

# Agenda Report



**MEETING DATE:** Saturday, February 10, 2024

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** PUBLIC WORKS & UTILITIES DIRECTOR LINDBERG  
ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY MANAGER MCCLOUD

**THROUGH:** CITY MANAGER MENDEZ

**SUBJECT:** EXECUTION OF THE 2024 MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT  
(MOA) WITH THE SANTA CRUZ INTEGRATED REGIONAL  
MANAGEMENT (IRWM) PROGRAM

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## **RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Recommend that the City Council authorize the City Manager to execute the 2024 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Management Program.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City and other partner agencies entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in June of 2006 to guide the integrated regional water management efforts. The proposed MOA provides for ongoing grant efforts. The terms of the MOA are relatively general, and any specific obligations will be covered in future grant agreements and sub-agreements. To continue participating in the Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Program, the City will need to execute the updated 2024 Memorandum of Agreement.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The 2024 Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Management (IRWM) Program MOA has been updated to reflect recent activities since 2016 and new statewide programs. The statewide programs include the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA), and forthcoming programs that advance and incentivize regional planning through watershed resilience and climate resiliency programs as outlined in the State Water Plan update in 2023.

Santa Cruz County is the lead agency in developing the Regional Water Management Program. County staff worked with the partner agencies in the county, including the City of Watsonville, to develop and implement the Northern Santa Cruz Preliminary Integrated Regional Water Management Plan in 2005. In June of 2006, the city entered into a memorandum of agreement with the other partner agencies that ultimately led to significant grant funding in 2008 and has continued through today. In 2016, Santa Cruz

Regional Water Management Group into a Central Coast Funding Area Memorandum of Agreement with the six other Central Coast Integrated Regional Water Management Programs to improve the IRWM planning process. This process allowed for all six funding regions to improve efficiency and equitable grant distribution across the Central Coast.

Participation in the Regional Water Management Plan is necessary to qualify for grant funding. Nearly all State grant programs now require that the project applicant is part of an Integrated Water Management Plan to qualify for grant funding. Signing the MOA demonstrates the City's intent to participate in future integrated water planning efforts and positions the city for many important grant funding opportunities that could fund water supply and water quality improvement projects. To date, the Central Coast Funding Area has been awarded \$43M across the Region.

The City of Watsonville has been a recipient of Santa Cruz IRWM grants that include Proposition 1 funding for Disadvantaged Community engagement for the Middle Struve Slough Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Project in the amount of \$105,000, Emergency Drought grant funding in the amount of \$4.85M for the Airport Reservoir Project, and recently \$545,000 for the Atkinson Lane Integrated Flood Management and Watershed Restoration Project.

**STRATEGIC PLAN:**

The execution of the 2024 Santa Cruz Integrated Regional Water Management Program Memorandum of Agreement supports the following Strategic Goals:  
2-Infrastructure & Environment

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:**

There is no financial impact with executing the Santa Cruz IRWM Program MOA.

**ALTERNATIVE ACTION:**

City Council could not execute the Memorandum of Agreement.

**ATTACHMENTS AND/OR REFERENCES (If any):**

1. 2024 Santa Cruz IRWM MOA Cover Letter