Water Availability Analysis
Potential Modifications

Workshop Presentation
November 5, 2014
Evolution of the Water Availability Analysis

• 1991—Initial report; response to drought; Initiates useful and regularly used Phase 1 concept (also Phases 2&3, though less successfully)

• 1999 BOS declares a ‘groundwater deficient basin’ and passes Groundwater Ordinance requiring permitting of new uses and establishing “Fair Share”

• 2007 WAA revised and updated

• Present: Update needed to reflect current understanding; particularly for hillside parcels and how to do well to well analysis
Key Points in Current WAA

• Phase 1
  – Applicant estimates proposed uses based on rules of thumb
  – Valley Floor=1.0 acre-ft/acre; Hillside 0.5; MST 0.3;
  – If threshold is exceeded, then Phase 2 (pump tests) and Phase 3 (other tests) kick in

• Multiple Departments review

• “Phase 1” concept has worked well on valley floor and MST; not so much for hillside parcels and for Phases 2 and 3

• Understanding site specific intricacies has evolved
The Major Changes

• Move away from Phase 1, 2, 3 terminology;
  – Tier 1: Water Use Volume
  – Tier 2: Well to Well
  – Tier 3: Groundwater to Surface Water

• Parcel specific analysis is required for hillside parcels (Tiers 1 and 2)

• Method of performing Tier 2 defined, including distance screening criteria that can determine which wells need no further analysis

• Method of performing Tier 3 developed
The Major Changes (Cont’d)

- Define PBES as lead department (previously 3 departments acted in parallel)
- Require project specific (more current and accurate) water estimates as opposed to the thumb rules used now
Next Steps

• Receive, incorporate workshop comments
• Planning Commission December 17
• Board of Supervisors hearing in Mid-January