

Agenda Report Reviewed by:
City Manager: 

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting Date: December 21, 2021
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Council Members
From: Joe Gaffney, City Engineer
Subject: Approval of Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Rosa Groundwater Basin
Recommendation: By Resolution, Approve the Groundwater Sustainability plan
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No X N/A

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable) AK (verified by Administrative Services Department)

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request the City Council to approve a Resolution approving the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Rosa Groundwater Basin.

BACKGROUND:

On December 9, 2021, the Board of the Santa Rosa Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) held a public hearing to review and approve the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for the Santa Rosa Basin.

DISCUSSION:

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) became law on January 1, 2015 and requires local management of medium- and high-priority groundwater basins (as designated by DWR) to achieve a sustainable yield of groundwater from each basin and avoid undesirable results. The Santa Rosa Plain Subbasin (Subbasin) is a medium-priority basin and, in compliance with SGMA, the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) was formed in June 2017. In April 2018, the GSA notified DWR of its intent to develop a GSP for the basin.

This action kicked off an intensive, transparent process that has included 26 Board meetings, 27 Advisory Committee meetings and eight community workshops. All meetings have been publicly noticed on the website, <https://SantaRosaPlainGroundwater.org>, and information has been sent to an interested parties list of about 1,500 people. Throughout this process the GSA staff engaged in public outreach to include diverse perspectives in GSP development, including tribes, disadvantaged communities, and rural well owners.

In December 2020, a draft of Sections 1 and 2 of the GSP was released and posted on the website for Board, Advisory Committee, and public review. Subsequently, through July 2021, additional draft GSP sections were released for review and comment, and in August 2021 a full draft version of the GSP was released. During that time, hundreds of comments were received, including technical questions, substantive suggestions and edits for grammar and style.

After adoption of the GSP by the GSA Board, the Plan will be submitted to the State Department of Water Resources (DWR) for review and approval. The GSP must be filed with DWR by January 31, 2022. The process takes one to two weeks to complete. Once the document is uploaded in the required format, and is reviewed for completeness, DWR will open a review period in which the public may make additional comments for at least 60

days and up to 75 days. DWR has until January 30, 2024, to make a determination on the adequacy of the GSP. However, the GSA must begin immediately implementing the GSP; the first annual report is due on April 1, 2022.

The GSP development process is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), but the implementation of projects and management actions under the GSP is not exempt from CEQA. Thereafter, SGMA requires that the GSP be updated every five years. Subbasins which are not covered by an adequate GSP are potentially subject to state intervention and management of the groundwater by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

A full copy of the GSP is available for public inspection at <https://santarosaplaingroundwater.org/gsp/>, and at the Sebastopol Public Works office, 714 Johnson St, during normal business hours.

GOALS:

- This action supports the following City Council Goals and General Plan Actions:

Goal CSF 3: Provide an Adequate, Clean, Safe, and Environmentally Sound Water Supply to All Existing and Future Water Users in Sebastopol

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, a consent calendar item may be requested to be removed from the consent calendar if a member of the Council or public requests to provide public comment on this item.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to schedule meeting date.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact from this action.

RECOMMENDATION:

By Resolution, approve the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Rosa Groundwater basin.

Attachments:

Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. _____

RESOLUTION APPROVING THE GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
FOR THE SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUBBASIN

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors ("Board") of the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("Agency") elected to be the Groundwater Sustainability Agency ("GSA") for the implementation of the comprehensive groundwater legislation collectively enacted and referred to as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act at California Water Code Section 10720 et seq. ("SGMA") via unanimous approval of Resolution No. SRP-17-001 on June 1, 2017; and,

WHEREAS, the stated purpose of SGMA, as set forth in California Water Code section 10720.1, is to provide for the sustainable management of groundwater basins at a local level by providing local groundwater agencies with the authority and technical and financial assistance necessary to sustainably manage groundwater through the creation and implementation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan ("GSP"); and,

WHEREAS, the Agency provided the notices required by Water Code section 10727.8, and previously formed an Advisory Committee, consisting of a diverse group of interested parties and stakeholders, which has reviewed and provided input into the GSP for the Subbasin; and,

WHEREAS, the Agency has duly prepared a GSP for the sustainable groundwater management of the Santa Rosa Plain Subbasin ("Subbasin") which is designated Subbasin number 1-55.01 in the Department of Water Resources ("DWR") Bulletin No. 118 and which is a medium-priority subbasin; and,

WHEREAS, the Agency's jurisdiction covers the full geographical area of the Subbasin; and,

WHEREAS, the GSA engaged in an intensive, transparent process that included 62 public meetings where elements of the GSP for the Subbasin have been presented and discussed, and where the general public has been provided the opportunity to comment, and the Agency took into account diverse perspectives from stakeholders and local and tribal governments from throughout the Subbasin as well as rural well owners, environmental groups, and disadvantaged communities; and,

WHEREAS a complete draft version of the GSP was made available for public comment in October 2021 and the GSA staff received and addressed hundreds of public comments; and,

WHEREAS, notice was provided in August, 2021 to City and County Governments within the GSP area to provide a consultation opportunity per Water Code Section 10728.4; and,

WHEREAS, THE Board held a duly noticed public hearing on the GSP on December 9, 2021, where public comment was received, and the GSP was subsequently approved by the Board; and,

WHEREAS, the City of Sebastopol, as a member agency of the Agency, has participated in the writing of the GSP, and approves of the content thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council hereby approves the Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Subbasin, and recommends submittal of same to the State Department of Water Resources.

The above and foregoing Resolution was duly passed, approved, and adopted at a meeting by the City Council on the 21st day of December 2021, by the following vote:

VOTE:

Ayes:

Noes:

Abstain:

Absent:

APPROVED: _____
Mayor Patrick Slayter

ATTEST: _____
Mary Gourley, Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC

APPROVED AS TO FORM: _____
Larry McLaughlin, City Attorney