

Infrastructure & Utilities Element

The ability to live and prosper in the diverse physical setting of San Bernardino County is dependent on the effective provision and management of water, wastewater, stormwater, solid waste, power, and communication systems. The effective management of these systems helps fulfill the County's obligation to protect the lives and property of residents and businesses, while also protecting the natural environment from the impacts of human development.

The County maintains a regional flood control system for the entire county and coordinates local flood management for the unincorporated areas. The County has limited responsibilities for public water systems and public sewer systems in unincorporated areas, but the County is responsible for regulating small public water systems, permitting wells and septic systems countywide, and uses a significant amount of water at County facilities.

In collaboration with incorporated jurisdictions, the County operates regional landfills and maintains closed landfills to manage dispersion programs and solid waste disposal. Power and communication systems are predominantly provided and maintained by private companies and public utilities.

Purpose

The Infrastructure & Utilities Element:

- Provides guidance on where, when, and how infrastructure and utilities are improved and expanded.
- Establishes goals and policies to maintain an adequate supply of potable water and the safe disposal, treatment, and recycling of wastewater, and the recycling and safe disposal of solid waste.
- Provides direction on system integration, resource conservation, and the protection of the natural environment.

Principles

We believe:

- Reliable and cost-effective water, stormwater, wastewater, sanitary, power, and communications systems are critical for maintaining and improving our communities, institutions, and businesses.
- Groundwater recharge, water conservation, water reclamation, and supplemental water are key components of a resilient water supply strategy. The effective management of water resources can reduce carbon emissions, energy consumption, and utility costs.
- Reducing, treating, and safely disposing solid and liquid waste will protect public and environmental health and preserve our natural resources.
- Flood control facilities are important for reducing the risks of flooding, contributing to groundwater recharge, and providing open space and habitat area.
- Collaborative efforts between government agencies and other stakeholders are necessary in order to effectively plan and efficiently provide infrastructure.

Goals & Policies

Goal IU-1 Water Supply

Water supply and infrastructure are sufficient for the needs of residents and businesses and resilient to drought.

- Policy IU-1.1 **Water supply.** We require that new development be connected to a public water system or a County-approved well to ensure a clean and resilient supply of potable water, even during cases of prolonged drought.
- Policy IU-1.2 **Water for military installations.** We collaborate with military installations to avoid impacts on military training and operations from groundwater contamination and inadequate groundwater supply.
- Policy IU-1.3 **Recycled water.** We promote the use of recycled water for landscaping, groundwater recharge, direct potable reuse, and other applicable uses in order to supplement groundwater supplies.
- Policy IU-1.4 **Greywater.** We support the use of greywater systems for non-potable purposes.
- Policy IU-1.5 **Agricultural water use.** We encourage water-efficient irrigation and the use of non-potable and recycled water for agricultural uses.
- Policy IU-1.6 **User fees.** For water systems operated by County Special Districts, we establish user fees that cover operation and maintenance costs and set aside adequate reserves for capital upgrades and improvements.
- Policy IU-1.7 **Areas vital for groundwater recharge.** We allow new development on areas vital for groundwater recharge when stormwater management facilities are installed onsite and maintained to infiltrate predevelopment levels of stormwater into the ground.
- Policy IU-1.8 **Groundwater management coordination.** We collaborate with watermasters, groundwater sustainability agencies, water purveyors, and other government agencies to ensure groundwater basins are being sustainably managed. We discourage new development when it would create or aggravate groundwater overdraft conditions, land subsidence, or other “undesirable results” as defined in the California Water Code. We require safe yields for groundwater sources covered by the Desert Groundwater Management Ordinance.
- Policy IU-1.9 **Water conservation.** We encourage water conserving site design and the use of water conserving fixtures, and advocate for the adoption and implementation of water conservation strategies by water service agencies. For existing County-owned facilities, we incorporate design elements, building materials, fixtures, and landscaping that reduce water consumption, as funding is available.
- Policy IU-1.10 **Connected systems.** We encourage local water distribution systems to interconnect with regional and other local systems, where feasible, to assist in the transfer of water resources during droughts and emergencies.

Policy IU-1.11 **Water storage and conveyance.** We assist in development of additional water storage and conveyance facilities to create a resilient regional water supply system, when it is cost effective for County-owned water and stormwater systems.

Goal IU-2 Wastewater Treatment and Disposal

Residents and businesses in unincorporated areas have safe and sanitary systems for wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal.

Policy IU-2.1 **Minimum parcel size.** We require new lots smaller than one-half acre to be served by a sewer system. We may require sewer service for larger lot sizes depending on local soil and groundwater conditions, and the County's Local Area Management Program.

Policy IU-2.2 **User fees.** For wastewater systems operated by County Special Districts, we establish user fees that cover operation and maintenance costs and set aside adequate reserves for capital upgrades and improvements.

Policy IU-2.3 **Shared wastewater facilities for recycled water.** We encourage an expansion of recycled water agreements between wastewater entities to share and/or create connections between wastewater systems to expand the use of recycled water.

Goal IU-3 Stormwater Drainage

A regional stormwater drainage backbone and local stormwater facilities in unincorporated areas that reduce the risk of flooding.

Policy IU-3.1 **Regional flood control.** We maintain a regional flood control system and regularly evaluate the need for and implement upgrades based on changing land coverage and hydrologic conditions in order to manage and reduce flood risk. We require any public and private projects proposed anywhere in the county to address and mitigate any adverse impacts on the carrying capacity and stormwater velocity of regional stormwater drainage systems.

Policy IU-3.2 **Local flood control.** We require new development to install and maintain stormwater management facilities that maintain predevelopment hydrology and hydraulic conditions.

Policy IU-3.3 **Recreational use.** We prefer that stormwater facilities be designed and maintained to allow for regional open space and safe recreation use without compromising the ability to provide flood risk reduction.

Policy IU-3.4 **Natural floodways.** We retain existing natural floodways and watercourses on County-controlled floodways, including natural channel bottoms, unless hardening and channelization is the only feasible way to manage flood risk. On floodways not controlled by the County, we encourage the retention of natural floodways and watercourses. Our priority is to reduce flood risk, but we also strive to protect wildlife corridors, prevent loss of critical habitat, and improve the amount and quality of surface water and groundwater resources.

Policy IU-3.5 **Fair share requirements.** We require new development to pay its fair share of capital costs to maintain adequate capacity of the County's regional flood control systems.

Goal IU-4 Solid Waste

Adequate regional landfill capacity that provides for the safe disposal of solid waste, and efficient waste diversion and collection for unincorporated areas.

- Policy IU-4.1 **Landfill capacity.** We maintain a minimum ongoing landfill capacity of 15 years to serve unincorporated waste disposal needs.
- Policy IU-4.2 **Transfer stations.** We locate and operate transfer stations based on overall system efficiency.
- Policy IU-4.3 **Waste diversion.** We shall meet or exceed state waste diversion requirements, augment future landfill capacity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and use of natural resources through the reduction, reuse, or recycling of solid waste.
- Policy IU-4.4 **Landfill funding.** We require sufficient fees for use of County landfills to cover capital costs; ongoing operation, maintenance, and closure costs of existing landfills; and the costs and liabilities associated with closed landfills.

Goal IU-5 Power and Communications

Unincorporated area residents and businesses have access to reliable power and communication systems.

- Policy IU-5.1 **Electricity and natural gas service.** We partner with other public agencies and providers to improve the availability and stability of electricity and natural gas service in unincorporated communities.
- Policy IU-5.2 **Expanded high-speed internet and wireless communication.** We encourage the expansion of expand affordable, high-speed internet access in underserved and unserved unincorporated communities. We encourage the expansion of advanced mobile and fixed wireless communication technologies that improve service, coverage, and reliability throughout the county.
- Policy IU-5.3 **Underground facilities.** We encourage new and relocated power and communication facilities to be located underground when feasible, particularly in the Mountain and Desert regions.
- Policy IU-5.4 **Electric transmission lines.** We support the maintenance of existing and development of new electric transmission lines along existing rights-of-way and easements to maintain the stability and capacity of the electric distribution system in southern California.
- Policy IU-5.5 **Energy and fuel facilities.** We encourage the development and upgrade of energy and regional fuel facilities in areas that do not pose significant environmental or public health and safety hazards, and in a manner that is compatible with military operations and local community identity.
- Policy IU-5.6 **Dig once approach.** We encourage infrastructure, telecommunication, and utility planning and projects to coordinate so that improvements are made concurrently or in such a manner that minimizes disruption to rights-of-way and reduces costs.