

# GPAC Meeting #16 Summary

October 18, 2022



## Introduction

On October 18, 2022, the City of Ventura convened the 16th meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The session was held jointly as an educational forum and focused on Ventura's water supply and water use. The City organized this meeting to respond to community concerns about planning for long term growth during a statewide drought. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide the GPAC and community members with an overview of the City's water supply and projected water availability for the future.
- Provide an opportunity for both GPAC and community members to ask Ventura Water staff questions.

The meeting was open to the public and held in person at City Hall in the City Council Chambers. The meeting was livestreamed on both WebEx and [YouTube](#). This document summarizes the key content presented and themes discussed.

## Meeting Participants

The following participants attended the meeting:

### General Plan Team

- Matt Raimi, Raimi + Associates
- Susan Harden, Circlepoint
- Peter Gilli, City of Ventura

### City Staff, Ventura Water

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gina Dorrington, General Manager</li> <li>• Betsy Cooper, Assistant General Manager Water Resources</li> <li>• Jennifer Tribo, Senior Management Analyst</li> <li>• Monica Noeng, Management Analyst II</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Glenn, Management Analyst II</li> <li>• Linda Sumansky, VenturaWaterPure Program Director</li> <li>• Grant White, Environmental Services Specialist</li> </ul> |
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### GPAC Members

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lorrie Brown, GPAC Chair</li> <li>• Doug Halter, GPAC Vice Chair</li> <li>• Philip Bohan, GPAC</li> <li>• Nicholas Bonge, GPAC</li> <li>• Stephanie Caldwell, GPAC</li> <li>• Kyler Carson, GPAC</li> <li>• Joshua Damigo, GPAC</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peter Freeman, GPAC</li> <li>• Kacie Goff, GPAC</li> <li>• Stephanie Karba, GPAC</li> <li>• Bill McReynolds, GPAC</li> <li>• Daniel Reardon, GPAC</li> <li>• Alejandra Tellez, GPAC</li> </ul> |
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*Absent: David Comden, Nicholas Deitch, Kelsey Jonker, Erin Kraus, Louise Lampara, Scott McCarty, Sabrena Rodriguez, Dana Worsnop*

# Meeting Format

Susan Harden welcomed GPAC members and the public to the 16th GPAC meeting and followed with an overview of the meeting agenda. Matt Raimi then provided a brief status update on the General Plan Update, including completed engagement activities, new online resources available on the project website, and next steps in the process. Gina Dorrington, General Manager of Ventura Water, followed with a presentation covering water supply and availability, as well as the City's water-related plans, policies, and regulations. After the presentation, Susan facilitated a question-and-answer session. GPAC member were invited to ask questions first, followed by members of the public. The meeting concluded with approximately 30 minutes for public comment.

## Q&A Session

The following section summarizes questions from GPAC and members of the public, along with accompanying responses from City staff. They are organized by topic. Some questions also include additional information not covered in the meeting.

### Water Usage/Demand

- **Does the City have a breakdown of water consumption by land use?**
  - Yes, the City's [Water Demand Factor Study](#) (released 2020) includes over 20 categories of estimated water usage by land use type. These factors were developed from water billing data between 2013 and 2018. Note that the City does not have a water demand factor for agriculture, since it does not supply water to agricultural uses.
  - *Additional information: The City provides an annual overview of water usage by categories (residential, commercial, municipal, etc.) in the [Comprehensive Water Resources Report](#).*
  
- **What land use has the highest water demand factor?**
  - Restaurants, breweries, and car washes have the highest water demand factor. Hospitals are one of the highest individual users. However, 60-70% of total water consumption comes from residential uses.
  
- **Does the City's water demand factors account for recently built multifamily developments?**
  - Yes.
  - *Additional information: The City's water demand factors were developed based on 2013 to 2018 billing data and included all multifamily development during this time. In the City's [Comprehensive Water Resources Report](#), future water demand projections are based on actual average water usage over the past 5-10 years plus estimated demands from recently approved and under construction projects.*

## Water Supply Sources and Projections

- **Do we share the Oxnard Plain Basin with other jurisdictions?**
  - Yes. The City's allocation of water from this source will be restricted in future years, but everyone who pumps out of that basin will have to conserve water at the same rate.
- **Do the City's water supply projections account for future rainfall levels?**
  - The water supply projections for surface water sources do factor in rainfall. The water supply projections also take into account the City's water allocations and the state of current facilities, such as pumps and wells. Note that compared to surface water, groundwater is less impacted by rainfall in the short term.
- **If the City needs to reduce pumping from the Oxnard Plain Basin by 40% in the next 15 years, why are the water supply projections not showing a significant reduction in groundwater supply?**
  - The Oxnard Plain Basin represents less than half of all the City's groundwater sources. Currently, the City is not projecting reductions in its other groundwater sources (the Santa Paula Basin and Mound Basin). These projections will be reevaluated annually.
- **Are risks of groundwater contamination considered in the water supply projections?**
  - The City's current plans and projections have not considered the possibility of groundwater contamination. However, the City does monitor for contamination. To date there have not been any issues with groundwater contamination, nor does the City have any risk factors for groundwater contamination.
  - *Additional information: The [Water Resources Background Report](#) provides information on the City's drinking water quality, which are regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board and Environmental Protection Agency. Ventura's drinking water sources are within current State and Federal levels for primary drinking water standards. The [Manmade Hazards Background Report](#) identifies growing concern about water supplies and contamination with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). However, there is currently no known PFAS contamination impacting Ventura's water supplies.*
- **How is Ventura's share of water from Lake Casitas prioritized compared to other customers?**
  - Ventura is the largest customer of Lake Casitas. If the Casitas Municipal Water District determines that they are moving to a different water shortage stage, all customers would need to meet their conservation requirements.
- **The water supply projections show that the City anticipates drawing a fairly consistent amount of water from Lake Casitas. What happens if Lake Casitas goes dry?**
  - This City is conservatively estimating future supplies from Lake Casitas. We anticipate that the Casitas Municipal Water District is going to declare a stage 4 next year (meaning the City's allocation will reduce by 40%) and that drought conditions will

continue in the next few years. The City currently complies with their water shortage restrictions, and the City is prepared to meet additional restrictions if they move into a different stage. The Casitas Municipal Water District is also working on various projects to bring water to the lake, including the State Water Interconnection Project.

- **How is litigation on the Ventura River impacting our projected water supply?**
  - The City is currently restricted from pumping any water when the river drops below four cubic feet/second. The water supply projections are based off this restriction. It is possible that as the litigation progresses or if the State passes stricter restrictions, this restriction level could get higher. At this stage in the litigation, the City is in a mediation phase where it is developing a solution with local parties and state agencies to ensure that water resources from the Ventura River watershed are sustainably used out into the future, both for local users and native species like steelhead trout.

## Water Conservation Programs & Other Long-Term Solutions

- **What can Venturans do at home to help conserve water?**
  - Take advantage of all the conservation programs offered by the City, such as the free water survey or equipment rebates. Evaluate your personal water use and incorporate practices such as scraping plates instead of running water while dishwashing or turning off the faucet when you are brushing your teeth.
- **What are some examples of extraordinary conservation measures in the City's Net Zero Policy?**
  - Extraordinary conservation measures include installing efficient water fixtures that exceed the State's green building standards.
- **Are hot water circulation pumps required in new homes?**
  - The City currently has a rebate program for hot water circulation pumps, but it does not mandate that new developments have them.
- **Does the City keep track of how many homeowners have participated in its [rain barrel discount program](#)?**
  - Ventura Water's Rebate and Incentive Programs provides rain barrel discount vouchers to its customers. The City keeps a record of all rain barrel vouchers distributed and purchased. However, that does not include what homeowners go out to purchase on their own.
- **Does the City have any rainwater storage tanks?**
  - The City currently does not have the infrastructure for large-scale stormwater recapture, although it does do some dry weather storm channeling. The City can look into these types of long-term solutions for the future and explore opportunities for regional collaboration.

- **What are feasible options for stormwater capture in the city?**
  - Stormwater capture is a part of the City's discussions around future resource planning. It is also being explored at the County level through the Countywide Stormwater Permit. Implementing large-scale stormwater capture is complex and will take time.
- **What is the City doing to remove invasive plants that are guzzling water?**
  - The City's [Water Supply Projects Environmental Impact Report \(EIR\)](#) recommends mitigation measures that include removal of invasive species like Arundo.
- **What percentage of wastewater that is generated is actually recycled, and how do we reuse it? When can we expect the wastewater recycle rate to be 100%?**
  - Currently, only 3% of the City's water supply is recycled water (approximately 500-700 acre-feet per year). This recycled water serves the golf courses, parks, and industrial areas along Olivas Park. The [VenturaWaterPure program](#) aims to recycle 100% of the City's wastewater.

## Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan

- **What is the closest the City has come to stage 6 of the [Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan](#)?**
  - The City has a six-stage contingency plan that outlines actions to be taken during different levels of water shortages. Under stage 6 of the plan, the City must suspend all development approvals. Historically, the worst water shortage that the City has ever reached was Stage 3.
- **Where is the City's six-stage water contingency plan defined?**
  - The six-stage water contingency plan is defined in the City's [Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan](#). This plan was approved by the State and determined to be adequate in protecting water supply.
- **What level of water shortage triggers Stage 6?**
  - When the annual supply projection is greater than or equal to 50% of the demand projection.
- **Can we assume that we are not just experiencing a drought, but a permanent climactic change to this region? What plans does the City have in place if we run out of water?**
  - The City is anticipating more frequent, longer durations of drought in the future. The City is conservative in its water supply and demand projections, considering these climatic changes. The Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan is in place to ensure the City does not run out of water.
  - *Additional information: The City annually evaluates and compares water supply and water demand projections in the Comprehensive Water Resources Report. If there is a shortage identified, the Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan identifies response actions to be*

taken by the City and its customers to keep water use within supply and delivery capability.

- **Why is the City waiting until stage 6 to limit development?**
  - The City anticipates additional water supplies to come online between 2025 and 2035. These planned water supplies will help the City continue to meet projected demands through 2045.
  - *Additional information: At Stages 1 through 3, the City can inform new development applicants of the Water Shortage Event Contingency Plan and its restrictions, including notice that if conditions worsen issuance of permits and development approvals may be delayed until additional supply becomes available or conditions significantly improve. At Stage 4, new development that does not have water supply to serve their project will be required to offset any impact to water supply if they wish to continue the entitlement process during a water shortage event. At Stage 5, the City can prepare a resolution for City Council consideration directing the Community Development Department to stop processing development approvals in order to conduct a public hearing regarding water allocation to development applications. At Stage 6, the City can suspend the issuance of any new development approvals and new water connections other than those required to be processed by State law.*

## Planned Infrastructure Projects

- **When will the State Water Interconnection Project be completed? How much will it cost?**
  - The City is currently in the preliminary design stage for [this project](#). Costs will be calculated when preliminary design is finished. It is estimated that the project will be completed by 2026.
- **Will water from the State Water Interconnection Project be used to recharge aquifers or to supplement the City's water supply?**
  - The water received from the State Water Interconnection Project will help offset our use of current supplies and allow for these sources to recharge.
- **The City is allocated 10,000 acre-feet of water from the State Water Interconnection Project. Why is the City only projecting that we will use 1,100 acre-feet of that water?**

The City will only receive what the State can deliver. This is dependent on the State's resources and how much rainfall and snowpack they have each year. These estimates are based on what Ventura Water thinks the City can reliably receive every year.
- **Does the City have a plan to better connect the water system from the eastside to the westside of the city?**
  - The City's distribution system is all connected. However, its water system is built to flow from the west to the east side of the city, so it is more difficult for water to flow in

the opposite direction. There are two pipeline projects being designed right now to better connect the two sides of the city.

- **What is the difference between [VenturaWaterPure](#) and recycled water?**
  - Recycled water refers to wastewater that is treated for restricted, non-potable uses such as irrigation. VenturaWaterPure will treat water that is currently discharged into the Santa Clara Estuary to meet drinking water standards.
- **What is the timeline for the VenturaWaterPure project? When does the City expect the project to be completed?**
  - Several components of the VenturaWaterPure project are well into the design and permitting phase. The City expects to receive water from this water supply sometime between 2025 to 2030.
- **What is the state of our water infrastructure? Are there any plans to improve it?**
  - The City's water system is complex for a city this size, with several different water supply sources. The City regularly refines its capital improvements plan, water master plans, and sewer master plans to identify critical needs and where there can be greater efficiencies.
- **In the worst case scenario, is desalinization an option?**
  - Desalinization was an alternative evaluated in the Water Supply Projects EIR. It will be pursued as a last resort if the VenturaWaterPure project does not produce adequate supply.
- **If the City does not grow at the projected 1% growth rate, does it still need to spend this much money on additional water sources and new infrastructure?**
  - Yes. The City is investing in new water sources and infrastructure to augment and diversify its water portfolio. Doing so reduces the risk that losing a water source has catastrophic impacts on the city.
- **Has the City considered pumping water from aquifers near Seaward?**
  - Since the 1960s, the City has moved groundwater wells inland to not further induce seawater intrusion. The City will focus groundwater wells where existing ones are located, near the Government Center.



## Miscellaneous

- **What is the well depth for the new Mound Basin wells under construction, and how do they compare to the current wells?**
  - The City currently has two wells that pump from the Mound Basin. One pumps from a deeper aquifer (about 1,200 feet deep) and the other pumps a shallower aquifer (about 500 feet deep). There are two replacement wells being constructed, and they are going to pump at the lower aquifer level (1,200 feet) because of water quality issues at the higher level.
- **What are the terms of agreement in the City's 20-year agreement with the San Geronio Pass Water Agency, and why did the City make this agreement?**
  - The City currently pays \$1 million for a water allocation they are not able to bring in to the city. With this 20-year agreement, the San Geronio Pass Water Agency will cover this cost and use all of the City's water allocations from the State until the State Water Interconnection Project is completed. Afterwards, they will pay a fixed price for any surplus water that the City does not use; they have to pay this fixed fee regardless of whether they receive any water. There are also off ramps for the City to leave the deal if circumstances change or something goes wrong. This agreement benefits both parties: given that the State Water Interconnection Project is an expensive water supply and the City expects to only need a fraction of its allocation, the City will save money while the San Geronio Pass Water Agency receives an additional water supply.
- **Does the City's Net Zero Policy address water contamination issues caused by agricultural and industrial uses?**
  - Fees collected from the Net Zero Policy are specifically dedicated to funding new water supplies such as VenturaWaterPure. Per State requirements, the City monitors water quality at all of its sample stations and meets State standards for water quality. High-level policies addressing water quality will be included in the General Plan in the Conservation and Environmental Justice elements. This topic can be discussed in greater detail at future meetings.

## Public Comments

Several individuals spoke during public comment at the close of each meeting. Comments are summarized below.

- The General Plan needs to include policies that address alignment between broadband and water infrastructure.
- The City needs to explore sustainable permaculture design and incentivize farmers and land managers upstream to manage their soil so that water sinks in instead of running off.
- Soil is way more efficient at soaking up and capturing water compared to rain barrels. Consider partnering with farmers to plant cover crops.

- The City should evaluate the impact of residue from toxic industries going into local groundwater.
- Our land is already stressed and many oak trees are dying. This should be a factor considered in declaring a building moratorium.
- There was poor turnout at this meeting. Evaluate why people are not participating in these meetings. Limit presentation time. Ensure people feel welcome, not restricted in commenting.
- There are cross functional savings and departmental revenue opportunities with capital improvement projects, but conversations are often siloed. There needs to be more coordination across City processes and departments.
- We need more than 2 minutes for public comments.
- Developments cause pollution, crime, and traffic. I do not agree with waiting until stage 6 to declare a building moratorium.
- Water is a public good that should be distributed equitably. It needs to be treated as a precious and finite resource. All of us need to use less. If stage 6 is ever reached, the City should not stop development where permits have already been issued.