WIRP Guidelines

Adopted by Resolution by the City Council on December 8, 2003 [CMR:547:03]

Guideline 1 – Preserve and enhance SFPUC supplies: With respect to the City of Palo Alto Utilities' (CPAU's) primary water supply source, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), continue to actively participate in the Bay Area Water Supply and Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) to assist in achieving BAWSCA's stated goal: "A reliable supply of water, with high quality, and at a fair price." Objectives in support of that overall goal include:

A. That the regional water system gets rebuilt cost-effectively and that BAWSCA monitor implementation of AB 1823 – San Francisco should safeguard the water system against damage from earthquakes and other foreseeable hazards. BAWSCA will monitor progress on the system repairs and on completing the requirements of the legislation that the BAWSCA agencies supported to oblige San Francisco to repair and rebuild the regional system.

B. That the cost of improvements is fairly allocated – San Francisco should commit to maintaining cost-based pricing, with the costs of the wholesale water system shared between the City and its wholesale customers based on their proportionate share.

C. That future water needs can be met – San Francisco must evaluate the ability of the regional system to meet future supply and capacity requirements and must use the BAWSCA agencies' long-term water demand forecasts as the basis for regional water demand projections.

D. That there are adequate supplies during droughts – San Francisco should arrange back-up supplies for dry years and should "drought proof" the entire service area, not just San Francisco itself. If rationing becomes necessary, San Francisco should use a system that allocates available water between San Francisco and wholesale customers in a way that (1) is fair and (2) avoids penalizing long-term conservation efforts and/or development of alternative supplies, such as recycled water.

E. That communities prepare for potential water outages – San Francisco should coordinate with the BAWSCA agencies to develop a crisis management plan.

F. That agencies implement cost-effective water conservation activities – San Francisco should provide agencies enough information so that they can prepare for possible outages, including the provision of conservation programs for their communities. BAWSCA can act as coordinator for these programs to improve the cost-effectiveness of agencies offering such programs.

G. That water received must meet drinking water standards – San Francisco should continue to protect the purity of Hetch Hetchy water and commit to provide its wholesale customers with water that meets EPA and California drinking water standards.

H. That the Master Contract is properly implemented and a new Master Contract is in place prior to 2009 – San Francisco should commit to maintaining cost-based pricing, with the costs of the wholesale water system shared between the City and its wholesale customers based on their proportionate share.

I. That there is ongoing support of efforts to protect health, safety and economic well being of the water customers and communities – BAWSCA should maintain the support of the many allies who supported the legislative effort to ensure San Francisco repairs, rebuilds, and maintains the regional system.

Guideline 2 – Advocate for an interconnection between SFPUC and the District: Work with the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) and the SFPUC to pursue the extension of the District's West Pipeline to an interconnection with the SFPUC Bay Division Pipelines 3&4. Continue to re-evaluate the attractiveness of a connection to an extension of the District's West Pipeline.

Guideline 3 – Actively participate in development of cost-effective regional recycled water plans: Re-initiate discussions with the owners of the Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant (PARWQCP) on recycled water development. In concert with the PARWQCP owners, conduct a new feasibility study for recycled water development. Since the feasibility of a recycled water system depends upon sufficient end-user interest, determine how much water Stanford and the Stanford Research Park would take.

Guideline 4 – Focus water DSM programs to comply with BMPs: Continue implementation of water efficiency programs with the primary focus to achieve compliance with the Best Management Practices (BMPs) promoted by the California Urban Water Conservation Coalition.

Guideline 5 – Maintain emergency water conservation measures to be activated in case of droughts: Review, retain, and prioritize CPAU's emergency water conservation measures that would be put into place in a drought time emergency.

Guideline 6 – Retain groundwater supply options in case of changed future conditions: Using groundwater on a continuous basis does not appear to be attractive at this time due to the availability of adequate, high quality supplies from the SFPUC in normal years. However, SFPUC supplies are not adequate in drought years and circumstances could change in the future such that groundwater supplies could become an attractive, cost-effective option. Examples of changing circumstances could be that the amount of water available to CPAU from the SFPUC for the long-term is reduced. This could occur if regulations or legislation require additional water to be made available to the Tuolumne River fisheries. In addition, in the future allocations or entitlements to SFPUC water may be developed. If those allocations are based on the dry-year yield of the system, allocations to all the users of the system, including CPAU, could be well below their current and projected future needs. CPAU should retain the option of using groundwater in amounts that would not result in land surface subsidence, saltwater intrusion, or migration of contaminated plumes.

Guideline 7 – Survey community to determine its preferences regarding the best water resource portfolio: Seek feedback from all classes of water customers on the question of whether to use groundwater during drought to improve drought year supply reliability. At the same time, seek feedback on the appropriate level of water treatment for groundwater if it were to be used in droughts. Survey all classes of water customers to determine their preferences as to the appropriate balance between cost, quality, reliability, and environmental impact.