

NOTES FROM MAY 2, 2012 IRWM WORKSHOP

COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS RE: GENERAL PLAN OVERVIEW:

- Word “sustainability” being used more and more – what does it mean, especially as it relates to water resources?
- Does any plan specify prescriptive measures regarding levels of involvement? Sometimes prescriptive measures can impede progress. For example, waiting until the end of the EIR/EIT process to comment on water resources issues often comes too late. How can we have more collaborative efforts up front, early in the planning process when it would be more meaningful?
- How can tiering of plans in a watershed be better aligned? Have not seen a lot of structure. How can we better lay it out? Pay attention to what, when?
- Did we look at the Cleveland National Forest Plan, state park plans, and water districts that own land in unincorporated areas, etc.? Those are land use plans and are relevant to rural areas.
- Other parts of the state are considering adding a water element to their General Plans (GPs).
- Plans often look at quantity and quality of water, but they are *not integrated*.
- There are a lot of other drivers re: water policies that are not captured in GPs. For example, Board of Supervisors (and other elected bodies) has other policies outside of GPs. How do we capture those? What is the “fence line” for looking at other plans in addition to General Plans?
- “Compatibility” is difficult. Example given: choice of trees can provide a good shade canopy (good for reducing need for air conditioning) but be bad for water conservation. We need to consider *all* impacts of our choices.
- GPs are long-term forecasts, which are often different than shorter-term water resource time frames, so land use and water policy do not always line up.
- General Plans mostly focus on water quantity (supply), and not enough on quality
- Urban Water Management Plans are often “playing catch-up” with development. E.g., cannot revise UWMP to reflect 1,000 new houses until the EIR is certified. Water planning ends up “behind the curve” of development planning.
- We do not look at the interrelationships of all the water resources topics – they are looked at as separate entities. We need a single-system (integrated) approach.
- GPs lack information about water/water quality resources.
- Planned land use and actual land use on the ground are often different. General Plans can be circumvented by exceptions. (This gets at the issue of how approval of variances and GPAs/zone changes mean that water-related GP policies regarding proposed build-out change as a result of implementation.) Therefore, the GP vision and reality are often disconnected.
- Where does the GP leave off conceptually and implementation start? A GP can have great policies but what happens if nothing comes from them – if it just “sits on a shelf” or there are not staff and/or financial resources to do implementation. And who is responsible for making them happen? Who takes the lead for implementation of water-related policies?
- GPs water policy is too broad. They do not get down to specific enough detail on water issues.
- General Plan guides but does not drive water policy.

- GPs are unique because they are long-term forecasts. Where does the water forecast intersect? How do other plans get aligned with GPs?

COMMENTS RE: PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS:

- Do not want to see a “one size fits all” approach.
- Question re: the validity of results, as in some cases the water managers and planners are in the same building – how do we know if the results came from that type of situation versus one where they are from different agencies? There may be silos, but the silos can be different – *within* agencies and *between* agencies.
- Comment regarding Question #2 of survey – water managers and planners think of the word “regional” in different ways. Some water managers (such as those dealing with water supply) think of “regional” as California or southern California, whereas planners think of it as the San Diego region (which is what “regional” was referring to in the question). Therefore, the responses may not be able to be compared.
- Small sample size – answers may not be reflective.
- Water quality was not a topic covered very much in the Survey

COMMENTS RE: PRELIMINARY STRENGTHS:

- Urban Water Management Plan Updates (UWMPs) done in coordination with Water Districts

COMMENTS RE: PRELIMINARY CHALLENGES:

- Long-term water supply verification is difficult for everyone. (Who decides?)
- Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plan should be considered a resource
- “Box nature” of system is a challenge.
- No one ever discusses what land uses should be allowed from a stormwater viewpoint. Stormwater managers should be part of the land use discussion process.
- TMDL compliance is typically in conflict with new development.
- Regulations drive the focus of all attention. That is why relationships are stronger in some areas than others. (Refer to Slide #22)
- Should establish a clearinghouse that identifies properties and water-related plans on a parcel level. There is so much to deal with – not sure where to start.
- IRWM – planners do not know about it, but it has been around for 5 years.
- Water rights – tribes – ground water – are a challenge.

COMMENTS RE: OPPORTUNITIES:

- (Ran out of time – moved directly into break-out groups)

COMMENTS FROM BREAK-OUT GROUP #1: Where are the disconnects between land use planning and water management planning? How can these planning processes be better aligned to address the disconnects?

Disconnects:

- Water Policy for land use planning is largely driven by supply and demand.
- Other issues, such as water quality and its relationship to land use are not clear.
- Better integration between land use planning and water policy is needed. For example, what factors related to stormwater management should be considered when determining the appropriate land use for a site. Stormwater managers should be consulted when the appropriate use for a site is being determined, very early in the land use planning process, and not be relegated to commenting and mitigating at the time of development review.
- Land use agencies do not have water management authority and vice versa. Too many silos exist.
- Proactive strategies are needed to better integrate land use and water management.
- Awareness and understanding of both issues and processes is lacking between water managers and land use planners.

Opportunities for better alignment:

- To break down silos, persistence is needed. It is a time-consuming and challenging process given the extreme complexity of the current system.
- A framework is needed to build upon. The example of Lego's was used, in terms of continuing to build, fitting the components together to improve the alignment of land use and water management
- Common terminology should be developed.
- Timing is important, and key milestones are needed so that progress can be measured and demonstrated.
- Relationships need to be fostered. This should be guided by the top leadership of the agencies. Needs leadership buy-in.
- Process needs to be strategic.
- Who should take the custodial role? SANDAG? Seen as regional planning entity, and update to the RCP will soon be underway. Concern is SANDAG's primary mission is transportation. CWA was also suggested as the appropriate custodian. IRWM program was also suggested as the appropriate conduit for better alignment of land use and water management in the region. Suggestion was to use the example from the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA) and develop a Resource Guide, a comprehensive guide to all water management issues in the watershed, as tool for improved coordination.
- Abundant outreach is key to improving communication.
- Use of grant money was suggested as funding mechanism to address bridging the disconnect.
- Questions were posed – Are there political and financial hindrances? How can this be made a key regional issue? How is reluctance to give up authority addressed (silos)?

COMMENTS FROM BREAK-OUT GROUP #2: What water management policy guidance is needed for land use planners? When should this guidance be implemented within the land use process? Where does water management policy guidance already exist?

What water management policies are needed?

- Best solution is usually a local community solution.
- Must develop policies that address *all* water resources, their *interrelationships*, and their *impacts* upon each other: call it a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) – a “SEA change” is needed!
- Need to be willing to come up with policies that encourage innovative solutions, like thinking in terms of a “net zero concept” regarding water resources impacts. For example, a policy like that could set stage for mitigation banking.
- Start by developing guiding principles and strategies – like what SANDAG does – develop regional policies that can be used by local agencies. Like RTP, RCP – use a region-wide cooperative process. Incentives are needed, such as:
 - Grants to facilitate the development of policies through a collaborative process
 - Process or other streamlining incentives
- Policies need to consider both developed communities and those that are currently rural. There is both a cost to construct the infrastructure and ongoing maintenance costs as we build further out – cost to utility and consumer – communities have to be internally sustainable.
- Community perception of potential policy solutions may be an impediment. We need to be able to consider all available resources in GP, such as policies to promote reuse of potable water, but public perception of it being “toilet to tap” inhibits putting possible solutions into place.

How could it be accomplished?

- Must work on ways to break down silos
- Education for land use planners needed
- Community Planning Groups also need to be educated
- Implementation is key – need to break out of silos to achieve solutions
- Need to overcome “power issue,” holding political ground
- Coordination of policy among water resources and planning agencies needs to be “required,” not just a suggestion. Legislation might be needed to enforce such a requirement.
- We need to look at economies of scope as opposed to economies of scale
- Where do missions/goals intersect? Some agencies are driven by the customer/developer rather than what’s best for the resource or other resources – but this approach may not be sustainable
- Need some type of regional coordinating entity that has the authority and/or political will to guide this process. SANDAG considered – pros and cons:
 - Is it working (politics)?
 - SANDAG may not be the best organization? Their job is transportation, so might not be the best fit

- On the other hand, there's an opportunity to link smart growth transportation policies to water policies
- Important to avoid contradictory policies at the microscope vs. regional level

Where does water policy already exist?

- Policies are both regional and local and exist for a wide range of water resources. Hard to know what all of them are.
- It would be beneficial for everyone to know what various water resources plans apply to any given parcel or larger development. Consider creating water, wastewater, and stormwater quality policies/solutions at the parcel and/or development level. Possibly develop a database or GIS-based system.

COMMENTS FROM BREAK-OUT GROUP #3: How can we improve communication and collaboration among land use planning and water management planning (agencies/staff)?

- Merge agencies – water agencies, wastewater agencies, within local jurisdictions
- Make planning agencies have a stake or responsibility in ensuring water supply and water quality
- Improve top level communication (make it a priority), and need top level to admit that we do have an issue
- Need to create accountability. One way would be to place a surcharge on agencies that are not compliant.
- Educate elected officials
 - They need to understand the implications re: water supply and storm water quality
 - Political will is needed to make change happen
- Need coordination regarding implementing policies, example: developments. State law could force this.
- Disconnects with permitting of land use/developments and water supply/conservation regulations. For example, how does a water agency ensure the land use authority approves a project that is as water conserving as it can be?
- We need to “advertise” so that everyone knows what’s going on:
 - List serves/emails
 - Understand how to use different media
 - Cross-training of land use/water managers
 - Sit down and talk to each other – identify overlapping agencies and determine what are goals that can be agreed to?
 - Need regular briefings for elected officials
- Where is SANDAG?
- Develop strategy to get out the word
 - Put on City Council agendas regularly
 - “Road Show” (SDCWA)
 - Hold an annual regional meeting