

# Groundwater Sustainability Agency Formation Update

City Council – Study Session  
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# Our mission:

Protecting public health  
by sustaining water  
resources, infrastructure  
and the environment



# Presentation Outline

- Santa Rosa Groundwater Background
- SGMA Requirements
- GSA Eligible Entities
- GSA Formation – Staff Discussion
- Next Steps



# Santa Rosa Groundwater Background

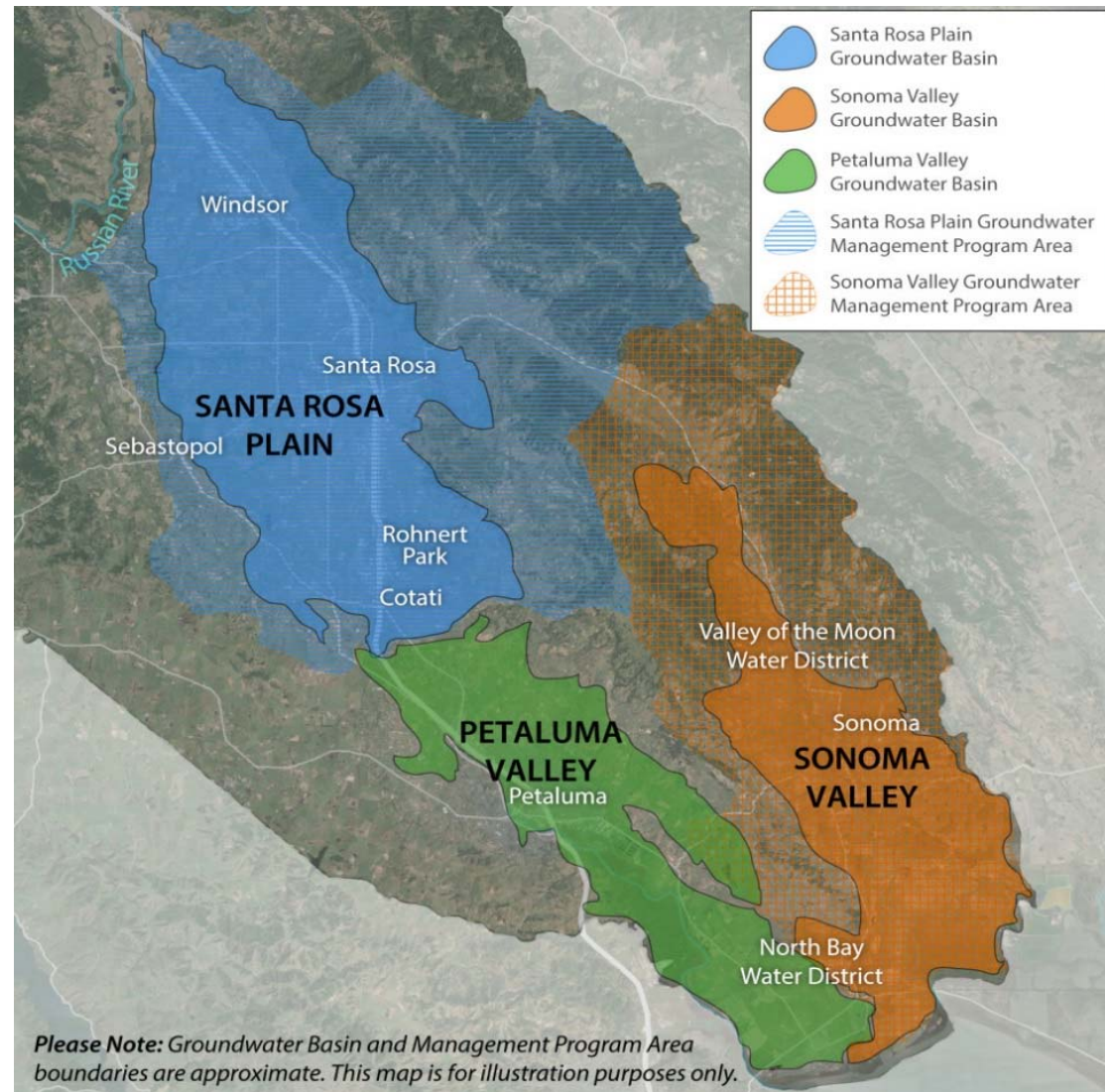
- Groundwater provides 5-10% annual water supply
  - Farmers Lane Wells
- 2013 – Santa Rosa GW Master Plan completed
  - Strategic direction for sustainable groundwater use
  - Emergency Groundwater Supply Program





# SGMA

- Became law 1/1/2015
- Applies statewide to medium and high priority basins
- Applies to three basins in Sonoma County



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# Required Steps to Groundwater Sustainability

## Step one

Form  
Groundwater  
Sustainability  
Agency  
June 30, 2017

## Step two

Develop  
Groundwater  
Sustainability  
Plan  
January 31, 2022

## Step three

Achieve  
Sustainability  
20 years after  
adoption of  
plan\*

\* DWR may grant up to two, five-year extensions on implementation upon showing of good cause and progress



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# What will the GSA do?

Manage groundwater without causing *undesirable results* (as defined by SGMA)

- Chronic lowering of groundwater levels indicating supply depletion
- Reductions in groundwater storage
- Seawater intrusion
- Degraded water quality
- Land subsidence
- Surface water depletions that adversely impact beneficial uses



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# GSA authorities per SGMA

GSA at their discretion are empowered to:

- Conduct studies
- Register and monitor wells
- Require groundwater extraction reports
- Regulate groundwater extractions
- Implement capital projects to meet goals
- Assess fees to cover cost of groundwater management



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# Land-Use Planning Connections

## GSAAs must:

- Notify cities, county of hearings to adopt plan
- Incorporate and maintain consistency w/ general plan assumptions

## GSAAs may:

- Request notification of new well permits
- Adopt spacing requirements for new wells

## GSAAs cannot:

- Supersede land use authority of cities/county



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# GSA Eligible Entities

- Each agency must have one of the following authorities:
  - Water supply
  - Water management
  - Land Use
- Santa Rosa Plain Subbasin - Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Windsor, Sebastopol, SCWA, County, Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- County is the default in “uncovered areas”



# GSA Formation Background

## 2015

- Stakeholder Assessment completed
- Staff Working Group created of countywide GSA-eligible agencies
- Principles adopted by GSA-eligible entities to commit to working together and with the public
  - City Council Resolution No. 28702
- Public Workshops – Santa Rosa Plain held in Dec



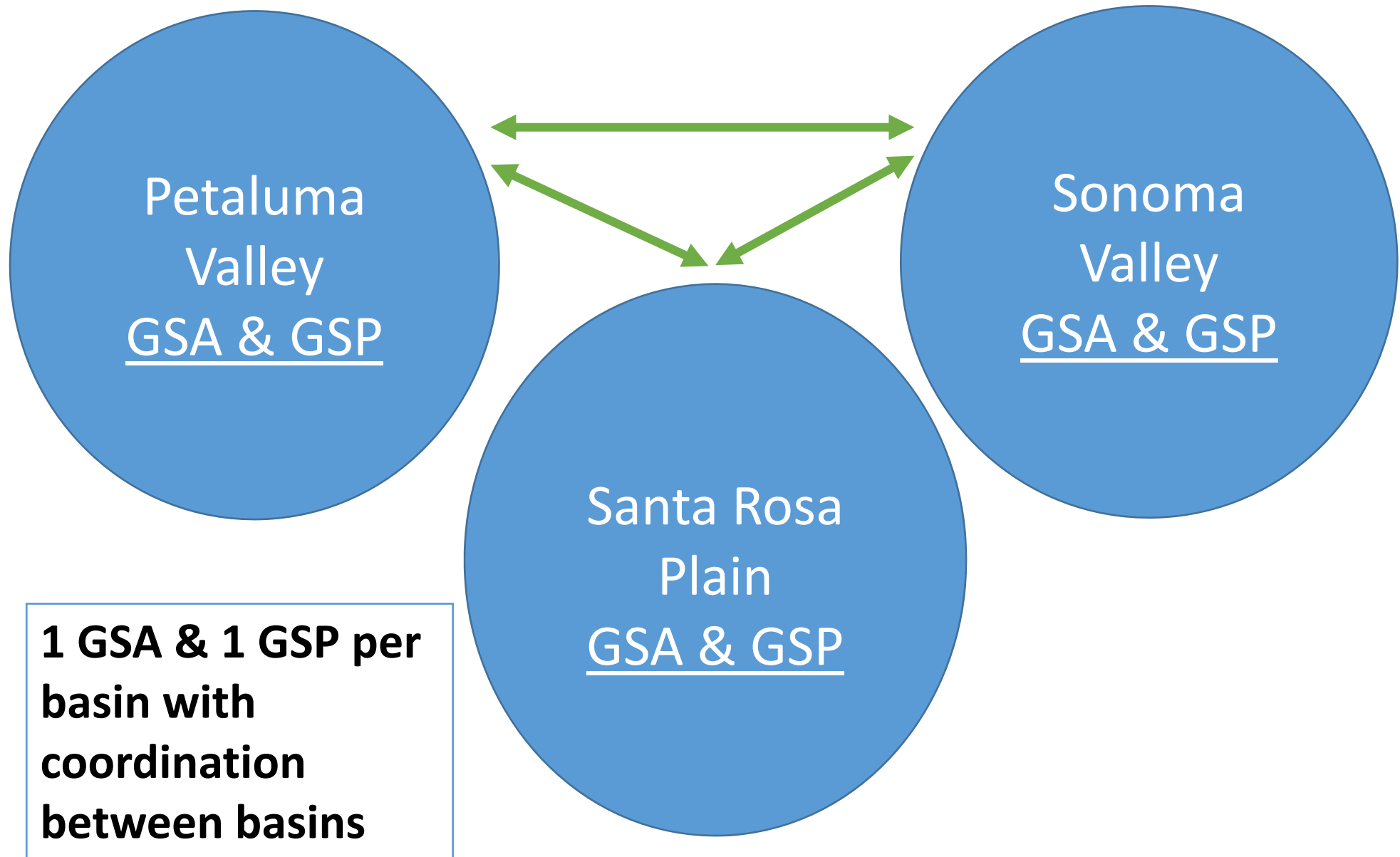
# GSA Formation Background

## 2016

- Website: [www.sonomacountygroundwater.org](http://www.sonomacountygroundwater.org)
- Monthly email updates on SGMA activities
- Formal comments on California's GW sustainability plan draft regulations (Spring 2016)
- Received \$250,000 Proposition 1 grant for managing/sharing data across basins and with public
- Public Workshops – Santa Rosa Plain held in July



# GSA Framework Structure





# GSA – Staff Discussion

- Formation - Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)
- Members – GSA Eligible Entities
- Governing Board – One representative from each GSA Eligible Entity and PUC/Mutual Water Company Representative
- Public Process - GSA will comply with Brown Act



# GSA – Staff Discussion

- Voting – Two Tiered
  - One vote per board member
  - First tier – Majority based on topic
    - Unanimous – changes to the JPA
    - Super-Majority – GSP adoption/amendments, annual budget, large capital projects, fees, regulations, policy/legislative advocacy, property acquisition
    - Simple majority – all other topics
  - Second tier – Block voting based on land use authority



# GSA – Tiered Voting

**Tier 1 Voting by Majority**

# Voting	Super Majority	Simple Majority
9	6	5
8	6	5
7	5	4
6	4	4
5 (Quorum)	4	3

+

**Tier 2 Block Voting**

Land Use Authority
<b>Agencies w/ Land Use Authority</b> <b>4 of 6 Required for Approval</b> Sonoma County Cotati Rohnert Park Santa Rosa Sebastopol Windsor
<b>Without Land Use Authority</b> <b>2 of 3 Required for Approval</b> SCWA RCD Mutual/PUC

=

Approval

# GSA – Advisory Committee

- Purpose: Created for stakeholder input.
- Advise GSA Board on:
  - GSP development & implementation
  - Regulations
  - Fees
  - Capital projects
  - Programs
- Appointments: Formal application process
- Transparency: Public process, Brown Act meetings



# GSA – Advisory Committee

- 8 at-large members appointed by each GSA-eligible agency
- Mutual/PUC-regulated water company member
- Interest-based members:
  - 2 environmental representatives
  - 2 agriculture representatives
  - 2 rural residential well owners
  - Business community representative
  - Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
  - Tribal representatives





# Financial Considerations

- Start-Up Funding
  - GSA may require 2-3 years of operation before financially self-sustaining
  - Individual GSA-eligible agencies could provide gap funding or loan funding
  - Methodology to allocate appropriate member costs/risk under development
- Legal Consideration
  - Prop. 218/26
  - Pursuing legal opinion to develop funding strategy



# Next Steps

- Staffs from local agencies continue to develop framework and draft JPA
- Consideration of GSA by BPU and Council in 2017
- Form Santa Rosa Plain GSA by July 1, 2017

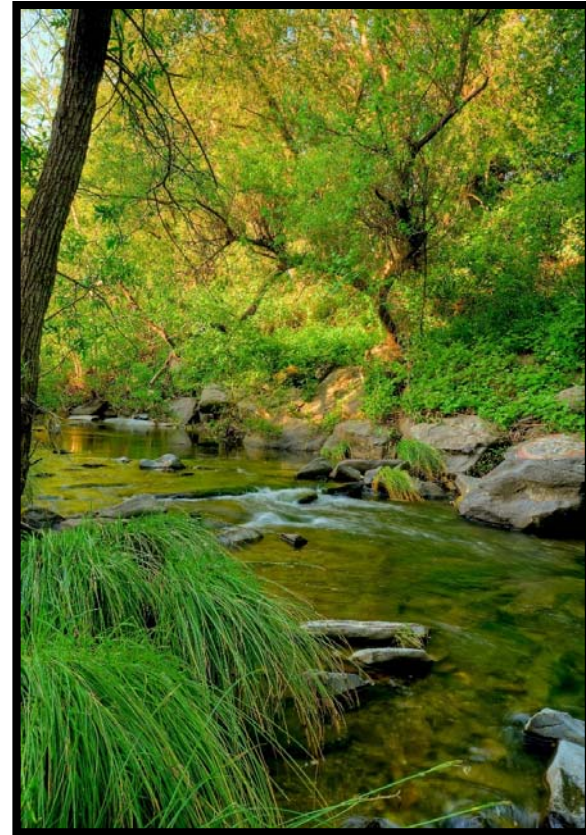


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# Thank You

## Questions/Comments?



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