

# SGMA Through a Planning Lens

- A look inside the mind of a planner
  - What does SGMA look like to a planner?
  - What is a planner's job?
- Where does water flow into planning practice?
- Practice tips for SGMA implementation



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# SGMA Requirements Are Deceptively Simple

## GSA's must:

- “**Take into account** general plan assumptions” in GSP
- Be **consistent** with general plan if adopting extraction limits
- Report on the **anticipated effect** of general plan amendments on GSP implementation

## Planning Agencies must:

- **Review & consider** GSP when amending general plan
- **Refer** “substantial” general plan changes to GSAs

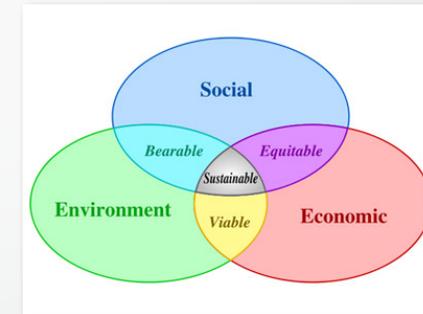
# A Familiar Process for Planners

- Preserve local land use authority for cities and counties
- General Plans should be foundational and stable
  - Don't reinvent the planning wheel for every project
  - General Plan is the starting point: GSPs must "account for" general plan assumptions
- But ... every project is different, so implementation is challenging
  - SGMA doesn't speak to general plan implementation

# What Is *Planning* In This Context?

- A plan for physical development that reflects a community's shared social values
  - Helps residents & developers build the kind of community they envision for themselves
- Community values are embedded in the plan whether they are explicitly stated or not
- Social values are complex and highly subjective, and variable over time

# Core Planning Principles: The 3 Es



## Three Es: Economy, environment and equity

- Process is full of trade-offs and the need to balance among competing and/or conflicting values & outcomes
- Planners must strive to serve the “public interest” that is a function of all these variables and values
- Not zero-sum!

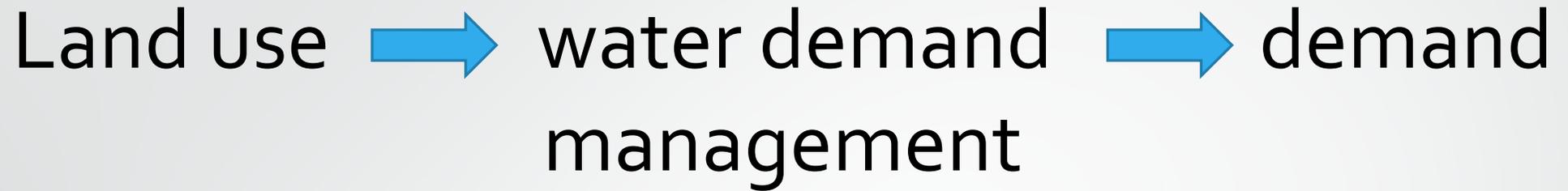
The background features a dynamic splash of water with numerous bubbles and light reflections. On the left side, there are large, overlapping geometric shapes in shades of blue and grey, creating a modern, abstract design.

# Where Does Water Flow Into Planning Practice?

# Land Development Drives Water Demand

- Land use type
- Land use design & intensity
- Density
- Location in relation to water sources

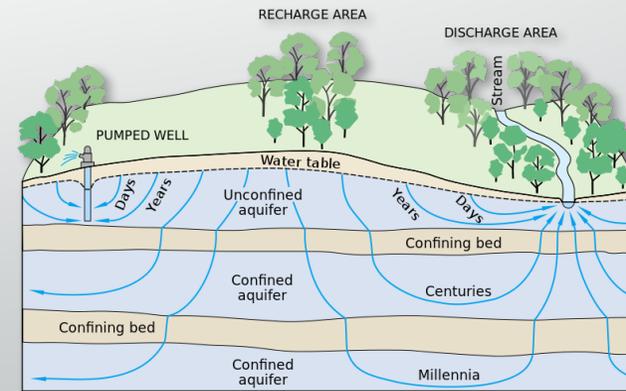
## Water in Planning Practice



- On-site conservation and water use efficiency
- State mandated landscape water efficiency
- On-site non-potable water reuse
- Zero net water use – NetBlue

# Water Resource Protection

- Location and design of new development
- Storm water management
- Protection/enhancement of recharge areas
- Wetlands & riparian protection
- Water related ecosystem services
- Water-dependent ecosystems



Water in Planning Practice

# Water Infrastructure & Public Safety

- Storage
- Conveyance (including recycled water)
- Water management (especially recharge and storm water)
- Flooding and other hazard mitigation
- Protecting water quality
- Assessing vulnerability and risk
- Climate change



Water in Planning Practice

# Equity and Environmental Justice

- Safe, reliable water supply
- Environmental Health, including wastewater disposal
- Socially disproportionate impacts
- Disadvantaged communities



# It All Happens In A Political Context

- Land use decisions made by local elected or appointed officials
- CA still values home rule, mostly; one reason that SGMA focuses on local management of groundwater
- Values vary by locality and over time
- Land use decisions are based on political geography, not groundwater basins, watersheds or other natural system boundaries



# Summary: How to Think About Planning

- Values-driven
- Multi-dimensional; water is everywhere in planning
- It's political
- It happens on a public stage
- Process is an essential component

# Back to SGMA Mandates

- Planning agencies must review, consider and refer
- GSAs must account for the general plan and report on anticipated effects

## **This means that ...**

- Planning agencies need not do anything until they “substantially amend” their general plan
- No express requirement for consistency between general plan & GSP

**Plenty of opportunities to stay in our silos!**

# Practice Tips from a Planner

- Planners need water managers on their team, and visa versa
  - Planning is by nature inter-disciplinary, not multi-disciplinary
  - Leadership is key
- Successful community planning is based on relationships
  - Start early and work your relationships to avoid surprises
- Have a *plan for planning*; know the process and plan for managing public engagement
- Understand that planning has traditional limits (rural residential & ag land uses)

# Practice Tips from a Planner

GSP adoption is only the beginning

- How can the general plan and the planning process support GSP implementation and groundwater sustainability?
  - Not just a matter of *consistency*
  - Groundwater sustainability should be a general plan goal too
  - Does the general plan need updating to fully reflect GSP implementation?
- GSP will be the new CEQA baseline for groundwater impacts
  - Planning agencies and planners will need training & orientation
  - GSAs can help with implementation



# Thank You!

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