



Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency

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Development of Projects and Management Actions July 29, 2020

Background

The Vina Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) must be approved and submitted to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) by January 2022. Projects and Management Actions (PMA) is a required element of the Vina GSP. PMAs comprise the efforts that will achieve the sustainability goals established in the GSP. PMAs can include regulatory and non-regulatory actions. To be considered for incorporation into a GSP, PMAs must meet criteria prescribed in the GSP regulations.

The scoping and development of PMAs will begin concurrently with the development of sustainable management criteria. A public process will be conducted to identify, evaluate and recommend PMAs to the Vina GSA. The required information for acceptable PMAs are considerable and should be drafted for inclusion in the GSP by June 2021 in order to meet the GSP deadline. The following outlines the process that the Vina Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) will develop PMAs.

Project and Management Act Criteria

The Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) Regulations (23 CCR §354.42 and §354.44) requires that each GSP include a description of the projects and management actions (PMA) that the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) has determined will achieve the sustainability goal for the basin as well as projects and management actions to respond to changing conditions in the basin. The GSP Regulations require that PMAs be based on the best available information and science. Documentation of supporting information and scientific references is a necessary component of a PMA. To be considered for inclusion in the Vina GSP, PMAs must include:

- A description of the measurable objective that is expected to benefit from the PMA. PMA (ex. groundwater levels, groundwater storage etc.).
- A description whether the PMA will be used to meet interim milestones, the exceedance of minimum thresholds, or where undesirable results have occurred or are imminent.
- A description of the circumstances under which the PMAs will be implemented, the criteria that would trigger implementation and termination
- A summary of the permitting and regulatory process required for each project and management action.
- The status of the PMA, including a time-table for expected initiation and completion, and the accrual of expected benefits.
- An explanation of the benefits that are expected to be realized from the PMA, and how those benefits will be evaluated.

- An explanation of how the PMA will be accomplished.
- A description of the legal authority to carry out the PMA and the basis for that authority within the Agency.
- A description of the estimated cost of the PMA and the plans to meet those costs.

PMA Development

PMAs can be developed prior to having the sustainable management criteria established. The draft basin setting data provides a relative idea of the magnitude of effort that will be needed to achieve sustainable management criteria. The initial effort to develop a broad set of potential PMAs will begin with a public scoping process. Capturing a broad set of PMAs is important to account for the data gaps identified in the basin setting discussion, changes to future conditions, and to provide flexibility with the implementation of the GSP. PMAs can be implemented over a 20 year period. In short, a single PMA solution to achieve groundwater sustainability would not be prudent. Generally, PMAs will either reduce groundwater pumping with or without a surface water supply replacement or increase groundwater recharge.

Potential PMAs will be evaluated not just on meeting the GSP regulatory requirements but on local considerations. The public will provide input regarding acceptability of PMAs that meet the minimum GSP standards. Some potential criteria for local acceptability include:

- Project is implementable with respect to technical complexity, regulatory complexity, institutional consideration, and public acceptance
- Project benefit is located in area (e.g., Management Area) of greatest need.
- Project is cost-effective (e.g, lowest unit cost per volume of water savings)
- Provides an environmental benefit or reduces an environmental impact
- Project addresses Disadvantaged Communities (DACs)

Conversely, there may be PMAs that meet other acceptable criteria but raise other issues that would make them unacceptable. For example, a PMA that affects the migration of a contaminant plume or conflicts with any other measurable objective would be eliminated. Public input will be sought on the criteria that would make a PMA more or less acceptable. Once a list of PMAs that are acceptable in terms of GSP requirements and other criteria, PMAs will be placed in prioritization of planned, potential or conceptual.

Planned – Projects in this category meet the acceptable criteria, have adequate planning and are scheduled to be completed prior to 2042.

Potential – Projects in this category meet the acceptable criteria but are in early planning stages, but possibly could be completed by 2042. For example, these projects may have uncertain funding sources or need additional analysis.

Conceptual – Projects in this category are in early conceptual planning stages and would require significant additional work.

PMAs that are part of the GSP will be monitored for meeting project milestones and results. The five-year performance reviews will document the status of the PMA. During the review period, PMAs failing to meet performance targets may result in other potential PMAs to be initiated in order to meet measurable objectives.

Projects will be administered by project proponents, the Rock Creek Reclamation District (RCRD) GSA and/or the Vina GSA. Projects would have to comply with all applicable rules including those of the Vina GSA and RCRD GSA. Projects conducted by project proponents would not be subject to approval by the Vina GSA or the RCRD GSA. However, for projects to be incorporated in the Vina GSP, the Vina GSA and RCRD GSA would have to approve their incorporation in the GSP.

PMA Drafting Process

August	Stakeholder Advisory Committee	Overview of PMA requirements and initial “brainstorming” of the types of PMAs
November	Public Workshop	Overview of PMA requirements, presentation of preliminary ideas and solicitation of other concepts
December	Stakeholder Advisory Committee	Review the results of the public workshop and the draft PMAs
January 2021	Vina GSA Board	Draft matrix of potential PMAs (unranked). Seek direction from the Vina GSA Board
February 2021	SHAC/Public Workshop	Review and possible recommendations on PMAs
April	SHAC	Review and possible recommendations on PMAs (revised from February 2021)
June	Vina GSA Board	Presentation of potential PMAs for incorporation into the GSP.