



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 16-835, **Version:** 2

Item #: PH-1.

CC - (1) Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the City to Become a Member of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Santa Monica Groundwater Basin (SMBGSA) in Concert with Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills and the County of Los Angeles, Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act; and (2) Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding Related to the City's Participation in the SMBGSA.

Meeting Date: May 30, 2017

Contact Person/Dept: Helen Chin/Public Works Department

Phone Number: (310) 253-5618

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☒ No ☐

Public Hearing: ☐

Action Item: ☒

Attachments: ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council (05/24/17);

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson/Public Works Director/City Engineer (04/26/17)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the City Council (1) adopt a resolution authorizing the City to become a member of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency (SMBGSA) for the Santa Monica Goundwater Basin in concert with Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, and the County of Los Angeles, pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA); and (2) approval of a Memorandum of Understanding related to the City's participation in the SMBGSA.

PROCEDURE:

1. The Mayor seeks motion to receive and file the affidavit of mailing and posting of public notice.
2. The Mayor calls on staff for a brief staff report and City Council poses questions to staff as desired.
3. The Mayor seeks a motion to declare the public hearing open and the City Council receives

public comment.

4. The Mayor seeks a motion to close the public hearing after all testimony has been presented.
5. The City Council discusses the matter and arrives at its decision.

BACKGROUND

In September 2014 Governor Brown signed three bills (AB 1793, SB 1319, and SB 1168) designed to advance groundwater management in California. The legislation, together known as the SGMA, provides for improved management of groundwater in unadjudicated basins by local authorities. The SGMA is one component of an integrated state policy that includes conservation, recycling, safe drinking water, storage, and watershed restoration. Sustainable management addresses management and use of groundwater in a way that can be maintained during planning and implementation without lowering groundwater levels, significant reduction in groundwater storage, unreasonable salt water intrusion, degradation of water quality, land subsidence, and surface water depletion.

Groundwater provides water for over 6 million Californians and is used by much of the state's \$45 billion agriculture industry. Groundwater is a critical resource that has been overused and under-regulated for over a century leaving California at risk for catastrophe during periods of extreme drought. During California's severe drought, farmers and other large users were encouraged to pump their own groundwater when surface water supplies ran low. Good groundwater management will provide a buffer against drought and climate change, and contribute to reliable water supplies regardless of weather patterns.

Department of Water Resources (DWR) Bulletin 118 has identified 515 alluvial groundwater basins in California and ranked these basins from high to very low priority. Basin prioritization is a statewide ranking of groundwater basin importance that incorporates groundwater reliance throughout the State and a scoring criteria for each basin using eight specific criteria: overlaying population, projected growth of overlying population, public supply wells, total number of wells, irrigated acreage overlying the basin, reliance on groundwater as the primary source of water, impacts on the groundwater, and other information deemed relevant by DWR.

The Santa Monica Groundwater Basin is considered a medium priority basin and is required to develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The basin covers approximately 50 square miles under the cities of Santa Monica, portions of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills and most of the City of Culver City. Basins are required to have Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) covering the entire basin, either under a single GSA or multiple GSAs. If part of a basin is not covered, the County will be the presumed GSA for the unmanaged area.

DISCUSSION

Santa Monica, as the principal groundwater pumper for the basin, has been designated as the lead agency for formation of the GSA. Development of a groundwater management plan for the entire Santa Monica Groundwater Basin provides opportunities for local agencies to work together

collaboratively to develop plans to protect this asset and to achieve water self-sufficiency.

The City of Culver City can either join the Santa Monica Basin GSA (SMBGSA) or Los Angeles County will be presumed to be the GSA for the area under Culver City. By joining the SMBGSA, Culver City will be able to participate as a member of the agency that governs the entire Santa Monica Basin and advise on behalf of its residents and other stakeholders. The agencies within the SMBGSA will have authority to conduct investigations, determine the sustainable yield of a groundwater basin, measure and limit extractions, impose fees for groundwater management, and enforce the terms of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP). The SGMA states that nothing in a GSP supersedes the land use authority of cities.

The SGMA sets a timeline for implementation as follows:

- June 30, 2017: Local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) must be formed.
- January 31, 2022: Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSP) must be completed in all medium priority basins.
- 2042: Medium priority groundwater basins must achieve sustainability.

In order to meet the deadline to file a GSA with the DWR, staff recommends the City Council adopt the resolution authorizing Culver City's membership in the SMBGSA and authorize the City Manager to execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that details the City's duties under the MOU and its duties as a participating agency in the SMBGSA.

The following is the schedule for the participating agencies and their public hearings for the MOU:

- LADWP - **approved** 5/2/2017
- Santa Monica - **approved** 5/9/2017
- LA County, 5/23/2017
- Beverly Hills, 6/13/2017

FISCAL ANALYSIS

At this time, costs to form a GSA via resolution are primarily staff administrative costs. In the future, it is anticipated that costs will be incurred to procure a consultant to prepare a GSP. Any costs sharing between member agencies will be determined by separate agreements.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Resolution, including attached Memorandum of Understanding

MOTION

That the City Council:

1. Adopt a resolution authorizing the City to become a member of the Groundwater Sustainability Agency for the Santa Monica Groundwater Basin (SMBGSA) in concert with the cities of Santa Monica, Los Angeles, Beverly Hills, and the County of Los Angeles;
2. Approve a Memorandum of Understanding related to the City's participation in the SMBGSA;
3. Authorize the City Attorney to review/prepare the necessary documents;
4. Authorize the City Manager to execute such documents on behalf of the City; and
5. Designate the Public Works Director/City Engineer or his designee to represent the City on the SMBGSA.