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# IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

Vol. 1 Ch. 11 Developing the Imperial IRWMP



IMPERIAL IRRIGATION DISTRICT  
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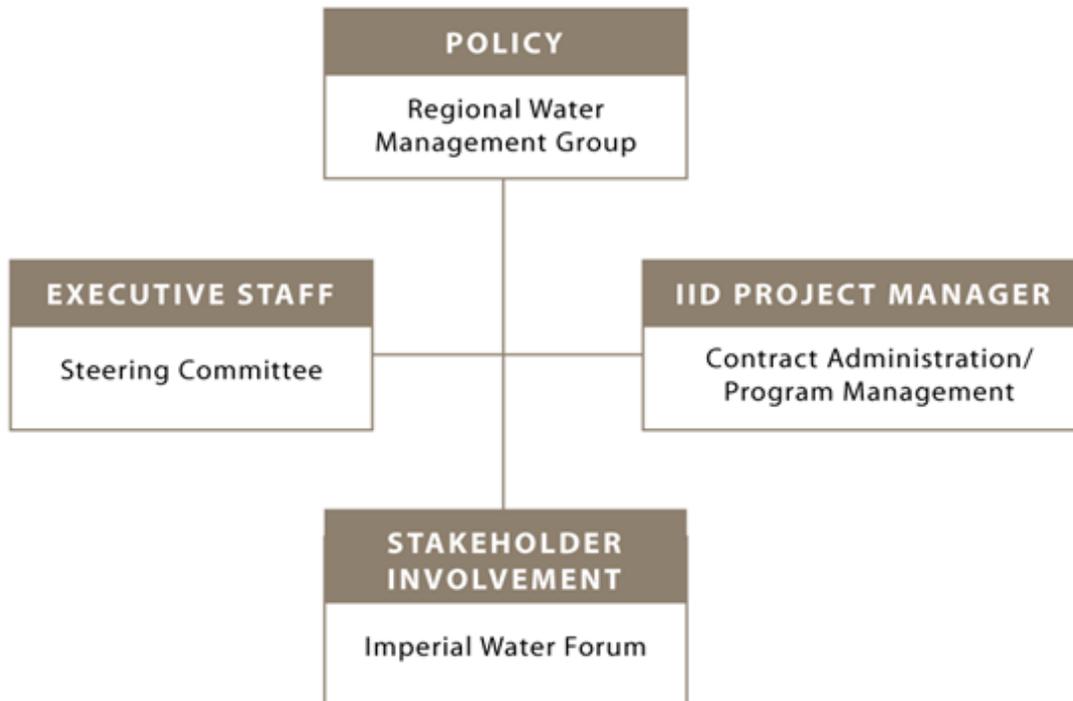
# 11 Developing the Imperial Region IRWMP

This Chapter provides a description of the proposed governance, structures, and roles for oversight and management for the development of the proposed Imperial Region IRWMP. It describes the proposed Imperial RWMG members, their role in the Imperial IRWMP process, regional water management responsibilities, and the level of IRWMP participation. It is anticipated that at the end of the planning process, each of the participating entities would adopt the Imperial IRWMP. Decisions on long-term governance and oversight for implementation of the regional projects and programs that come out of an IRWMP would need to be made once the Imperial IRWMP is completed.

## 11.1 Decision Making Structure and Purpose

The proposed governance structure will facilitate the planning process and the sustained development of regional water management strategy, both now and in the future. A basic organizational chart is shown in Figure 11-1 showing functional relationships and responsibilities including: the Regional Water Management Group operating at the policy and elected officials level; an Steering Committee operating at the executive or senior staff level; IID operating as the contract administration and program management level; and the Imperial Water Forum (Water Forum), which will served as the mechanism for stakeholder and public involvement.

Figure 11-1. Imperial Region IRWMP Governance and Management Structure



The governance structure of the Imperial Region IRWMP is intended support development of a collaborative water management portfolio. The purpose of the governance structure is to:

- Support prudent decisions and allow for timely completion of the Imperial IRWMP
- Provide opportunities for diverse interests to contribute to the Imperial IRWMP
- Improve coordination of individual plans, programs and projects for the mutual benefit of the Imperial Region
- Support identification, development and implementation of a collaborative process that results in projects that may be beyond the scope or capability of a single public agency or group, but that would be of mutual benefit if implemented among multiple parties in the Imperial Region
- Foster coordination, collaboration and communication among public agencies and interested stakeholders to achieve greater efficiencies and to enhance public service and public support for projects vital to the Imperial Region’s economic growth
- Assist disadvantaged communities (DACs) in the Imperial Region
- Implement a representative decision-making process

Current members of the RWMG will work together to address complex issues, develop and negotiate solutions, and demonstrate their ability to function and produce results as an oversight body.

#### ***11.1.1 Imperial Region RWMG Composition and Authorities***

The Imperial Region RWMG is essentially an extension of an existing Water Planning Group that consists of two members of the IID Board of Directors and two members of the Imperial County Board of Supervisors, with the inclusion of three representatives from Imperial Region cities, at least two of which will be from DACs. IID and Imperial County are the two agencies with statutory water management authorities and have strongly endorsed the development of the Imperial IRWMP. The RWMG purpose is:

- To serve as a consensus building, negotiating, and conflict resolution body
- To provide policy direction and overall guidance during the development of the Imperial IRWMP
- Increase communications and create a link between agencies to convey information to, and provide input from, the elected bodies
- Support adoption of the Imperial IRWMP
- Encourage staff to develop integrated projects or projects that fit into the regional portfolio of water management strategies

Each participating agency’s governing board will specifically authorize the agency to participate in the planning process and assign representatives to participate in the RWMG

and Steering Committee. The RWMG will be responsible for developing the Imperial IRWMP, including public outreach, oversight, and review of the draft plan, briefing their governing boards, obtaining plan adoption, and coordinating with the other entities. Additional agencies are expected to join at a later date by indicating their support of the planning process through a resolution approved by their governing boards. It is the responsibility of each public agency to provide existing water management plans or to identify the need for water management strategies for each service area carried out in the individual agencies jurisdiction.

It is anticipated that each agency will adopt the Imperial Region IRWMP. It is intended that the Imperial IRWMP provide critical information that participating land use agencies are able to incorporate directly or by reference into other related documents such as the pending 2010 UWMP updates and any future city or Imperial County general plan updates.

**Imperial Irrigation District.** IID is an irrigation district organized under the California Irrigation District Law, codified at §§ 20500 et seq. of the California Water Code, and delivers Colorado River water in Imperial County, California for potable and irrigation purposes. By a decisive favorable vote at an election held on July 14, 1911, the people of the valley organized the IID and the vote was made effective by resolution of the Board of Supervisors of Imperial County on July 24, 1911. IID is governed by a five-member Board of Directors. While elected by vote of all qualified voters, each member represents a separate geographical division of the District. Directors serve a four-year term. Critical functions of the IID are: 1) diversion and delivery of Colorado River water, 2) operation and maintenance of the drainage canals and facilities, and 3) generation and distribution of electricity.

**Imperial County.** The County has statutory authority for groundwater resource management in Imperial County as codified under the County Groundwater Ordinance (Title 9, Division 22) adopted in May 2004 for the purpose of preserving, protecting, and managing the groundwater within the County. The County therefore exercises permit requirements on all projects related to groundwater within its boundaries. In addition, the Imperial County Groundwater Management Act of 1992 (i.e., Groundwater Management Plan) defines the County's responsibility for groundwater management within Imperial County. Under this Act, the County is responsible for the preservation and management of groundwater within Imperial County for the protection of domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, municipal, and other uses. The County also has land use authority in the unincorporated areas.

**Imperial Region Cities.** The incorporated cities are responsible for water treatment, distribution, and sales through their municipal utilities or by franchise agreements with investor-owned utilities. They also have land use authorities, prepare Urban Water Management Plans, and operate the wastewater treatment facilities within their jurisdiction.

#### 11.1.1.1 Imperial Region RWMG Steering Committee

The Imperial Region RWMG will appoint staff members to the Steering Committee from their respective organizations. The Steering Committee will provide staff review, support to

the planning process and be responsible for the ongoing and regular coordination of the IRWMP planning process. The Steering Committee will:

- Facilitate communications between the RWMG and the Imperial Water Forum
- Set and coordinate agendas for the Imperial Water Forum
- Identify needs and make recommendations to the RWMG
- Track progress
- Find, coordinate, and pursue funding opportunities
- Make interim decisions and commitments
- Form and coordinate ad hoc work groups as needed
- Coordinate with the contractor and Water Forum facilitator

The Steering Committee will include, at minimum, the IID program management staff as appointed by the IID General Manager, a representative of the County Administrative Officer, and representatives appointed by the City Manager.

#### **11.1.1.2 IID: Contract Administration and Program Management**

IID has retained the services of a consultant to support development of the Imperial IRWMP. IID will provide overall contract administration and program management. Some of the activities associated with this task include:

- Administration of the professional services contract
- Issuing task orders to consultants
- Acting as liaison to the state
- Reviewing the consultant's work
- Managing project budget and schedule
- Reviewing consultant invoices
- Coordinating with agencies and other stakeholders
- Project reporting
- Coordinating grant writing for IRWMP-related funding
- Preparing Water Forum meeting agendas, minutes, and coordinating follow-up actions

#### **11.1.1.3 Imperial Water Forum**

The Water Forum will be the primary mechanism for stakeholder involvement in the process. The role of the Water Forum is to allow for obtaining a diverse range of perspectives on water management strategies, projects and policies and to make recommendations to the

RWMG that can then be further presented to the respective decision making bodies for action. Participation will be sought from a wide array of stakeholder groups and organizations as described in the next Section. The purpose of the Water Forum is to:

- Share information, provide comment and feedback to the consultant
- Refine and enhance the purpose and need, goals, and objectives
- Review, comment, prioritize, and make recommendation to the RWMG on water management strategies
- Identify projects concepts for further evaluation
- Establish criteria for ranking alternatives, review the results of the alternatives, and advise the RWMG on a priorities
- Develop an implementation plan, including review and definition of funding strategies and define long-term governance

#### **11.1.1.4 Ad Hoc Working Groups**

The RWMG or Water Forum may form Ad Hoc Working Groups composed of IID Staff, consultants, stakeholders, and other technical resources to address specific issues or topics and to bring recommendations back to the Water Forum and RWMG. Work groups will be used as needed to provide technical or policy level review of projects or policies concepts. Examples of Work Groups include Outreach/Communications, Governance, or Finance and Funding; and/or will evaluate specific project or management strategies (e.g., recycled water, groundwater banking).

#### **11.1.2 Decision Process and Functions of the Water Forum**

A decision process is needed for purposes of negotiating and conflict resolution. The elements of the decision process and functions of the Water Forum are discussed below. The independent agencies give up none of their powers or authorities and are the ultimate entities to decide the direction of their respective organizations related to participation in the Imperial IRWMP and any of the projects that may be proposed.

Decisions are made by members of the RWMG, listed above. Decisions will be by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved, a majority vote will be used. An alternate is authorized to vote if the appointed representative is absent. Representatives serve staggered four-year terms and are appointed by an agency's legislative body, but are not required to be a member of that legislative body. The following sections provide examples of the RWMG's decision-making process including establishing IRWM plan goals and objectives, prioritizing projects, financing RWMG and IRWMP activities, implementing plan activities, making future revisions to the IRWM plan, and hiring and managing consultants.

Decisions and recommendation to the RWMG by the Water Forum will be based on consensus of the Water Forum members. Should consensus be lacking, the facilitator and consultant will work to ensure minority positions are communicated to the RWMG. The overall process and approach is discussed below.

#### **11.1.2.1 Share information**

The Water Forum will allow interested parties to provide critical data, ideas and prior analysis results to support project development, justify projects proposed by sponsoring entities, and conduct further engineering or economic feasibility studies. White papers, briefings, and presentations will be made to the Water Forum to obtain input and provide feedback to the consulting team.

#### **11.1.2.2 Refine and Enhance Purpose and Needs, Goals, and Objectives for IRWMP**

Preliminary Purpose and Needs, Goals, and Objectives for the Imperial Region IRWMP have been developed by the IID Board and will be used as a starting point for consideration by the RWMG and Forum. The stakeholder process will be used to refine the purpose and need for the Imperial IRWMP and gain a consensus and common understanding of the problems to be addressed. In order to lay the foundation for agreement and practicable solutions, it is critical that RWMG and Water Forum members understand the nature and extent of the issues facing the Imperial Region.

The Water Forum will refine and enhance the planning goals and objectives for the Imperial Region IRWMP. Specific planning objectives will be developed based on:

- Previous regional efforts
- Local planning documents, such as UWMPs and City or County General Plans
- Studies performed by IID and/or the RWMG
- Discussions among RWMG and stakeholders
- Consensus of the Water Forum
- Final adoption by the RWMG member's boards and councils

Based on preliminary information it is evident that the Imperial IRWMP will be designed to provide a roadmap for long-term water supply reliability and water demand management in the Imperial Region. Additional objectives are likely to be included early in the IRWMP process through stakeholder involvement.

#### **11.1.2.3 Review Water Management Strategies**

The Water Forum will be briefed on water management strategies recommended by DWR for IRWMP inclusion. In developing water management options, each water management strategy included in the California Water Plan Update 2009 will be examined to determine its applicability to an integrated approach for the Imperial Region. The water management strategies are the building blocks for the Imperial IRWMP and will help support further project definition and integration opportunities.

The consultant will develop a preliminary analysis of the strategies and priorities for review and discussion by the Water Forum and, along with IID staff, will support development of a consensus on the final recommendations to the RWMG. The Forum will review and comment on the strategies and preliminary analysis and provide input on recommended

integration approaches and priorities to the RWMG. Separate work groups may be formed to consider applicable strategies in greater detail, refine project concepts, and make recommendations to the full Forum and RWMG. Any participant in the Water Forum may recommend projects to the full group.

A final consensus on strategies is to be achieved as an outcome of the process. The outcome of this task will be a determination of the Water Management Strategies that are most likely to meet the objectives of the Imperial Region and that should be considered in the Imperial IRWMP. Because the Imperial IRWMP is intended to meet multiple water management objectives, multiple strategies will be identified. Therefore, an important aspect of this task will be to describe how individual strategies will be integrated into strategic options that present a cohesive program for land and water use in the Imperial Region.

#### **11.1.2.4 Identification of Projects, Develop Integrated Management Strategies for Region**

Specific project options will be evaluated in the context of individual and integrated water management strategies to determine feasible projects that generate the greatest regional benefits at acceptable levels of impact and cost. Candidate strategies or groups of strategies will be assembled into strategic options and decision support methodologies will be applied to assist local decision makers in identifying strategic options that are responsive to the objectives of the Imperial IRWMP.

Use of decision support methodologies will be important for framing project options in ways that clearly define the advantages and disadvantages of each project option and describes the interrelations between project elements and water management strategies. In this way key issues and potential solutions can be presented to stakeholders in a manner that facilitates discussion, enables participants to focus on central issues, and leads to well informed, insightful decision making. The goal of this process is to enable the strategic options that move forward in the planning process to be those that are technically sound and that generate broad support.

Specific projects to be ranked and prioritized will be identified. Any participant in the RWMG and Forum can recommend specific projects within any one of the water management strategies, or based in a combination of the strategies (e.g., groundwater development coupled with desalination). Ideally, regional projects would include multiple participants, provide multiple benefits, and would integrate multiple water management strategies. Ideally, benefits would accrue to the region and help meet regional objectives, rather than provide limited benefits or meet singular objectives.

#### **11.1.2.5 Establishing of Criteria for Ranking Alternatives**

The IID Plan has reviewed and ranked projects that the IID Board has considered. A specific project identification and prioritization process will be used for gaining support of the IRWMP and Forum. The IID Plan project evaluation criterion have been developed by the consultant and used to rank projects. This work will be revisited by the Forum and RWMG for purposes of ranking regional projects. The stakeholders may have additional projects that need to be factored into the process. The criterion would be refined and applied by a Working Group for purposes of the IRWMP, and projects would be prioritized to meet

regional water use objectives. Some of the prioritization factors to be considered will likely include: urgency for the project (whether there is a safety issue or a fine associated), consistency with objectives and priorities, whether the project generates significant regional benefits at acceptable levels of impact and cost, and contribution of the project to meeting planning goals.

### **11.1.3 Implementation Plan Activities**

The RWMG makes decisions regarding the implementation of plan activities by:

- Looking at all alternatives
- Incorporating public and stakeholder input
- Maintaining an open process
- Making decisions using a stakeholder driven process
- Establishing a long-term governance mechanism
- Establishing long-term funding and financing
- Adoption of the Imperial IRWMP by key water and land use agencies
- Adaptive management and IRWMP update and revision

An implementation schedule that extends beyond the adoption of the Imperial IRWMP will be developed. This will include review and evaluation of funding and financial strategies and the long-term program for oversight and governance during plan implementation.

### **11.1.4 Future Revisions to the Imperial IRWMP**

The RWMG will conduct an open review process, as required by statute, for any updates or revisions to the Imperial IRWMP. Priorities may need shifting or adjustments as needs of the Imperial Region and its stakeholders change with time. The RWMG structure will allow periodic changes to the plan, which are expected over the life of the plan.

## **11.2 Financing the Imperial RWMG and Imperial IRWMP Activities**

The development of the IID Plan has been funded by IID using impact fees on new industrial water users and developers collected by IID. This seed money has been collected and provided by IID to help support preparation of the IID Plan and initiate development of the Imperial IRWMP, development of project concepts, and to support the RWMG during the beginning stages of the IRWMP process. IID will likely seek grant funding from DWR to further develop the Imperial IRWMP and to support a facilitator and the community outreach and stakeholder efforts.

In the future, a finance plan could be developed and presented at a regularly scheduled meeting for RWMG adoption. Potential sources of funding for the projects and continued implementation of the Imperial IRWMP will be identified. The finance plan will be designed to have an appropriate weighting and scheduling of local and external funding.

### **11.3 New Members**

The RWMG would incorporate new members into the Water Forum as needed to be representative of the larger community and to ensure that there is a diverse range of perspectives and interests representing different sectors, regardless of their ability to contribute financially to the Imperial IRWMP. New members will be incorporated into the governance structure by indicating their support of the planning process through a resolution approved by their governing boards. The Water Forum is open to all stakeholders. A balance of interested persons and entities will be achieved through stakeholder and public outreach and involvement. Interested parties will be invited and encouraged to participate in regularly scheduled meetings, workshops, the public review process, and the stakeholder and public review and comment period.

### **11.4 Working Relationships**

The planning process will seek to improve interagency liaisons and working relationships. Of course, regionally, there are several agencies and organizations that conduct planning activities that must collaborate to deliver a truly integrated plan for the area. The IRWMP planning process must consider these other activities. The process must know the scope and impacts of future actions developed by neighboring jurisdictions and other organizations that co-exist within the region. This necessary coordination will prevent duplication, avoid missed opportunities, and make sure there are no gaps in the IRWMP.

Other planning in the region include efforts such as land use planning (e.g., update of the Imperial County and City General Plan), the Salton Sea (including Salton Sea Authority input and the DWR Salton Sea Ecosystem Restoration Program), the QSA/Transfer Agreements, and economic development (alternative energy, recreation, etc.). It is important to structure the IRWMP process to allow and encourage effective coordination among planning efforts. The plan integration process should:

- Utilize existing organizational structures where possible.
- Ensure other planning agencies participate as stakeholders in the IRWMP. This would mean not just inviting, but encouraging or insisting upon participation.
- Seek common objectives between planning efforts where possible.
- Collect common information that can be shared by agencies.
- Look for joint strategies between and/or among plans.
- Tier or coordinate actions among agencies so they complement each other and address mutual objectives.
- Look for duplication in planning efforts and minimize them.
- Incorporate agencies as funding partners where strategies align.
- Check back with agencies after compilation of the Imperial IRWMP to ensure no conflicts exist.

## **11.5 Stakeholder and Public Involvement**

### ***11.5.1 Stakeholder Outreach and Involvement***

The Imperial Region is developing the IRWMP through a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process and the RWMG has created a geographically inclusive region where diverse views and water management issues are represented. This section provides a description of how stakeholders, including DACs, are identified and invited to participate, further listing the procedures and processes that promote access to, and collaboration with, people or agencies with diverse views within the region. Along with the information on the management structure above, it is intended to present how the outreach efforts will address the diversity of water use issues, geographical representation, and stakeholder interests in the Imperial Region; and how stakeholders can help develop integrated, multi-benefit, regional solutions and incorporate environmental stewardship.

Stakeholder outreach is a significant part of the IRWMP planning process. The Water Forum will provide the framework and a facilitated process for an earnest exchange of ideas; help reduce polarization; create understanding; and recognize common interests and solutions. The facilitated dialog will continue through the development and adoption of the Imperial Region IRWMP and then, while at a somewhat reduced effort, will continue as part of the daily business practice of the RWMG as the Region's work continues and the plan is implemented.

Objectives for Stakeholder Involvement include:

- Promote Imperial IRWMP as the mechanism for addressing water supply issues
- Prevent surprises for the IID Board of Directors, customers or other stakeholders; for Imperial County Board of Supervisors; and for City Councils
- Demonstrate desire to engage the inform customers, stakeholders, and the public on the part of IID's Board of Directors, the County's Board of Supervisors, and the City Councils
- Create awareness, and get consensus on solutions, including funding strategies
- Reduce the potential for conflicts, manage expectations, and develop strategies to respond to identified issues and concerns

The Imperial Region shares common attributes, a common watershed (South Salton Sea watershed), adjacent groundwater basins, and service by IID as a common water wholesaler to most of the water users in the Region. Through the IRWMP process, the RWMG will represent the Imperial Region to fairly and efficiently manage water resources and implement environmental stewardship practices. The RWMG recognizes that to provide fair representation for the stakeholders, it is imperative that they implement a collaborative, multi-stakeholder process. The stakeholder outreach process includes a comprehensive effort to activate and engage stakeholders, including DACs and the public in the IRWM planning process.

For the most part, Imperial County, Imperial Region cities and the development community are totally reliant on IID for water. These customers will be significantly affected by decisions on the Imperial IRWMP and during implementation of the actions defined in the IRWMP. The consultants held discussions with the IID, Imperial Region Cities and Imperial County, and it is clear that there is a desire to be kept informed as the plan develops, and to participate actively in the IRWMP process. There are great expectations for the Imperial IRWMP and the plan is perceived by the non-agricultural interests as the mechanism for solving a number of outstanding issues and for reducing uncertainty related to what water is available for future development and non-agricultural use.

The expectations of both the agricultural and urban water use communities need to be managed; perceptions and alternative views need to be shared between these groups; facts need to be presented; and the vitality and creativity within the community need to be productively channeled so that there is ultimate acceptance of the Imperial IRWMP, and so that the plan does not become a source of conflict, rather than the means to resolve current conflicts. In addition to the primary agricultural and non-agricultural customers, other stakeholders could strongly influence decisions. These “influencers” include groups like the Farm Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, labor groups, building industry association, and various non-governmental organizations.

By directly contacting currently identified stakeholders and inviting and encouraging them to participate in the Imperial IRWMP efforts, the stakeholders will be able to voice their interests and issues to the Region’s decision makers. Through the RWMG’s proactive stakeholder outreach efforts, additional stakeholders will be identified and invited to participate in the Imperial IRWMP efforts. The more stakeholders that are involved in the process, the more the RWMG can enhance its understanding of the water use issues in the region as a whole, which will ultimately promote the development of a truly integrated regional water management plan.

#### **11.5.1.1 DAC Outreach**

The RWMG is actively engaging and proudly advocates for economically-disadvantaged communities. The Median Household Income (MHI) in the Imperial Region was \$31,672 based on US Census Bureau Estimates for 2000. The RWMG has specifically identified DACs within the Imperial Region and will include them in planned outreach efforts. DACs were specifically identified by utilizing census tracts and census blocks to analyze and determine the MHI for the area. Table 11-1 excerpts the MHI and other information by city for the RWMG membership. All communities, with the exception of Imperial, have MHIs below the threshold of 80 percent of the statewide MHI (\$37,994), the current ceiling for disadvantaged status. DACs will be represented by cities and communities with full membership in the development of the Imperial IRWMP and will provide input and comments. This participation will ensure that their water supply and water quality are protected and enhanced. The RWMG will employ specific mechanisms to assist DACs in identifying projects to include in the Imperial IRWMP development process. Regular RWMG meeting locations will rotate and will be held periodically in DAC cities.

**Table 11-1. Demographic information for the Participating Imperial Region Cities**

<b>City or Developed Area</b>	<b>Median Household Income</b>
Brawley	\$31,277
Calexico	\$28,929
Calipatria	\$31,302
El Centro	\$33,161
Heber	\$28,221
Holtville	\$36,318
Imperial	\$47,494
Niland	\$25,592
Seeley	\$31,058
Westmorland	\$23,365

1. Based on 2000 Census information, 2006 data not available.
2. Disadvantaged communities.

#### **11.5.1.2 Stakeholder Outreach Process**

The proposed stakeholder outreach process for the development of the Imperial IRWMP includes the following items and activities.

##### **11.5.1.2.1 Develop Stakeholder List and Final Communications Plan**

The RWMG has developed a working list of stakeholders in the region (Table 11-2) and through outreach efforts the RWMG will expand the existing list. The RWMG will initially contact stakeholders in writing. The RWMG will specifically notify the stakeholders when the meetings are held for the Imperial IRWMP. Additional stakeholders will be identified and included during the Imperial IRWMP development process.

A draft communications plan and strategy has been prepared and the RWMG and IID, as program manager, intend to finalize a detailed communications plan specifically for the Imperial IRWMP process. With input obtained from stakeholders at the proposed kick-off meeting, the RWMG will develop a final communications plan that documents the method and process that will allow the stakeholders to participate in the planning process, ensuring that their opinions can influence decisions about water use and management. Because meetings will be regularly scheduled throughout the Imperial IRWMP process, interested stakeholders will have many opportunities to provide input during the development of the Imperial IRWMP. By participating in the Water Forum meetings, stakeholders will have a mechanism for review, comment and input throughout the development of the Imperial IRWMP. Subject to budget limitations, a website may be developed or existing agency Web resources may be used.

**Table 11-2. Stakeholders Participation in the Imperial Water Forum**

<b>City and County Government</b>	
Imperial County	City of Brawley
Imperial Valley Association of Governments	City of Calexico
Imperial County Local Agency Formation Commission	City of Imperial
County Community Services Districts	City of El Centro
City of Westmoreland	City of Holtville
Imperial Valley Economic Development Corp	Salton Sea Authority
Others	
<b>Non- Governmental Organization</b>	
Imperial County Farm Bureau	Imperial County Joint Chambers of Commerce
IID Water Conservation Advisory Board	Coalition of Agriculture, Labor and Business
Coalition of Ag Labor and Business	Sierra Club, Imperial Chapter
Center for Socio-Economic Justice	California Rural Legal Assistance
Building Industry Association	Desert Wildlife Unlimited
Others	
<b>State and Federal</b>	
California EPA, Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board (Region 7)	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
California Department of Fish and Game	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
California Department of Water Resources	California Department of Public Health
Other	

**11.5.1.2.2 Initial Water Forum Kick-off Meeting**

The RWMG will hold an initial Water Forum kick-off meeting to solicit input from the community regarding the preparation of an IRWMP. The RWMG will publicly announce the meeting in local newspapers, on the radio, and on their web site, inviting stakeholders to attend. The RWMG will specifically contact currently identified stakeholders to ensure they receive an invitation. The purpose of the meeting is to present the stakeholders with information about the proposed Imperial IRWMP planning process and receive comments from interested parties. The presentation will describe the region encompassed by the Imperial IRWMP. RWMG members or their representatives will be at the meeting to answer questions, solicit input, and increase public awareness of the proposed Imperial IRWMP. Documentation of the meeting and the comments received from the public will be recorded and made available to the public.

**11.5.1.2.3 Regular RWMG and Water Forum Meetings**

A final schedule of meetings will be developed once stakeholder input is obtained as a result of the kick-off meeting. The RWMG may meet monthly at the onset of the project, then as needed at key milestones. It is anticipated that the RWMG Steering Committee will meet monthly to plan Water Forum Meetings and act on the direction from the RWMG. The Water Forum will meet monthly or as key meeting milestones and deliverables are produced.

#### **11.5.1.2.4 Work Group Meetings**

Special meetings for RWMG assignments, plan actions and/or workshops will be held as necessary by Working Groups.

#### **11.5.1.2.5 Existing Decision Making Bodies**

The RWMG is comprised of appointed members of their respective elected bodies. Members of the RWMG, with support from their Steering Committee representatives, will convey information back to their respective elected bodies for further discussion and to provide input at regularly scheduled public meetings. This provides the opportunity to more directly and closely communicate within their respective communities during regular business meetings of the Board of Directors, Board of Supervisors, and City Councils.

#### **11.5.2 Public Outreach**

The final communications plan will describe the process to be used that makes the public both part of and aware of the regional management and Imperial IRWMP efforts. It will further describe the transparent process and ways for the public to gain access to the RWMG and IRWMP process for information, and how they could provide input.

In order for the RWMG to fairly and comprehensively represent the cities, communities, and agencies of the Imperial Region, it will incorporate public outreach through existing programs and communications channels during the Imperial IRWMP development efforts. The people of the Imperial Region are ultimately the beneficiaries of the Imperial IRWMP and their input is imperative to the process. Similar to the stakeholder outreach process outlined, the RWMG plans to engage the public, including DACs, and encourage their involvement.

The RWMG plans to utilize a variety of media in its public outreach efforts to publicize the IRWM process and encourage public participation, including the internet, newspaper, radio, written announcements, brochures, reports and existing newsletters. The RWMG intends to leverage existing resources at IID to fulfill public relations functions. A speaker's bureau of RWMG and the RWMG Steering Committee members will be developed along with standard presentations and public affairs materials suitable for distribution at RWMG or other stakeholder offices or during other regularly schedule business meetings.

Subject to budget constraints, development of a website will be investigated to publish draft and final technical memorandums, briefings, presentations, meeting agendas and minutes, and draft and final Imperial IRWMP. Links could also be provided on City Council and RWMG member websites. Meeting agendas should be posted before the meeting and regular meeting notices will be announced at least one week before the meeting. The meeting minutes will be posted as soon after the meeting as possible. Contact information should be posted on the website, with directions on who the public may contact with comments, questions, and concerns.

In addition to the RWMG website, meeting announcements will be made via local newspapers, local radio stations, and posted in public places. Any individual RWMG

decisions related to IRWMP adoption would be posted on individual RWMG member websites, at the meeting location, and in public locations such as city libraries and city buildings in accordance with regular process and state requirements.

The proposed public outreach process is summarized below.

#### **11.5.2.1 Public Involvement Plan**

The communications plan will refine the method and process that will allow the public to participate in the Imperial IRWMP process and ensure that their opinions can influence decisions during IRWMP development. Since much of the Imperial Region public is Spanish speaking, materials will need to be produced in both English and Spanish. Interested members of the public will have many opportunities to provide input throughout the IRWMP process at regularly scheduled Water Forum meetings and on the RWMG website.

A draft of the Imperial IRWMP Purpose and Need, Goals and Objectives has been developed. Once finalized, specific messages can be crafted and brochures or other public affairs materials can be developed and delivered to the Customers/Stakeholders (target audience) using appropriate tools and media.

#### **11.5.2.2 Initial Public Meeting**

As described above, the RWMG plans to hold Water Forum meetings to solicit input from the community regarding the preparation of an IRWMP. These meetings will be open to the public. The RWMG will publically announce the meeting in local newspapers, on the radio, and on their website, inviting all members of the public to attend. The meeting will be announced and the agenda will be made available no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to present the public and stakeholders with information about the proposed Imperial IRWMP planning process and receive comments from interested parties. The presentation will describe the region encompassed by the Imperial IRWMP. RWMG members will be at the meeting to answer questions, solicit input, and increase public awareness of the proposed Imperial IRWMP. Documentation of the meeting and the comments received from the public will be recorded and made available to the public via the RWMG's website, the City Council websites, the local library, and the RWMG members' websites.

#### **11.5.2.3 Public Meeting on Draft Imperial IRWMP**

Within two weeks after the draft Imperial IRWMP has been made available, a hearing will be held for the general public to address concerns and provide their comments on the Imperial IRWMP. Members of the RWMG and the consultant will answer questions and facilitate public involvement.

#### **11.5.2.4 Imperial IRWMP Implementation**

As part of the development of the draft and final Imperial IRWMP, the RWMG will consider development of a broader Public Outreach and Communications Plan whose purpose would be to gain support for funding and implementation of the proposed solutions. Such a plan would provide a strategic foundation and direction for specific tasks to be conducted to gain

support for IRWMP implementation. This will be critical if a Proposition 218 election or other voter approval is needed, and would create a more broadly targeted public affairs effort aimed to the wider decision making community and the general public. Such a program could utilize a combined approach of community relations tools and media to reach the target audiences. The plan would evaluate which tools and media would be used to reach specific audiences, and which media would be used for communicating the specific message concepts.

## **11.6 Findings and Conclusions**

From discussions with IID Cities, Imperial County, and other stakeholders it can be observed that the community is fragmented and stakeholders have an expressed desire to be more engaged in District decision making.

The Imperial Region shares common attributes, a common watershed (South Salton Sea watershed), adjacent groundwater basins, and service by IID as a common water wholesaler to most of the water users in the Region.

The proposed Imperial IRWMP governance structure would facilitate the planning process and the sustained development of regional water management strategy, now and in the future.

The proposed Imperial RWMG operating at the policy and elected officials' level; a Steering Committee operating at the executive or senior staff level; IID operating as the contract administration and program management level would provide an appropriate structure for decision making, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Through the IRWMP process, the RWMG would represent the Imperial Region to fairly and efficiently manage water resources.

An Imperial Water Forum (Water Forum) would serve as the mechanism for stakeholder and public involvement, providing the opportunity to increase community awareness of the water management issues and opportunities and serving as a conduit for obtaining feedback from a wide cross-section of the community.

Each participating agency's governing board should specifically authorize the agency to participate in the planning process and assign representatives to participate in the RWMG and Steering Committee so that information is communicated and transmitted from and to each organization, and so that representatives are empowered to negotiate and make decisions.

Public workshops should include large and small group discussions with structured agendas and ground rules, and these meetings should be professionally facilitated and supported by technical staff able to answer questions, conduct research, and provide factual information. Workshops and meetings should be held in more than one location throughout the valley. There should be opportunities for IID Directors and the elected officials of the County and Cities to interact and engage with the members of the community.

## 11.7 Recommendations

The Phase I report (Hanemann and Brooks, 2005) documented areas of agreement and disagreement. From conduct of the user interviews it was found that the comity is increasingly fragmented and stakeholders expressed a strong desire to be more engaged in District decision making. Regrettably, since the report was produced, there remains an environment of litigation and conflict.

It is suggested that public workshops include large and small group discussions with structured agendas and ground rules, and that these meetings be professionally facilitated and supported by technical staff able to answer questions, conduct research and provide factual information. Workshops and meetings should be held in more than one location throughout the valley. There should be opportunities for IID Directors and the elected officials of the County and Cities to interact and engage with the members of the community.

- IRWMP 1) Initiate development of the IRWMP to build consensus and resolve conflicts through planning and dialog rather than through costly and time consuming litigation.
- IRWMP 2) The Proposed IRWMP outreach process should be reviewed with stakeholders and refined to initiate a broader community dialog on priorities for a water supply portfolio and for action.
- IRWMP 3) A Master Meeting schedule needs to be developed to put the outreach process in sync with the State timelines for grant applications for Proposition 84 and 50 funding to get a consensus and drive the program to the finish line.
- IRWMP 4) Use professional facilitation services to run Regional Water Management Group and Imperial Water Forum meetings.
- IRWMP 5) Prepare a final communications plan to describe the process to be used that makes the public both part of and aware of the regional management and Imperial IRWMP efforts.