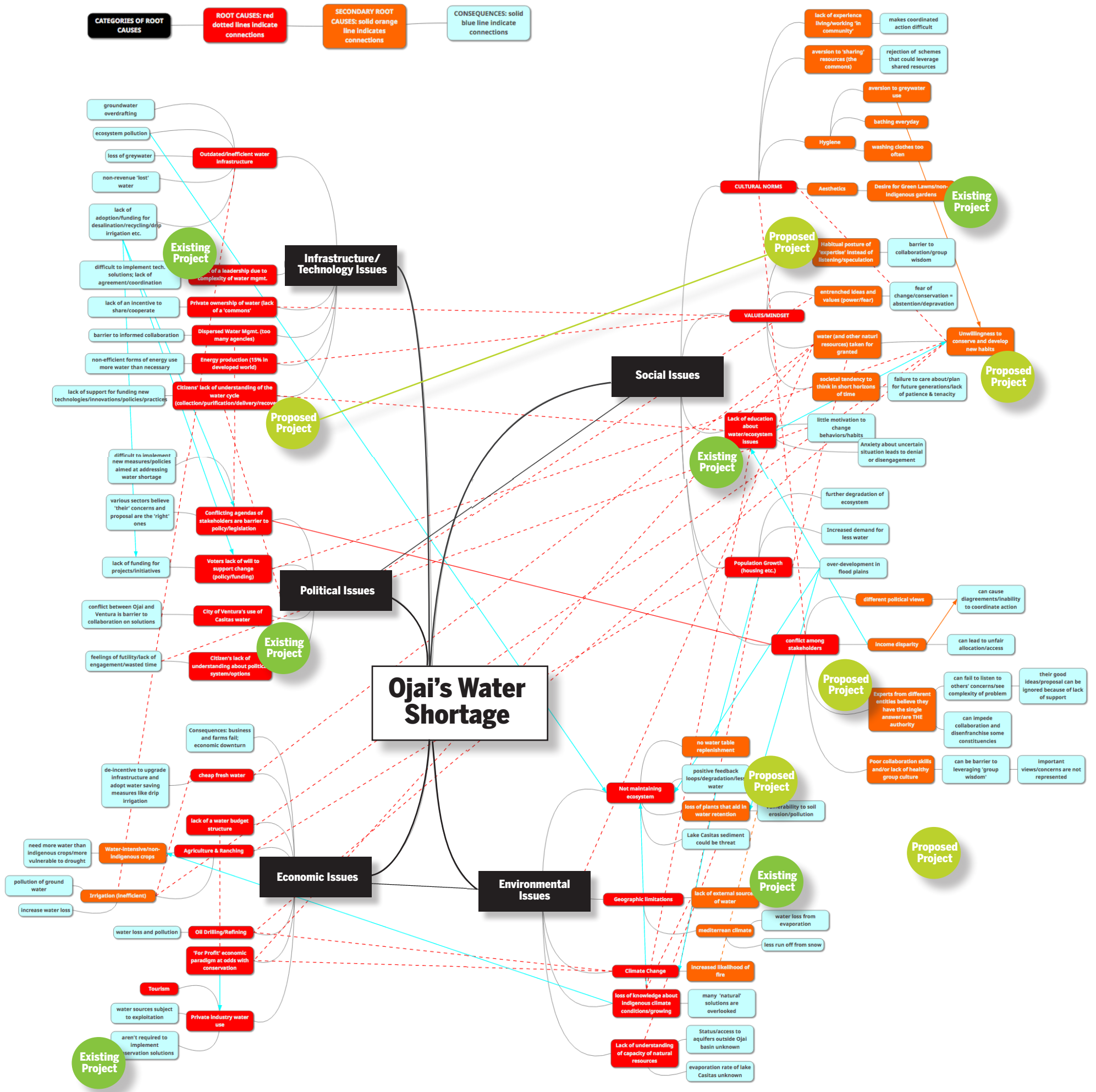
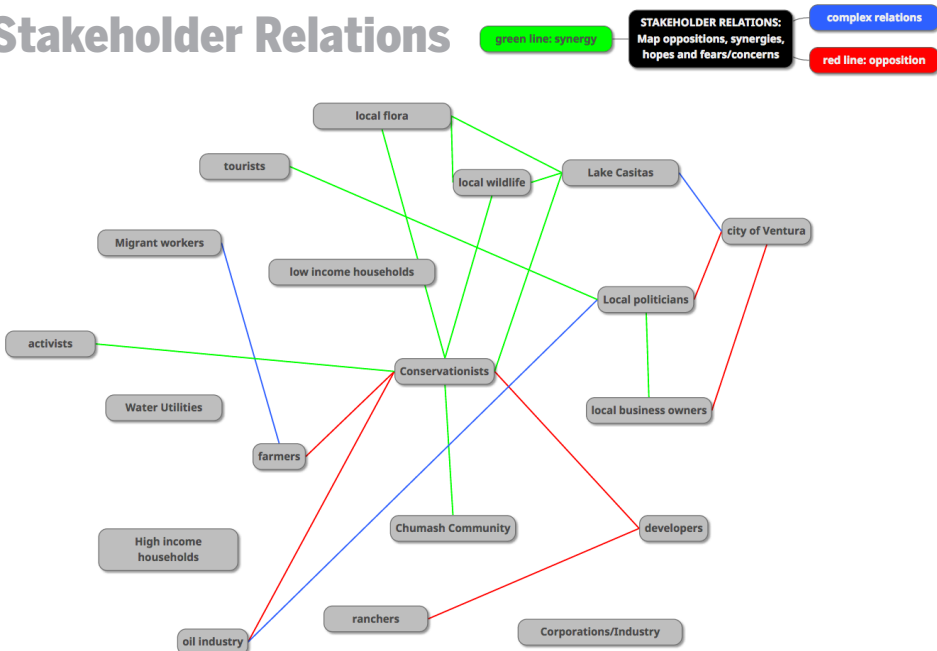


# Mapping a Wicked Problem

A wicked problem is a system with its own anatomy and dynamics. Below is a 'sketch' of a wicked problem map of Ojai, California's water shortage. Understanding the dynamics of the system can reveal 'leverage points for intervention' (Meadows) that have the potential to create exponential change within it. It can also aid in strategically linking existing projects for greater leverage and reveals opportunities for new ones. Here primary and secondary root causes and their consequences have been mapped. We have also indicated the way in which existing projects/initiatives can be situated relative to the issues they address.



## Stakeholder Relations



One of the most common barriers in solving for a wicked problem is conflict and dissension among stakeholders. However, these social dynamics can also serve as *leverage points for change* if properly understood. Stakeholders include social groups of various kinds *as well as the ecosystem itself*. Individuals may be members of several stakeholder groups: for instance an individual might be part of a neighborhood group, work in a local industry but might also be a representative of city government. It is important to understand where synergies exist and where opposition and conflict are likely. Stakeholder relations are complex, but an essential part of solving for wicked problems involves creating opportunities for each group to express concerns, hopes, fears and desires. A deep understanding of stakeholder relations (based upon extensive research) should also guide the development of a long-term vision for the community.

Developing a stakeholder relations map can surface the social dynamics that permeate the wicked problem. These dynamics are often considered an intractable problem instead of leverage points for change

School of Design, Carnegie Mellon University, 2016 (Irwin/Kossoff). Map created as process demonstration for a Transition Design workshop run in partnership with the Ojai Valley Water Trust, January, 2017, Ojai, California.