

# SAFE, CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

## Project Selection Subcommittee

Meeting Summary: February 8, 2018

### MEETING IN BRIEF

This was the first meeting of the Project Selection Subcommittee for the Safe, Clean Water Program. The objectives of the meeting were to:

1. Review Board of Supervisors' purpose and intent for the Safe, Clean Water Program
2. Review strawman proposal for Project Selection Criteria
3. Gather feedback on Project Selection Criteria

#### Attendees

Marty Adams  
Carl Blum  
Daniel Bradbury  
Russ Bryden  
Liz Crosson  
Terry Dipple  
Hany Fangary  
Mark Gold  
Alberto Grajeda

John Heintz  
Leslie Johnson  
William Johnson  
Mike Lewis  
Shelley Luce  
Diana Mahmud  
TJ Moon  
Rochelle Paras  
Dave Pedersen

Shane Phillips  
Rachel Roque  
Melissa Turcotte  
Kelli Tunnicliff  
Teresa Villegas  
Ed Walsh  
Melanie Winter  
Melissa You  
Katy Young

#### Welcome

The goal for the meeting is to conduct listening sessions for County staff and leadership to gather ideas and explore thought lines for Program Content with stakeholders. These meetings also allow for interested parties to hear each other, to better understand each other, and develop a more meaningful and impactful Program, together. These meetings are not meant to achieve consensus.

#### Review of Board of Supervisors' Purpose and Intent for the Safe, Clean Water Program

The objectives and outcome of the Safe, Clean Water Program were reviewed.

#### Review Strawman Proposal for Project Selection Criteria

Please refer to the Strawman Proposal for Project Selection Criteria

#### Discussion

## What are the primary goals for project selection criteria?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that the Municipal program have some minimum criteria, but that Municipalities maintain control and flexibility with the funding. Another member stated that there be some minimum criteria for the Municipal Program, but it will need to be different and more flexible than the Regional Program. Members noted that if a project has regional benefits, but is located entirely in a single municipality, FCD should consider its eligibility for Regional funds.
- There was a discussion about the ability to balance water supply, water quality, and community enhancement benefits in single project. Suggestion that water supply may not be attainable in some areas of the County, and that water quality be considered as the most important benefit. Suggestion that Selection criteria need to capture all type of benefits.
- Discussion of the strawman proposition that “Regional Program projects will be designed, constructed, and operated and maintained by FCD”
  - Note that some cities have the capability to design, construct, and maintain projects. Suggestion that if the FCD is the only entity to design/construct/maintain, it may limit the program. Suggestion that FCD be the default implementing agency, with exception given to cities that have the means to carry out projects. Note that sometimes other agencies are positioned better than the FCD to implement projects due to property ownership.
  - Suggestion that FCD as the only project implementation entity limits cities’ ability to meet Program goals.
  - Suggestion that a separate construction authority be established to aid project implementation. Alameda Corridor East Authority was noted as an example that has worked well.
- Suggestion that FCD consider water conservation practices to be included as an eligible benefit since it impacts both supply and quality and that County-wide efforts be pursued to achieve regional benefits.
- Discussion about including projects that are part of existing plans but also allowing new projects to be eligible for funding if not part of an existing plan. This was considered more of a Governance Subcommittee topic than Project Selection Criteria.
- Suggestion that size threshold is not necessary if there is a cost-effectiveness threshold, and project magnitude is built into cost-effectiveness.
- Suggestion that the Program prevent project proponents from adding on project elements to inflate their scores when the additions do not accomplish any meaningful benefits. A minimum point threshold for eligibility for each benefit may address tacking on project elements to inflate scores. This was considered more of a Governance Subcommittee topic than Project Selection Criteria.
- Suggestion that project scoring be done by a Technical Advisory/Oversight Committee to determine if projects meet minimum eligibility requirements.

Suggestion that not every project should be advanced to the governing entities for potential funding.

Is it possible to achieve all 3 benefits in a single project? How should benefits be weighed in comparison to each other?

Comments received include:

- Note that obtaining meaningful water supply is an issue for many areas. For example, stormwater capture in Santa Clarita is not directly related to water supply for the region. Groundwater basins may not be accessible, making water supply benefits difficult to achieve. Suggestion that other options for water supply benefits be included, such as diversion of runoff to sewer systems.
- Members noted that there are some projects that include all 3 benefits, but these are very limited.
  - Consider requiring at least 2 of the 3 benefits for eligibility. Projects that accomplish all three benefits should be scored higher. Some concern that allowing single-purpose projects may lead to an imbalance in the Program. Some members suggest that supply and quality comprise the majority of projects funded. Another member suggested Community enhancement elements may be treated more for bonus points.
  - Suggest FCD consider weighing projects programmatically, rather than project-by-project in order to get a balance of benefits.
  - Suggestion that balancing all 3 benefits is not necessarily the most important thing.
  - Note that there is tension between wanting all 3 benefits vs. ability to achieve all 3. Ideally, the Program would implement a lot of green infrastructure to achieve all 3 benefits, but practically, there seems to be a hierarchy for quality and supply.
  - Note that green infrastructure projects are the Program goal, so if we do not require the “green” (i.e. community enhancements) elements, then the Program will not necessarily fund construction of green infrastructure projects.
- Discussion of cost-effectiveness and the following suggestions:
  - Consider that a cost-effective water quality project that also has supply benefits be scored high. If a project is very cost-effective in one benefit, it might not score high. Consider another tier of cost effectiveness.
  - Consider cost-effectiveness to be a threshold criterion rather than points. The best projects should be implemented first.
  - Consider cost-effectiveness point values be high relative to other point categories. A minimum threshold may hold back projects that are very efficient in one benefit.
- Discussion of matching funds and the following suggestions:
  - Other funding sources be included as scoring criteria.

- The section for matching funds be eliminated by basing the cost-effective calculations on the amount of funding requested only from this Program, and not the total project cost.
  - More points be given to projects that leverage other funding sources.
  - Applicants with more local funding receive a higher score
- Suggestion that “good projects” to be run through the criteria to see how they score.
- Note that the cost of a project typically assumes construction costs only. Suggestion that the Program look at life cycle cost. Easy to make a low-initial first cost project, but with a high O&M cost. Suggestion that O&M costs be captured in criteria. (Section D2)
- Suggestion that metrics for community enhancements need to be developed. Suggestion that some community park elements may not be appropriate for use of this Program’s funds (e.g. playgrounds, parking lots). Consider further discussion of what elements of a project are eligible for these Program funds and whether land acquisition should be eligible.

### Is there anything else that’s missing?

Comments received include:

- Suggest exploring how this scoring system will work when actual projects are run through it.
- Note that readiness criteria seem redundant in that if a project gets points for one category, it would get points for the other categories as well. For community enhancements, consider defining DAC in the context of this Program.

### What should be the threshold criteria for water supply improvements?

Comments received include:

- Suggestion that quantifiable performance outcomes may provide better projects to fund. A strong focus on cost may produce only one type of project (e.g. conservation) and that new supply and conservation not be considered equally.
- Suggestion that the Program define “meaningful” as it may be different for different geographic areas. Suggestions of a lower threshold of 10+ acre-feet or that the threshold be set somewhere between 10-50 AFY.
- Suggestion that project magnitude is important and including tiers of scoring based on the magnitude of water supply is a good concept. Another suggestion was that magnitude should not be an important indicator, since it is factored into cost-effectiveness.
- Suggestion that FCD consider site-specific conditions. Some geographic areas may not be able to achieve new water supply and be at a disadvantage. Note that if a regional group suffers from the same types of limiting conditions the projects would score similarly on the criteria within that region, which may act as an equalizer.

- Suggestion that the Program fund small-scale, less cost-effective versions of what the County is already doing on a large-scale in terms of water supply. It may make more sense to allocate funding in areas that do not already benefit from the County's ongoing activities (e.g. spreading grounds).
- Note that some projects move forward in IRWMP that are not as viable as other projects due to the equal distribution of funding across sub-regions.

### What should be the threshold criteria for water quality improvements?

Comments received include:

- Note that assigning threshold criteria on quality is more difficult than for supply. Consider pollutant reduction, target achievement, and EPA 90% level.
- Suggest comparison of design criteria with performance results to help form the criteria for water quality
- Suggest exploring other scoring systems to see whether percent reduction vs. load reduction is used in calculating quality benefits.

### Public Comment

- A member of the public would like life cycle costs to be included in cost/benefit ratios.
- A member of the public commented that magnitude and community enhancements are important inclusions and the Program should include job creation as well as conveying the impact of these projects to the community.

### Closing Remarks

Written comments may be submitted via [www.safecleanwaterla.org](http://www.safecleanwaterla.org) or sent to Russ Bryden ([rbryden@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:rbryden@dpw.lacounty.gov)) or Alberto Grajeda ([algrajeda@dpw.lacounty.gov](mailto:algrajeda@dpw.lacounty.gov)).

### Adjourn