

INTEGRATED RESOURCES PLAN ASSEMBLY

1995 ASSEMBLY STATEMENT

Sponsored by the

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

**San Pedro, California
March 29-31, 1995**

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At the close of their discussion, the participants of this Assembly reviewed and adopted as a group the following statement. The statement represents general agreement. However, no one was asked to sign it. Furthermore, it should not be assumed that every participant subscribes to every recommendation.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents the conclusions reached at an American Assembly on the Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) for Southern California.¹ The Assembly was convened on March 29-31, 1995, at the Doubletree Hotel in San Pedro. (An overview of the Assembly procedures is provided in Appendix 1.) Over 170 people attended, including Assembly staff and observers. Participants included members of the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan), Metropolitan's Member Agency managers, Metropolitan senior staff, groundwater agency managers, and representatives of retail subagencies that purchase water from Member Agencies. (A list of Assembly participants is provided in Appendix 2.)

The 1995 Integrated Resources Plan Assembly was the third Assembly in a series. The first two were held in October 1993 and June 1994. The Assemblies were designed in conjunction with Metropolitan's strategic planning process to help develop a coordinated, flexible, affordable, and equitable approach to meeting the region's present and future needs for dependable supplies of high quality water.

The 1993 Assembly on Metropolitan's Strategic Plan focused on fundamental issues such as regional water policies, financing structures, and governance. It provided direction for a number of Metropolitan's actions, including adoption of a foundation for a new revenue structure,

¹ The IRP addresses the water resource needs of Metropolitan's service area which consists of 5,139 square miles including portions of six counties in Southern California, over 250 communities, and a current population of about 15.7 million. References to the Southern California region refer to this service area.

selection of criteria for resource evaluation, and formulation of initial business practices and water management principles.

The June 1994 Integrated Resources Plan Assembly focused on the resource mix for meeting the water needs of Metropolitan's service area through the year 2020. The Assembly endorsed an intermediate resource mix combining imported supplies with an emphasis on local water conservation and development of new local water supplies. The Assembly also identified and discussed business principles to guide Metropolitan and its Member Agencies in the implementation of the IRP and resulting water management plans.

The primary questions and issues addressed at the 1995 Integrated Resources Plan Assembly involved affirmation of the preferred mix and implementation issues associated with it. The Preferred Resource Mix is a balanced resources strategy that involves least cost investment in imported resources, local supplies, and demand-side management that meets the region's reliability goal. Implementation of the Preferred Resource Mix will assure the economic security for the region for the rest of the century. Particular concerns were whether to affirm the specific resource mix targets, how to promote local water conservation, and what strategies to follow in developing local resources.

II. PREFERRED RESOURCE MIX

Based on the Preferred Resource Mix, resource targets for local and imported supplies were developed jointly by Metropolitan, Member Agencies, subagencies, and local groundwater agencies. Targeted amounts include:

Water Conservation - An additional 130,000 acre-feet of conservation savings by the year 2000 (representing a 35% increase over current levels), of which about 89,000 acre-feet results from the implementation of new plumbing codes and ordinances. By year 2020, about 512,000 acre-feet of additional conservation savings, of which about 235,000 acre-feet result from the implementation of plumbing codes and ordinances. By 2020, the additional conservation savings represent a 138 percent increase over current levels.

Reclamation - Additional reclamation supply of about 100,000 acre-feet by the year 2000 representing a 60 percent increase from current levels. By the year 2020, about 280,000 acre-feet of additional reclamation supply (representing a 165% increase over current levels), of which about 50,000 acre-feet results from existing projects.

Groundwater Programs - About 1.0 million acre-feet of local groundwater storage capacity developed over the next 10 years to be used to store available imported water. About 40,000 acre-feet of year-round groundwater production and 300,000 acre-feet of dry year groundwater production over the next 10 years, as a result of groundwater recovery and storage programs.

Colorado River Aqueduct - About 450,000 acre-feet of additional firm CRA supplies through conservation projects (canal lining), land-fallowing agreements, and other similar arrangements over the next 20 years, with the objective of maximizing CRA deliveries.

State Water Project - About 650,000 acre-feet of additional dry year SWP supplies over the next 20 years as a result of a Delta transfer facility and improved operational plans. Reliance on SWP supplies is critical to achieving the region's reliability goals and to provide water quality adequate to implement local resource programs. However, the total amount of dry-year SWP water included in the plan, about 1.3 MAF, is less than the amount used during recent comparable dry years and significantly less than Metropolitan's full SWP entitlement of 2.011 MAF. This reduced dependence on the SWP compared to past planning efforts is possible because of the implementation of wet period storage and other elements of the diverse resource mix.

Central Valley Water Transfers - About 400,000 acre-feet of voluntary water transfers developed by options agreements and purchases of water through the drought bank or other similar spot markets. These agreements allow Metropolitan to use this water only when needed - estimated to be about 20 percent of the time.

III. RESOURCE MIX IMPLEMENTATION

As specific resource targets in the Preferred Resource Mix were developed, more was learned about the Mix's strengths, weaknesses, and implications.

A. The most important lesson from this experience is the need to make the IRP a continuous process. The Preferred Resource Mix, along with the policies and procedures required to implement it, should be periodically evaluated and, if appropriate, adjusted. The need for consistency must be balanced by a willingness to remain open and adaptive.

B. Metropolitan's minimum water supply reliability goal is "providing 100 percent of full service wholesale water demands 90 percent of the time, and never providing less than 80 percent of full service wholesale demands." This reliability goal remains acceptable. However, the cost and feasibility of higher wholesale reliability should be reviewed. Metropolitan should facilitate achieving a higher level of reliability when requested to do so by a Member Agency.

C. The Preferred Resource Mix has a number of strengths:

1. It pursues a diverse combination of imported supplies and development of local supplies, and therefore it offers flexibility if conditions change.

2. The Preferred Mix balances costs, reliability, environmental factors, water quality, flexibility, and other considerations.
3. It is a shared program that provides benefits to the entire region.
4. It recognizes the need to integrate the region's water resources.
5. The Mix was developed through a participatory process and has raised awareness about the diversity of opportunities available to meet the region's water needs.
6. A cooperative effort is inherent in the implementation of the Preferred Resource Mix.

D. Nevertheless, questions remain about how the Preferred Resource Mix will work out in practice, and hence the Mix should be continuously evaluated. Some of the most important issues and questions are:

1. Can the levels of conservation assumed by the Mix actually be achieved?
2. Can we continue our progress toward maintaining the Colorado River Aqueduct at full reliability in the face of endangered species, habitat, and other problems in the lower basin?
3. Can the salinity of the Colorado River be dealt with in order to facilitate regional increases in reclamation and groundwater recharge?
4. Can the new rate structure and projected rate increases be politically accommodated at the local level?
5. Can Metropolitan develop contractual relations or other mechanisms with Member Agencies, subagencies, and groundwater agencies to assure that its investments in local groundwater programs actually produce regional benefits?
6. Can the environmental, institutional, and political problems in the Delta be solved?
7. What will the results be after implementation?

E. In addition to resolving these questions and issues, a number of challenges will need to be addressed as the Preferred Resource Mix is implemented.

1. A serious barrier to implementing the Preferred Resource Mix is public opposition to rate increases. The public is largely uninformed about why capital and program investments are needed. Consumers are not aware that steady rate increases are coming, nor have they been adequately informed that the rate increases are required to enhance reliability and water quality. The level of understanding and support of state and local elected officials also varies.
2. Related to this political problem is a credibility issue. Consumers have been confused by their experience with conservation, when rates were raised following successful reductions in consumption. Compounding this are potential misunderstandings about the coming rate increases. Metropolitan is forecasting cost increases for the region as a whole, but consumers will experience varying rate increases depending on the availability of local resources and on other potential cost increases at the retail level.
3. Also, related to the political uncertainty surrounding the rate increases necessary to implement the Preferred Mix are questions concerning the degree of support for the rate structure among Member Agencies. If Member Agencies and subagencies fail to support the rate increases with their consumers, or if they blame Metropolitan for the new rates rather than explaining their necessity, public support will surely be further eroded.
4. Lack of a consistent uniform message supported by all involved entities continues to be a problem.
5. Other barriers to implementing the Preferred Mix include the lack of coordinated sub-regional planning at the Member Agency and subagency levels; uncertainty about the region's groundwater basins; and the challenge of balancing the policy-setting responsibilities of the Metropolitan Board of Directors with the necessity for regional partnership.

F. A number of steps should be taken to address these challenges. Metropolitan should take the lead, but it should continue to strive for a partnership with Member Agencies, subagencies, and others in Southern California's water community.

1. The single most important need for overcoming the above barriers is active, credible communication of the situation to the public. Metropolitan must take the lead in joining with Member Agencies to establish an aggressive, coordinated public information campaign for the region as a whole including elected officials and other government leaders, private business leaders, and the public. Metropolitan must also be very careful to assure that accurate information is disseminated in cooperation with its Member Agencies. The information needs to be consistent region-wide but adapted to local circumstances.

2. Metropolitan must assure that its investments produce commensurate regional benefits. Contractual arrangements with Member Agencies may be needed, along with adequate monitoring. Successful implementation of the Preferred Resource Mix requires both commitment and accountability.
3. An approach must be formulated and established to assure that the conservation goals assumed by the Preferred Resource Mix are achieved. Such an approach is discussed later in this document.
4. Measures must be taken to protect the financial integrity of Metropolitan and to keep rates from fluctuating widely, including maintaining adequate reserves to accommodate variations in annual sales resulting from weather and hydrologic conditions.
5. As experience is gained, the Preferred Resource Mix should continue to be reassessed through Assemblies and forums.
6. To assure continued success in resolving environmental and economic problems related to the Delta, Metropolitan, in cooperation with its Member Agencies, must continue to build positive working relationships with the environmental and agricultural communities regardless of changing political circumstances.

IV. WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

There must be a strong regional partnership in the development of local water supplies. Because of the complexity of the situation, a "one size fits all" approach would be counterproductive.

A. The basic idea of securing regional benefits through local groundwater development makes sense. When Metropolitan invests in local groundwater development, it should assure that this water is available to the region during times of scarcity. Suggested measures to accomplish this include contracts, shortage allocation plans, and recovery plans. However, this basic policy of linking regional investments to regional benefits must be adapted to at least two circumstances:

1. The price of surplus water must relate to the regional value produced and the need to protect the integrity of revenues.
2. The degree to which each Member Agency is dependent on Metropolitan should be taken into account. For some, Metropolitan's water is supplemental, while for others Metropolitan is the sole supplier. Limitations on access to

regional supplies during droughts affect each type of Member Agency very differently.

B. In addition to recognizing these complexities, Metropolitan needs to adopt a leadership and partnership role with Member Agencies and subagencies. This means:

1. Metropolitan should continue to be a consensus builder in the IRP process.
2. Incentives rather than sanctions should be used to the extent that they are workable and economically feasible.
3. The methodology for calculating regional benefits should be clear and as simple as possible in light of local differences.
4. Drought Management Policies should be developed up front so that Member Agencies know they will not be penalized for local water development.
5. Metropolitan should focus on providing financial, political, and technical support.
6. Metropolitan should provide programs that satisfy widely ranging local circumstances.
7. Metropolitan should measure implementation of the Preferred Resource Mix and provide an implementation "report card." Progress by Member Agencies and for the region as a whole should be reviewed regularly.
8. Metropolitan should consider establishing innovative financing mechanisms such as a "revolving fund" to help finance local projects. With respect to the latter, Member Agencies could apply for loans to carry out projects consistent with the IRP, and the Agencies would pay back these loans in a set time so that the monies could be used repeatedly.
9. Metropolitan should encourage sub-regional IRPs and participate in coordinated operations with the Member Agencies to make the IRP work at the local level.

C. Metropolitan should adhere to the following local water management program principles. These principles are not listed in any order of priority, and they need to be taken into account as a whole.

1. Regional benefits of both local storage and local projects programs should be measured by: (1) the reduction in capital investments due to a deferral and/or

down-sizing of regional infrastructure; (2) the reduction in O & M expenditures needed for treatment and distribution of imported water; and (3) the reduction in expenditures associated with developing alternative regional supplies.

2. Metropolitan's investments for local storage and local projects programs should not exceed the regional benefits over the life of the project(s).
3. Metropolitan's investments for local storage and local projects programs should be sufficient to encourage the implementation of projects identified in the Preferred Resource Mix. Such investments and their associated payment schedules should also be flexible enough to meet the needs of each project.
4. Metropolitan's participation in local storage and local projects programs should not cause large fluctuations in Metropolitan's water rates.
5. Local storage must increase regional supplies during time of need. Specifically, water placed in local storage programs must be utilized during time of need without displacing dependable local supplies. The amount of water involved should be agreed to in advance when each storage and local projects program is established.
6. Local projects programs must increase regional supplies and provide measurable regional benefits.
7. Performance of local storage and local projects programs should be verifiable (e.g., deliveries into and withdrawals out of local storage should be accounted for by either direct measurement or by incorporation into a shortage management plan).

V. CONSERVATION IMPLEMENTATION AND REGIONAL ROLES

The Preferred Resource Mix sets an ambitious goal for conservation. The Mix assumes that Best Management Practices will be adopted throughout the region.

- A. It is widely agreed that conservation is both essential and difficult to carry out. Conservation is essential not only for the IRP, but for environmental and political reasons as well.
- B. The barriers to successful regional water conservation are many and include the following:

1. Some conservation components are difficult to measure.
2. Water rates are expected to rise alongside conservation, and this strikes the consumer as unfair.
3. It is difficult to set regional standards for conservation performance. Using current consumption as a baseline penalizes those who have already begun to conserve.
4. Metropolitan and even many of the Member Agencies are not involved directly in retail water sales to consumers, and yet consumers are the real implementers of many conservation measures.
5. Some of the most effective conservation measures are implemented through building codes, landscaping ordinances, and other regulatory programs, and yet Metropolitan and some Member Agencies lack regulatory powers of this sort.
6. There is uncertainty over how much it will cost and therefore whether it will be financially feasible to implement all of the BMPs.
7. Member Agencies are hesitant to expand conservation programs before Metropolitan establishes its Drought Allocation Plan.
8. Because of existing rate structures, some retail agencies are concerned about the financial impacts of conservation.

C. There are several views about how to deal with the IRP's conservation goals. A small group of participants believe that the conservation goals are unachievable and should simply be scrapped in favor of more realistic options. Another group (also small) advocates seeking legislation to enforce the BMPs. However, the largest group of Assembly participants wants Metropolitan to use both incentives and sanctions to encourage region-wide adoption of BMPs. The position of this largest group is that Metropolitan should assist Member Agencies with financial and technical support to implement the BMPs, and that it should use pricing structures to encourage Member Agencies to implement the BMPs. There is also some support for establishing conservation targets for each Member Agency, and for creating a conservation-based rate structure which rewards conservation during both droughts and periods of normal supply.

D. Both Metropolitan and the Member Agencies must play an active role in educating consumers about the importance of conservation in the region's Resource Mix. Consumers need to be informed that conservation is an investment that is part of a least-cost plan to enhance reliability. Although in many cases subagencies are the units directly involved with consumers, subagencies need guidance and support from Metropolitan and

the Member Agencies. Regional dissemination of information is critical because consumers need to be given a consistent message.

E. The following principles should be used to guide the development and implementation of Metropolitan's conservation programs:

1. Conservation projects should be designed to meet the IRP goals on a regional basis.
2. Recognizing that conservation occurs at the consumer level, the local water purveyor should sponsor the implementation of conservation measures. Metropolitan and the Member Agencies should work together to provide information, guidance, ideas, and incentives.
3. Metropolitan's pricing, financial incentives, and drought allocation methodologies should encourage the achievement of regional conservation goals, and any future water shortage allocations must recognize the "demand hardening" result of conservation programs.
4. Regional benefits of conservation projects should be measured by: (1) a reduction in capital investments due to a deferral and/or down-sizing of regional infrastructure; (2) a reduction in O & M expenditures needed for treatment and distribution of imported water; (3) a reduction in expenditures associated with developing alternative regional supplies; and (4) environmental benefits from reduced demands on the ecosystem.
5. Metropolitan's average level of investment for conservation projects should not exceed the regional benefits measured over the life of the project(s).
6. Conservation project savings must be verifiable and consistent in order to qualify for continuing Metropolitan investment. In partnership with Member Agencies and subagencies, Metropolitan will commit to pursuing evaluation studies to reliably define potential conservation savings and will continue to encourage studies of new or innovative conservation practices.
7. The region must devote a portion of the conservation investment to develop locally-implemented education programs. These programs need to be rigorously evaluated.
8. Metropolitan's investment in conservation projects should reflect equity among the Member Agencies. Agencies that conserved early should not be penalized for their initiative.

9. Metropolitan's participation in conservation incentives should not cause large fluctuations in Metropolitan's water rates. Metropolitan's involvement should be based on multi-year agreements for conservation.

10. Public and private partnerships to achieve conservation goals, implemented in cooperation with Member Agencies, should be included among conservation program measures. However, partnerships with the private sector should be based on a competitive system. Pay should be linked to performance.

VI. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The IRP and associated American Assemblies have produced many positive changes in the relationship between Metropolitan, Member Agencies, subagencies, other water providers, and the public. In some ways, the process was as important as the final product.

A. Important benefits of the IRP and the Assemblies include: improved communication; enhanced understanding of similarities and differences; deeper trust; new cooperation with other stakeholders; more knowledge about resource mix options and implications; and greater appreciation for the interrelations between groundwater, surface water, conservation, and reclamation.

B. The IRP and the Assembly process should be continued and expanded. The IRP needs to be periodically evaluated and discussed, and progress reports need to be issued. At the same time, other groups, such as businesses, consumers, and local elected officials, should be brought in. If we hit a snag, we should not retreat to the old ways.

C. The story of the IRP and the Assemblies should be told. The region and the state need to know that Southern California's water agencies are working together to assure reliable water supplies for the future. Incremental progress needs to be acknowledged and celebrated.

D. Assemblies should become an integral part of regional decision making. Other regional water policy issues beyond the IRP should be handled through the Assembly process. Workshops and forums should be used as well.

E. The policies of Metropolitan and other boards that are inconsistent with the IRP should be identified and addressed.

F. When Urban Water Management Plans are amended in future years, they should be aligned with the IRP.

G. Metropolitan should act as an agent to facilitate achieving a higher level of local reliability, when requested, at the Member Agency's cost.

H. A wheeling policy must be developed by the Metropolitan Water District Board of Directors.

VII. SAN PEDRO PRINCIPLES

The following statement of principles captures the overall philosophy developed through the Assembly process:

This statement is a declaration of a new spirit of partnership within the Southern California water community.

Water providers in Southern California face a changing set of challenges. In the past, Member Agencies could depend on Metropolitan to independently meet the region's needs for imported supplies, and Metropolitan could operate primarily as a water importer. In recent years, however, increased environmental regulations and the attendant competition for water from outside the region have resulted in reduced firm supplies of imported water. At the same time, demand is rising within Southern California because of continued population growth.

The growing gap between the region's water requirements and its firm supplies necessitates a number of steps to assure reliable, high quality water supplies and adequate funding. Water must be conserved. New local supplies must be secured. Increasingly stringent standards and public concerns about drinking water quality must be addressed. Surface and groundwater storage facilities must be developed. Innovative techniques must be evolved for transferring water from one area to another. Methods must be devised for storing supplies during wet seasons and allocating them fairly and efficiently during droughts. And new technologies for water reclamation and desalination must be explored.

These and other actions for assuring reliable, high quality water supplies for Southern California require a high level of cooperation, commitment, and trust within the region's water community. Water providers at all levels must work together to allocate local and imported supplies efficiently, to distribute the benefits and costs of the regional water system fairly, and to build public support for essential investments.

The following principles of partnership are endorsed:

1. No water supplier in Southern California is an isolated, independent entity unto itself. All suppliers and the community served are dependent to varying degrees upon a regional system of water importation, storage, and distribution.

2. Metropolitan is Southern California's lead agency in regional water management. It has responsibility not only for importing water from outside the region and constructing necessary conveyance and storage facilities, but also for convening dialogues on regional water issues, encouraging local water development and conservation, advocating the region's interests to the state and federal governments, and in other ways leading Southern California's water community.
3. Water suppliers at all levels have a responsibility to promote a strong water ethic both within the water community and among the public. This requires that plans be developed through open processes and that agencies commit to achieving adopted regional goals and strategies. It also requires that all suppliers commit to a policy of equity and fairness in the development and implementation of programs for water management.

OVERVIEW OF THE INTEGRATED RESOURCES PLAN ASSEMBLY

The March 1995 Integrated Resources Plan (IRP) Assembly brought together 101 water industry leaders who were members of Metropolitan's Board of Directors, Member Agencies, Metropolitan senior staff, groundwater agency managers, and representatives of retail subagencies that purchase water from Member Agencies to focus on strategies delineated through the IRP process for meeting the water needs of Metropolitan's service area through the year 2020. The main issue addressed was how to implement the IRP to achieve Metropolitan's reliability goal.

The American Assembly process is a procedure designed to reach consensus on controversial and complex issues of interest to diverse parties. The American Assembly started in the 1950s with President Eisenhower at Columbia University.

Central to the success of the IRP Assembly is the Steering Committee composed of representatives of constituency groups participating in the Assembly. The Steering Committee members for the Assembly are as follows: Metropolitan Board members serving on the Bay/Delta Political Advisory Ad Hoc Committee: Jim Blake, Charles Barker, Alf Brandt, Timothy Brick, Christine Frahm, Ted Grandsen, Bill Hill, Lois Krieger and Wayne McMurray; Member Agency representatives: Rich Atwater, Byron Buck, Gerry Gewe, Don Harringer, Don Kendall, Lester Snow, Stan Sprague and Ane Deister; and Metropolitan management: John Wodraska, Tim Quinn, Wiley Horne, Debra Man, Ed Means, Gary Snyder, Jay Malinowski and Bert Becker. Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith of the Florida Institute of Government facilitates the Assembly. Responsible for planning and coordinating the Assembly, the Steering Committee developed the key issue questions the Assembly considered. In addition, the Committee reviewed and modified the background papers which provided Assembly participants with information essential to understanding the key issues and alternative strategies for addressing the key issues.

During the evening of the first day of the Assembly, a video presentation from the three open forums held throughout Southern California was shown to review options and provide input on the IRP process. On the second day, the Assembly, divided into working groups, considered the key issue questions and developed positions and recommendations. Each working group had a pre-assigned facilitator and recorder. At the end of the second day, the facilitators and recorders met with Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith to construct a draft Assembly statement based on the positions and recommendations of the working groups. During the final session, the draft Assembly statement was reviewed by all participants, and the full Assembly, led by the Assembly facilitator, Dr. Lance deHaven-Smith, worked through the document. Revisions and/or changes to specific wording in the document were made by the full Assembly, and agreement was reached at that time on specific language adopted in the Assembly Statement.

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INTEGRATED RESOURCES PLAN ASSEMBLY

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