

Capitola City Council

Agenda Report



Meeting: March 14, 2024

From: Public Works Department

Subject: Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Program

Recommended Action: Authorize the City Manager to execute the 2024 Memorandum of Agreement with the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Program at no cost to the City.

Background: The Santa Cruz Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) consists of 12 local agencies with authority over water supply, water quality, watershed stewardship, and flood and stormwater management in a region that includes most of Santa Cruz County. The RWMG is active in the planning and implementation of the Santa Cruz IRWM Plan (IRWMP), which was developed in response to the state's IRWM planning initiative to promote an informed, locally driven, and consensus-based approach to water resource management. The IRWMP aims to develop and implement policies and projects that achieve the agencies' desired objectives including sustainable water use, reliable water supply, better water quality, improved flood protection and stormwater management, and promoting environmental stewardship.

The RWMG operates under a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA); previous MOAs were adopted in 2006, 2011, and 2016. In 2015, the City formally joined the RWMG, resulting in all municipalities within the IRWM region becoming members of the RWMG and approving the 2014 IRWMP. Updates to the MOA occur on an approximate 5-year cycle. To continue participating in the Santa Cruz IRWM Program, the City will need to execute the updated 2024 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

Discussion: The 2024 Santa Cruz IRWM Program MOA has been updated to reflect activities since 2016 and new statewide programs, including the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA), and forthcoming programs that advance and incentivize regional planning through watershed resilience and climate resiliency programs outlined in the 2023 State Water Plan Update.

The City's participation in the Regional Water Management Plan is necessary to qualify for grant funding pertaining to water resource management and sustainability projects. Nearly all State grant programs now require that the project applicant is part of an integrated Water Management Plan to qualify for grant funding. To date, the Santa Cruz IRWM Program has brought \$17.6M to the region. Signing the MOA confirms the City's intent to participate in future integrated water planning efforts, positions the City for important grant funding opportunities, and provides access to a network of local member agencies for collaboration on regional water resource planning and climate resiliency projects.

Fiscal Impact: There is no fiscal impact with executing the Santa Cruz IRWM Program MOA.

Attachments:

1. SC IRWM MOA Cover Letter dated 12-12-2023
2. SC IRWM MOA 2024

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Approved By: Jamie Goldstein, City Manager