



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Planning Department

City Of San Diego General Plan Update - Conservation Element: #5, December 9, 2003

This distribution is intended to provide increased opportunities for public input in the General Plan process. Through regular updates, we will send you information and ask for your input on issues to be covered in the Conservation Element. This is the fourth Conservation Element update. If you missed the first four mailings (which covered "Resource Conservation and Efficiency," "Sustainable Land Use Patterns," "Wetlands," "Environmental Education," "Landform Preservation and Urban Form," "Energy Independence," "Biological Diversity," "Environmental Justice," and "Efficient Building and Site Design.") let us know and we will send them to you.

You can respond through emails or written comments, or through participation in various public forums and meetings that we will be scheduling. We will be having an open public meeting to discuss conservation issues on December 10, 2003.

Event: **What on Earth Are We Doing? How Today's Decisions on
Land Use, Water, and Energy Affect Our Future**
Date: **Wednesday, December 10, from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM**
Location: **Santa Fe Room, Balboa Park Club, Balboa Park**

For additional upcoming events, please see our website at:
<http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/community/publicshop.shtml>.

If you are receiving this mailing rather than an email, it is because we do not have your email address in our database. To save City resources and efficiently provide information, the City is e-mailing instead of postal mailings whenever possible. **Please e-mail us at planning@sandiego.gov to add your e-mail to our database!** If you do not wish to receive these mailings, please let us know and we will remove you from our list.

Topics Covered In This Mailing

- ◆ Background of the General Plan update
- ◆ Scope of the Conservation Element
- ◆ Conservation Issue # 10: Water Resource Management
- ◆ Conservation Issue # 11: Water Quality
- ◆ Goals, Discussion and Proposed Policies for each issue

We Want Your Input!

If you have comments or questions about the issues or policies discussed, **please contact our planner**, Anna Shepherd. Please provide your comments by **January 9, 2004**. We are interested in your feedback!

Anna Shepherd

Associate Planner

City of San Diego Planning Department, MS 4A
202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92101

ashepherd@sandiego.gov

619-235-5233

BACKGROUND

The Conservation Element is being drafted as a part of an overall General Plan update that began with City Council adoption of the Strategic Framework Element of the General Plan on October 22, 2002. The Strategic Framework Element sets forth the City of Villages strategy to address the challenges of growth and improve quality of life. Policy direction is provided to protect the natural environment, increase housing affordability, enhance neighborhoods, increase mobility, create economic prosperity, provide for equitable development, and provide public facilities. New growth is to be targeted in mixed-use village centers in order to create lively activity centers, provide housing, preserve existing low density residential neighborhoods, improve walkability, and help support a state-of-the-art transit system. Strategic Framework Element conservation recommendations call for conserving and restoring resources to the fullest extent possible, developing land and buildings more efficiently and sustainability, and ensuring environmental equity and education.

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

The Conservation Element is being drafted to expand upon Strategic Framework Element policies, to update and replace the existing Progress Guide and General Plan Conservation Element, and to propose new policies where needed. You can access a

status report and outline of the Conservation Element (and other General Plan elements) at: www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages/index.shtml. Conservation Element issues to be addressed include:

- Resource Conservation and Efficiency
- Landform Preservation and Urban Form
- Soil and Mineral Use and Preservation
- Energy Independence
- Water Resource Management
- Water Quality
- Biological Diversity
- Wetlands
- Pollution Prevention
- Waste Management
- Sustainable Land Use Patterns
- Efficient Building and Site Design
- Environmental Justice
- Border/International Conservation
- Environmental Education

This list is subject to change, as we are open to your suggestions for additional topic areas. We will also provide the opportunity for meetings as needed to allow for live person-to-person communication and discussion.

PROPOSED POLICIES FOR REVIEW

With this update, we will be discussing two issues: Water Resource Management and Water Quality. Please review the discussion and draft policies and let us know what you think by January 9, 2004. Your comments will help determine the content of the draft General Plan document that will form the basis for environmental review.

Conservation Issue #10 – Water Resource Management

GOAL:

- ◆ A safe, reliable, and cost-effective water supply for San Diego.
- ◆ Maximum water-use efficiency for San Diego.

DISCUSSION:

San Diego's water resources are used for residential, commercial, industrial, ecological, recreational, navigational, and waste disposal purposes. Although San Diego is located in a semi-arid coastal climate, it has historically benefited from a reliable water supply, despite fluctuations between wet and dry periods. As water supplies become more constrained in California due to population and economic growth and competing regional demands, San Diego must implement new policies to safeguard the supply for present and future generations.

The majority of San Diego's water supply is imported from northern California and the Colorado River. Local reservoirs owned and operated by the City supply about 10 to 15 percent of total supply. The City of San Diego has no direct control over the imported water supply, but is a member agency of the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA), which is responsible for securing the San Diego region's water supply.

In late 2002, the U.S. Department of the Interior mandated that Southern California return to its allocation of 4.4 million annual acre-feet. This represented a significant reduction of 900,000 annual acre-feet in surplus Colorado River water that Southern California had received for decades. In response, the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) was ratified in 2003 to allow the (SDCWA) to purchase up to 200,000 acre-feet annually from the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) for a term of 75 years. Additionally, SDCWA opted to finance the lining of the All American and Coachella canals in exchange for dedicated rights to 78,000 annual acre-feet of conserved water from these projects for a term of 110 years.

Despite the addition of the 278,000 acre-feet of dedicated water supplies to San Diego County, there is remaining annual demand for 380,000 acre-feet of imported water. The SDCWA has preferential rights to approximately 310,000 annual acre-feet from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), leaving the San Diego region with approximately 70,000 acre-feet of supplies that could be interrupted in times of drought. By 2030, the City's water demands are projected to increase by approximately 55 million gallons a day (MGD) or 25% over 2002 levels. Additional dedicated water supplies and increased water-use efficiency programs are needed for the region to support growth projections. In response to these uncertainties, the City began a

strategic planning process in order to be more engaged in the development of its own water supply. This process resulted in the Long-Range Water Resources Plan, which defines a flexible thirty-year strategy and includes evaluation tools for continued water resources planning. The policies below reflect this strategy and other General Plan goals and policies.

POLICIES:

1. Invest in and research innovative water supply techniques: conservation, reclamation, reuse, sea water conversion, and watershed management.
 - a. Develop potential groundwater resources.
 - b. Reduce evaporative losses in City reservoirs.
 - c. Participate in water reclamation and seawater conversion programs.
 - d. Consider water reuse options.
 - e. Implement water conservation measures, to minimize environmentally destructive side effects of developing new water sources
 - f. Implement conservation incentive programs that increase water use efficiency and reduce urban runoff.
 - g. Encourage local water agencies to use State-mandated powers to enforce conservation measures that eliminate or penalize wasteful uses of water.
2. Prepare, implement, and maintain long term, comprehensive water supply plans in cooperation with the appropriate federal agencies, state, regional authorities, water utilities, and local governments, based on watersheds and other natural hydrological boundaries, such as aquifer recharge and discharge areas.
 - a. Provide adequate water supplies for present uses, to accommodate future growth, to attract and support commercial and industrial development, and to supply local agriculture.
 - b. Increase reliance on local water resources and decrease reliance on imported water.
 - c. Assure adequate water resources to maintain water-efficient urban vegetation.
3. Minimize pollution and other threats to water resources.
4. Control water discharge in a manner that does not reduce reasonable use by others, negatively impact wildlife and habitat, or create hazardous conditions (e.g., erosion, sedimentation, flooding and subsidence).
5. Develop and expand water-efficient urban forestry and landscaping projects.
6. Consume water in a manner that does not interfere with its reasonable use by others, impair the ability of water resources to be naturally replenished, or negatively impact wildlife and habitat.

Conservation Issue #11 – Water Quality

GOAL:

- ◆ Protection and restoration of all water bodies, including coastal waters, creeks, bays, and wetlands.

DISCUSSION:

The 1972 Clean Water Act established the permitting procedure that regulates the discharge of pollutants from industries and large pollutant generators to waters of the United States. Considerable strides have been made in reducing conventional sources of pollution, such as from sewage treatment plants and industrial facilities. However, studies have shown that runoff from urban areas – urban runoff – is the single largest source of pollution affecting creeks, bays, wetlands, and open space. When water from rainfall or human activities flows across streets, rooftops, parking lots and other urban areas, it picks up a host of pollutants in its path, such as, trash, debris, bacteria, viruses, oil, grease, sediments, nutrients, metals, and toxic chemicals. Urban runoff can also change the hydrological nature of streams, including flood duration/rates, which can affect natural habitat.

San Diego’s storm drain system only conveys rainfall runoff to avoid flooding. It does not direct water to a treatment facility. Pollutants that are picked up by runoff flow untreated directly to open space, beaches, bays, and wetlands. These contaminants can impair water quality, which in turn can adversely affect wildlife, public health, and economic prosperity. Also, extra urban flow directed through the storm drains to open space during non-storm events cause erosion and change the natural ephemeral nature of streams and creeks to constant flow, which is a disadvantage to natural habitat and actually makes a better environment for non-native and invasive plants/animals. Pollutants from urban runoff were not fully recognized until the 1987 Clean Water Act amendments, which established a regulatory framework to address them. The City of San Diego has enacted policies, programs, and development regulations to protect and restore the quality of San Diego’s beaches, creeks, bays, and wetlands.

POLICIES:

1. Adopt, amend and/or enforce City policies and regulations to reduce pollution from storm water and urban runoff.
 - a. Minimize large surface parking lots.
2. Secure funding to implement programs to protect and improve water quality.
 - a. Apply funding to comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) municipal permit regulations to jurisdiction responsibilities related to “new development and significant redevelopment” projects under the rubric of watershed planning and watershed plan implementation.
 - b. Support regional funding for water quality watershed planning and management.
 - c. Support increased funding of federal and state programs that monitor, model, assess, and map ground and surface water resources.
3. Support programs that address the causes of water quality pollution.

4. Support monitoring programs to better assess the causes and severity of water quality issues.
5. Reduce the number of yearly beach closures.
6. Require or encourage development practices through regulation that minimize alteration of natural hydrological conditions, minimize pollutant sources, and where possible, promote the preservation of natural drainage systems.
7. Minimize the amount of graded land surface exposed to erosion.
8. Improve quality of ocean outfall discharges.
9. Strictly enforce regulations concerning sewage discharge from vessels into Mission Bay and San Diego Bay.

Thank you for your review of these draft policies! If you have comments or questions about the issues or policies discussed, please contact Anna Shepherd at:

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202 C Street, San Diego, CA 92101
ashepherd@sandiego.gov
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