

# Section 2

## Planning Process

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### 2.1 OVERVIEW

Development of the IRWMP followed an integrated planning process to aid in group decision-making and result in a mutually acceptable document. This section describes the overall process as an introduction to the remainder of the document.

### 2.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The planning team held a public meeting at the beginning of the process to solicit public information on the IRWMP. Prior to the meeting, SCWA sent notification to major stakeholders within the region, announced the public meeting at other board and water-related meetings, and placed meeting announcements in local newspapers. At the meeting, the planning team presented the IRWMP process and requested comments. Although this initial public meeting was not well attended, the meeting provided some indication of public interest on the IRWMP.

A second public meeting was held after a draft IRWMP was prepared. This meeting was similarly advertised. This meeting was also not well attended. SCWA staff also made presentations to city councils and district boards in January and February 2005.

### 2.3 STAKEHOLDER GROUP PROCESS

The Stakeholder Group was formed from members of SCWA's Board of Directors, the SCWA Advisory Commission, the SCWA Flood Control Advisory Committee, and wastewater agencies to focus on IRWMP development. The members represent a cross-section of technical and policy representatives from agricultural and urban agencies. The purpose of this Stakeholder Group was to work together to assemble and apply knowledge and experience regarding the region's water resources and develop recommendations for consideration by the SCWA and member agencies' boards/councils. Table 1-1 lists the Stakeholder Group participants. The Stakeholder Group was asked to:

- Increase mutual understanding of water resource issues and opportunities;
- Identify issues and strategies;
- Identify actions (policies, programs, and projects) to implement strategies;
- Define criteria to prioritize IRWMP actions; and
- Develop recommendations for SCWA Board and member agency board/council consideration.

The Stakeholder Group met six times, from February 2004 through October 2004 to develop this IRWMP. Figure 2-1, at the end of this section, shows the meeting topics and depicts the Stakeholder Group's decision-making process. The rest of Section 2.3 previews the steps in this decision-making process. Section 3 summarizes key demand and supply information used in the evaluations. Sections 4, 5, and 6 discuss the detailed methods and results from each step.

### 2.3.1 Identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

“SWOTs” are organizational “strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats” with respect to long range water resources. SWOTs create a foundation for identifying strategic issues and potential actions. Strengths and weaknesses focus on resources and capabilities within the Solano agencies. Opportunities and threats focus on forces outside the Solano agencies’ control, such as potential actions of allies and competitors, and political and technological forces.

The Stakeholder Group developed SWOTs by first brainstorming concerns within the region. The Stakeholder Group then identified additional SWOTs by considering several questions, such as:

- What are the biggest successes in the past few years? (*strengths*)
- What are the Solano agencies capable of doing? (*strengths*)
- What are the Solano agencies’ limitations and vulnerabilities? (*weaknesses*)
- What is needed to provide service to customers? (*opportunities*)
- Do the Solano agencies face any obstacles? (*threats*)

The planning team consolidated the results of these exercises into several SWOT worksheets. Appendix B provides these results.

### 2.3.2 Describe and Weight Strategic Issues

Strategic issues are fundamental policy questions or critical challenges that affect the Solano agencies’ ability to accomplish their mission and that require Board-level decision making. The Stakeholder Group identified strategic issues using the recurring themes from the SWOT exercise (particularly the strengths, weaknesses, and threats). All of the strategic issues ask how the Solano agencies could better address a substantial problem or challenge in the region. Section 4 contains the list of strategic issues and their descriptions.

Some strategic issues are more important to stakeholders than others. After creating the set of strategic issues, the Stakeholder Group weighted the strategic issues to show their relative importance. The Stakeholder Group used a process called “dot voting,” in which the strategic issues were displayed on a large poster, and Stakeholder Group members “voted” by placing dot-shaped stickers beside the strategic issues. Each member received twenty dots, or votes, to assign to the strategic issues. The individual assigned these dots to the strategic issues of most importance to him or her. The strategic issues with the most combined dots were assumed the most important to the group as a whole. Further Stakeholder Group discussion confirmed the results.

As the Stakeholder Group further developed the strategic issues during the planning process, the definitions of several of the strategic issues changed slightly. The Stakeholder Group then re-voted on paper by assigning a number of votes to each strategic issue. Section 4 includes more information about the weighting process and the strategic issue weighting results.

### 2.3.3 Develop Strategy Statements

Strategy statements are brief descriptions of a pattern of policies, decisions, actions, or resource allocations that are formulated to address a strategic issue. After the Stakeholder Group identified strategic issues, it developed a suite of strategy statements that represent directions that the Solano agencies could take to address the strategic issue. Section 4 defines the strategy statements for each strategic issue.

### 2.3.4 Identify Potential Actions to Fulfill Strategy Statements

Potential actions are policies, programs, or classes of projects that serve to implement a strategy. Implementation steps are more specific projects that fit under a potential action. The Stakeholder Group developed a comprehensive list of potential actions and initial implementation steps using information from the SWOT exercise. Many SWOTs, especially the opportunities, represented potential actions for the Solano agencies. The Solano agencies also added potential actions and implementation steps that they have started, planned, or considered. The Stakeholder Group compiled all of the potential actions and screened the list by eliminating potential actions that were not technically feasible, effective, timely, or legal. Section 5 discusses the screening process and results.

### 2.3.5 Prioritize Actions

The Stakeholder Group prioritized the potential actions according to a set of prioritization criteria. Prioritization criteria are factors used to compare the importance and feasibility of potential actions and help to determine the sequence in which actions should be implemented.

The Stakeholder Group selected a set of prioritization criteria according to several guidelines. These guidelines stated that the criteria should be:

- Measurable: specify the degree to which criteria can be achieved;
- Unique: ensure no overlap between criteria;
- Clear: be easily explainable to the public and policymakers; and
- Concise: be direct and to-the-point.

The planning team ranked the prioritization criteria, with Stakeholder Group input, to indicate their relative importance. The planning team then developed rating scales for each criterion to ensure even application of the criterion to all actions. The rating scale indicates how an action should score according to each criterion. A good rating scale includes distinct rating categories, is understandable and meaningful, and distinguishes between actions.

The Stakeholder Group used the prioritization criteria and rating scales to evaluate each potential action. The planning team rated the potential action's performance according to each criterion, and recorded the results in a prioritization matrix for Stakeholder Group review and comment. The evaluation indicates which potential actions performed the best and should be a higher priority for immediate implementation. Section 5 describes the prioritization method in detail, and Section 6 presents the results.

### **2.3.6 SCWA Strategic Plan**

The steps documented in Sections 2.3.1 through 2.3.5 lead to a prioritized set of water resources potential actions that would address strategic issues in the region. SCWA does not have a major role in all of them. To meet all document purposes, this document includes both the regional IRWMP and the SCWA Strategic Plan. The SCWA Strategic Plan is formed around a subset of the regional IRWMP that includes only actions where SCWA has a major role. Section 7 includes the SCWA Strategic Plan, which describes prioritized potential actions for SCWA and creates a roadmap for future implementation.