

Town Hall Questions

November 2, 2023

QUESTION # 1(A)

Will the 2023 IWMP assess the reliability of water sources over a 20-year planning time frame?

RESPONSE

The District is not yet required to do an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) nor was it required in 2010. No UWMP was done in 2010. However, the District's consultants have applied rigorous national industry standards for water resource planning in both plans. Technically, a UWMP is voluntary but required to access state funds. Local governing boards decide themselves to proceed with UWMPs. The 2023 IWMP does not use 20 years as the planning time frame because it is more conservative to use the maximum projected build-out conditions that may happen prior to 20 years.

QUESTION # 1(B)

Will the 2023 IWMP describe demand management measures used and water shortage contingency plans?

RESPONSE

Demand management measures are water conservation measures. Consistent with national industry standards, the 2023 IWMP describes demand management measures aka water conservation actions. The demand analysis of the consultants does not prescribe additional conservation beyond that which has already been achieved.

QUESTION # 1(C)

Will the 2023 IWMP describe water shortage contingency plans?

RESPONSE

Water shortage contingency plans are plans for conservation during periods of extreme drought. Consistent with national industry standards, the 2023 IWMP will include scenario planning for drought conditions that result in mandated mitigation measures.

QUESTION # 2 (A)

How will the 2023 IWMP water supply analysis include new state policies that require consideration of forecasted river flow changes, water storage, & climate impacts?

RESPONSE

The 2023 IWMP analysis will include a comprehensive water accounting. It will consider historical and forecasted river flow changes, water storage, and historical and projected climate impacts. This is done through the use of historic data and simulations regarding all three of those elements. Work done in this area by the consultants has been recognized nationally as being innovative and extremely useful.

QUESTION # 2 (B)

Does the IWMP consider the physical impacts on the Cosumnes watershed over the IWMP's 20-year reporting period?

RESPONSE

The Cosumnes Watershed covers a very broad regional area that extends up to the Sierras. The physical impacts on the Cosumnes Watershed are represented in the USGS gauge data that historically captures the available water supply for the community of Rancho Murieta. The consulting team will continue to evaluate that data during the scenario planning phase of the 2023 IWMP.

QUESTION # 3

Does the 2023 IWMP include a conservative (supply) risk assessment in order to minimize risk to existing ratepayers?

RESPONSE

The assessment models conservative supply scenarios, including potential mandated pumping curtailments. The IWMP will include scenario testing to help determine how to reduce risk to existing ratepayers.

QUESTION # 4

How does the IWMP consider risk to existing ratepayers?

RESPONSE

For over 20 years, the IWMP Consulting Team has incorporated the concepts of climate change and associated drought conditions through sophisticated simulation tools. Those same approaches, with the best available data, are being used in the 2023 IWMP to ensure that projections for both supply and demand are as accurate as possible.

QUESTION # 5 (A)

How is the consultants' analysis consistent with the SWRCB's and the ARBS's) dire predictions regarding the Cosumnes Watershed?

RESPONSE

The 2023 IWMP incorporates a wide variety of conditions in its forecast models that fully capture the idea of drought being inevitable and including options that better prepare the community for such situations. The first and second phases have been evaluating supply and demand and the final phase will propose options to address water supply reliability under the "new normal" conditions.

QUESTION # 5 (B)

When will Maddaus explain her risk assessment plan and its results to the ratepayers, all of whom will be severely impacted by her decision?

RESPONSE

The 2023 IWMP Consulting Team shared their risk assessment plan at the March 18, 2023, Town Hall. The risk assessment plan is a combination of analyses of both supply and demand and inclusion of viable water supply options. Those options will be part of the next phase of the consultants' work and their adoption or rejection is the responsibility of the Board, not the consultants.

QUESTION # 5 (C)

Are the consultants and the District fully aware of what the state and federal governments are telling us?

RESPONSE

The consultants are well informed of state and federal water requirements due to the fact that they consult at the state, national, and international level.

QUESTION # 5 (D)

Does the District understand the economic and quality of life impacts that these forecasts represent?

RESPONSE

The District is very much aware of the economic and quality of life impacts that the SWRCB and ARBS forecasts represent. A climate-resilient community is the goal of the Conservation of a California Way of Life legislation and something the District's consultants are very committed to and focused on with the IWMP work.

QUESTION # 5 (E)

What happens should the 2023 IWMP reveal actual river flows, recycled water, rainwater harvesting & groundwater do not support this goal of adequate water for development?

RESPONSE

It is premature to answer this question until the next phase of the IWMP assessment has aligned the supply and demand scenarios with climate change and viable water supply options and related costs.

QUESTION # 6 (A)

If water is (somehow) available, who is responsible for the infrastructure required to develop it?

RESPONSE

When development is approved by Sacramento County to occur within the District's borders, state law and District policy require that the development pay the costs associated with providing water service to the development.

QUESTION # 6 (B)

Is the District aware of its Policy 90-2, which defines developer responsibility?

RESPONSE

The District approved Policy 90-2 back in 1990. Policy 90-2 covers a few topics, including conservation and developer responsibility. The current Board and staff are aware of Policy 90-2. Everyday water efficiency remains a priority.

The 50% conservation requirement is only triggered by extreme drought conditions.

Policy 90-2 does commit developers to pay for supply augmentation as needed.

QUESTION # 6 (C)

Does the District believe that its legal responsibilities are different than its existing policy?

RESPONSE

When development is approved by Sacramento County to occur within the District's borders, state law and District policy require that the development pay the costs associated with providing water service to the development.

QUESTION # 6 (D)

Does the District anticipate that these infrastructure costs will be on the backs of the ratepayers?

RESPONSE

No, the District is a steward of public resources and requires developers to cover the costs of additional system capacity.

QUESTION # 7 (A)

What exactly are the goals of our water plan?

RESPONSE

The goals of the plan are the same as the goal of the District: to provide a safe and reliable water supply.

QUESTION # 7 (B)

Are we, the ratepayers, required to sacrifice the safety of a conservative water plan - a plan that best mitigates a water crisis?

RESPONSE

The 2023 IWMP is a supply planning process that is intended to avert a water crisis due to shortfalls in supply for both existing and future ratepayers.

QUESTION # 7 (C)

What constitutes a sufficient margin of safety?

RESPONSE

The Shared Vision part of the next phase of the planning process is intended to determine what an adequate margin of safety looks like.

QUESTION # 7 (D)

How much water will be dedicated to a backup water supply?

RESPONSE

The Shared Vision part of the next phase of the planning process is intended to determine what an adequate margin of safety looks like. Current state law has reduced the legacy standard for indoor residential water use from 55 gallons per capita per day (in 2024) to 42 gpcd by 2030, which could be considered enough to serve residential public health and safety needs. One of the conclusions of the 2010 IWMP was to research further the benefit of having a groundwater augmentation well which is open for further discussion.

QUESTION # 7 (E)

Where will that water come from if other methods of water harvesting and groundwater wells are non productive?

RESPONSE

This question is premature and will be answered during the next phase.

QUESTION # 7 (F)

What, exactly, is the District goal?

RESPONSE

The goal of the District is to provide a safe and reliable water supply at a reasonable cost.

QUESTION # 7 (G)

How do the District's stated objective of "finding water for development" conflict with the need for an emergency supply of water?

RESPONSE

District staff, management, and board members recognize their job is to provide water for the District, including during emergency drought conditions.