



PLANNING & BUILDING  
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

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# Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board

## Countywide Water Conservation Program

### June 1, 2015



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## **Introductions**

# **Planning & Building Water Team**

- Xzandrea Fowler, Project Manager
- Michael Hanebutt, Planner
- Cheryl Cochran, Planner



## **Tonight's Presentation Topics**

- 1. Project Overview**
- 2. General Plan/Code Amendments (Ag. Only)**
- 3. Environmental Review**
- 4. Status Update/Hearing Schedule**
- 5. Next Steps**



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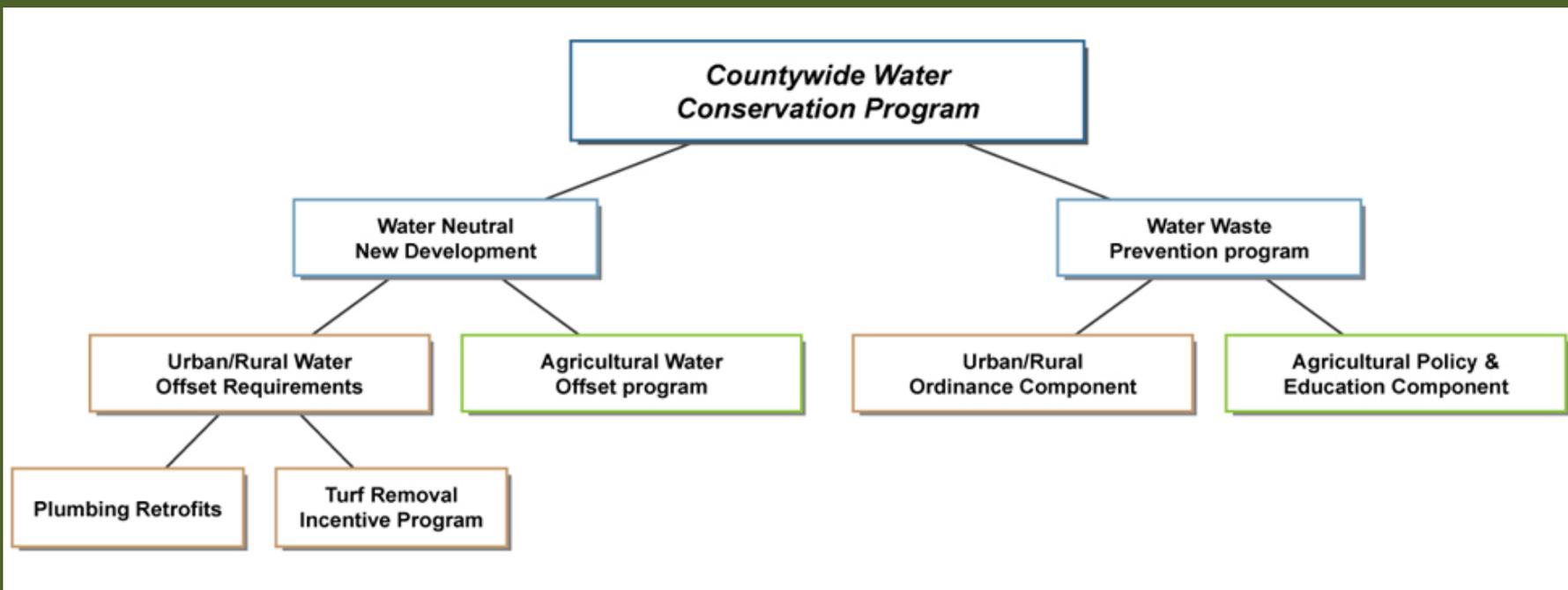
# **Project Overview: Agricultural Water Offset and Agricultural Water Waste Prevention**



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## Project Overview





## Program Component: Water Neutral New Development

**Any new water use will be offset through water savings from within the same water source:**

- Intended to serve as an interim measure to substantially reduce increases in groundwater extraction and the lowering of groundwater levels in certified LOS III groundwater basins.
- Implementation achieved through:
  - **Agricultural Water Offset**
  - Urban/Rural Water Offset



## Implementation: Agricultural Water Offset

- All new plantings overlying the PRGWB must offset water use at 1:1 ratio
- Planting credits are generated from removal of existing crops or switching to a different crop
- Planting credits obtained could be applied on the same site or applied to a receiving site
- Program to sunset at the adoption of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan pursuant to SGMA
- Title 22, Agricultural Element, and the COSE



## Project Component: **Water Waste Prevention**

Develop, implement, and /or encourage behavioral measures that will result in improved water conservation efforts for urban/rural land uses and agricultural operations:

- Implementation achieved through:
  - an ordinance prohibiting certain uses of water deemed to meet the definition of water wasting in urban and rural areas
  - policy clarifications that would identify a series of best management practices (BMPs) aimed at reducing water waste and increasing water use efficiency in agricultural operations .



## Implementation:

### Agricultural Water Waste Prevention

- Consists of policy clarifications that would include provisions to reduce agricultural water waste.
- The provisions would be limited to expansion/clarification of existing policies and implementation measures found in the Agriculture and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan.
- Changes would include best management practices as well as implementation of an educational outreach program.



## Implementation:

### Agricultural Water Waste Prevention

- In addition to the BMPs, the County would institute an education program for interested parties on how agriculture uses water and the purpose behind certain practices
- Examples include:
  - A website to educate the public on agricultural water use and a clearinghouse for water-efficient practices
  - Distribution of BMP information to agriculturalists during the pesticide permit and operator identification number issuance process



## Implementation:

### Agricultural Water Waste Prevention

- Examples of best management practices for efficient agricultural water use in different types of agricultural operations would include:
  - Increased adoption of crop water status monitoring, such as soil moisture monitoring technology.
  - More precise irrigation scheduling
  - Enhanced irrigation monitoring practices
  - Use of a tail water return system for any surface water application
  - Use of covers or other evaporation reducing systems for agricultural irrigation ponds
  - Use of wind machines for frost protection, rather than overhead sprinklers, where feasible



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# **General Plan and Code Amendments:** **Agricultural Water Offset &** **Water Waste Prevention**



## Amendments: **Ag Water Offset**

### Title 22 – Land Use Ordinance

This title contains a majority of the land use regulations in the County jurisdiction, addresses the inland area, and varies on how water issues are addressed based upon planning area designation. Regulatory requirements for land uses, minimum lot sizes, extension of services and new development water requirements are part of this title.



## Amendments: **Ag Water Offset** - continued

### Amendments to Title 22 – Land Use Ordinance

- Chapter 22.06 – Allowable Land Uses and Permit Requirements by Land Use Category
  - Section 22.06.030 - Table 2-2
  - Section 22.06.040 – Exemptions from Land Use Permit Requirements
- Chapter 22.30 – Standards for Specific Land Uses for the addition of a new Section 22.30.204 – New or Expanded Crop Production Overlying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin
  - Section 22.30.310 – Nursery Specialties



## Amendments: **Ag Water Offset** - continued

### Amendments to Title 22 – Land Use Ordinance

- Chapter 22.62 – Permit Approval or Disapproval
  - Section 22.62.030 – Zoning Clearance
- Chapter 22.80 – Definitions/Glossary,
  - Section 22.80.030 – Definitions of Land Uses, and Specialized Terms and Phrases



## Amendments: Ag Water Offset - continued

### Amendments to Agricultural Element

- Contains goals and policies to address agricultural issues such as agricultural land protection, water availability and conversion of agricultural lands to other uses.
- Agricultural Goal – AG I (Support County Agricultural Production)
- Agricultural Policy – AGPI 0 (Water Conservation)
- Agricultural Policy - AGPI I (Agricultural Water Supplies)



## Amendments: **Ag Water Offset** - continued

### Amendments to Conservation and Open Space Element

- One of the ten chapters of the element addresses water resources, which contains goals, policies, and implementation strategies to employ those policies in ordinances and decision making processes.
- Water Resource Policy – WR 1.7 (Agricultural operations)
- Water Resource Implementation Strategy - WR 1.7.1 (Protect agricultural water supplies)
- Water Resource Policy - WR 1.14 (Avoid net increase in water use)



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# Amendments: **Ag Water Waste Prevention**

- Implementation of this project component would require an amendment to the Agricultural Element
  - Agricultural Policy – AGPI0 (Water Conservation)



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# Environmental Review



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### EIR Process

Notice of Preparation/Comment Period -  
August 15, 2014 to September 17, 2014

Public Scoping Meeting -  
August 27, 2014

Draft SEIR Public Comment Period –  
March 31, 2015 to May 15, 2015 and  
May 22, 2015 to July 6, 2015

Final SEIR –  
Available Thursday, July 16, 2015





## DSEIR – Impacts Identified

### Agricultural Resources

- Impact AG-1: Result in fallowing of agricultural fields, crop conversion, or conversion of irrigation systems as a means of reducing water consumption which could result in direct conversion of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance.
- Impact AG-2: Would not result in a net decrease in the amount of designated agricultural land in the county



## DSEIR – Impacts Identified

### Agricultural Resources - continued

- Impact AG-3: Could result in the fallowing of lands under Williamson Act contract or conflict with the provisions of Williamson Act contracts.

### Land Use

- Impact LU-1: Would be potentially consistent with applicable policies of the General Plan or other applicable planning documents. Potential minor inconsistencies could occur with some policies.



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# Status Update



## Status Update

- DSEIR comment period opened: March 31 through May 15
- DSEIR comment period reopened: May 22 through July 6
- Hearing Schedule
  - PC study sessions – May 14, May 29 and June 4
  - Final SEIR released July 16
  - PC hearing/BOS recommendation – July 30
  - BOS introduction – August 11
  - BOS hearing – August 25
  - BOS hearing continued – September 1 (if necessary)
  - Earliest effective date of ordinances – September 24



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# Next Steps



## Next Steps – Review Process

- Environmental Review
  - Draft SEIR public comment period closes on Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Consultant will prepare responses to comments received
  - Final SEIR will be available Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup>
- Program/ Amendment Development
  - Changes will be made to the proposed General Plan (Agricultural Element/COSE) and Code (Titles 8, 19, and 22) amendments based on public and Commissioner comments received by Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Revised draft language will be available for public review in mid-July



## **Next Steps - Meetings**

- Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> – Planning Commission Study Session Continued
  - Meeting Objectives:
    - Review all changes to the proposed CWWCP details and the associated General Plan and Code amendments
    - Discuss the comments received on the Draft SEIR and the responses to those comments
    - Public Works staff available for questions



## Next Steps - Meetings Continued

- Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> – Planning Commission Hearing Continued
  - Meeting Objectives:
    - Review any additional changes to the proposed CWWCP details and the associated General Plan and Code amendments
    - Review and comment on the Final SEIR
    - Planning Commission recommendation to the Board regarding the adoption of the proposed CWWCP and the associated General Plan and Code amendments; including the certification of the Final SEIR



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# Questions