REPORT

DATE: December 1, 2005

TO: Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Daniel E. Griset, Senior Regional Planner, (213) 236-1895, griset@scag.ca.gov

SUBJECT: Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDATION:

The Water Policy Task Force recommends that the Energy and Environment Committee urge the Regional Council to adopt Resolution 06-469-2 in support of the Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use and support use of these principles in local planning and project implementation.

BACKGROUND:

In 1991 the Local Government Commission adopted the first edition of "The Ahwahnee Principles", planning guidance for the development of more livable and sustainable communities in California. (The web URL for these initial policy guidelines is http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/principles.html.) Developed largely by a group of leading architects, these Principles focused on both community and regional aspects of planning and project development and proposed ways that implementing improved sustainability would expedite appropriate projects and communicate community goals clearly. Earlier this year the Commission adopted additional principles highlighting the linkage between Water Quality and Resource Efficient Land Use (appended to this memorandum). These principles highlight the linkage between water quality, water supply and land use, emphasizing the roles land use policy and implementation play in managing our vital natural resources.

In various ways these principles are well-aligned with the vision developed by SCAG's Compass program for integrating regional growth, efficient public investments and more sustainable environmental improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT: All work related to the recommended staff action is contained within the adopted FY 2005/06 budget under work element #06-075.

The Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use

Preamble

Cities and counties are facing major challenges with water contamination, storm water runoff, flood damage liability, and concerns about whether there will be enough reliable water for current residents as well as for new development. These issues impact city and county budgets and taxpayers. Fortunately there are a number of stewardship actions that cities and counties can take that reduce costs and improve the reliability and quality of our water resources.

The Water Principles below complement the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities that were developed in 1991. Many cities and counties are already using them to improve the vitality and prosperity of their communities.

Community Principles

Community design should be compact, mixed use, walkable and transit-oriented so that automobile-generated urban runoff pollutants are minimized and the open lands that absorb water are preserved to the maximum extent possible. (See the Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities)

Natural resources such as wetlands, flood plains, recharge zones, riparian areas, open space, and native habitats should be identified, preserved and restored as valued assets for flood protection, water quality improvement, groundwater recharge, habitat, and overall long-term water resource sustainability.

Water holding areas such as creek beds, recessed athletic fields, ponds, cisterns, and other features that serve to recharge groundwater, reduce runoff, improve water quality and decrease flooding should be incorporated into the urban landscape.

All aspects of landscaping from the selection of plants to soil preparation and the installation of irrigation systems should be designed to reduce water demand, retain runoff, decrease flooding, and recharge groundwater.

Permeable surfaces should be used for hardscape. Impervious surfaces such as driveways, streets, and parking lots should be minimized so that land is available to absorb storm water, reduce polluted urban runoff, recharge groundwater and reduce flooding.

Dual plumbing that allows grey water from showers, sinks and washers to be reused for landscape irrigation should be included in the infrastructure of new development.

Community design should maximize the use of recycled water for appropriate applications including outdoor irrigation, toilet flushing, and commercial and industrial processes. Purple pipe should be installed in all new construction and remodeled buildings in anticipation of the future availability of recycled water.

Urban water conservation technologies such as low-flow toilets, efficient clothes washers, and more efficient water-using industrial equipment should be incorporated in all new construction and retrofitted in remodeled buildings.

Ground water treatment and brackish water desalination should be pursued when necessary to

maximize locally available, drought-proof water supplies.

Implementation Principles

Water supply agencies should be consulted early in the land use decision-making process regarding technology, demographics and growth projections.

City and county officials, the watershed council, LAFCO, special districts and other stakeholders sharing watersheds should collaborate to take advantage of the benefits and synergies of water resource planning at a watershed level.

The best, multi-benefit and integrated strategies and projects should be identified and implemented before less integrated proposals, unless urgency demands otherwise.

From start to finish, projects and programs should involve the public, build relationships, and increase the sharing of and access to information. The participatory process should focus on ensuring that all residents have access to clean, reliable and affordable water for drinking and recreation.

Plans, programs, projects and policies should be monitored and evaluated to determine if the expected results are achieved and to improve future practices.

RESOLUTION No. 06-469-2

**A RESOLUTION OF
THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
URGING SUPPORT AND USE OF THE AHWAHNEE WATER PRINCIPLES
IN LOCAL PLANNING FOR RESOURCE-EFFICIENT LAND USE**

WHEREAS, cities are facing major challenges with water contamination, storm water runoff, flood damage liability, and concerns about whether there will be enough reliable water for current residents as well as for new development, issues that impact city budgets and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, land use decisions made at the local level have major impacts on local, regional, and state water resources in terms of quality, quantity, and availability; and

WHEREAS, the Local Government Commission, in partnership with the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties, sought funding from the State Water Resources Control Board to develop principles related to water-efficiency and land use; and

WHEREAS, the Local Government Commission developed a set of principles known as the *Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource-Efficient Land Use* which can reduce costs and improve the reliability and quality of our water resources, and which complement the earlier *Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities*;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Southern California Association of Governments that SCAG encourages its member Cities and Counties to support and use *The Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource-Efficient Land Use* to advance urban environmental quality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that SCAG urges all local agencies to also make use of the guidance of the Local Government Commission's earlier *Principles on Livable Communities*, themes that correspond with the Growth Visioning work already advanced by SCAG.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the [vote] of the Regional Council of the Southern California Association of Governments at a regular meeting on this 5th day of January, 2006.

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President, SCAG
Councilmember, City of Port Hueneme

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SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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