

## RWA Watersheds Resilience Pilot Study Advisory Committee Meeting

**Date:** January 16, 2026

**Project name:** RWA Watersheds Resilience Pilot Study

**Project no:** W8Y34200

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## Attendees

### Project Team

Name	Organization
Ryan Ojakian	Regional Water Authority (RWA)
Jim Peifer	RWA
Trevor Joseph	RWA
Gretchen James	Valley Vision
Ibrahim Khadam	Khadam Consulting
Devyani Kar	Jacobs
Sirisha Nemani	Jacobs
Armin Munevar	Jacobs
Vijay Kesavan	Jacobs
Tapash Das	Jacobs
Shannon Litchfield	Jacobs
CJ Porter	Jacobs

### Advisory Committee

Name	Organization
Austin Miller	Sacramento County
Brett Ewart	City of Sacramento
Christine Kohn	IN Communications
Clyde Macdonald	Save the American River Association (SARA)
Gary Bardini	Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA)
Michael Saunders	Georgetown Divide Public Utility District
Rebecca Guo	El Dorado Water Agency
Sean Bigley	City of Roseville

## Agenda

- Welcome and meeting objectives
- Project timeline and Advisory Committee expectations
- Quantitative vulnerability assessment summary
- Adaptation strategies framework
- Implementation plan and equity assessment approach
- Discussion: post-grant next steps
- Action items and closing

## Meeting Notes

### Introductions

Jim Peifer (JP): Welcomed Advisory Committee members and project team; noted the intention to keep the meeting efficient and proceed even if some attendees join late.

Ryan Ojakian (RO): Confirmed attendance and moved into the agenda to stay on schedule.

### What We Need from the Advisory Committee

RO: Emphasized the project is in the final sprint under State legislative and fiscal-year constraints; Advisory Committee feedback is essential to complete adaptation and implementation components on time.

Devyani Kar (DK): Stated prior feedback on adaptation strategies has been compiled and categorized; team is developing evaluation criteria for strategies and actions; asked for guidance on additional criteria or refinements.

DK: Noted materials and targeted questions will be sent after the meeting; requested high-level feedback due to short turnaround; clarified that materials will go to RWA and then to Sacramento County Department of Water Resources (DWR).

### What Are the Committee's Expectations

JP: Invited members to share expectations and needs for working with short timelines and quick reviews; encouraged candid feedback to keep the process two-way.

RO: Asked members to flag concerns early, so expectations can be aligned for the remainder of the schedule.

### Roadmap and Schedule

RO: Reviewed pilot roadmap; remaining Steps 6 through 8 will proceed in parallel; underscored the need to finish within approximately 2 to 2.5 months.

RO: Feedback requests and milestones:

- Advisory Committee feedback on the strategies plus evaluation criteria spreadsheet: 1 week
- Advisory Committee feedback on the full draft resilience report (to be shared in February): 1 week
- Watershed Network presentation: March 20 (tentative)

- Final submittal to RWA Staff/DWR: March 31

### **Quantitative Vulnerability Update**

JP: Introduced vulnerability update; noted collaboration with Tapash Das (TD) and Jacobs team.

TD: Summarized future challenges:

- Surface Water: Earlier runoff; reduced reliability
- Groundwater: Storage declines from lower recharge and higher pumping
- Flooding: Higher magnitude and frequency; more people and structures exposed
- Water Quality: River temperature rises; dissolved oxygen declines
- Ecosystems: Increased temperature exceedances for salmon; increased climatic water deficit; increased wildfire probability
- Recreation: Reduced boating and snow-based recreation
- Hydropower: Decreased generation (e.g., Folsom Reservoir)
- Agricultural and Urban Supply: Higher demands; more shortages; increased groundwater reliance

Gary Bardini (GB): Noted ongoing efforts including development impact fee updates and coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Yolo Bypass and regional flood risk work.

Clyde Macdonald (CM): Stressed significant concern regarding salmon impacts from rising river temperatures.

Michael Saunders (MS) (via chat):

"My only comments which I will be adding will be : More look at the upstream impacts of flooding and breeches on our dams, reservoirs, and spillways. Increased groundwater substitution during wet years."

### **Adaptation Strategies and Actions**

Ibrahim Khadam (IK): Presented framework developed from Advisory Committee input, Watershed Network feedback, and vulnerability assessment results.

IK: Framework includes the following:

- 19 adaptation strategies (stable, outcome-focused)
- 119 adaptation actions (planning, operations, infrastructure, policy, and data and science), categorized by system and sub-region and documented in a spreadsheet

RO: Emphasized the spreadsheet is the primary feedback tool; requested spot-checks for completeness rather than detailed line-by-line review; encouraged identification of strategy or action gaps.

### **Implementation Plan**

IK: Explained the implementation plan will not be a ranked list of projects; instead, it establishes a decision-making framework to prioritize projects as funding opportunities arise.

IK: Noted that objectives include translating actions into fundable projects, supporting phased and transparent decisions, and remaining flexible under uncertainty.

CM: Flagged complexity related to highly technical areas (e.g., reservoir operations and infrastructure constraints).

IK: Confirmed explanatory documentation will be added to the spreadsheet to provide additional context.

## Equity Assessment

Vijay Kesavan (VK): Presented equity approach using the Vulnerable Communities Platform (VCP); described VCP as a statewide, climate-focused equity assessment tool.

VK: Method refinements for local relevance include the following:

- Localized climate hazard modeling
- Integration with Federal Emergency Management Agency population datasets
- Watershed-level normalization of vulnerability scores

VK: Noted equity is a core criterion for implementation and funding competitiveness, including alignment with Proposition 4 requirements.

MS (via chat): "Some of the Health factors in our area may not be represented because the data is not always published... King Fire: exceeded 300  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ; Caldor exceeded 250; Paradise exceeded 300; Mosquito measurements stopped at exceeding 500." (Reiterated during equity discussion to underscore local data gaps and wildfire smoke exposure not fully captured in statewide datasets.) [ $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  = microgram(s) per cubic meter]

VK/IK: Acknowledged the limitations and emphasized stress-testing VCP outputs with local observations and augmenting datasets where feasible.

## Next Steps and Future Events

DK: Reviewed upcoming deliverables and deadlines:

- Draft strategies + evaluation criteria feedback: due January 23
- Draft resilience report (Advisory Committee only) shared Feb 19/20 feedback: due Feb 27
- Watershed Network review: March 20 (tentative)
- Final submittal to RWA Staff/DWR: March 31

## After the Submission – Advisory Committee Feedback

RO: Led discussion on post-grant activities, including continued use of the Watershed Network, funding coordination, and briefing city councils and boards on resilience findings.

JP: Noted increased interest and recent media attention; emphasized value of broader outreach beyond the Advisory Committee.

## Action Items

### Project Team

## Minutes

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- Distribute strategies and evaluation criteria spreadsheet and targeted questions to Advisory Committee.
- Add explanatory documentation for complex technical topics (e.g., reservoir operations, dams/spillways, levees, and infrastructure constraints).
- Integrate upstream flooding and breach impact considerations on dams, reservoirs, and spillways into the adaptation and implementation narrative (per MS).
- Reflect groundwater substitution during wet years within adaptation actions and logic where appropriate (per MS).
- Share draft resilience report with Advisory Committee by Feb 19/20; incorporate feedback by Feb 27, 2026.
- Prepare materials and interactive feedback mechanisms for Watershed Network by March 20, 2026.
- Coordinate with Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation on VCP application and equity-funding alignment.
- Stress-test equity assessment with localized wildfire smoke exposure data; and explore options to supplement statewide datasets with PM2.5 observations cited by MS.

### **Advisory Committee**

- Provide high-level feedback on strategies and evaluation criteria by January 23 (i.e., spot-check completeness and identify gaps).
- Review draft resilience report and submit comments by February 27.
- Identify potential implementation concepts aligned with strategies, including upstream infrastructure risk reduction and wet-year groundwater substitution.

### **RWA**

- Maintain accelerated review cadence; hold open Question and Answer session for spreadsheet navigation and criteria interpretation.
- Plan post-grant continuity of the Watershed Network and develop an outreach plan for councils and boards.

### **SAFCA (GB)**

- Continue development impact fee update; coordinate Yolo Bypass, levee fragility, and flood-risk inputs relevant to plan integration.

### **Follow-ups**

- Meet with MS to review local PM2.5/wildfire smoke datasets and identify appropriate pathways to incorporate or reference these data in the equity and vulnerability analyses.
- Report back to the Advisory Committee on how the upstream flooding and breach and wet-year groundwater substitution considerations are being integrated.