

Chapter 10

GOALS AND POLICIES FOR MANAGING THE SANTA CRUZ WATER SYSTEM

The foregoing Chapters have highlighted the water management challenges facing the City of Santa Cruz and described the direction and the steps the City is currently taking to address these challenges. This final chapter presents long-term goals, policies, and actions that will serve to guide management of the water system through the year 2030 and ensure that the water supply system – one of the City’s most vital services – continues to meet the needs of the community well into the future.

The goals, policies, and actions referenced below were developed through two separate but related processes: 1) the City’s General Plan Update 2030, and 2) City Council Three Year Strategic Plan.

10.1 General Plan Update 2030

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the City is well along towards completing a comprehensive update to its existing General Plan. The new General Plan will extend to 2030, corresponding with the timeline for this Urban Water Management Plan. Public review of the draft General Plan and its accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is scheduled for the latter half of 2011, followed by consideration and adoption by City Council, expected in early 2012.

The City’s General Plan 2030 is built around a series of goals, policies, and actions. In the context of the General Plan, a goal is a general, overall and ultimate purpose aim or end toward which the City will direct effort during the timeframe of the General Plan. A policy is a specific statement of principle or guidance that implies clear commitment; the direction the City intends to follow. An action is a program, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal.

The draft General Plan addresses community facilities and services, including water, wastewater, solid waste, and other public services, in Chapter 7, CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES. The opening principle of the Plan states that the City “... will highlight and protect ... the sustainable use of our precious natural resources.” This chapter follows that principle by a call for improving and maintaining the public infrastructure, among other things. The CIVIC AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES chapter

includes one overarching goal with 11 associated policies and nearly 50 accompanying actions that address water service. The City's General Plan goal for water supply is expressed as follows:

Goal CC 3 A safe, reliable, and adequate water supply

Policy CC3.1 supports implementation of the City's Integrated Water Plan, and its three accompanying actions support reduction in long-term demand with conservation, periodic updates of the City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan, and development of a 2.5 mgd desalination plant for drought protection with the potential for incremental expansion to 4.5 mgd. Other proposed policies address water demand and conservation, water management, protection of water supplies, including groundwater supplies, development of new water sources and provision of adequate water facilities. Several policies and actions in other chapters of the proposed General Plan also pertain to the City's water supplies and/or demand. Water conservation and audits at park facilities are supported (NRC1.1.3), as well as water conservation education related to creeks and wetlands (NRC1.1.5).

The draft General Plan proposes the following policies (designated in italics) and actions with regard to water service that will support and promote the City's general goal of achieving a safe, reliable, and adequate water supply. These policy statements thus form the basis for the Water Department's annual strategic planning and budgeting processes:

CC3.1 Implement the City's Integrated Water Plan.

- CC3.1.1 Implement the City's Long-Term Water Conservation Plan to reduce average daily water demand and maximize the use of existing water resources.
- CC3.1.2 Periodically update the City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan to prepare for responding to future water shortages.
- CC3.1.3 Develop a desalination plant of 2.5 mgd for drought protection, with the potential for incremental expansion to 4.5 mgd, if it is environmentally acceptable and financially feasible.

CC3.2 Meet or exceed all regulatory drinking water standards.

- CC3.2.1 Regularly and comprehensively evaluate the water system relative to federal and State water quality regulations and

- standards, and develop recommendations and an action plan to address findings.
- CC3.2.2 Develop, maintain, and update sampling and analysis programs, and laboratory procedures for the treated water distribution system and storage facilities.
- CC3.2.3 Maintain required federal and State laboratory certification.
- CC3.2.4 Prepare and submit compliance reports to all regulatory agencies.
- CC3.2.5 Regularly sample and analyze finished water in accordance with approved methods and parameters identified by the State, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the City.
- CC3.2.6 Monitor the quality of water from all sources.
- CC3.2.7 Provide annual drinking water quality reports to all consumers of city water.
- CC3.3 *Safeguard existing surface and groundwater sources.*
- CC3.3.1 Manage City watershed lands relative to protecting the sources of drinking water.
- CC3.3.2 Maintain compliance with all applicable drinking water source protection-related regulations.
- CC3.3.3 Secure and maintain all City water rights to existing and future water supplies to provide certainty and operational flexibility for the water system.
- CC3.3.4 Review and comment on new State Water Resources Control Board water rights applications and timber harvest plans on City drinking water source watersheds.
- CC3.3.5 Pursue appropriate regulatory enforcement of environmental violations committed by other watershed stakeholders.
- CC3.3.6 Conduct hydrologic and biotic monitoring throughout drinking water source watersheds to protect water supplies and habitat. Cf. CD4.3.3 and NRC2.1, 2.2, 2.4, and 6.3.
- CC3.3.7 Ensure that fisheries conservation strategies address and protect water storage, drinking water source quality, and

water system flexibility, as well as protect the environmental resource.

CC3.3.8 Provide adequate pumping, treatment, and distribution facilities for peak season production of groundwater of 170 mgd in normal years and 215 mgd during droughts.

CC3.3.9 Monitor groundwater levels and quality.

CC3.3.10 Participate with the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Alliance in cooperative efforts to assure the quality and production of groundwater resources.

CC3.4 Maintain and improve the integrity of the water system.

CC3.4.1 Maintain and improve water facilities to meet pressure and fire flow requirements and ensure customer delivery. Cf. HZ1.4.3.

CC3.4.2 Modernize City water treatment plants.

CC3.4.3 Optimize storage, transmission, and distribution capacities and efficiencies.

CC3.4.4 Evaluate and improve the water system so as to minimize water outages due to emergencies and disasters.

CC3.5 Promote maximum water use efficiency.

CC3.5.1 Implement 14 urban water conservation “best management practices” and meet reporting requirements in the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Urban Water Conservation in California.

CC3.5.2 Promote public education and awareness about the City’s water resources and the importance of water conservation.

CC3.5.3 Offer water audit programs and technical assistance for homes, businesses, and large landscapes to help customers reduce their average daily water use and control their utility bills.

CC3.5.4 Provide financial incentives to City water customers for installing high efficiency plumbing fixtures, appliances, and equipment.

- CC3.5.5 Provide public information regarding onsite water catchment systems.
 - CC3.5.6 Administer and enforce water waste regulations, plumbing fixture retrofit requirements, and water efficient landscape standards for new development.
 - CC3.5.7 Explore and consider promoting or requiring new opportunities and technologies for more efficient use of water and energy.
 - CC3.5.8 Evaluate water use by residential, commercial, industrial and other customer categories and trends per capita.
 - CC3.5.9 Regularly audit the water distribution system and implement programs to minimize system losses and underground leaks.
 - CC3.5.10 Participate in regional water conservation partnerships, events, and opportunities.
 - CC3.5.11 Play a leadership role in supporting research, policy development, standards, and legislation aimed at furthering water use efficiency across the state.
 - CC3.5.12 Implement additional water conservation programs that provide a reliable gain in supply and can be justified in terms of their cost.
- CC3.6 *Coordinate major land use planning decisions in all three jurisdictions served by the City water system based on water supply availability.*
- CC3.6.1 Implement the City's Urban Water Management Plan and update it periodically as required by State law.
 - CC3.6.2 Provide annual updates to the city council on the status of remaining water supply.
 - CC3.6.3 Confirm or adjust the estimate of remaining supply to avoid oversubscribing the water system.
 - CC3.6.4 Consider developing criteria for determining significance of environmental impacts of development projects on the City water system to streamline the environmental review process.

- CC3.7 *Allow extension of the Water Service Area only if an application is approved by city council and/or LAFCO*
- CC3.8 *Prohibit additional connections to the North Coast water system, in accordance with City Council Resolutions NS-17372 and NS-21056.*
- CC3.9 *Sustain long-term fiscal stability.*
- CC3.9.1 Maintain a rate schedule based on cost of service and designed to provide an economic incentive for conservation.
 - CC3.9.2 Collect sufficient revenues to assure adequate maintenance of the water system infrastructure.
 - CC3.9.3 Maintain a Water Rate Stabilization Fund to protect against unanticipated emergencies, and Operating Reserves as needed for cash flow.
 - CC3.9.4 Confine long-term borrowing to major capital improvements.
 - CC3.9.5 Develop and implement a long-term Capital Improvements Plan for prioritizing and financing major projects.
- CC3.10 *Investigate new supply options to meet planned growth.*
- CC3.10.1 Explore opportunities to use recycled water for future water supply.
- CC3.11 *Conserve water resources. Cf. NRC1.3.1 and 3.1.*
- CC3.11.1 Promote water conservation.
 - CC3.11.2 Regularly update guidelines and standards for new landscaping that emphasizes xeriscaping, climate-appropriate landscape design, and other water-conserving practices.
 - CC3.11.3 Conduct a landscape irrigation audit program and target large water consumers to reduce consumption. Examples of large consumers are large turf customers, large commercial and industrial customers, and property management firms.

This document recognizes that City Council has yet to adopt the proposed General Plan 2030. Thus, there may be some differences between the draft policies listed above and actions and language that are ultimately adopted. It also recognizes that General Plans

are dynamic and that changes may and do occur over time due to periodic amendments and updates.

10.2 City Council Three Year Strategic Plan

Early in 2011, the City Council undertook a process to develop a Three Year Strategic Plan. This process was intended to serve two basic purposes: 1) to focus attention on the most critical action items facing the City to be completed in the next three years, and 2) to engage the community and communicate achievements and progress on a regular basis.

Through this process, the City Council identified the following five major goals:

- Enhance Environmental Sustainability and Resources
- Enhance Community Safety
- Attract and Retain Businesses and Jobs
- Achieve Financial Stability and Sustainability
- Improve and Maintain the Infrastructure and Facilities

Under the category of Enhancing Environmental Sustainability and Resources, three strategic objectives directly involving the Water Department were identified and ultimately adopted by City Council. These include:

- Continuing planning for and implementation of drought protection project (Desalination Project) in conjunction with the Soquel Creek Water District, including certification of EIR;
- Develop and implement the next level water conservation programs; and
- Complete endangered species permitting and Habitat Conservation Plan for North Coast streams

These strategic objectives thus form part of City Council approved strategic plan that represent priority items to be addressed over the 2012-2014 time period. Progress toward completing these objectives will be the subject of annual reports to the Santa Cruz community and the next (2015) reporting cycle for the City's Urban Water Management Plan.