

FOX CANYON GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AGENCY



MEMORANDUM

Date: April 19, 2023
To: Operations Committee
From: Kim Loeb, Groundwater Manager
Subject: Item E – Weighting of Criteria for Prioritization of Water Supply and Infrastructure Projects

Background

The Operations Committee developed recommended criteria for evaluating and ranking proposed projects over four meetings from May 2, 2022, through November 7, 2022. There was significant stakeholder participation in the meetings and in development of the recommended criteria and procedures.

The purpose of the project ranking process is to rank and prioritize the projects on the lists of projects adopted by the Board for the GSP for each of the basins. This will create a ranked Project Prioritization List of projects to be implemented by FCGMA and/or other agencies. The prioritization will be used to recommend to the Board which projects should be included for funding by potential replenishment fees and/or in the Agency's applications submitted in response to grant opportunities. Additionally, the prioritization will help to inform which projects should be included in future-scenario modeling for the five-year GSP evaluations based on the likelihood that the project will be implemented by the 2040 deadline for bringing the basins into sustainable groundwater management.

March 22, 2023, Board Meeting

The Committee's recommended process and criteria for evaluation and prioritization of water supply and infrastructure projects was presented to the Board at its March 22, 2023, meeting. The Board was complementary of the Committee's work and supported the recommended criteria and process for prioritizing projects, however, Board members expressed concern with the proposed weighting of the criteria, directed that the Committee reevaluate the weighting.

The draft Project Ranking and Project Scoring Sheets are attached. The criteria are organized into following categories:

- **Water Supply** – This category is to establish the projected benefit to the groundwater basin by increasing the sustainable yield, producing supplemental water to meet demand in lieu of groundwater pumping, or reducing groundwater demand. Scoring is based on the annual volume of increased sustainable yield or reduced groundwater demand provided by the project and the extent of the studies and documentation supporting the estimated quantification. The total possible Water Supply score is 50 points.
- **Timing / Feasibility** – This category addresses the timing and uncertainty of the project. The basins are mandated to achieve sustainable groundwater management by 2040, so projects with greater certainty that they can be implemented and online prior to then will score higher. Projects with more uncertainty and longer implementation times will score lower. The total possible Timing / Feasibility score is 50 points.
- **Cost / Funding** – This category evaluates the cost / benefit of the project and the amount of capital and operations and maintenance (O&M) of non-FCGMA funding that is committed to the project. The total possible Cost / Funding score is 50 points.

- **Additional Benefits** – This category provides additional points if the project benefits disadvantaged or underrepresented communities. The total possible Additional Benefits score is 5 points.

During development, the Operations Committee recommended that Water Supply, Timing/Feasibility, and Cost/Funding be equally weighted. However, Board members commented that the Committee reconsider weighting these equally. Chair West expressed concern that project size was over-rated and project feasibility was under-rated. He suggested that perhaps the feasibility category should have double the points of the two other categories. There was discussion about whether the scoring was too heavily weighted toward large expensive projects and multiple smaller projects with similar benefits in aggregate may be disadvantaged. Director Maulhardt suggested that smaller local projects could be compared separately from larger regional projects.

Additionally, Board members also recommended that the linear scoring of each criterion be revisited. There was specific concern with awarding any points when a criterion is not met and suggestion that the Committee consider logarithmic or other non-linear scoring of criteria, especially criteria considered to be especially important when ranking a proposed project.

Recommendation

Based on the Board's direction, staff recommends the Operations Committee reevaluate the weighting and scoring of each criterion and develop revised recommendations for the Board's consideration.

Attachments: Item E-1 – Draft Project Ranking Sheet
Item E-2 – Draft Project Scoring Sheet