

**Sustainable Silicon Valley  
Water Initiative  
Policy, Principles and Objectives Document  
Final Draft February 2005**

**Sustainable Water for Residents, Businesses and Ecosystems”**

**Policy**

Water Resources Management is sustainable when it is economically, socially, and ecologically sound and meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable resource management must be completely transparent, address the diverse needs of the community, accommodate growth, be integrated with community planning and the built environment, and not result in environmental harm.

Sustainable Silicon Valley (SSV) has identified water as one of the region’s top sustainability priorities. Reliable clean water is crucial to the region’s human health, economy, ecosystem and quality of life. SSV is facilitating the dialogue on water sustainability in the region and seeks to educate and gain broad support from community stakeholders including local governments, public agencies, municipalities, businesses, and community groups. SSV will work to integrate water sustainability with other environmental/sustainability priorities, such as reducing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. On April 26, 2004, SSV convened a workshop for 100 regional stakeholders to understand what water resource management leaders believe are the top water priorities for the region. Based on the input from this workshop, the top water priorities for the region are:

1. Maximize water use efficiency and conservation
2. Ensure a reliable supply of high quality water
3. Preserve existing water rights that serve the region

Our first water sustainability priority for the region is to minimize water demand increases through implementation of water use efficiency and conservation measures. We intend to work toward significant water use improvements in all types of urban water use, recognizing that population and economic growth will continue to put upward pressure on demand. Approved regional growth should not drive us further from sustainability. Cities and land use planning agencies must stress the need for increased water use efficiency (water conservation, recycling, appropriate landscaping), in all new development and redevelopment projects and ensure that appropriate public and private investments are made for implementing water recycling and water conservation measures.

Our second water sustainability priority is to ensure that the region has equitably priced and reliable supply of high quality water. In this context, reliability means a certainty of supply to meet the region’s current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This is crucially important for continued viable health of our people, our economy, and our ecosystems.

Our third water sustainability priority is to ensure that the region continues to preserve use of the wide variety of existing water supply sources. The protection of the region's water rights is crucial to ensure that water supplies are not diverted away from the region or used unsustainably. When available, surplus water from water conservation efforts should be used in a manner that most benefits our community and ecosystems as well as adheres to sustainability principles.

## Principles

Members of the SSV Water Initiative have developed the following principles, which embody the input received at the SSV stakeholder water workshop held in April 2004 to address these top regional water priorities. These will guide the objectives and targets to be established for this initiative.

1. Encourage partnerships and cooperation so that water resource management decisions are based on common values and consensus among all key stakeholders;
2. Manage local and imported sources of water and the use of the groundwater basins to ensure a long term, reliable, flexible, and clean water supply;
3. Actively protect and enhance water quality for all beneficial uses of water;
4. Encourage adoption and enforcement of more efficient and conservative water use through revised building codes, ordinances, standards, policies and programs;
5. Develop and deploy engaging and effective water-wise education programs and encourage community activism in water sustainability;
6. Ensure the reality of climate change is incorporated into long-term water resources planning, management, and asset maintenance decisions.
7. Support the integration of water sustainability into related issues such as land use, energy, and economic development.

In educating and inspiring others to action, we will also seek to create and propagate models and tools for water sustainability excellence, and to build capacity for better management of this essential resource within other regions of California, other states, and our neighbors around the world.

## Objectives

SSV water initiative will pursue the following objectives in support of these principles beginning with the Priority "A" objectives. SSV water initiative stakeholders will adopt goals (targets) for these objectives in the next phase of this initiative.

	<b>Demand Management/Technology</b>	<b>Priority</b>
1.	Identify existing data on the current urban water sources for the region and their capacities relative to the service area population and projected population.	A
2.	Strengthen green building practices and adoption in city planning processes. <sup>1</sup>	A
3.	Promote water-saving landscape practices by residents, businesses, institutions in local governments (e.g. distributing education materials)	A
4.	Facilitate installation of water and sewer meters on all significant water use activities.	A
5.	Identify programs (through agency/utility company rebates) to help residents, commercial and institutional users purchase evapotranspiration controllers, drip irrigation equipment, and other water efficient equipment.	B

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<sup>1</sup> Examples: Modify California Environmental Quality Act Office of Planning and Research (CEQA OPR) guidelines used in CEQA planning.; Increase use of porous pavement and vegetated drainage swales.

**Metrics**

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| 6. | Define the attributes of water supply reliability and develop a consensus list of supply reliability metrics. <sup>2</sup>            | A |
| 7. | Define water budgets for customer classes (e.g. a new water rate schedule) that could be used to support incentives for conservation. | A |
| 8. | Update existing and promote new water efficiency standards for water consuming equipment.   | B |
| 9. | Identify impaired water bodies or water supplies with potential for impairment (e.g. water quality)                                   | B |

**Education/Communication**

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| 10. | Broaden water education curricula for elementary schools.  | B |
| 11. | Identify new funding for radio/newspaper/TV public service announcements on water supplies and conservation.   | B |
| 12. | Conduct outreach to city council staff to bring visibility to SSV's high priority water objectives and to solicit participation in implementing the objectives. <sup>3</sup> | A |

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<sup>2</sup> Example: Frequency and severity of water delivery system failures or water shortages.

<sup>3</sup> Outreach should use examples of specific successful sustainable projects.