



# *Memorandum*

**TO:** RULES AND OPEN  
GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Vice Mayor Chappie Jones

**SUBJECT: ADVANCE THE STRATEGIC  
EXPANSION OF WATER REUSE IN SAN JOSÉ**

**DATE:** August 19, 2020

Approved

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**SUBJECT: Advance the Strategic Expansion of Water Reuse in San José**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. Direct the City Manager prioritize the pursuit of expanded recycled water use with Santa Clara Valley Water District (Valley Water) to increase local, drought-resilient supply and reduce reliance on imported water. Through collaborative efforts, Valley Water and the City of San José (City) should establish a negotiation team and negotiate to meet future water needs by developing and expanding programs and partnerships for water reuse, including both recycled water and potable reuse.
2. Place the item on the September 1, 2020 Council Agenda for action.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City and Valley Water share a history of working together and developing recycled water supplies since 1990. Building on the past collaboration efforts with recycled water and in planning the expansion of purified water facilities efforts, the two agencies are again poised to work together.

A reliable supply of clean water is necessary for the environmental, economic, and social well-being of Santa Clara County. On behalf of the community, Valley Water, along with the Cities of San José and Santa Clara, have made significant investments to manage demands for water as well as to develop water supplies and infrastructure to meet the county's water needs. However, demands continue to grow, and future supplies are becoming more uncertain due to climate change. It is now more important than ever to continue to expand these partnerships to develop locally controlled, drought-resilient supplies such as water reuse with partner municipalities.

## RULES AND OPEN GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

Month Day, Year

**Subject:**

Page 2

### **ANALYSIS**

In 2018, the City continued its commitment to environmental leadership by adopting the Climate Smart San José Plan, which provides the City with a strategy for moving toward a sustainable water supply and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. As such, the plan set a target of 14% of local water demand to be met by reuse/recycling by 2030 and 23% by 2040. Although San José currently has one of the largest recycled water systems through the South Bay Water Recycling Program, there is an opportunity to advance water supply goals in the Climate Smart San José Plan that will help the City address climate change-related water supply challenges.

Valley Water is currently working with the City of Palo Alto and Mountain View for an upgraded facility that would expand its water reuse program in North County. These types of programs offer multiple benefits, including being locally controlled and drought-resilient, and are generally well-supported by the community. This program also offers various environmental benefits, such as:

- Reducing county-wide reliance on imported water;
- Reducing water diverted from the Tuolumne River;
- Reducing pollutant loaded discharge to the San Francisco Bay.

In addition, I recommend that the City Manager prioritize solutions that:

- Ensure no future liabilities or adverse financial impacts on the Regional Wastewater Facility and sanitary collection systems;
- Reduce further loading of nutrients and other pollutants to the Bay;
- Minimize or reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Support a vibrant and adaptive ecosystem in the Lower South San Francisco Bay;
- Minimize the rate impact on our residents;
- Ensure long-term viable water supplies for San Jose.

Concurrently, Valley Water is evaluating the renewal of its Safe Clean Water Measure, which may provide additional funding opportunities for the City and Valley Water to collaborate.

### **CONCLUSION**

To assist in meeting our respective goals, I recommend that Valley Water and the City expand on its positive working history and move a partnership forward that supports increased usage of recycled water, similar to Valley Water's collaborative efforts with the City of Palo Alto and Mountain View, supports potable reuse efforts, and improves the environmental conditions of the San Francisco Bay.