



Tri-Valley Water Roundtable
Held May 13, 2015
Discussion Notes

On Wednesday, May 13, 2015, the Tri-Valley Water Policy Roundtable met from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at the Dublin San Ramon Services District at 7051 Dublin Blvd., Dublin, CA.

Agencies represented included the Cities of Livermore, Pleasanton, San Ramon and Dublin; Zone 7 Water Agency; Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD); and the California Water Service Company. Pat O’Keeffe and Brittany Gabel of Management Partners served as the facilitator and recorder respectively. The following is a summary of the discussion that was captured on flip charts. Attachment A presents the participants’ evaluation of the workshop.

Four objectives were established for the session:

- Deeper understanding of current recycling efforts
- Discussion of potential additional recycling measures
- Understanding elements of structural conservation measures
- Understanding impact of Governor’s water conservation proclamation

Participants

Elected/Designated Representatives

- Mayor John Marchand, Livermore
- Council Member Doug Horner, Livermore
- Council Member Karla Brown, Pleasanton
- Council Member Kathy Narum, Pleasanton
- Council Member Harry Sachs, San Ramon
- Director Dawn Benson, DSRSD
- Director Richard Halket, DSRSD
- Vice President Sarah Palmer, Zone 7
- Director Jim McGrail, Zone 7
- Director Dick Quigley, Zone 7
- Frank Vallejo, General Manager Cal Water
- Don Biddle, City of Dublin

Staff

- Brian Bornstein, City Engineer, San Ramon
- Roger Bradley, Assistant to the City Manager, Dublin
- Jill Duerig, General Manager, Zone 7
- Darren Greenwood, Public Works Director, Livermore
- Dan McIntyre, Engineering Services Manager, DSRSD
- Bert Michalczyk, General Manager, DSRSD
- Daniel Smith, Operations Services Director, Pleasanton

Setting the Context for Workshop Discussion

In order to set the context for the workshop presentations and group discussions, facilitator Pat O’Keeffe reviewed the list of six policy issues, summarized below, which the group settled on during a previous session on November 17, 2014.

- A. Improved reliability through diversification of supply, storage, and facilities
- B. Increased use of recycled water
- C. Increased “structural” conservation
- D. Planned growth to proceed when reliability criteria are being met
- E. Coordinated legislative and regulatory outreach and lobbying to enhance Valley water
- F. Governance changes that are needed for implementation of the above policy points

It was noted that the focus of this workshop session was the second policy issue: increased use of recycled water.

Presentation on Water Recycling Efforts and Expansion

On behalf of staff for the Tri-Valley agencies, Dan McIntyre delivered a presentation on the history of recycled water in the Tri-Valley, as well as the primary advantages and challenges associated with “purple pipe” seasonal irrigation, indirect potable reuse, and direct potable reuse. Attachment B includes the slides from this presentation. Workshop participants were invited to provide comments and ask clarifying questions about the presentation. Comments and clarifications included:

- Policy makers need to give direction if staff were to more fully explore indirect potable reuse, if desired.
- Public perception and engagement on indirect potable reuse and reverse osmosis is essential.
- Although the current water recycling facility is functional, indirect potable reuse hasn’t been implemented because it is currently not part of the urban water management plan.
- Years ago, plans to integrate indirect potable reuse as a water resource were tabled due to the initial community reaction to the idea.
- Renovations are needed to the water recycling facility, but if the public were ready for indirect potable reuse, it wouldn’t take long to prepare the facility for operation.



Discussion of Reliability Elements and Priorities

In order to facilitate workshop discussion, participants were asked to answer the following four questions in small groups:

1. Do we want to explore additional water reuse alternatives to provide water supply reliability even at a greater cost?
2. Do we want to limit water reuse to recycling using “traditional purple pipes”?
3. Is advanced recycling through use of indirect potable reuse something the agencies should commit to studying?
4. Would we like to know more about public engagement for indirect potable reuse?

Each group was also encouraged to discuss their reasons for answering “yes” or “no” to the above questions and provide any qualifying remarks. A summary of the overall discussion that occurred in relation to each individual question is presented below.

Discussion of Question 1: Do we want to explore additional water reuse alternatives to provide water supply reliability even at a greater cost?

Responses from participants were as follow:

- We should consider studying both direct and indirect potable reuse alternatives, as well as options like Cope Lake and DeValle for storage.
- It is difficult to determine an upper limit of acceptable costs (1x, 2x or 10x?). It depends on your point of view.
- We should collaborate to explore different options, including interties, indirect potable reuse, and other sources.
- Public education and transparency are important as we look into options, but now is the time to move on this issue.
- We can refocus the conversation around improving the quality of ground water for end users.
- We should consider how much recycled water really helps the overall portfolio (it is about 5-15% of supply), but it brings local control, making the region less impacted by changes in water rates.
- There is a cost threshold that should be identified; what percent of our overall water portfolio we would like to come from water reuse alternatives will likely depend on these cost thresholds.
- Now is the time to explore water reuse alternatives beyond “purple pipes.”
- We could improve groundwater quality.
- We should build off of what we have already done.
- This will require constant public communication and transparency.

Discussion of Question 2: Do we want to limit water reuse to recycling using traditional purple pipes?

Responses from participants were as follow:

- We should consider various opportunities, including seasonal storage and direct potable (stream recharge/spreading basins; storage facilities like lakes or reservoirs).
- Others are making progress in these areas – why shouldn’t we do the same?



- We should keep our options open; expand on indirect or potable reuse and not limit it.
- We could move treated recycled water into the chain of lakes and DeValle.
- One group was only comfortable with using indirect potable reuse water for certain purposes (they supported using recycled water for stream recharge and storage in lakes, but did not support using it for injection).
- We could investigate seasonal storage and enhancements of purple pipes (winter storage).
- We should consider groundwater storage opportunities for indirect potable reuse water.
- We could study or implement a pilot injection project, but be cautious.
- One group felt that the region is not yet ready for direct potable reuse.

Discussion of Question 3: Is advanced recycling through use of indirect potable reuse something the agencies should commit to studying?

Responses from participants were as follow:

- Studying these topics will open our understanding of options; with more resources comes greater confidence.
- Don't expect too much reaction to conducting the study; the public will respond once decisions are made as a result of the study.
- The public expects us to be investigating these alternatives at this point.
- Each agency shouldn't commission studies independently; we should pool resources.
- We could reach out to other water agencies in other regions for guidance; options include Watsonville, Orange County, Santa Clara Valley Water District, and San Diego.
- We should survey the public to better understand their acceptance levels of this idea; afterwards, we could focus a public information campaign on specific issues or concerns. This is a low-cost, high-value activity.
- As we look to the future, we must not rely on a "magic bullet" as the focal point of our water portfolio; we need to look at many different options.
- We should keep in mind that the chain of lakes and Cope Lake are also flood control lakes (not just for storage).
- We should research and implement a groundwater injection pilot program.

Discussion of Question 4: Would we like to know more about public engagement for indirect potable reuse?

Responses from participants were as follow:

- We need to prepare for difficult questions and challenges and educate early and often.
- Be proactive in addressing public concerns.
- Santa Clara Valley Water District is far ahead; they have a great tour of their facility which showcases their impressive technology; they also use before-and-after surveys that show how effective the tour is at bringing people around to the idea of recycled water. Their tour is also very hands-on, functioning as a "teaching lab."
- The DSRSD facility is also a full-scale facility currently producing recycled water that goes into the seasonal irrigation blend; the facility was funded through grants, including both public and private funding.



- We are more likely to be successful if we start early and often with public engagement.
- Keep in mind that diversification of supply is the ultimate goal.

A summary of each group's response to the four questions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Groups Responses to Discussion Questions

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
1. Do we want to explore additional water reuse alternatives to provide water supply reliability even at a greater cost?	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Do we want to limit water reuse to recycling using "traditional purple pipes"?	No	No	No
3. Is advanced recycling through use of indirect potable reuse something the agencies should commit to studying?	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Would we like to know more about public engagement for indirect potable reuse?	Yes	Yes	Yes

Presentation by the Soquel Creek Water District

A presentation was delivered by Taj Dufour, the Engineering Manager of the Soquel Creek Water District about recent efforts to improve elements of structural conservation, including grey water collection, building code requirements for new developments, water offset program, and "cash for grass" programs. Workshop participants were invited to provide comments and ask clarifying questions about the presentation. Comments and clarifications included:

- The District was able to verify the effectiveness of ongoing water conservation in each unit who participated in their water offset program by surveying the whole house before and after low-flush toilets were installed and other conservation improvements were made. When calculating the "water saved" through conservation measures, they also considered parcel size, the size of the structure and its proposed use (residential or commercial).
- A question was asked about the District's per capita reduction since their water conservation measures have been underway. They responded that the District's per capita usage was already quite low, making large percent reductions challenging. They are now approximately 15% below their 2013 per capita water consumption.
- One of the challenging things about water conservation is the effect that successful water conservation has on water rates. Because the District has fixed costs, as their customers use less water, the District must raise rates to cover fixed costs, which is counterintuitive for the customer.
- The District had a desalination project that never made it to the voters.
- The District's traditional rebate program covers grey water/rain water capture.
- The District doesn't have any direct customers with large landscapes (such as golf courses) and growers. Their community college and local golf course each have their own private wells.



Overview of the Governor's Water Conservation Proclamation

Jill Duerig, the General Manager of Zone 7, gave a brief presentation on the Governor's Water Conservation Proclamation. Attachment C presents the handout which was distributed to each participant for this presentation.

Public Comment

After group discussions and presentations concluded, members of the public were invited to present comments. A number of comments were provided, including:

- Cope Lake is an old silt pond and should not be an option for storing recycled water.
- These discussions focus on the long-term time horizon; there hasn't been enough pressure on people to conserve in the short-term. I would like to see real pressure on people now, because long-term solutions won't cut it.
- We are growing hay, cotton and rice in California. We need to think about the cheapest cost per acre foot of water. Sometimes it is cheaper to buy water than to build expensive facilities.

Wrap Up Discussion

To conclude the roundtable discussions, facilitator Pat O'Keeffe asked participants to identify what they liked about the meeting. Comments included:

- Policy consensus – helps us work towards more specific policy objectives.
- Discussion brought attention to recycled water and its place in our diversified portfolio; this is important due to our high dependence on Lake Oroville and our concerns for fire suppression in the coming months.
- Now that we know there is consensus, we can move forward in looking for options.
- City of Dublin has done some great things in the area of using recycled water for City facilities and parks; there hasn't been any significant complaints from the community.
- Diversification of water portfolio is key, as well as conservation through more efficient water usage (especially in farms).
- Community is frustrated by lack of education.
- Need policy objectives; we should do more than discuss.
- These meetings should result in action items.
- We don't want to miss the opportunity for bond money; we need concrete steps to take advantage of the moment.
- We should work on this as a whole valley; collaboration is important to make our efforts more cost effective.
- Public is engaging more; attitude towards these issues seems to be changing.

Attachments

- A. Facilitation Evaluations
- B. Presentation on Recycled Water by Dan McIntyre
- C. Protecting Water Supplies Handout



Attachment A: Facilitation Evaluations

Wednesday, May 13, 2015
Tri-Valley Water Roundtable

The best thing about this workshop was...

- Love the small tables.
- Darren is a great facilitator and should always facilitate discussion at a table.
- Good exchange of views at tables; nice to see both consensus as well as discussion of differences of various recycled options.
- Enjoyed the group discussion.
- Collaborative input.
- Collaboration of all tables; emphasis on local control.
- Collaboration on projects.
- Agreement to move forward exploring recycled water alternatives.
- That it's obvious the drought is re-opening the recycled water question.
- Policy direction and studying options.
- Found guest presentation very useful.
- We agreed to move forward on recycled as a piece of the community portfolio.
- Open discussion about indirect; having recycled water to ground water/aquafer.
- The discussion on recycled water.
- The extended discussion on how to expand/reuse recycled water.
- The discussion.

Some thing(s) which could have been better...

- Should extend introduction opportunities to audience.
- Hope we got public comments on bike rack.
- Questions could have been tougher; were questions too easy?
- Limit non-relevant public comment (time).
- What is the deliverable?
- Concrete timeline.
- Action items.
- Controlling expectations – roundtables to build relations only please.
- Summary of what changes, modifications or policies have resulted in these round table meetings; lots of education, but no real change.
- Better conservation study; there is much more education we need to do.
- More discussion on how agencies can incentivize residential recapture.
- Conversation seemed to be directed forward.



Overall usefulness of the workshop

1 (Not Useful)	2	3	4	5 (Very Useful)
0	2	1	3	8

Overall quality of the workshop

1 (Very Low)	2	3	4	5 (Very High)
0	0	2	7	5

Other Comments

- Need to think about the “end game” – what exactly is going to come from this? Maybe some sort of policy statement to be jointly adopted or better yet a couple of “quick winner” projects in the ground – let’s not waste the opportunity and lose momentum.
- Important to work as a “whole valley.” Share the resources/studies rather than each agency/City reinventing the same study.
- Need to move items forward.
- Looking forward to the next few.
- Very useful – like to see a similar workshop on storage options and a long-term diversified portfolio.
- What is the outcome we are going towards in the Valley? To establish policy. We need to unify as public officials and stand together! Pool resources – grant funding.
- When looking at recycled water options, know the regulatory framework – time is important.

