



**San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
 Citizens' Advisory Committee  
 Water Subcommittee**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 28, 2025  
 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.  
 525 Golden Gate Ave., 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Tuolumne Conference Room**

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**Meeting ID / Passcode**

861 5404 3761 / 989566

**Mission:** The Water Subcommittee reviews water supply system reliability, water conservation, recycling, regional cooperation efforts, and other relevant plans and policies. ([Admin Code 5.140-142](#))

**Members:**

**Jennifer Clary (Chair) (D11)**    Eliahu Perszyk (M-Large)    Amy Nagengast (D8)  
 Douglas Jacuzzi (D4)            Water User

D = District Supervisor appointed, M = Mayor Appointed, B = Board President appointed

**Staff Liaisons:** Lexus Moncrease and Lupita Garcia  
 Staff Email for Public Comment: [cac@sfwater.org](mailto:cac@sfwater.org)

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**1. Call to Order and Roll Call at 5:34 pm**

Present (3): Clary, Perszyk, Nagengast

Absent (1): Jacuzzi

Staff/Presenters: Manisha Kothari, Jennifer Lee

Members of the Public: Peter Drekmeier, Tom Smegal

**Daniel L. Lurie**  
 Mayor

**Kate H. Stacy**  
 President

**Joshua Arce**  
 Vice President

**Avni Jamdar**  
 Commissioner

**Steve Leveroni**  
 Commissioner

**Dennis J. Herrera**  
 General Manager

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## 2. Approval of the [October 22, 2024 Minutes](#)

Motion was made (Nagengast) and seconded (Perszyk) to approve the October 22, 2024, minutes.

Minutes approved without objection.

Public Comment: None

## 3. Report from the Chair

- Chair welcomes committee members, staff, and the public
- Chair Clary announced that there have been two seats vacant due to transitions and introduced member of the Public, Tom Smegal, Bay Area Water Supply & Conservation Agency (BAWSCA) CEO.

Public Comment: None

## 4. Public Comment: Members of the public may address the Committee on matters that are within the committee's jurisdiction and are not on today's agenda (2 minutes per speaker)

Public Comment: None

## 5. Presentation and Discussion: [Demand Forecasting Update](#), Manisha Kothari, Alternative Water Supply Program Manager, SFPUC & Jennifer Lee, Alternative Water Supply Project Manager, SFPUC

### *Presentation*

- Plan for Obligations, Build for Demands
- Retail vs. Wholesale Water Demands
- Background on Demand Projections
- What was in the 2020 Demand Model?
- Past Comments on Demand Projections
- Key Changes to the 2025 Demand Forecast
- Housing Unit Growth as a Key Variable
- Housing Growth Inputs
- Comparison of the Housing Growth Inputs
- Key Takeaways

### *Discussion:*

- **Member Perszyk** asked how long Staff Lee has been with the PUC.

**Staff Lee** responded she first worked at SFPUC in 2014 and left after a few years. She has since come back as of last March.

- **Member Nagengast** asked if there is State law requiring certain inputs in SFPUC's model or if the SFPUC is allowed to pick any inputs.

**Staff Lee** responded State law requires urban water suppliers need to coordinate with their respective regional, state, or local land use authorities on appropriate population growth number. Since the

SFPUC has historically used SF Planning Department for these projections, the SFPUC has translated housing units to population to get gallons per capita per day (GPCD). The law does not require the SFPUC to necessarily use the region's number and gives some flexibility for the water suppliers.

- **Member Nagengast** asked how the SFPUC's prior projections match in terms of actuals and how much of this was affected by the inputs.

**Staff Lee** responded that the SFPUC tasks this to consultants and in 2020, one thing the model assumed that did not pan out was the population growth because the SFPUC gets its data from the SF Planning Department and because the SF Planning Department gets the data from the Bay Area Plan which is not a legal document forecast until 2050. Since these demands and growth do not materialize, the SFPUC's demands are not going to be materialized either. An important assumption the model made was GPCD because if the actuals are closer to what the model assumed, it shows the assumption was not wrong, just the input of how many people are coming in. When looking at the 2020 model, single and multi-family homes had a slightly different per capita usage. Single family was assumed at around 40 gallons per day and multifamily was assumed around 35 GPCD. When looking at our most recent water resources annual report, the GPCD was around 40 so this assumption on the model was more or less correct.

**Member Nagengast** commented that this will help inform a future sensitivity analysis and help inform the confidence when making these allocations and from a public perspective, boost confidence and build a dialogue on the model and sourcing.

**Staff Kothari** responded the area numbers do need to be reflected somewhere because of a state mandate and having at least one scenario that includes them makes sense. Historically, the housing projections have not been at the pace they are projected to be so having two completely different scenarios helps find a range where the SFPUC would like to be.

**Member Nagengast** asked how the SFPUC comes up with the scenarios and if the two different scenarios are they sufficiently different enough to inform decision making.

**Staff Lee** responded that it is not just looking at two scenarios since any variables with the inputs create different scenarios for example what would the water rates be if at this housing size and this temperature creating all these permutations which is what is in BAWSCA's sensitivity analysis where there were so many, they had to pick 5.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that it is good to explain the SFPUC's logic and how it is refining the model because it is so complex and asked if the SFPUC accounts for changes in industrial development water usage because it is ever changing like the AI data centers in the South Bay.

**Staff Lee** responded that this demand projection is only for retail, so it does not include wholesale customers.

**Staff Kothari** further responded that the SFPUC is targeting the same schedule as BAWSCA to have both retail and wholesale demands updated to give a more complete picture.

- **Member Perszyk** asked if there is any change that the SFPUC is projecting for the future water consumption when assessing stream flow because he has heard that the estimates on water consumption are related to water storage and how much water kept in storage because there is an 8.5 drought year scenario that the SFPUC must keep.

**Staff Kothari** responded that for this exercise we are just looking at the demand side. For the supply side, these will come from negotiations with the State and where that lands can affect how much water is potentially available for storage and environmental flows. Demand works collaboratively with supply to look at both supply and demand to then assess the impact for the gap the SFPUC is planning for. For this exercise, we are just focusing on the demands and demand projections for 2045 and 2050 and the next Urban Water Management Plan Cycle that goes to 2050 which will be compared to the best information available on the supply side. Supply won't be directly affected by changes in demand.

**Member Perszyk** commented that it does affect projects that the SFPUC is planning but not storage and how the SFPUC manages its storage.

**Member Kothari** responded yes, and it affects what alternative water supply projects the SFPUC is pursuing. For context, when she presented the Alternative Water Supply Plan, the SFPUC had six projects that they were planning for that were about a third of the projected gap. The SFPUC has never been pursuing to reach 92 million gallons per day (mgd). The SFPUC keeps track of what the water supply gap is, and this gap will continue to change and the SFPUC does not have a long list of projects that will achieve the gap.

- **Member Perszyk** commented he has heard the Southeast Treatment Facility has a project upgrade, and the Water Enterprise will be constructing a nitrogen removal projected and asked for more details on this project.

**Staff Kothari** responded this is a purified water project in San Francisco and is referred as Pure Water SF. When looking at the equation for supply and demand, it affects the retail demand for the regional water system. How much retail will need from the regional water system will go down if we build local supplies and that is how the SFPUC has treated local groundwater project conservation done in the City. It has an overall effect of keeping the 73.5mgd retail demand down or pushing it further down.

**Chair Clary** asked when the SFPUC plans on opening the Pure Water plant and if the SFPUC is delivering recycled water to the west side of the City.

**Staff Kothari** responded as soon as possible but it is not very soon and no, not currently but the direct potable reuse Department of Pesticide Regulations (DPR) regulations are effective as of October 1<sup>st</sup> of last year and she has spent a lot of time working with pure utilities who are looking at the DPR requirements and the requirements are significantly greater than any other types of water supply projects in California and with good reason that the regulators are being very conservative in terms of more treatment, more institutional agreements, more permitting requirements, and needing to demonstrate effectiveness of the treatment, process, management and financing. The SFPUC needs to demonstrate for at least a year and half of data produced from a full-scale plant before it can put the water in the distribution system and is hoping to have the demonstration project in the next 8 to 10 years. Currently, the SFPUC is putting together an implementation plan to map out how it is going to accomplish this.

**Chair Clary** asked if this is one option for complying with the nitrate loading requirement that will come done in the next 3 to 5 years.

**Staff Kothari** responded that internally, Wastewater Enterprise (WWE) and Water Enterprise (WE) are having a lot more coordination on what the Wastewater requirements are going to be, both on the source control as well as the discharges and then what will be needed in terms of feed water for a purified water project and what happens to the brine.

- **Chair Clary** commented that we have great regulations and statutes for Urban Water Management plans, but DWR does not enforce them and thinking about the 8.5-year design drought is irrelevant now because of the requirement and statute for drought planning. Every year, you should know your water supply outlook for the next 5 years and be operating on a rolling 5-year planning horizon and voluntary reductions have taken care of most requirements like the 20% Jerry Brown required for his drought which was more than what would have been required in the 8.5-year drought design. Chair Clary asked about the finance projections versus the demand projections and how finance

is creating their projections and if they would be closer to the Department of Planning or DOF numbers.

**Staff Lee** responded that finance looks at previous sales data and they are projecting based on number of accounts opened, based on meter size, and other customer class. There is a memo that shows what finance's projections look like and they are more conservative because from a financial perspective when they are setting rates too high, there is a risk that we don't have enough revenues to cover demands so finance wants to make sure that they have sufficient revenues to cover growth where for Demand projections, it's the opposite and want to make sure we have enough water for these growth projections.

**Staff Kothari** further responded that the list of inputs is the lens from which they see it and the relationship between each of those inputs and water use. Finance is just looking at sales projections and historic sales.

**Chair Clary** commented finance must have a lot of uncertainty as well because business is still down from where it was in the last plan, and she asked what the current regional and retail water uses are because the water supply gap of 92 mgd seems incredible and she would like to understand what it is being compared to.

**Staff Kothari** responded she can get updated numbers to share.

- **Member Perszyk** commented that it would be good to see what the current existing obligations are separate from the potential.

**Staff Kothari** responded the current existing contractual obligation is the 265 mgd and the potential is the +9mgd. This number is not being used for planning purposes and are using the projected demands which is why we are trying to right size a range of what demand should be. The existing obligation stems from the 184-supply assurance to the wholesale customers which is the SFPUC's true obligation that exists in perpetuity from a settlement agreement in 1984. San Jose and Santa Clara have been customers of the SFPUC since the early '70s and have asked for longer term guarantee or assurance so they can continue their development. This takes form in ongoing discussions with San Jose, Santa Clara and BAWSCA where we meet monthly to talk about that and recognize when there will be a shortfall in dry years that needs to be addressed with a potential solution.

**Member Perszyk** commented that it would be good to see what the actual demand versus actual obligation for retail.

**Staff Kothari** responded they have tables like this from the Alternative Water Supply Plan that they can share.

- **Chair Clary** asked about the water availability with the Bay Delta Plan amendment that is now called Healthy Rivers and Landscapes instead of Voluntary Agreements.

**Staff Kothari** responded clarifying that this number is not based on the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes but what the State adopted in December 2018.

- **Member Clary** commented what she would like to understand is how the SFPUC plans for droughts in a way that helps instream flows because if we've had 18 dry years out of the last 24, how do we support species because right now traditionally when you have a drought species can go without for a couple of years and take 90% of the water and don't have salmon that year and 3 years later, don't have a salmon run but when you are doing this 3 years running, you lose the salmon and what does the SFPUC do to fulfill its responsibility for flows.

**Staff Kothari** responded the Alternative Water projects that are being discussed are not on the Tuolumne River and are local of our service area and are downstream of the flows.

**Chair Clary** commented that the SFPUC has not recalculated their numbers in a few years and if they can recalculate the 92 mgd.

**Staff Kothari** responded that for 152 mgd, the SFPUC is waiting for State negotiations.

**Chair Clary** commented that's fine and what she wants to understand is the 92mgd. If the SFPUC is looking at the water shortage plan in the Urban Water Management Plan and its planning for 5 years can't the 5 year projection include minimum needs for instream flows if we were to have a drought that lasts 5 years, the SFPUC can provide instream flows for the first 4 of 5 years.

**Member Perszyk** commented that this should be talked about when the full CAC meets and if the SFPUC were to increase water supplies, how could the SFPUC negotiate with Turlock and Modesto to increase instream flows to the river.

**Staff Kothari** responded in this equation right now, where this resides is in the 152 mgd number. The orange box in the presentation is what the SFPUC are hoping to right size with this exercise and then the 152 mgd number can be modeled in different ways and currently, it is based on the Hetch Hetchy model and 40% unimpaired flow scenario that stretches out over the 8.5-year design drought.

**Chair Clary** commented that the thing missing is the increase on earlier runoff because this impacts water supply as well.

**Staff Kothari** responded she is not sure how this is treated in the model and can ask internally.

- **Member Nagengast** commented that she is interested in the process and how the scenarios that are decided, what is the final number and what the different scenarios look like and asked how one is decided and the impact it has on water supply.

**Staff Kothari** responded that as the SFPUC goes through the process of digging into different scenarios, they can come back to the CAC and share. Regarding picking a scenario, depends on the where we are talking about reflecting it and in the Urban Water Management Plan, it has a set of requirements and the SFPUC will have at least one scenario that does reflect the arena numbers and what she envisions is that we have 2 to 3 scenarios that create a range especially for the Water Supply Planning side. The Urban Water Management plan would likely need to pick a scenario, and it would be one that includes the State mandated numbers.

**Chair Clary** responded that since the SFPUC is already using the rolling numbers and the Urban Water Management Plans, the SFPUC can use this kind of modeling to figure out its shortage because it would change by water year.

Public Comment:

- **Peter Dreke** (Policy Director at Tuolumne River Trust) commented he would like to acknowledge some positives from tonight's meeting including that they were heard, and a sensitivity analysis will be done. There were lots of good questions from the members and has slides that can answer some of their questions. In the past, he has offered to do presentations to the CAC and at one point former CAC Chair Garcia was interested but former member Sandkulla did not allow it because she did not want people to hear from him. Now that the CAC has Tom, and he has known Tom for a while and has a lot of respect for him, he knows that he has offered to do workshops and presentations and wants to put it out there again as he thinks the issues can be better understood in the way he presents them. Over the past 25 years the Urban Water Management plans have over-projected an average of 22% and are getting slightly better. In the 2020 plan, they projected the 2025 demand would be 216 mgd in the regional water service area and last year it was 184 mgd. We flagged a lot of this in 2020 and said the projections are going to be off because of the population numbers that are based on Plan Bay Area which is wishful thinking for developers who want to add jobs and housing. It was acknowledged in the Urban Water Management plan that in the previous 15 years, the population of San Francisco grew by 15% and then the projection for the next 15 years going up to 2035 was 25%, a much faster growth rate. We are not seeing this and do not know what factor COVID-19 played. In 2020, the SFPUC sent BAWSCA and its agencies a document that used 265 mgd as current



demand when in fact it was 198 and it took a little time to figure this out. SFPUC was not going to change it and got Former Commissioner President, Anson Moran involved to change it. By using actual demand, it reduced the potential ration by 27% and has all the documentation for this. It sounds incredible that the SFPUC would try to cook the books this way, but they did, and we caught them and said the Urban Water Management Plans are going to be wrong and stated as to why. We offered to have a workshop and before it was time to submit them, staff stalled and had the workshop 16 days after the Urban Water Management Plan was turned in and there's a lot of great information that should have been in this plan. In January of 2021, we got Commissioner Ajami and Moran to ask for a comparison of Water Enterprise demand projections which are Urban Water Management Plan and the Finance Bureau projections, which came up earlier in this conversation. It took staff 6 months to do something that he was able to do in an afternoon and showed that while both Finance and Water Enterprise had overestimated, Finance was much closer in range. In the Urban Water Management Plan and the Alternative Water Supply Plan, the 2045 projection is 244 mgd and for Finance, it is 207, which is a 37 mgd difference and amounts to a saved \$7 billion dollars in not overinvesting. There was a Water Supply Assessment on the agenda today for the SFPUC and this project would entail about 400,000 square feet of office space and about 150,000 of hotel space, no housing which will add to the housing crisis. There is a huge disconnect between the SFPUC and the Planning Commission, who approve development. PUC approves every water supply assessment because they believe we have plenty of water, but Commissioners have brought up the question of why water for development is there always but not for the environment. What needs to happen is water assessments need to be reviewed carefully and ask questions that make the SFPUC and Planning Commission think. We do not have an endless supply of water and need to use it most effectively. In 2018, there was a survey done to San Francisco voters and found the number one motivator for people to conserve water was to help the environment. The water currently being conserved does not help the environment and is happy to give a presentation on this. Number two was affordable housing where housing is still seen as a positive and office space is negatively seen. 85% of people who read a short description of Plan Bay Area said they thought it would worsen their quality of life. There is not a lot of support for the massive development and to base plans on it is just political, making it a way of saying we don't have water for the Bay Delta Plan.

- **Tom Smegal** (BAWSCA CEO) commented he likes all the talk about coordination, and staff at BAWSCA are excited about the new program to develop the water demand projections and he is asking when does he get to see the numbers because he is curious to understand how the housing demands and big arena numbers in the Peninsula and South Bay affect us and is glad that the SFPUC and BAWSCA are using similar approaches. He is glad to hear that the SFPUC was

responsive to the questions and concerns that were brought up about scenarios and looking forward to seeing the results later this year.

## 6. Staff Report

- No Staff Report

Public Comment: None

## 7. Future Agenda Items and Resolutions

### Standing Subjects

- Groundwater
- Water Quality

### Specific Subjects

- Green Infrastructure - *Tentatively WW Topic*
- Integrating Tribal Leaders into SFPUC Land Management Decisions
- State Board Water Rights
- Water Enterprise Environmental Stewardship Policy Implementation Report
- Debate about Bay Delta – Member Sandkulla suggested everyone watch the February 5, 2021, Commission workshop about the Voluntary Agreement
- COVID and Long-term Affordability Program
- Implementation if the Bay Delta Plan Flow Requirement
- Hetch Hetchy Water and Power Division Update
- State Policy and Programs on Affordability or Low-Income Rate Assistance (LIRA)
- Bay Delta Plan and voluntary settlement agreement
- Legislative Update
- State of the Regional Water System Report – Bi-annual report
- Drought resilience: 3-year water supply update
- Water Equity and Homelessness
- State of Local Water Report
- Retail Conservation Report
- Harry Tracy Water Treatment Plant tour

### Adopted Resolutions for Follow Up

- Resolution in Support of a Resilient Water Supply [adopted August 17, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of the Southern Skyline Boulevard Ridge Trail Extension Project [adopted April 20, 2021](#)
- Resolution in Support of Interim Emergency Rate Assistance Program and Revised Community Assistance Program [adopted July 21, 2020](#)
- Resolution in Support of Improved Communications Related to the San Francisco Groundwater Supply Project [adopted August 21, 2018](#)
- Resolution in Supporting Stewardship and Public Access in the Redeveloped Lake Merced West Property [adopted in March 15, 2016](#)
- Resolution on Impacts of Drought on System Maintenance and Improvements [adopted January 19, 2016](#)

### Public Comment:

- **Peter Dreke** commented that the SFPUC's CAC priorities for this year are great and for the 5 years of drought in the 2010's, the average unimpaired flow was 12% in the lower Tuolumne and in 2017, it was 79%. In 2017, the flatline release was 9,000 cubic feet per second

(CFS) for two months and 9,000 cfs is the cutoff because the army corps does not want anything above because of flooding. There was a week where it went up to 15,000 cfs and there wasn't too much flooding but there was about 70,00-acre feet that they could not control the water which is equivalent of the water conservation for 5 years. So not only did it not help the river, but it also put Modesto at risk and probably flushed out juvenile salmon before they were ready to go out. They suggested a few years ago where since the Bay Delta plan is not in effect at the moment and demand is low, the SFPUC could do 40% unimpaired flow for at least two years which was modeled and have a huge impact. The Commission nodded and staff said they would need to get an agreement from the irrigation district to do so. Regarding the Tuolumne River Agreement, which focuses a lot on habitat restoration and adds some water, The important question to ask is how much water will be added and the impacts on the Tuolumne River.

- 8. Announcements/Comments** Please visit [www.sfpuc.org/cac](http://www.sfpuc.org/cac) for final confirmation of the next scheduled meeting, agenda, and materials.

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Public Comment: None

**9. Adjournment at 6:59 pm**

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