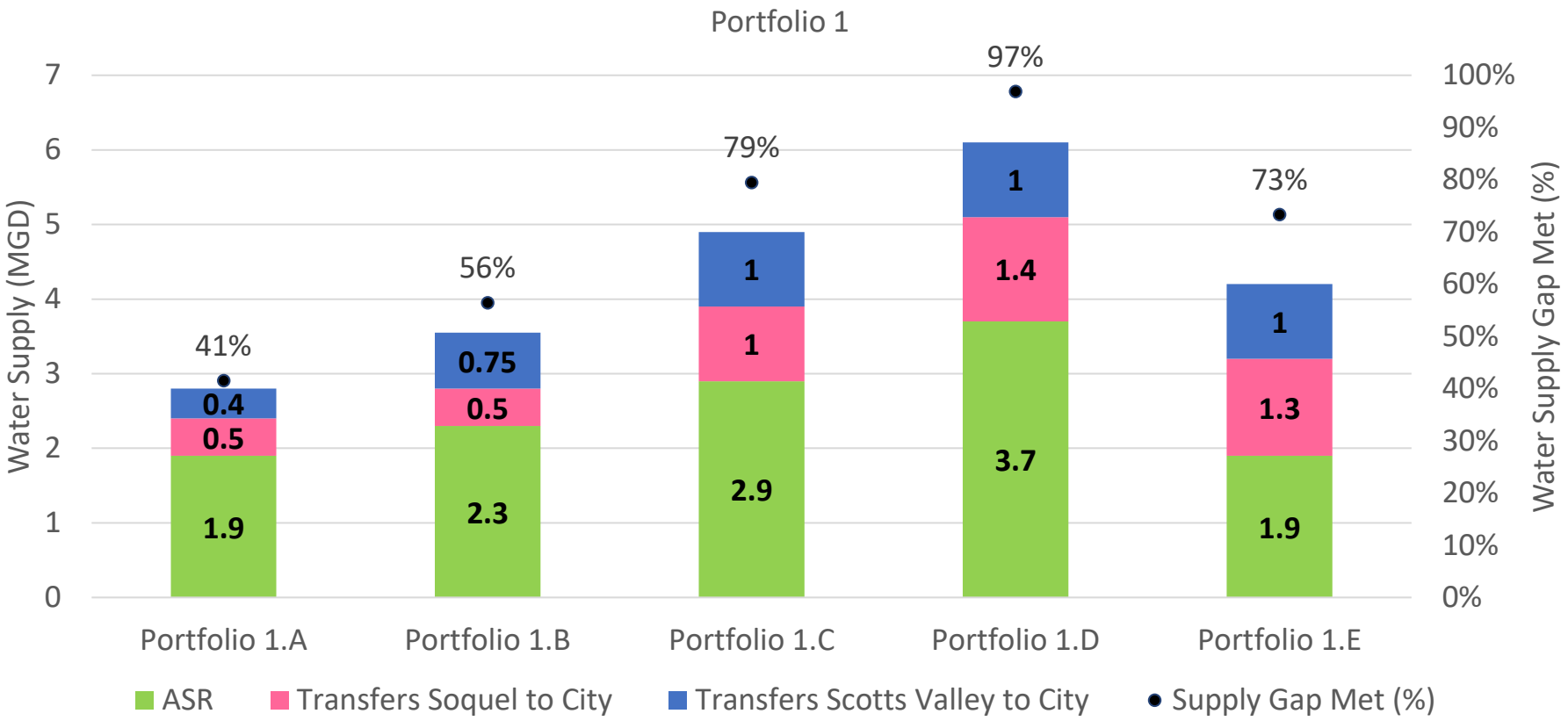


WSAIP Portfolio 1 Alternatives

Portfolio		Portfolio 1.A	Portfolio 1.B	Portfolio 1.C	Portfolio 1.D	Portfolio 1.E
ASR		4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells
			1 New Capitola Well	1 New Capitola Well	2 New Capitola Wells	
PWS		1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)	1,500 AFY (1.3 MGD)	1,900 AFY (1.7 MGD)	2,100 AFY (1.9 MGD)	3,500 AFY (2.6 MGD)
		3 SWIP Wells	3 SWIP Wells	4 SWIP Wells	5 SWIP Wells	6 SWIP Wells
Transfers	City to Soquel	0 MGD	0 MGD	0 MGD	0 MGD	0 MGD
	Soquel to City	0.5 MGD	0.5 MGD	1 MGD	1.4 MGD	1.3 MGD
	City to Scotts Valley	0.75 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD
	Scotts Valley to City	0.4 MGD	0.75 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD
Water Supply Gap Met (5 year drought) & Portfolio Costs						
R1270		**41%**	**56%**	**79%**	**97%**	**73%**
Capital and O&M Cost Estimate						
Capital Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$57 ($30 to $111)	$71 ($37 to $138)	$108 ($56 to $213)	$132 ($68 to $261)	$182 ($93 to $361)
Annual O&M Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$2.1 ($1 to $4.1)	$2.4 ($1.2 to $4.7)	$4.3 ($2.2 to $8.6)	$4.6 ($2.3 to $9.3)	$6.0 ($3.0 to $12.1)

*Portfolio 1.E and reduced transfers from Soquel to City where not modeled under Optimization Study

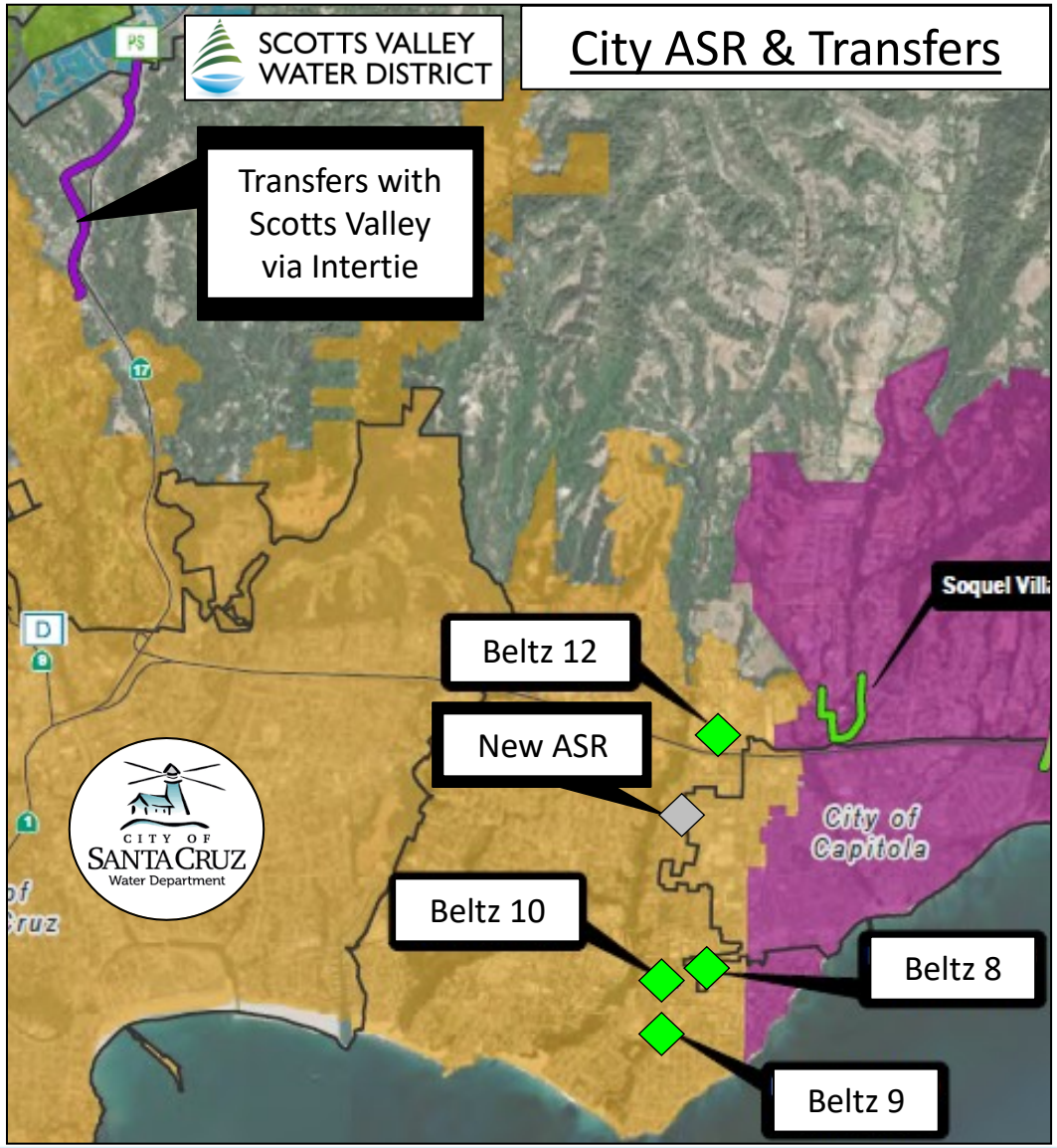
WSAIP Portfolio 1 Results

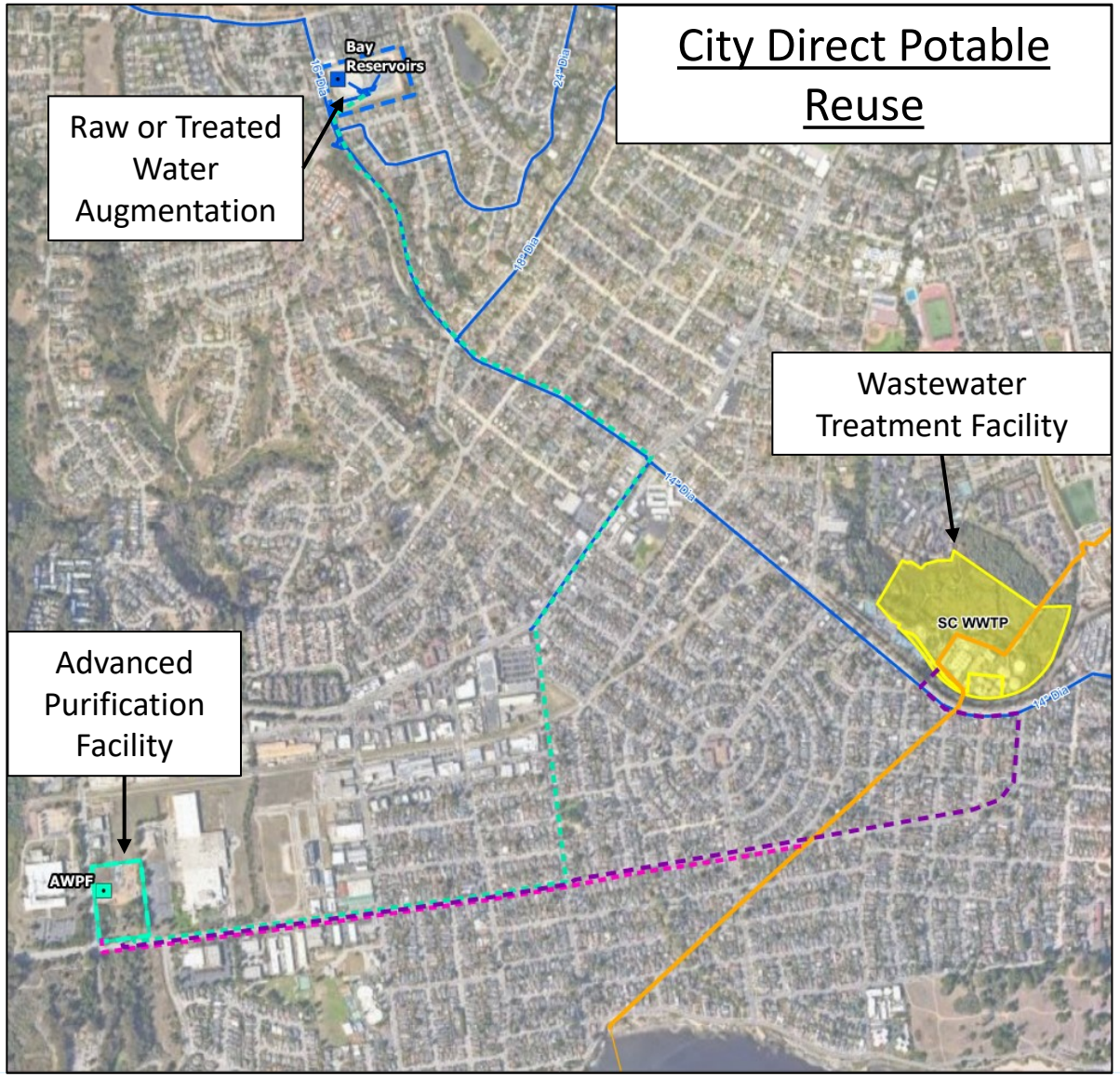


Costs:

- Do not include cost to build Pure Water Soquel to 1,500 AFY
- Include costs for expansions of Pure Water Soquel above 1,500 AFY
- Do not include ocean outfall improvements or distribution treatment improvements
- Do not account for cost sharing between agencies or costs for water transferred

Portfolio 2 – City Direct Potable Reuse





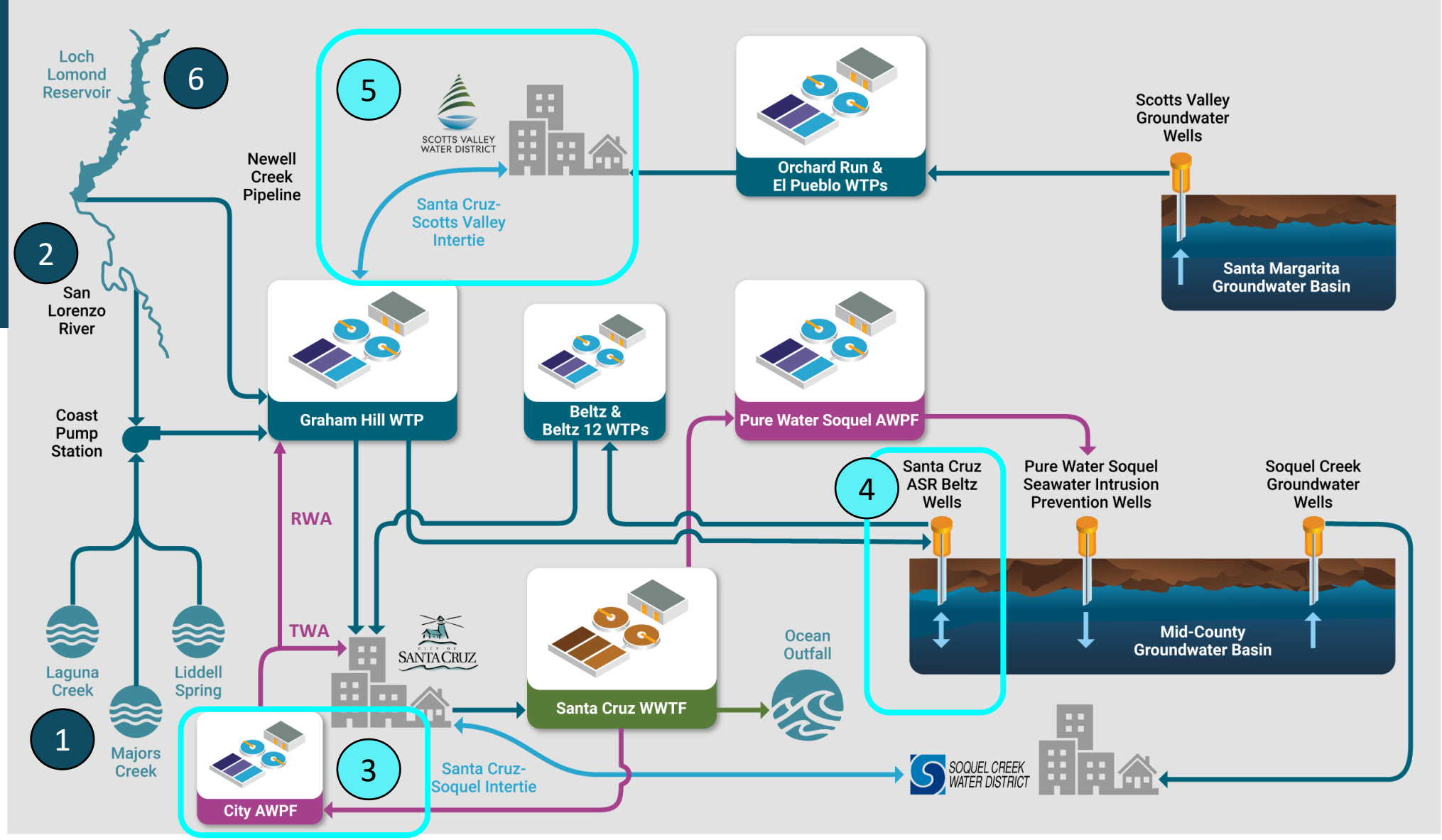
Water Supply Portfolio 2

New Components:

- ✓ Direct Potable Reuse
- ✓ ASR
- ✓ Scotts Valley Transfers

Existing Source

New Source



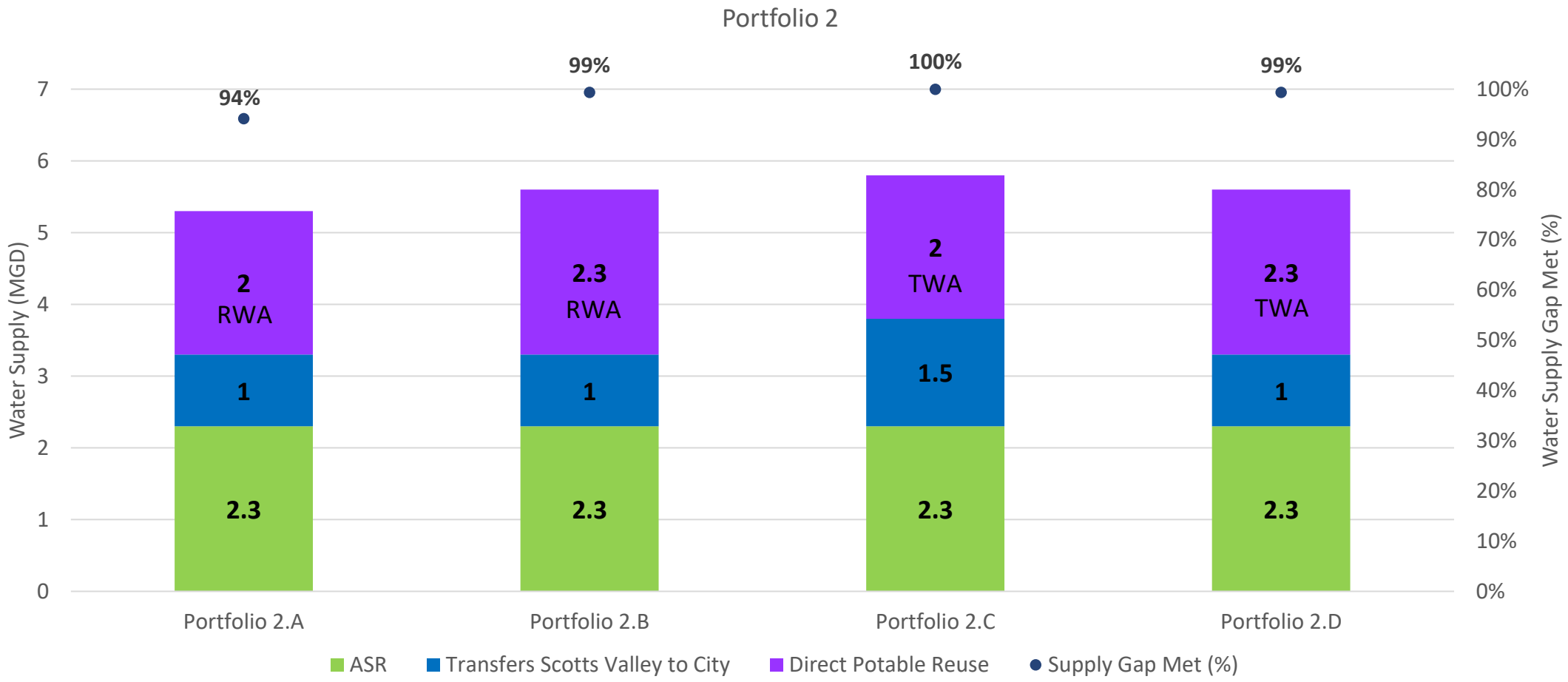
WSAIP Portfolio 2 Alternatives

Portfolio		Portfolio 2.A	Portfolio 2.B	Portfolio 2.C	Portfolio 2.D
ASR		4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells	4 Beltz Wells
			1 New Capitola Well	1 New Capitola Well	1 New Capitola Well
Transfers	City to Scotts Valley	1 MGD	1 MGD	1.5 MGD	1 MGD
	Scotts Valley to City	1 MGD	1 MGD	1.5 MGD	1 MGD
Direct Potable Reuse		Raw Water Augmentation	Raw Water Augmentation	Treated Water Augmentation	Treated Water Augmentation
		2 MGD	2.3 MGD	2 MGD	2.3 MGD
Water Supply Gap Met (5 year drought) & Portfolio Costs					
R1270		**94%**	**99%**	**100%**	**99%**
Capital and O&M Cost Estimate					
Capital Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$244 ($124 to $485)	$253 ($128 to $503)	$277 ($140 to $550)	$253 ($128 to $503)
Annual O&M Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$6.6 ($3.3 to $13.2)	$6.5 ($3.2 to $13.0)	$7.2 ($3.6 to $14.4)	$6.5 ($3.2 to $13.0)

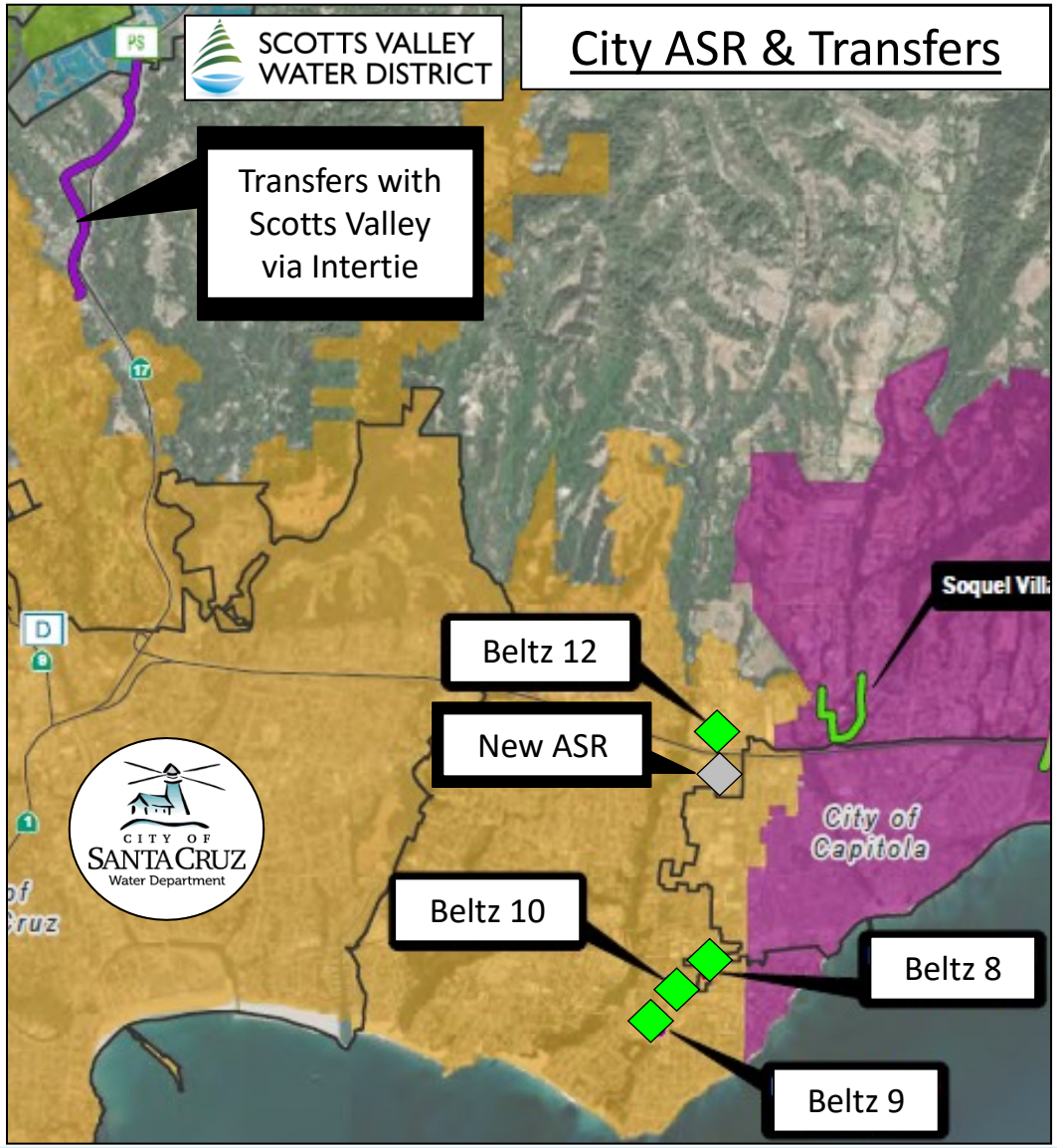
Costs:

- Do not include ocean outfall improvements, land acquisition, or distribution treatment improvements.
- Do not account for cost sharing between agencies or costs for water transferred.

WSAIP Portfolio 2 Results



Portfolio 3 – City Desalination



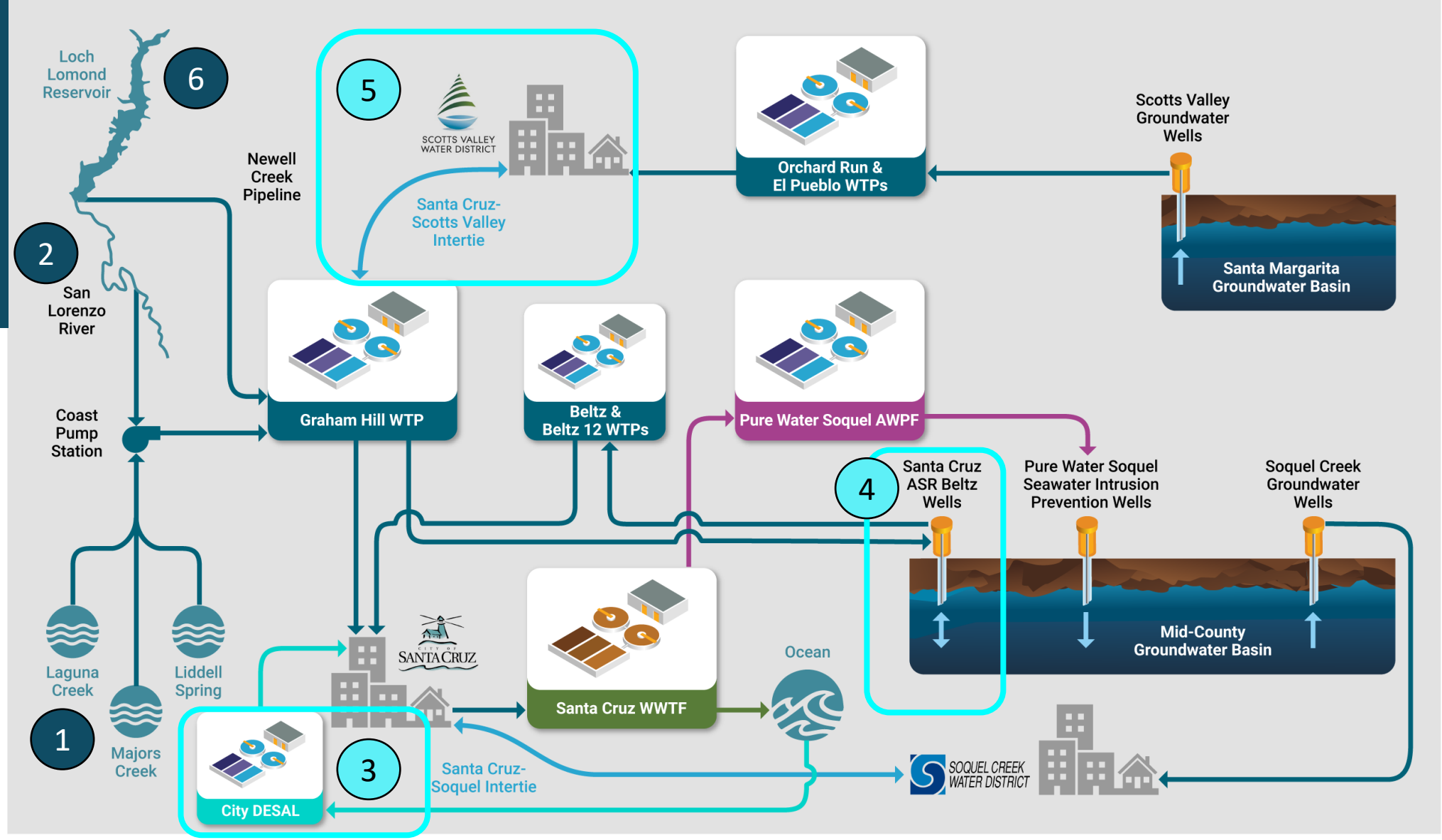
Water Supply Portfolio 3

New Components:

- ✓ Desalination
- ✓ ASR
- ✓ Scotts Valley Transfers

Existing Source

New Source



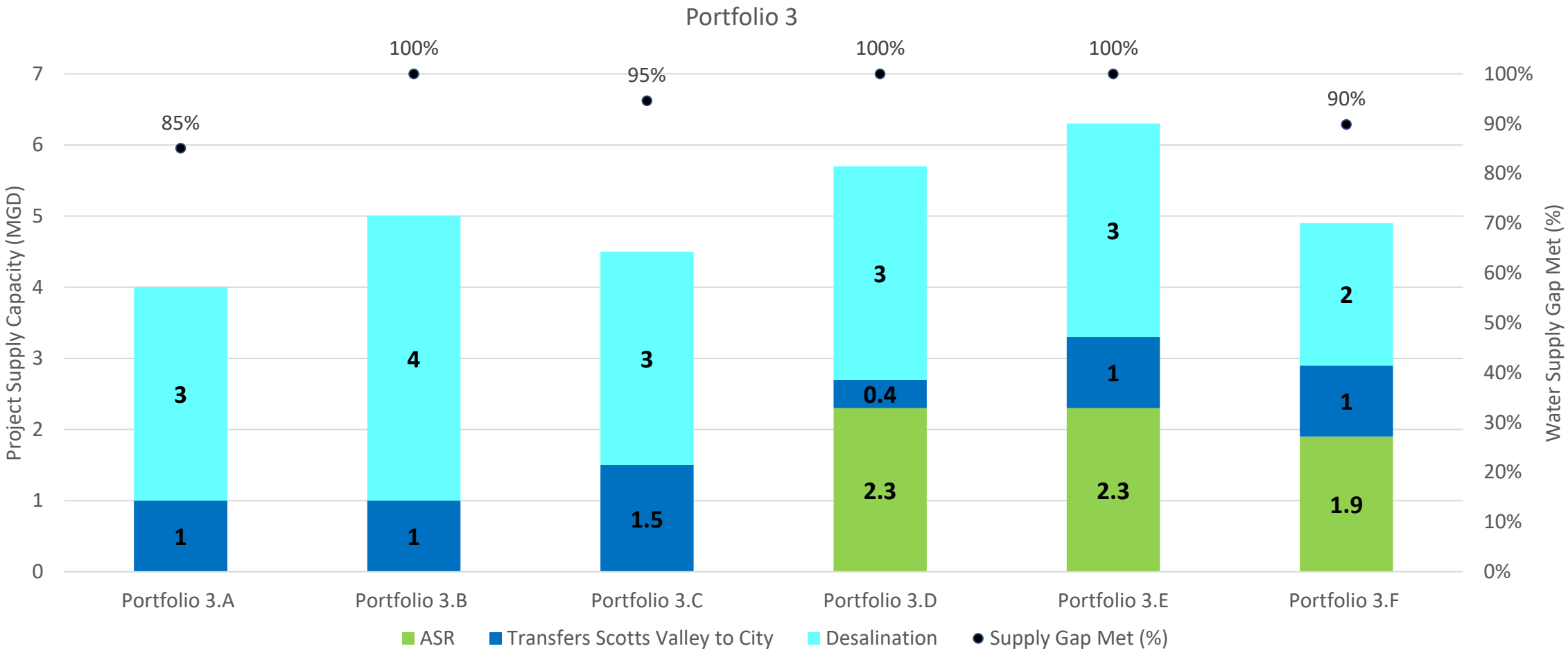
WSAIP Portfolio 3 Alternatives

Portfolio		Portfolio 3.A	Portfolio 3.B	Portfolio 3.C	Portfolio 3.D	Portfolio 3.E	Portfolio 3.F
ASR		None	None	None	4 Beltz Wells 1 New Well	4 Beltz Wells 1 New Well	4 Beltz Wells
Transfers	City to Scotts Valley	1 MGD	1 MGD	1.5 MGD	0.75 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD
	Scotts Valley to City	1 MGD	1 MGD	1.5 MGD	0.4 MGD	1 MGD	1 MGD
Desalination		3 MGD	4 MGD	3 MGD	3 MGD	3 MGD	2 MGD
Water Supply Gap Met (5 year drought) & Portfolio Costs							
R1270		**85%**	**100%**	**95%**	**100%**	**100%**	**90%**
Capital and O&M Cost Estimate							
Capital Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$224 ($114 to $445)	$258 ($131 to $514)	$256 ($130 to $509)	$291 ($147 to $578)	$291 ($147 to $578)	$250 ($127 to $497)
Annual O&M Cost ($M) (-50% to +100%)		$9.5 ($4.7 to $19.0)	$12.0 ($6.0 to $24.1)	$10.1 ($5.0 to $20.2)	$11.0 ($5.5 to $21.9)	$11.0 ($5.5 to $22.0)	$8.3 ($4.2 to $16.6)

Costs:

- Do not include ocean outfall improvements, land acquisition, or distribution treatment improvements.
- Do not account for cost sharing between agencies or costs for water transferred.

WSAIP Portfolio 3 Results



Portfolios – Primary Evaluation Criteria

Primary Evaluation Criteria	Regional Project	Local Direct Potable Reuse		Local Desalination	
	1.D	2.B	2.D	3.B	3.D
Criteria for Evaluation					
1. COST METRIC					
Total capital costs ($M)	$132[a]	$253	$253	$258	$291
Annualized capital costs [b] ($M)	$7	$13	$13	$13	$15
Annualized operation and maintenance costs ($M)	$5	$6	$6	$10	$11
Unit costs based on maximum production ($/AF)	$11,100/AF	$10,000/AF	$10,000/AF	$6,300/AF	11,500/AF
2. YIELD METRIC					
Project's supply contribution as a % of worst year supply shortfall (% of R1270, 5-year drought filled)	97%	99%	99%	100%	100%
3. TIMELINESS METRIC *Time required to for implementation* (years)	5+ Depends on Basin meeting sustainability objectives	5 to 10	5 to 10	10+	10+

Costs:

a. Does not include cost to build Pure Water Soquel to 1,500 AFY

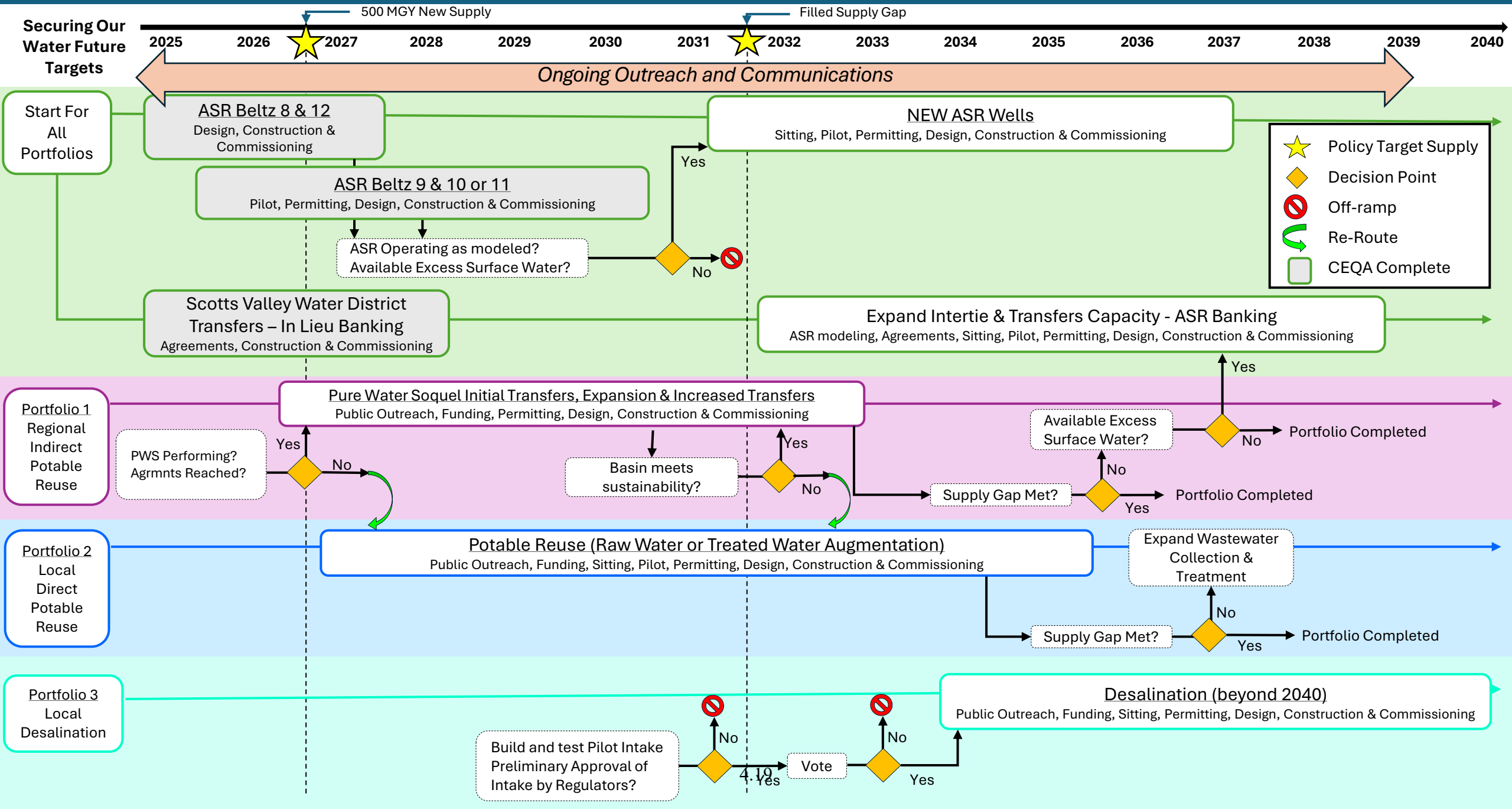
b. Annualized Capital Costs estimated assuming 3% Interest Rate and 30 years lifetime of facilities

Portfolios – Additional Evaluation Criteria

Additional Evaluation Criteria	Regional Project	Local Direct Potable Reuse		Local Desalination	
	1.D	2.B	2.D	3.B	3.D
Increases resilience to climate change (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Understood and accepted by the public and stakeholders (yes/no)	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	No	No
Scalable or can be implemented incrementally or in phases (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Technical Feasibility (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Likelihood of project being funded by state or federal grants (highly likely/highly unlikely)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Opportunity for shared funding (yes/no)	Yes	Yes, Limited to SVWD Transfers	Yes, Limited to SVWD Transfers	Yes, Limited to SVWD Transfers	Yes, Limited to SVWD Transfers
Greenhouse Gas Emission (MT of CO_{2e}) – To be estimated					
Operational complexity (high/medium/low)	High	High	High	High	High
Energy Use (KWh/yr) – To be estimated					
Potential impacts for CEQA required mitigations to impact project cost or timeliness (High/Medium/Low)	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Adaptable to future regulatory or source water changes (yes/no)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Unknown
Degree of administrative complexity complexity and time required to address regulatory, permitting, and other legal issues (complexity = high/medium/low; time required = months or years)	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Adaptive Flexibility – How a project may (or may not) be able to adapt to changing conditions or be functional in the face of climate change, wildfire, seismic or other natural disasters.	Maybe	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Yes

Recommended Criteria to NOT carry forward in evaluation

DRAFT Adaptive Water Supply Roadmap



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WATER COMMISSION
INFORMATION REPORT

DATE: 10/30/2024

AGENDA OF:	11/04/2024
TO:	Water Commission
FROM:	Heidi Luckenbach, Water Director
SUBJECT:	Santa Cruz Mid-County and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agencies Advisory Body Report

RECOMMENDATION: That the Water Commission receive information on the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency and Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA)

The MGA Board met last on September 19, 2024. Materials for this and all MGA meetings can be found here:

https://www.midcountygroundwater.org/committee-meetings

The next meeting of the MGA will be at 6:00 p.m. on December 12, 2024.

Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency (SMGWA)

The SMGWA Board met last on October 24, 2024. Materials for this meeting can be found here:

https://twistcms-shared.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/meetings/113/agendas/3900.pdf

Materials for all meetings can be found here:

https://www.smgwa.org/meetingdashboard

At this meeting, the Board:

- Received a presentation on the Groundwater Sustainability Program and the Santa Cruz County effort to update the County Well Ordinance. Materials presented at the meeting show that over the past 10 years since the passage of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, SMGA water levels have been stable in the shallow Santa Margarita Aquifer and are improving in the deeper Lompico Aquifer. All water levels, except the deepest Butano Aquifer, had good improvements following the wet year in 2023. One key message is that while water levels are sustainable under current conditions, it is important to continue groundwater management practices, such as conjunctive use, to ensure sustainability under future climate and demand projections. Other newsworthy items in this presentation were:
    - The Department of Water Resources (DWR) is developing a Guidance on Interconnected Surface Water that could necessitate that Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) modify their current approach for defining undesirable results and assessing seepage from surface water due to groundwater extraction.
    - Paul Gosselin, DWR's Deputy Director for Sustainable Water Management, recognized in a recent webinar that the cost of Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) compliance is challenging for smaller basins. Both the SMGWA and MGA are participating in a Small GSA Coalition to continue to highlight this issue.
- Established an ad hoc review committee for the Water Year 2024 Annual Report.

Other information:

- SGMA is celebrating 10 years with an event in Sacramento on November 18th. See the attached flyer for details.

The next Agency Board meeting has not been scheduled.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

PROPOSED MOTION: No motion required; this item is information only.

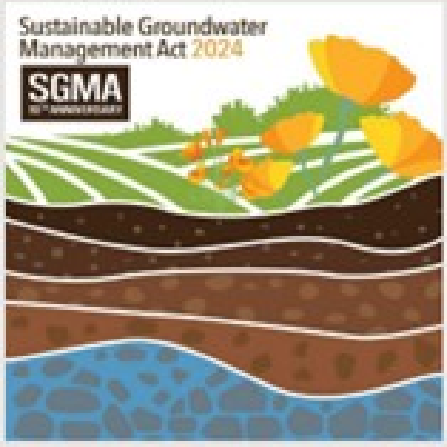
ATTACHMENTS:
1. SMGA 10-Year Anniversary Event Flyer

REGISTER TODAY!

The Road to Sustainability
SGMA 10-Year Anniversary Event

Join the Department of Water Resources (DWR) on **November 18th** as we commemorate the 10-Year Anniversary of the historic passing of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Hear from local groundwater sustainability agencies, community organizations, state leaders, and others in the SGMA community as they reflect on the progress made over the first 10 years of SGMA, highlight challenges and lessons learned, and look ahead to the next 10 years of advancing sustainable groundwater management. This all-day event will be held in person at the California Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento and online via Zoom.

If interpretation is requested (either in-person or virtual), please email sgmps@water.ca.gov and we will do our best to make accommodations.



When: November 18, 2024
Where: Participants can join in-person at California Natural Resources Agency, 715 P St, Sacramento, CA 95814, or online via Zoom.

Join us for a No-Host Social Hour after the event.

Register for event below or scan the QR code:

https://SGMA10Year.eventbrite.com

Virtual attendees will be emailed a Zoom link prior to the event.

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News and Information - November 4, 2024

From the California Department of Water Resources website (also see the attached article):
Improving the Lives of Californians: DWR Marks 10 Years of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and Progress Made to Protect Water Supplies

San Lorenzo Valley Water District Board Appoints Interim General Manager:
https://www.slvwd.com/home/news/san-lorenzo-valley-water-district-board-appoints-interim-general-manager

Is California Experiencing a Water Affordability Crisis? - Public Policy Institute of California

Is California Getting Drier? - Public Policy Institute of California

Improving the Lives of Californians: DWR Marks 10 Years of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act and Progress Made to Protect Water Supplies

Published: Sep 16, 2024

Landmark law has driven significant progress to protect drinking water supplies against the impacts of climate change

More work lies ahead to safeguard supplies in groundwater dependent communities

Sacramento, Calif. – Today marks the 10th anniversary of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), a landmark law that is driving reductions in the overuse of groundwater, protecting drinking water supplies, and making communities, agriculture and ecosystems more resilient to the impacts of climate change.

SGMA was signed into law on September 16, 2014, midway through the historic 2012-2016 drought. Driven by the need to address declining groundwater supplies, the law created a statewide framework to protect this critical resource in California, which provides 41 percent of the state's total supply in a normal year and up to 60 percent during droughts. About 85 percent of Californians rely on groundwater for some portion of their water needs.

In the 10 years since its passage, remarkable accomplishments have been achieved under SGMA:

- More than 250 local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) have been formed to protect drinking water wells, reduce land sinking and improve groundwater supplies.
- These GSAs are implementing over 100 Groundwater Sustainability Plans, using creative solutions like recharging groundwater supplies, limiting usage, and other management actions that will help create a resilient and sustainable water supply for California.

- California is now collecting more groundwater data than ever before, providing a better understanding of groundwater conditions and ultimately leading to better management decisions.
- SGMA has raised public awareness about the importance of protecting groundwater and has encouraged more cooperative management efforts.
- Water supply reliability is improving with efforts to recharge groundwater. In 2023 alone, 4.1 million acre-feet of water were added to underground aquifers through managed efforts.
- The State has invested nearly $1 billion in SGMA in 10 years, including more than $100 million through the Department of Water Resources for local groundwater recharge projects.

“It has been impressive to see that through the tireless efforts of local groundwater sustainability agencies, every ambitious SGMA milestone has been met so far,” said Paul Gosselin, DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management. “A foundational part of SGMA is that groundwater is best managed locally, by the people that know their groundwater basins and depend on the resource. As a result, over 95 percent of groundwater pumping is subject to a locally adopted, enforceable groundwater sustainability plan.”

The State’s goal is to help GSAs reach sustainable groundwater conditions in their basins while maintaining local control, for the benefit of sustainable agriculture, drinking water supplies, and healthy ecosystems.

Under SGMA, local agencies are responsible for the sustainable management of their groundwater basins. However, state agencies – namely DWR and State Water Board – are responsible for ensuring local groundwater management achieves SGMA's goals.

DWR is the primary technical assistance and oversight agency responsible for assessing and evaluating basin compliance with SGMA. The State Water Board acts as the state “backstop” and will temporarily intervene in the management of a groundwater basin when DWR determines that the basin is not in compliance, working with local agencies to resolve failures and end state intervention.

"Improving groundwater management practices to achieve sustainable aquifers is essential for the future of California and the ability of agriculture to continue food production in a hotter, drier future,” said Karen Ross, Secretary, California Department of Food and Agriculture. “The State of California has made significant investments to support local authorities with financial investments, policy development to accelerate groundwater recharge, sharing of data and technical assistance to chart a pathway forward to successfully implement this historic law."

“Ten years ago, when SGMA became law, all of us took on the responsibility of bringing about sustainable management of our groundwater basins for the benefit of everyone who relies on them,” said Joaquin Esquivel, board chair of the State Water Resources Control Board. “A lot of progress has happened since then to meet this challenge, and we have more work to do to achieve sustainability for California’s groundwater basins.”

The next 10 years of SGMA will focus on implementing the plans developed so far. Projects and decisions aim to bring California's groundwater basins to sustainable conditions by the early 2040s. Weather extremes, especially drought, make this work even more critical, as the state must store and capture as much water as possible during wet years.

To celebrate this milestone anniversary, DWR will host an event on Nov. 18. Featured speakers and panelists will include DWR Director Karla Nemeth, and DWR Deputy Director of Sustainable Water Management Paul Gosselin, as well as representatives from GSAs, community organizations, State leaders and others in the SGMA community. This all-day event will be held in person at the California Natural Resources Agency building in Sacramento and online via Zoom. More information will be announced soon. To receive the latest in groundwater news and updates on 10-Year Anniversary events from DWR, visit the DWR email subscription page and select the 'Sustainable Groundwater Management' topic.

For more information:

- Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) (ca.gov)
- DWR SGMA Portal
- DWR SGMA Data Viewer
- California's Groundwater (Bulletin 118)

Contact:
Public Affairs, Department of Water Resources
916-820-8083 | media@water.ca.gov