

**FINAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN
TO INFORM ESTABLISHMENT OF A
GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY & PLAN FOR THE
SANTA CRUZ MID-COUNTY GROUNDWATER BASIN**

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--FINAL DRAFT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN--

I. What Is The Purpose of This Community Engagement Plan?

California’s Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014 requires broad stakeholder involvement in the development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) and Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) for 127 groundwater basins around the state, including the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin (see geographic information below). SGMA’s intent is to ensure sustainable management of groundwater resources at the local level. Success will require cooperation by all stakeholders, and cooperation is far more likely if stakeholders help shape the path forward.

To that end, this Community Engagement Plan is intended to make transparent to stakeholders their opportunities to contribute to the development of a GSA and a GSP that can effectively address the challenges of the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin. At the same time, this Community Engagement Plan is intended to provide community leaders with a roadmap to follow to ensure stakeholders have meaningful input into GSA and GSP development through a process widely seen as fair and respectful to the range of interested parties. (More specific community engagement requirements are summarized elsewhere in this document.)

II. What Is The Context of This Community Engagement Plan?

This name for the Mid-County basin is currently awaiting formal DWR approval. It refers to the hydrogeologic area formerly known as the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Area to local water managers, and as the Soquel Valley Groundwater Basin to DWR. The boundaries are Monterey Bay to the south, certain hills near the Zayante Fault to the north, the western boundary of the Soquel Creek Water District to the west, and the coastward projection of the drainage divide between the Soquel and Aptos Creek watersheds to the east (in practical terms, the eastern limit of the Soquel Creek and Central Water District’s service area). Soquel Creek is the major drainage in the Basin.

Current groundwater management efforts in the Soquel-Aptos, or “Mid-County” region of Santa Cruz County actually encompass all or part of four basins – the Soquel Valley Groundwater Basin -- the name currently used by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) – as well as the West Santa Cruz Terrace Basin, the Santa Cruz Purisima Formation, and the Pajaro Valley Basin. Local water managers currently refer

to these collectively as the “Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Area,” but they have asked DWR to adjust basin boundaries¹ to match current practice, and to name this management area the “Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin.”

As has been widely discussed at public forums and local media in the mid-County area, the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin has a continuing problem with saltwater entering our groundwater. This has occurred because groundwater levels have dropped below sea level. This has occurred because groundwater use dropped below protective levels. The seawater then seeps in to fill the void. Once saltwater enters our groundwater, the groundwater becomes too salty to use for drinking water or agriculture without costly treatment at facilities that currently do not exist in the mid-County area. Area water managers were already exploring how to rectify this very real and serious problem when the California Legislature passed SGMA in August 2014.

SGMA, which took effect January 1, 2015, seeks to bring the management of the state’s groundwater resources into balance over time to avoid specific negative circumstances named in SGMA, including chronic groundwater depletion and seawater intrusion, so that our groundwater resources remain available to future generations. SGMA requires the establishment of GSAs in the 127 groundwater basins around the state that are designated as either medium or high priority based on threat to the basin’s integrity. (The Soquel Valley Groundwater Basin – as the basin in the Mid-County area is currently referred to by DWR -- is deemed “high” priority and in “critical overdraft.”) GSAs must be in place by June 30, 2017. SGMA looks to “local agencies” to take the lead in establishing GSAs, with counties as the default. If a county or other local agency declines to act, the responsibility to step into the void falls to the State. (Similarly, if a GSA cannot successfully implement an adopted GSP, then the State has the authority to step in to ensure the groundwater basin in question is managed sustainably.)

Once the GSA is established, it must then develop a GSP by January 31, 2020. GSAs must provide local land use planning agencies a review opportunity prior to adopting their plans. Once a GSA adopts a GSP, the GSA must submit the GSP to the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) for review; DWR must review GSPs every five years, and has the authority to request changes. SGMA also provides for a validation process to help protect against future legal challenges.

GSPs must contain certain required elements, including long-term planning goals, measurable objectives, and provisions for meeting five-year milestones to ensure that the overdraft is eliminated and sustainable conditions are achieved within twenty years. SGMA gives GSAs a list of specific groundwater management authorities to use in implementing these plans, such as adopting and enforcing regulations, investigating and acquiring water rights (although at the same time not affecting landowners’ existing water rights), imposing fees, and limiting groundwater production.

Our basin¹ is designated high priority due to the continuing problem with saltwater entering our groundwater, and therefore, is subject to SGMA's requirements. Thus, there is both a practical and a legal need to establish a GSA and GSP for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin as expeditiously as possible.

III. Who Developed and Updates This Community Engagement Plan?

At the time of this writing, area leaders are working together to meet SGMA requirements and address our groundwater management challenges through the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Committee (S-AGMC), an expanded version of what was formerly known as the Basin Implementation Group (BIG). S-AGMC members include elected officials from the Soquel Creek and Central Water Districts, the City and County of Santa Cruz, and three private well-owners (also referred to as "independent pumpers").

The S-AGMC established two working groups to support two major initiatives: a) a GSA Formation Subcommittee to formulate recommendations to the S-AGMC on how to structure this area's GSA. This group has completed its work and is no longer meeting; and b) an Outreach Work Group to assist with community engagement. This working group is ongoing.

The S-AGMC also has worked through Soquel Creek Water District to obtain the services of California State University, Sacramento's, Center for Collaborative Policy (CCP) to develop this Community Engagement Plan. CCP has done so in consultation with the S-AGMC, GSA Formation Subcommittee, and stakeholders. Consultations with stakeholders have consisted of:

- 22 interviews with a diverse range of individuals;
- Input obtained from the community through meetings of the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group (described below); and
- Discussions at meetings of the S-AGMC, its GSA Formation Subcommittee, and its Public Outreach Work Group (all of which are open to the public).

Please see Attachment A for a list of the interviewee questions and Attachment B for a list of interviewees, along with selection considerations.

The GSA is being structured as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) led by representatives of the S-AGMC agencies and independent pumpers. GSA "members" refers to the public agency representatives, while GSA "directors" include both the public and private sector representatives. The GSA will most likely be staffed through the collaborative efforts of staff from member agencies. Once the GSA is formed, it is expected to assume responsibility for any necessary updates to this Community Engagement Plan.

¹ See "Soquel Valley Groundwater Basin" in DWR Bulletin 118.

IV. What Are the Required Public Notice and Involvement Opportunities During Development of A Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Plan?

SGMA strongly encourages broad stakeholder engagement in establishing GSAs and in developing and implementing GSPs. According to SGMA:

- “The groundwater sustainability agency shall encourage the active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the groundwater basin prior to and during the development and implementation of the groundwater sustainability plan.” [CA Water Code Sec. 10727.8(a)]
- “The groundwater sustainability agency shall consider the interests of all beneficial uses and users of groundwater.” [CA Water Code Sec. 10723.2]

SGMA explicitly authorizes GSAs to form Advisory Boards if they choose, but does not require them to do so. SGMA does have several GSA-specific requirements regarding public notice, public hearings, and public meetings.² These include:

A. Local agencies seeking to become a GSA must issue public notice and hold a public hearing before doing so. The public notice must be consistent with Section 6066 of the Government Code. The hearing must take place in a county overlying the groundwater basin of interest. [CA Water Code Section 10723 (b)]

Within 30 days of electing to be (or forming) a GSA, the GSA must inform the State of this development and its intent to manage groundwater sustainably. In doing so, the GSA must:

- Include a list of parties who wish to receive “plan preparation, meeting announcements, and availability of draft plans, maps, and other relevant documents”; and
- Explain how the interested parties’ perspectives will be considered, both during the development and operation of the GSA and during development and implementation of the GSP. This information must also be sent to the legislative bodies of any city and county in the area covered by the plan.

Illuminating the term “interested parties,” SGMA requires that GSAs consider the interests of “*all beneficial uses and users of groundwater*,” along with entities expected to share responsibilities for implementing GSPs. As a starting point, SGMA specifies a number of types of “interested parties” (see Attachment C). The GSA must maintain its list of interested parties on an ongoing basis. Anyone who wishes to be put on this list can do so upon making this request in writing. [CA Water Code Section 10730. (b) (2); 10723.2; 10723.4; and 10723.8. (a)]

With respect to tribes, SGMA states that, “any federally recognized Indian tribe, appreciating the shared interest in assuring the sustainability of groundwater

² SGMA also includes public notice requirements for state agencies; see the text of SGMA for details.

resources, may voluntarily agree to participate in the preparation or administration of a groundwater sustainability plan or groundwater management plan under this part through a joint powers authority or other agreement with local agencies in the basin. A participating tribe shall be eligible to participate fully in planning, financing, and management under this part, including eligibility for grants and technical assistance, if any exercise of regulatory authority, enforcement, or imposition and collection of fees is pursuant to the tribe's independent authority and not pursuant to authority granted to a groundwater sustainability agency under this part.” [CA Water Code Section 10720.3 (c)]

- B. GSAs planning to develop a GSP** must provide notice of their intent to do so to the public and the state before proceeding. The notice must describe opportunities for interested parties to participate in the development and implementation of the GSP. This written notice must be provided to the legislative bodies of any city or county located within the basin to be managed by the GSP. [CA Water Code Section 10727.8. (a)]
- C. A GSA seeking to adopt or amend a GSP** must provide notice to cities and counties within the area encompassed by the proposed plan or amendment, and consider comments provided by the cities and counties. Cities and counties receiving the notice may request consultation with the GSA, in which case the GSA must accommodate that request within thirty days. The GSA also must hold a public hearing prior to adopting or amending a GSP. There must be at least 90 days between the notice issued to cities and counties and the public hearing. [CA Water Code Section 10728.4]
- D. If a GSA intends to impose or increase a fee**, it must first hold at least one public meeting, at which attendees may make oral or written comments. This public notice must include information about the time and place of the meeting and a general explanation of the topic to be discussed. It must be posted on the GSA’s website and mailed to any interested party who submits a written request for mailed notice of meetings on new or increased fees. (The GSA must establish and maintain a list of interested parties in this context, and the list is subject to renewal by April 1 of each year.) The public notice must also be consistent with Section 6066 of the Government Code. In addition, the GSA must share with the public the data upon which the proposed fee is based, and this must be done at least ten days before the public meeting takes place. [CA Water Code Section 10730.(b)(1),(2), and (3)]

V. How Can Community Members Participate in Developing the Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Plan for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin?

- A. Community Engagement Opportunities During GSA Formation.** As noted above, area leaders have formed the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Committee (S-AGMC) as the primary vehicle through which the Soquel Creek and Central Water Districts, the City and County of Santa Cruz, and independent pumpers work

together on SGMA compliance. However, the S-AGMC is simply an updated and expanded version of the Basin Implementation Group (BIG), which has been working on area groundwater management issues for several years. The BIG established the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group and convened it on six occasions over several years to provide updates and invite community feedback on groundwater management efforts.

The S-AGMC is continuing to convene the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group to keep the community informed of its GSA formation efforts and other groundwater management activities, and to invite feedback. The seventh and eighth such meetings took place on June 30 and December 10, 2015. This group takes the form of public meetings; it does not have a fixed composition. Based on the input of the 22 stakeholders interviewed during development of this Community Engagement Plan and feedback provided at the seventh meeting of the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group, stakeholder input during GSA formation will occur in the context of periodic meetings of the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group. However, interviewees urged expanded community engagement during GSP development and implementation to foster shared ownership in the plan. The next section describes the anticipated approach for accommodating that desire.

On behalf of the S-AGMC as a whole, the Soquel Creek Water District has established a webpage to keep the community informed of efforts to achieve sustainable groundwater management. The website address is www.midcountygroundwater.org. Information on all SGMA-related public meetings will be posted on this webpage.

B. Community Engagement Opportunities During GSP Development. As shown in Attachment D, the anticipated community engagement approach for development of a GSP for the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Basin consists of seven primary elements:

1. Compliance with SGMA community engagement requirements;
2. Establishment of a GSP Policy Development Subcommittee of approximately 12-20 individuals, which will include some of the GSA directors as well as additional stakeholders representing the range of major groundwater users and beneficial uses. Subcommittee members will work together to formulate the key policy content of the GSP (recognizing that GSA directors retain the legal responsibility for final GSA- and GSP-related decisions). See Attachment E for an illustration of the anticipated GSP Policy Development Subcommittee, reflecting the input of the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group. The GSP Policy Development Subcommittee is expected to focus on core policy issues, while a staff working group and consultants will be responsible for technical support (e.g., planning context, monitoring and reporting, analysis of alternatives for discussion by the GSP Policy

Development Subcommittee and the GSA). Please see Attachment F for a list of the kinds of topics that the GSP Policy Development Subcommittee is likely to discuss;

3. Targeted outreach to independent well-owners for broader input from this key, but diffuse, stakeholder sector (supplementing the County's ongoing meetings with small water systems);
4. Outreach to other parties known to be interested in GSP development at strategic mileposts to provide updates and invite feedback; and
5. Regular updates for the community-at-large via the Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholders Group, additional events designed specifically for private well-owners, and a range of other mechanisms as shown in Attachment D.

VI. Conclusion

This Community Engagement Plan is intended to chart the path by which community stakeholders can contribute to the development of a GSA and GSP that comply with SGMA. In so doing, it offers a realistic and feasible approach for remedying the problems of the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Area and ensuring adequate water supply for beneficial use by future generation. It lays out a fair and respectful process for engaging stakeholders in that undertaking. In so doing, this Community Engagement Plan is intended as a useful reference for the community at large, as well as community leaders guiding SGMA compliance and groundwater management efforts.

Whether one is pleased or dismayed by the passage of SGMA, it is now the law of the land. It presents a new playing field and an opportunity for regional collaboration on shared water management challenges. As one stakeholder has observed, "Santa Cruz County is a great place for this to work. We have lots in common – i.e., a strong appreciation for the environment – the ocean and mountains...; people are willing to make less money in order to live here." And another stakeholder says, "The prospects are good to generate the right outcome." There is reason to be optimistic that our community is on the path to solving our water challenges.

Attachment A:

Interview Questions

Forming a Groundwater Sustainability Agency Under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

Anticipated Stakeholder Interview Questions

(Note that the facilitator plans to use these questions as the backbone of the interview, but will improvise follow-up questions, given the interviewee's answers.)

- I. **Are you familiar with the new state legislation on groundwater -- the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act?** (If needed, I will explain a little, including the requirements for a GSA and GSP.)

- II. **I'm working with the Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Committee & its GSA subcommittee to develop a plan for how to engage the broader community in getting these required components in place, and would like to invite your input on that. In that context, do you have thoughts on what parties, or types of parties, will need to be involved in developing a Groundwater Sustainability Plan?** Possible prompts:
 - a. Those with decision-making or other governance roles regarding groundwater in this basin and might want to be included in your GSA;
 - b. Other stakeholders who need to be involved in order to form a GSA that enjoys broad community support (those who are most strongly affected; those that could ensure or block GSA effectiveness).

- III. **Do you have thoughts on how best to engage those particular parties, and the public generally, in development of the Plan?** Possible prompt: are there existing engagement opportunities that seem to be working well that we might be able to build upon?

- IV. **What issues would you like to see discussed during the development of the GSP?** Possible follow-up prompts:
 - a. It's likely that one of the topics on the table will be additional supply options (e.g., sharing water, recycling water, etc.). What aspects of this issue would you like to see discussed during GSP development?
 - b. Another thing that is likely to come up is the question of balancing additional development pressure with a possible need to continue a reduced pumping profile. Do you have thoughts on how that tension will play out in this basin? Is this something you think could fruitfully be discussed during GSP development?

- V. Thinking back on past groundwater-related efforts with which you've been involved, are there any lessons you think we can learn from them (e.g., what worked / what might be done differently in the future)?**

- VI. How should this initiative relate to / coordinate with other initiatives in the region?**

- VII. If you imagine the situation 2 years down the line, and you are feeling great about how this has all transpired, what would have happened that would give you that feeling? Possible prompts:**
 - a. What should we seek to accomplish with the GSA and GSP?
 - b. Any thoughts about priorities, programs, or projects that might support those aspirations?
 - c. How should we measure success?

- VIII. Is there anything else you think I should know that I haven't asked about?**

- IX. Is there anyone else you would suggest I interview?**

- X. Is there anything you've told me that you'd like me to keep confidential?**

Attachment B: Interviewees³

1. Bruce Jaffe, SqCWD / GSA Formation Subcommittee member
2. John Ricker, Santa Cruz County / GSA Formation Subcommittee member
3. Micah Posner, City of Santa Cruz / GSA Formation Subcommittee member
4. John Benich, CWD / GSA Formation Subcommittee member (jointly with Bob Postle, co-GSA Formation Subcommittee member, & Ralph Bracamonte, CWD District Manager)
5. Jon Kennedy, Private Well-owner / GSA Formation Subcommittee member
6. Rosemary Menard, Water Director, City of Santa Cruz
7. Bruce Daniels, SqCWD Board Chair, with Melanie Mow Schumacher, SqCWD Special Projects Manager
8. Mary Bannister, General Manager, Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency
9. Rick Longinotti, Santa Cruz Desal Alternatives, Member of Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee
10. David Green Baskin, Santa Cruz City Water Commissioner, Member of Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee
11. Gary Nelson, Seascape Golf Course General Manager (large business groundwater user)
12. Joe Nugent, Cabrillo College Facilities Planning and Plant Operations Director
13. Martin Mills and Jennifer Young, Pure Source (small water system operators)
14. John Bargetto, Bargetto Winery
15. Chris Coburn, Executive Director, Central Coast Resource Conservation District
16. Pam Caldwell Nootbaar, General Manager, Kennolyn Camps
17. Ned Spencer, Santa Cruz County Water Advisory Commission; founder of Friends of Soquel Creek
18. Barbara Mason, Santa Cruz County Economic Development Coordinator
19. Kirsten Liske, Vice President, Green Communities, Ecology Action
20. Regan Ray, Realtor, Attorney, and Private Well-owner (residential sector)
21. Jon Jankovitz, Fisheries Biologist and Ecologist, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
22. Jim Keller, Director of Conservation, Amah Mutsun Tribal Band

³ Considerations in selecting interviewees included: 1) Interviewees are stakeholders with respect to GSA / GSP formation in this basin; 2) They are widely respected opinion leaders, and/or could help ensure or block GSA / GSP effectiveness; 3) They include major decision-makers with respect to GSA / GSP formation; 4) They collectively represent a broad range of sectors and perspectives; and/or 5) They collectively represent broad geographic diversity within this basin. Generally, interviewees met one or more of the 1st three considerations, and contributed to the last two considerations.

Attachment C: Types of Interested Parties Whose Interests Must Be Considered At Minimum ⁴

SGMA specifies that GSAs' lists of interested parties should include, at a minimum:

- a. Holders of overlying groundwater rights, including both agricultural and domestic users;
- b. Municipal well operators;
- c. Public water systems;
- d. Local land use planning agencies;⁵
- e. Environmental users of groundwater;
- f. Surface water users, if there is a hydrologic connection between surface and groundwater bodies;
- g. The federal government, including, but not limited to, the military and managers of federal lands;
- h. California Native American tribes;
- i. Disadvantaged communities (DAC), including, but not limited to, those served by private domestic wells or small community water systems; and
- j. Entities listed in Section 10927 that are monitoring and reporting groundwater elevations in all or a part of a groundwater basin managed by the GSA. [CA Water Code Section 10723.2.]

Also, SGMA allows for the option of multiple GSAs in a single basin. Where this occurs, SGMA requires that the GSAs in a single basin coordinate with one another through a coordination agreement covering the whole basin. In this case, the GSAs must use the same data and methods for certain parts of their Plans. [CA Water Code Section 10727.6.]

⁴ The adjoining basins include West Santa Cruz Terrace to the west and the Pajaro Valley to the southeast.

⁵ SGMA requires that GSAs coordinate with land use planning agencies. The latter must review the proposed GSP prior to its adoption or amendment. In addition, local land use planning agencies must give local GSAs an opportunity to review proposed general plan adoption and amendment actions, and the GSAs are required to identify anticipated effects of the proposed action on GSP implementation.

Attachment D: Summary of Community Engagement Opportunities and Timeline

Time-frame	Milestone	Required Community Engagement	Additional Community Engagement Recommendations
GSA establishment no later than June 30, 2017	Prior to establishing GSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue public notice regarding intent to form GSA⁶ and to hold public hearing. Provide supporting data at least 10 days prior to hearing. ▪ Hold public hearing in county overlying ground-water basin of interest. ▪ Determine whether there are any federally recognized Tribes with interests in this basin (e.g., check with Native American Heritage Commission); if so, reach out to determine desire to participate. ▪ Active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to hold Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group meetings as needed to update community on progress in establishing GSA and invite feedback.⁷Expand outreach in areas dense with independent pumpers (e.g., Branciforte, Olive Springs, Glen Haven, Floral Glen, Rodeo Gulch, Old San Jose Road, Valencia, and Trout Gulch Roads). ▪ Update community at large via Facebook pages of S-AGMC members and project webpage. (www.midcountygroundwater.org). ▪ Publish notice in Sentinel, Capitola-Soquel Times, and Aptos Times, and via insert in customer utility bills of relevant S-AGMC member agencies. ▪ Systematically develop list of interested parties (see Attachment C) under auspices of S-AGMC and its GSA Outreach Work Group. In all above communications with the public, include invitation to be added to list; this should be a standing message on the webpage. ▪ Plan composition and operating protocols of GSP Policy Development Subcommittee, including mechanisms that incentivize and reinforce independent pumper engagement.

⁶ Public notices must be consistent with Section 6066 of the Government Code.

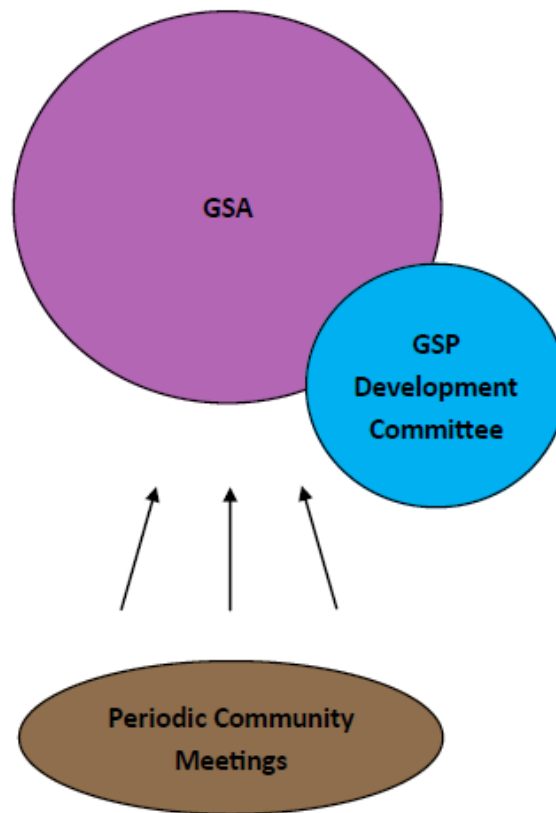
⁷ Standard means of publicizing these meetings include ads placed with the Santa Cruz Sentinel / Coastlines and the Times Publishing Group; distribution via email lists, websites, and Facebook pages of members of S-AGMC and its subcommittees; and postcard mailings for key events.

Time-frame	Milestone	Required Community Engagement	Additional Community Engagement Recommendations
Within 30 days of electing to be (or forming) a GSA	GSA establishment	At the time that the GSA informs the State of GSA establishment and the intent to manage groundwater sustainably, submit to the State and to legislative bodies of any cities and counties located in the area to be covered by the GSP: a) a list of interested parties (per Attachment C); and b) description of how they will be involved with the GSA and GSP.	Once particular GSA model is selected, update this Community Engagement Plan as needed to serve as (b) in column to left.
After GSA formation but before GSP adoption (required by Jan. 31, 2020)	Prior to Beginning GSP development	Provide to the public and State notice of intent to begin GSP development and description of opportunities for interested parties to participate in GSP development and implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Issue press release regarding establishment of GSA. ▪ Offer interviews to area radio (e.g., AM 1080-KSCO) and television stations. ▪ Meet with editorial boards of Sentinel, Good Times, Capitola-Soquel Times, and Aptos Times to explain intent and approach.
See above cell	During GSP development	Active involvement of diverse social, cultural, and economic elements of the population within the basin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convene monthly or bi-monthly meetings of GSP Policy Development Subcommittee to jointly develop core policy content of GSP; Subcommittee membership should include, but be broader than, GSA directors (with clear understanding that GSA directors retain legal responsibility for final GSA and GSP-related decisions); provide public comment opportunity at each meeting. ▪ Establish staff working group to provide technical support to GSA Development Subcommittee

Timeframe	Milestone	Required Community Engagement	Additional Community Engagement Recommendations
See above cell	During GSP development (<i>continued</i>)	See above cell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to hold Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group meetings as needed to update community on progress in developing GSP and invite feedback. ▪ Augment with meetings of interested independent pumpers / private well-owners to obtain broader input from this key, but diffuse, sector on as-needed basis. ▪ Augment with community input via web-based survey to get additional input on targeted issues where warranted. ▪ Update area legislative bodies at strategic mileposts (and any group upon request). Continue to update community at large via project website, press, bill inserts, and/or postcards mailed at key junctures.
GSP adoption no later than January 31, 2020	Prior to GSP adoption or amendment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide notice to cities and counties within area encompassed by the proposed plan or amendment. ▪ Consider comments provided by the cities and counties. ▪ Accommodate requests for consultation received from the cities and counties within 30 days. ▪ No sooner than 90 days following public notice, hold public hearing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group meetings to orient attendees to proposed GSP. ▪ Meet with editorial boards of Sentinel, Capitola-Soquel Times, and Aptos Times. ▪ Offer interviews to area radio and television stations. ▪ Celebrate progress with the community.

Timeframe	Milestone	Required Community Engagement	Additional Community Engagement Recommendations
Prior to GSA imposing fee or increasing fee	If GSA intends to impose or increase a fee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide public with access to the data serving as the basis for the proposed fee, the time and place of explanatory public meeting, and general explanation of topic to be discussed. Post on project website and mail to any interested party who submits written request for mailed notice of meetings on new or increased fees. ▪ No sooner than 10 days following public notice, hold public meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hold Mid-County Groundwater Stakeholder Group meetings to orient attendees to proposed GSP. ▪ Meet with editorial boards of Sentinel, Capitola-Soquel Times, and Aptos Times. ▪ Offer interviews to area radio and television stations. ▪ Provide explanatory information on the project webpage.
Quarterly	Through-out GSP implementation		Convene GSP Policy Development Subcommittee at regular intervals (at least annually) to review GSP implementation / results and recommend GSP amendments as needed.

**Attachment E:
Anticipated Stakeholder Engagement Approach for GSP Development**



Attachment F

Topics To Discuss During GSP Development

Because the Mid-County area has an existing groundwater management plan (the 2007 AB-3030 Soquel-Aptos Groundwater Management Plan), the development of the GSP is expected to focus on updating the existing Groundwater Management Plan, rather than starting from a blank slate. Topics likely to be addressed during GSP development include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. **Current Conditions, Assets, and Challenges.** Characterize the physical setting, the aquifer underlying the basin to be managed, current conditions in the basin (particularly including Soquel Creek summer flows), associated groundwater management challenges, factors contributing to those challenges, and assets that can help contribute to solutions.
2. **Evaluation Criteria.** Identify criteria for an acceptable solution to the basin’s groundwater management challenges (e.g., cost, impact on water quality, impact on salt water intrusion, timeliness of results; political feasibility, certain level of base flow in Soquel Creek, certain groundwater level at the coast, etc.).
3. **Models and Examples.** Investigate how others have handled similar challenges (e.g., adjudicated basins elsewhere in the State; how Australia handled its recent drought; how Orange County implements water recycling; Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency’s approach and conservation programs in Pajaro Valley; Santa Barbara’s response to an earlier drought; etc.)
4. **Measurable Objectives, Thresholds, Triggers, and Interim Milestones.** SGMA indicates that GSPs must address groundwater quantity and quality, mitigation of overdraft, use of recharge, and use of surface water (e.g., for recharge and/or in-lieu of groundwater). GSPs must include measurable objectives that will enable water managers to avoid six specific “undesirable results”⁸ specified in SGMA, as well as interim milestones that enable

⁸ The six undesirable results include: 1) chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating a significant and unreasonable depletion of supply if continued over the planning and implementation horizon; 2) significant and unreasonable reduction of groundwater storage; 3) significant and unreasonable seawater intrusion; 4) significant and unreasonable degraded water quality, including the migration of contaminant plumes that impair water supplies; 5) significant and unreasonable land subsidence that substantially interferes with surface land uses; and 6) depletions of interconnected surface water that have significant and unreasonable adverse impacts on beneficial uses of the surface water.

measurement of progress in meeting those objectives.⁹ These objectives and interim milestones break up the overall goal of groundwater sustainability into manageable pieces. Thresholds will need to be defined that indicate when an undesirable result would be reached, as well as triggers that would require changes in management strategies to avoid reaching those thresholds.

5. **Options.** Articulate the range of possible solutions or strategies for achieving the above objectives, including both conservation and supply enhancement (water recycling, recharge, increased storage, desalinization, and inter-jurisdictional water sharing); market-based solutions (e.g., cap and trade); options for various sectors; options for both indoor and outdoor water conservation; and options that offer an opportunity to implement the recommendations of the Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee, along with SGMA compliance. However, the initial focus should be on options that address the most limiting factors and will be politically feasible (e.g., supplementing water supply and eliminating waste, rather than restricting access).
6. **Option Evaluation and Selection.** Evaluate and select among the range of options. Determine how best to link the GSP with applicable city and county general plans, other water-related plans and programs, and other relevant initiatives in the region.¹⁰
7. **Plan implementation, monitoring, and adaptive management.** Discuss and agree upon:
 - Who will carry out various aspects of the solution, including education, technical assistance, data collection, monitoring, reporting, and enforcement;
 - How to incentivize independent pumpers' participation in GSP implementation;

⁹ Please see SGMA Sections 10727.2 and 10727.4 for further detail on required GSP elements.

¹⁰ Other initiatives in the region with which the GSA should consider establishing appropriate linkages during GSP development include: a) Water Districts in adjoining basins (including Pajaro Valley Water Management Agency, Scotts Valley Water District, and Monterey County Water Agency) and existing agreements and negotiations among them; b) DWR Strategic Plan for Groundwater; c) Urban Water Management Planning Act; d) Capitola's Lagoon Management Plan; e) Integrated Water Resources Management Plan; f) Local Agencies Formation Commission; g) Stormwater regulations; h) Santa Cruz Water Supply Advisory Committee; i) current water conservation efforts in Santa Cruz and Soquel; j) Soquel Creek Water District's feasibility study regarding recycled water; k) Deepwater Desal project in Moss Landing; l) model water reduction plan for community colleges being developed by Cabrillo College; m) County planning and development requirements, area cities, and neighboring basins to make regulations consistent across jurisdictions.

- How the solution will be funded and the costs shared among beneficiaries; and
- How to ensure the GSP is adaptable over time, including how conflicts will be handled, who will be responsible for GSP updates, how often these updates will occur, and how the updates will be accomplished, and related stakeholder involvement opportunities.