Draft Meeting Summary

Upper Petaluma River Watershed Flood Control Project Scoping Study

Subject: Stakeholder Meeting #1

Prepared For: Sonoma County Water Agency

Prepared By: RMC

Date/Time: April 28, 2011; 3-5 pm

Location: Lucchesi Park Community Center, Petaluma

Attendees: See Sign-in Sheet

Meeting Objectives:

- Introduce project to stakeholders
- Discuss and obtain feedback on core and supporting objectives
- Develop an understanding of priority objectives for study
- Discuss project concepts

Attachments

Attachment A: Meeting Agenda

Attachment B: Draft Objectives Handout

Attachment C: Meeting Attendees

Discussion Items

A. Greetings and Introduction

Meeting attendees introduced themselves and briefly stated their affiliations.

B. Overview of the Scoping Study

Kent Gylfe explained that this Project is consistent with the Water Agency's Water Supply Action Plan, which was adopted last fall by the Water Agency's Board of Directors and identifies, as strategy #4, the pursuit of combined flood control and water supply projects. It is anticipated that this Project will also align with local integrated regional water management plans (IRWMPs) and multiple funding opportunities.

There are three similar studies being performed, one each in the Laguna/Mark West watershed, the Sonoma Valley watershed, and the Petaluma watershed. The projects are currently at a scoping stage and will be followed by a feasibility stage and a design/implementation stage. To help with the Project scoping, some of the objectives of this workshop are to obtain feedback on both the draft project objectives as well as project concepts that may be implemented.

Kent reviewed the core project objectives as well as the proposed overall schedule of the scoping phase of work.

C. Issues and Needs within the Upper Petaluma River Watershed

Christy Kennedy introduced Randy Raines and Tim Harrison and explained their roles on the Project as part of the consultant team.

Christy summarized the focus area of the Study and described the Zone 2A area. She noted that the flood protection focus would be upstream of Lynch Creek since the City of Petaluma and Corps of Engineers had been doing work within City limits and especially the downtown area.

Christy reviewed the Key Project Purpose and explained that this Project was particularly interested in concepts that provided both flood protection and groundwater recharge. She also reviewed the current status of the Project and explained that the Scoping Study is in the initial phases.

Christy explained that, based on a review of existing documents, there are three primary issues within the Project area that could be addressed, consisting of flooding, a need for recharge, and water quality improvements.

Christy showed the FEMA 100-year floodplain map for Zone 2A and highlighted flooding issue areas including the Marin-Wiggins watershed, the Penngrove area and the Denman area. Christy made a request for photographs of flooding within Penngrove to better understand where it floods as well as the impacts of that flooding.

Groundwater information has come from the 1982 Department of Water Resources study, and there has been limited groundwater work that is available for the Zone 2A area. The USGS in partnership with the Water Agency and City is planning a groundwater study that is scheduled to commence in 2012. The scope of that study has not been determined yet. The City's 2005 Urban Water Management Plan and pumping data from the Water Agency suggest that groundwater pumping by the City of Petaluma has been increasing since 2006. The City is primarily supplied by surface water from the Water Agency and utilizes its wells to meet peak demands, for emergencies, and to meet supply shortfalls.

Nitrates have been found in the past in the northwestern portion of the Project area. It will be important to consider the effects of mobilization that could result from a recharge project. There are also some salinity issues at the southern end of the watershed due to seawater intrusion but these are generally outside the Project limits. The Petaluma River is listed on the SWRCB 303d list for several constituents including diazinon, nutrients, pathogens, sediment, trash, and nickel.

After presenting on watershed issues and needs, stakeholders were asked to comment on this topic. Comments received from stakeholders (consolidated where common opinions were voiced) include:

- Meeting Notification
    - Concern regarding the notification process for the meeting. This meeting was not publicly noticed. This topic was discussed at length and stakeholders felt that there was a need for public noticing for future meetings, and expanded outreach and notification to all stakeholders and landowners in order to build consensus early on in the process.
- Land Needs
    - Required project land should be obtained from willing landowners only.
- Groundwater Recharge
    - There needs to be an understanding of underground water storage versus recharge.
    - A recommendation was made that recharge areas throughout the Project area should be preserved, including within City limits.

  - It was noted that findings show the Petaluma groundwater basin is connected to the Santa Rosa groundwater basin where water levels have dropped significantly.
  - It was noted that it is unlikely that enough land could be set aside for recharge to make a measurable difference in the aquifer.
  - Concern was raised regarding the feasibility of groundwater recharge. It was noted that some local septic systems sometimes will not leach.
- Water Supply
  - Groundwater should not be used to offset Petaluma surface water supply. The city should focus on addressing growth, rather than getting water from rural areas.
  - Concern was raised regarding the sale of water to Marin Municipal Water District and how that affects local supply.
- Funding
  - Funding is critical to this Project and outside funding measures should be considered.
  - A question was raised regarding if a multi-benefit project including recharge was a legitimate use of Zone 2A flood control funds. The Water Agency explained that it was, given the overarching flood control benefits of the project.
- Coordination
  - The need for partnerships between the County and City was discussed.
  - A question was raised to ascertain if any Zone 9 (Petaluma watershed south of Zone 2A) meetings were planned on the same topic. The Water Agency explained that no similar project or meetings are planned for the area south of Zone 2A.
  - A stakeholder asked if RMC was the same team that conducted a study of detention ponds for the City. It was noted that RMC was not the same firm (named RMI). RMI finished their scope of work for the City and RMC has been selected as the consultant to move the Scoping Study forward for the Water Agency.

D. Review of Draft Objectives

Tim Harrison with RMC reviewed the draft core and supporting objectives with meeting attendees. Draft objectives include:

- Flood Hazard Reduction – Projects providing up to 100-year flood protection will be considered so we are interested in stakeholder's opinions on small vs. large projects.
- Groundwater Recharge – Recharge will be used to supplement existing groundwater supply.
- Water Quality – Water quality considerations include impacts and benefits to both groundwater and surface water resources.
- Water Supply – Use of non-potable stormwater is one method to offset potable water demand.
- System Sustainability – This objective incorporates consideration at both a macro (i.e. regional and global) and local scale. Project should be geomorphically stable and designed for long-term viability.

- Ecosystem – Project concepts should consider the existing environment, habitat, and species but also potentially improve conditions.
- Agricultural Land – Agricultural land is a valuable resource. Some project concepts are able to provide enhanced benefit to agricultural lands while still maintaining existing agricultural practices and meeting project objectives.
- Open Space – Open space is a valuable resource. Open space can be preserved and potentially enhanced with some project concepts.
- Community Benefits – Educational and recreation facilities could be incorporated into some project concepts.

Comments received from stakeholders included:

- Avoid the word "take" in both the Agricultural Land and Open Space supporting objectives; consider the word "use" instead. Clarification was asked for to determine if this meant utilizing "eminent domain". The Water Agency noted that at these initial phases of the Scoping Study, all ideas were open for consideration, but that this would be further defined in the conceptual alternatives development process. *[Post Meeting Clarification - The Water Agency desires projects that will be based upon collaborative partnerships and is not interested in implementing projects that are known or likely to require eminent domain procedures.]*
- Clarification of open space lands – this was clarified to mean lands zoned as open space. It was noted that modifying designated open space lands may not provide an enhancement.

E. Potential Project Concepts

Tim shared several project concepts with the attendees and invited input on these concepts as well as others that stakeholders would want to investigate. The presentation included an example of a multi-benefit project, an in-stream detention basin, an off-stream detention basin, an underground recharge and storage basin, and a managed natural floodplain.

Comments received from stakeholders were limited because the group was behind in the agenda and sufficient time for break out session was needed. Comments included the following, but the group was encouraged to provide input on project concepts during the small-group break out session as well:

- A concern for the feasibility of passive recharge given the relatively deep level of aquifers was noted. RMC responded that both passive (spreading basins) and active methods (injection wells) could be looked at in the concept phase, but that active recharge had much more stringent regulatory requirements and more intensive operations and maintenance. The Water Agency also noted that active recharge methods were considered an unlikely project candidate given the higher power usage, operations and maintenance, and regulatory requirements associated with them versus passive recharge methods.
- It was noted that requesting amendments for existing conservation easements should be looked at cautiously.
- It was noted that a funding source was needed before providing increased access to project areas for maintenance and recreation.

F. Small Group Break-Out Session

Meeting attendees split themselves into three groups with the objectives of:

- Reviewing the current draft objectives and offering proposed language changes;
- Understanding priorities within the proposed objectives; and
- Getting feedback on proposed project concepts and hearing about other potential project concepts.

After the small group sessions, the following input was reported back from each group to the larger group:

- Stakeholders would like to see partnerships between landowners and the public agencies promoted as part of this project, in addition to partnerships between the City and County
- Recommendation to eliminate the consideration of eminent domain
- The Agricultural Land supporting objective should be elevated in importance
- The language in both the Agricultural Land and Open Space supporting objectives should be revised to remove the word "take"
- Land for agricultural purposes should be preserved
- Water Supply for agricultural and rural areas should be considered, but increasing water supply for municipalities was not a priority
- Prioritize recharge locations
- The Community Benefits supporting objective is acceptable as a supporting objective only if practices are fiscally sustainable
- Consider the issue of nitrates in groundwater
- Include looking at "super-regional" projects (i.e. large projects that could solve all flooding issues in one location rather than a number of smaller projects)
- Opposition to using agricultural land for projects was voiced
- The project should scrutinize the planned Lowe's project in Petaluma to increase recharge and consider Low Impact Development (LID) measures
- Some land owners are amenable to periodic flooding on their lands
- Detention ponds should also be looked at to provide a water supply to landowners
- More options for project concepts should be considered, including LID measures
- Water storage under public rights of way should be considered
- Future meetings should be publically noticed and outreach/notification of the meetings should be expanded
- Tidal impacts should be considered to understand flooding
- An overarching Plan for implementation should be developed rather than piecemeal implementation of projects
- Some stakeholders had an interest in evaluating smaller projects
- Maintenance of projects should be considered
- Recommendation to delete "Component A" from Agricultural Land supporting objective
- Recommendation to revise "Component B" in the Agricultural Land supporting objective to read "Preserve and enhance agricultural lands"
- An additional component to the Agricultural Land supporting objective should be to "provide additional water for irrigation and frost protection"

- Recommendation to delete "Component A" from the Open Space supporting objective
- The question was asked if the Baylands are within the project study. The Water Agency answered that this area was not within the study area.
- Consider incorporating recreational features such as ball fields into projects concepts
- Look for retention pond location within City limits
- Consider establishing a baseline for groundwater quality and quantity
- A stakeholder noted that the Water Agency should stay away from utilizing rural lands
- Provide the group with some successful detention basins examples
- Utilize the Zone 2A committee for information dispersal and future meetings
- It was noted that the Water Agency should consider stopping water exports to Marin County
- Urban recharge areas should be preserved rather than built upon
- Prohibit LAFCO from allowing the annexation of rural lands for development
- Notify public television access station of meetings in advance

G. Next Steps

The Water Agency invited attendees to submit comments on the presented materials through May 12th. Comments should be provided to Tim Harrison at tharrison@rmcwater.com.

Attachment A: Meeting Agenda

Meeting Agenda

RMC Water and Environment

Upper Petaluma River Watershed Flood Control Study

Subject:	Petaluma Area Stakeholder Meeting		
Prepared By:	RMC	**Requested Attendees:**	Various
Date/Time:	April 28, 2011; 3-5pm		
Location:	Lucchesi Park Community Center, 320 N. McDowell Blvd, Petaluma		

The Sonoma County Water Agency is conducting scoping studies in three areas: Laguna-Mark West, Petaluma and Sonoma Valley. The purpose of the studies is to identify potential projects that will reduce flooding risks and provide groundwater recharge benefits. This meeting will focus on the Upper Petaluma River Watershed.

Meeting Agenda

A. Greetings and Introduction
B. Overview of the Scoping Study
C. Issues and Needs within the Upper Petaluma River Watershed
D. Review of Draft Objectives
E. Potential Project Concepts
F. Small Group Break-Out Session
G. Next Steps

Attachments:

A. Draft Issues Assessment
B. Draft Project Objectives Report
C. Draft Project Objectives Definition Sheet

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Attachment B: Draft Objectives Handout

Upper Petaluma River Watershed Flood Control Project – Scoping Study Objectives Summary Sheet

Draft Core Objectives

Objective	Component
Flood Hazard Reduction	
Improve management of stormwater that contributes, directly or indirectly, to reduce flood hazards.	A. Manage up to a 100-year storm event B. Coordinate projects within and downstream of project area C. Consider "green" methods
Groundwater Recharge	
Increase beneficial recharge of groundwater, whether or not that recharged groundwater is directly accessible as water supply.	A. Provide recharge B. Provide water supply offset from floods

Draft Supporting Objectives

Objective	Component
Water Quality	
Protect or improve water quality of surface water and groundwater.	A. Help eliminate impaired water body designations B. Provide adequate water quality to sustain aquatic life C. Facilitate long-term operations & maintenance permitting D. Avoid aquifer degradation E. Improve aquifer water quality
Water Supply	
Increase or improve water supply availability, reliability and flexibility for domestic, municipal, industrial, agricultural and environmental use.	A. Offset use of groundwater and potable surface water by utilizing storm flows in excess of the recharge potential for water supply
System Sustainability	
Support energy and water efficiency and climate change resiliency of water management systems and developed supplies; provide for channel stability and sedimentation control; and consider the long-term viability of implemented project and impact on affected systems.	A. Minimize use of imported energy at the project site B. Ensure water is used efficiently C. Implement improvements to eliminate or mitigate effects of erosion and sedimentation D. Implement improvements that facilitate permitting for long-term O&M
Ecosystem	
Improve ecosystem function and/or enhance habitat, especially for listed species.	A. Integrate environmental habitat requirements into project B. Promote sustainable, native habitats where possible C. Preserve and enhance stream buffers and riparian areas D. Facilitate long-term O&M permitting
Agricultural Land	
Preserve agricultural land use.	A. Minimize use of agricultural lands B. Preserve and enhance agricultural lands
Open Space	
Preserve and/or enhance open space.	A. Minimize use of open space lands B. Preserve and enhance open space lands C. Restore degraded open space lands
Community Benefits	
Create and/or enhance recreation, public access, education, etc.	A. Provide educational opportunities B. Cooperate with local agencies to implement recreational features C. Protect or enhance visual resources

5/19/2011

Attachment C: Meeting Attendees

Petaluma Watershed Meeting #1 - April 28, 2011	
Attendee Name	**Organization/Affiliation**
Kent Gylfe	Sonoma County Water Agency
Grant Davis	Sonoma County Water Agency
Jay Jasperse	Sonoma County Water Agency
Ann DuBay	Sonoma County Water Agency
Rem Scherzinger	City of Petaluma
Pamela Torliatt	
Mike Healy	City of Petaluma; Water Advisory Committee
Pamela Tuft	City of Petaluma; Water Advisory Committee
Teresa Barrett	City of Petaluma; Zone 2A Flood Control Advisory Committee
Ted Cabral	Zone 2A Flood Control Advisory Committee
Corbin Johnson	Sonoma County Regional Parks
Susan Haydon	Southern Sonoma County RCD
Leandra Swert	Southern Sonoma County RCD
Tito Sasaki	North Bay Agriculture Alliance
Gerald Moore	Petaluma Wetlands Alliance
Arnie Riebli	Farmer
Jim Riebli	Riebli Dairy
Tom Altenreuther	
Bill Bennett	Resident
Christopher Ward	KOA Campground
Betty (last name unreadable)	Homeowner
Heidi Rhymes	IAS & SCIF
John King	Resident
Margaret Kullberg	Resident
Joe Tambe	
Susan Kirks	P.L.A.N.
Jenny Sterling	Resident
Jim Groverman	Pumpkin Patch
Bob Krieger	
Moises Velazquez	Public Access TV Filmcrew
Diane Reilly Torres	Public Access TV Filmcrew
Randy Raines	RMC Water & Environment
Christy Kennedy	RMC Water & Environment
Tim Harrison	RMC Water & Environment
**Additional Attendee, unable to read name from sign-in sheet.	