SECTION 12.0 - Relationship of Regional IRWM Plan to Local Land-Use Planning

12.1 Overview

This section describes the relationship between, and integration of, land-use planning and water management in Ventura County. The communication strategies used between land-use managers and water managers to effectively integrate water management and land-use planning are also addressed. Land-use strategies, procedures, and plans are referenced as the tools which accomplish these linkages. The information contained in this section also addresses several Resource Management Strategies (RMS).

Land-use practices can exacerbate water supply and quality problems or can proactively promote effective and sustainable water-management practices. Water-related resources can be protected through the implementation of policies that have been incorporated into long-range land-use plans such as general plans, and other land-use programs/requirements such as those found in zoning ordinances, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance, and permit conditions.

Programs that link land-use development and water-management requirements can also emerge from outside of traditional planning requirements and programs. For example, severe droughts and water shortages in the past resulted in adoption of water-saving measures adopted by most California jurisdictions. These types of land use/water-management programs include changes in building codes to require ultra-low-flow toilets, standards for gray water use, encouraging installation of rain gardens or cisterns, and water efficient landscape requirements for discretionary projects.

The integration of land-use planning with regional water issues and water-management objectives requires that land-use related actions taken by agencies with land-use decision-making authority (i.e. cities, the County) be consistent with the objectives set out in the IRWM Plan, which are intended to manage and protect local water and related environmental resources. Land-use strategies can include long-range planning goals, objectives, general-plan policies, ordinances, regulations, mitigation measures/funds, project conditions of development, guidelines, community and project design, incentives, penalties, and education/outreach programs which result in positive impacts to local water resources, water quality, habitats, and ecosystems.

Land-use measures can also improve water quality, minimize flooding impacts, protect habitat, and other resources if incorporated into the land-use planning process. Land-use policies can restrict certain types of developments and uses in the floodplain, support creation of “bio-friendly” drainage courses and provide greater opportunities for percolation and groundwater recharge.

Cities and counties have the authority to issue some form of approval for most development projects, whether they are private projects or public facilities. Most jurisdictions require that project developers meet or address conditions of approval, design guidelines, resource use limitations, or some combination of the above. As projects are reviewed, water-management strategies must be employed to assist in an overall positive impact on water resources.

12.2 Current Relationship Between Local Land-Use Planning and Water Management Entities

There is a strong relationship between water and land-use planning efforts in Ventura County. Due to the complexity of water use and resources and the advocacy of its citizens, Ventura County has a history of integrating land-use decisions with water-management planning that spans many decades. This is demonstrated by the many plans, policies, and development processes set in place to regulate and manage land and water use. Representative examples of these programs, plans, and policies are described below and summarized in Table 12-1.

Land-Use Planning and Water Management Linkages
The County's extensive groundwater resources (groundwater provides about 65% of the County's water needs), agricultural production, urban development, and reliance on imported water have guided water-management input and land-use decisions by the County Board of Supervisors and local city councils. Early land use and water management coordination efforts were implemented in response to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Section 208 and 201 Clean Water Act grants in the late 1970's and early 1980's, which mandated the participation and input of water districts, water companies, the public, and elected officials in water management and land-use planning decisions. Grants from the 208 and 201 programs provided funding for regional planning, waste-water treatment, water management, solutions to sea water intrusion, and water conservation. The first Section 208 - Countywide Water Management Plan was adopted in 1978 and updated in 1980. In 1994 the County of Ventura adopted a comprehensive update to the 1980 208 Water Management Plan.

More recent programs that link water management and land-use entities include the enactment of the statewide Sustainable Groundwater Management Act;, updates to the County's Coastal Plan; development of a comprehensive GIS database to include biological, geological, water resources, floodplain, and land-use data; amendment of the County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines, which recognize linkages between water and biological resources; protecting the benefits of aquifer recharge and wetland protection; projects implemented through the IRWM Plan.

In September of 2014, the California Legislature enacted comprehensive legislation aimed at strengthening local control and management of groundwater basins throughout the state. Known as the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) of 2014, the legislation provides a framework for sustainable management of groundwater supplies by local authorities, with a limited role for state intervention when necessary to protect the resource. An important element of SGMA is the role and authority of land-use planning agencies in helping to sustainably manage groundwater basins.

According to the California Department of Water Resources, "For the first time in its history, California has a framework for sustainable, groundwater management - "management and use of groundwater in a manner that can be maintained during the planning and implementation horizon without causing undesirable results." (source – DWR website).

As outlined in Section 113 of the California Water Code: "It is the policy of the state that groundwater resources be managed sustainably for long-term reliability and multiple economic, social, and environmental benefits for current and future beneficial uses. Sustainable groundwater management is best achieved locally through the development, implementation, and updating of plans and programs based on the best available science."

SGMA requires governments and water agencies of high and medium-priority basins to halt overdraft and bring groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. Under SGMA, these basins should reach sustainability within 20 years of implementing their sustainability plans. For critically overdrafted basins, that will be 2040. For the remaining high and medium-priority basins, 2042 is the deadline. The first step in the process laid out by the legislation is that local agencies must form local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) within two years. These GSAs must be formed to address groundwater basins determined by the state to be of high or medium priority. In the County, seven (7) basins are designated as medium priority, and four are designated as high priority. 10% of all medium and high priority-basins in the state are located in Ventura County. In addition, three basins in the County are designated as critically overdrafted (Oxnard, Pleasant Valley, Cuyama Valley).

Other recently adopted ordinances and permits in the WCVC Region include the County/city storm water permit (MS4), updated landscape plan guidelines, and the climate change action plans. More recent plans such as the Local Government Commission Report on Aligning Land Use and Water Use Protection in Ventura County are discussed later in this section. With the ongoing implementation of the programs identified above and described in Table 12-1, effective procedures are in place that enable local land use and water-management entities to integrate water resource concerns into the land-use planning process.

In addition, since 1985, Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) have been prepared and updated every five (5) years by urban water purveyors serving at least 3,000 people or 3,000 acre-feet of water per year for urban uses. These plans require coordination with the land-use agencies in the jurisdiction the water is served.

The successful implementation of these programs requires close working relationships between staff and officials of local land use and water agencies and state and federal agencies involved in water management and land use. Many of these land-use programs were initially managed by the Ventura County Planning Division as part of the Countywide Planning Program (CPP) that included coordination with all stakeholders at regular meetings. Other groups such as the Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC) have since continued the function of coordination and input on regional planning and water issues.

Table 12-1
Programs, Plans, Policies Linking Land Use and Water Management

Jurisdiction	Program, Policy or Planning Effort	IRWM Plan Goals Addressed	Purpose/Status
County and Cities, Urban Water Suppliers	Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP)	1 and 5	Prepared by California's urban water suppliers every five years to support their long-term resource planning and ensure adequate water supplies are available to meet existing and future water demands. Every urban-water supplier that either provides over 3,000 acre-feet of water annually or serves more than 3,000 connections is required to assess the reliability of its water sources over a 20-year planning horizon considering normal, dry, and multiple dry years. This assessment is to be included in its UWMP and submitted to the Department of Water Resources
Countywide	Water Management Plan - 1980; 1994 - 2004	1, 2, 3, 4, and 6	Addresses water supply, water quality and long- range population forecast. The County General Plan requires discretionary projects to be consistent with the policies of the Water Management Plan (Policy 1.3.2.1).
County	County General Plan - Agricultural Land Protection	1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6	General Plan Update in 1984 to create agricultural land use and 40-acre lot minimum. Protects agricultural operations and promotes urban development within existing cities and urban areas. Water supply and quality benefits by retaining agriculture on prime soils. Current update underway.

Jurisdiction	Program, Policy or Planning Effort	IRWM Plan Goals Addressed	Purpose/Status
County and Cities	Guidelines for Orderly Development Compact Design/Separate Communities	2, 3, 4, and 5	Adopted in 1969 by the Board of Supervisors; all City Councils within Ventura County and the Local Agency Formation Commission. The Guidelines state that urban development should be located within incorporated cities whenever or wherever practical.
County and Cities	Greenbelt Agreements	4 and 5	Voluntary agreements between the Board of Supervisors and one or more City Councils regarding development of agricultural and/or open-space areas beyond city limits. Cities commit to not annex any property within a greenbelt while the Board agrees to restrict development to uses consistent with existing zoning.
Cities and County	Save Open Space and Agriculture Agreement (SOAR) General Plan Amendments	2, 3, 4, and 5	Adopted for cities of Camarillo, Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Santa Paula, Simi Valley, and Thousand Oaks, the SOAR ordinances and initiatives establish "City Urban Restriction Boundary" (CURB) lines around each city and require city voter approval before any land located outside the CURB lines can be developed under the city's jurisdiction for urban purposes. The County SOAR ordinance requires countywide voter approval of any change to the County General Plan involving the "Agricultural," "Open Space" or "Rural" land use map designations or any change to a General Plan goal or policy related to those land use designations. Reauthorized by county voters in 2016.

Jurisdiction	Program, Policy or Planning Effort	IRWM Plan Goals Addressed	Purpose/Status
County	Conservation Parcel	2, 3, 4, and 5	Ventura County approved changes to Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and Land Conservation Act LCA) Guidelines to make it simpler to donate or sell land to a conservation organization. Applies to non-coastal land. For example, wetlands adjacent to agricultural land undergoing large lot subdivision can be retained in perpetuity for their green infrastructure and habitat value.
Groundwater Sustainability Agencies	Groundwater Sustainability Plans	1, 2, 4,5, and 6	Groundwater Sustainability Plans are developed by Groundwater Sustainability Agencies created in high and medium-priority basins as designated by the state, under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (2014). These agencies and the related plans (GSPs) must bring the affected groundwater basins into balance to avoid undesirable effects.
County	Development-Related Guidelines	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	• Efficient Model Home Requirements "Each model home in the complex, including the low-water use models, shall be equipped with a water meter to generate records on how much water the landscape uses …" • Landscape Approval/Installation Verification "Maintenance Program: Landscapes of residential common areas and commercial and industrial projects shall be carefully and competently maintained to ensure water efficiency and high-quality appearance."

Jurisdiction	Program, Policy or Planning Effort	IRWM Plan Goals Addressed	Purpose/Status
County	Other Plan Policies	1 and 6	• "Encourage tiered-rate structures and water allocations to limit water use by providing an economic incentive to use water efficiently." • "Defer installation of required landscape during drought conditions."
County	Flood Mitigation Plan	2, 3, 4, 5, and 6	• "Maintain flood control and storm drains, in accordance with habitat preservation policies through periodic dredging, repair, de-silting, and clearing to prevent any loss in their effective use."

Vehicles for Collaboration Between Land Use and Water Management in Ventura County

The Ventura County-City County Planning Association (VCCPA) is one forum for ongoing communication between the WCVC IRWM Program and local land-use planners. VCCPA meetings are held monthly and through this forum regional water management and land-use planning topics (projects, policies, procedures, etc.) are often addressed.

County General Plan Update 2040 - The County Planning Division is in the process of conducting a comprehensive, multi-year process to update its General Plan, applicable in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County. The Ventura County General Plan Update (VC GPU) will address future land-use goals, policies, and programs out to the year 2040 and will include a Water Resources Element for the first time, as well as a Climate Action Plan. WCVC staff and stakeholders are engaged in this process and are providing input into the technical background documents and the Elements applicable to management of water in the County unincorporated area. VC GPU 2040 also addresses the potential impacts of climate change on future land uses.

Coastal Vulnerability - One effect of climate change that is impacting coastal areas in the County is rising sea levels. In addition to the VC GPU 2014, the County recently completed a comprehensive assessment of coastal vulnerability. WCVC staff and stakeholders were engaged in this process and provided input. According to the final document released in December 2018, "The 2018 VC Resilient Coastal Adaptation Vulnerability Assessment (Report) provides Ventura County (County) with a science-based vulnerability assessment that evaluates a variety of resources and infrastructure in the unincorporated coastal areas of the county and the risk of future damage associated with coastal hazards (high tides, erosion, and storm flooding) and sea level rise. This Report will be used to support community discussions on existing and future hazards, identify potential adaptation strategies that can reduce the risk of future damage, and guide land-use goals, policies, and programs.

The California Coastal Act requires local governments in the state's coastal zone to create and implement Local Coastal Programs (LCPs). Each LCP consists of a coastal land-use plan (Ventura County's is called the "Coastal Area Plan") and an Implementation Plan (Ventura County's is called the "Coastal Zoning Ordinance"). The County of Ventura's Coastal Land-use plan is one of the County's nine Area Plans. These Area Plans are extensions of the County's General Plan and are used to achieve the community's vision for future growth and ensure the provision of adequate services. LCPs must be certified by the California Coastal Commission once they are determined consistent with the California Coastal Act. After certification, local governments manage coastal development, prioritize coastal-dependent uses, and protect coastal resources, including addressing the challenges presented by coastal hazards like storms, flooding, and erosion".

12.3 Programs, Plans, Policies Linking Land Use and Water Management in Ventura County

The following goals were developed by the stakeholders in the region and are based on the water needs and conflicts identified across Ventura County. The first goal was recently modified to reflect the need for a diverse water-supply portfolio for enhanced water supply reliability.

1. Protect, conserve, and augment local water-supply portfolio to increase local water resilience.
2. Protect and improve water quality.
3. Protect people, property, and the environment from adverse flooding impacts.
4. Protect and restore habitat and ecosystems in watersheds.
5. Provide water-related recreational, public access, stewardship, engagement, and educational opportunities.
6. Prepare for and adapt to climate change.

Land-use planning practices, policies, and programs in Ventura County have always, and will continue, to play an important role in helping the region meet its water-management goals and address challenges.

12.3.1 General Plans

Probably the most important land-use planning document addressing water resources, water infrastructure, and integrating land use and water-supply planning in cities and counties is the general plan. Urban Water Management Plans, watershed plans, stormwater-management plans, and water-master plans are the types of plans typically adopted by water agencies but also address land use. General plans are developed by land-use planning agencies and are coordinated with water agencies. Ventura County's General Plan addresses water resources and requires discretionary projects to be consistent with the policies of the Water Management Plan.

Ventura County General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs Related to Water Resources (applicable in the unincorporated areas of the County):

Excerpted from Existing Ventura County General Plan (As noted above, the VC General Plan is being updated – scheduled final completion 2020).

1.3.1 Goals

1. Inventory and monitor the quantity and quality of the County's water resources.
2. Effectively manage the water resources of the County by adequately planning for the development, conservation, and protection of water resources for present and future generations.
3. Maintain and, where feasible, restore the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of surface and groundwater resources.
4. Ensure that the demand for water does not exceed available water resources.
5. Protect and, where feasible, enhance watersheds and aquifer recharge areas.

6. Promote reclamation and reuse of wastewater for recreation, irrigation, and to recharge aquifers.

7. Promote efficient use of water resources through water conservation.

1.3.2 Policies

1. *Discretionary development* which is inconsistent with the goals and policies of the County's Water Management Plan (WMP) shall be prohibited, unless overriding considerations are cited by the decision-making body.
2. *Discretionary development* shall comply with all applicable County and State water regulations.
3. The installation of *on-site septic systems* shall meet all applicable State and County regulations.
4. *Discretionary development* shall not significantly impact the quantity or quality of water resources within watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, or groundwater basins.
5. Landscape plans for *discretionary development* shall incorporate water-conservation measures as prescribed by the County's Guide to Landscape Plans, including use of low water usage landscape plants and irrigation systems and/or low water usage plumbing fixtures and other measures designed to reduce water usage.
6. The use of the Santa Clara River as a multiple resource (i.e., source of supply for water, concrete aggregates, and biological habitat) shall be permitted to continue with the use of the River as a water resource having priority over all other uses.
7. Out-of-river mining below the historic or predicted high groundwater level in the Del Norte/El Rio (Oxnard Forebay Basin) area may be permitted if the applicant can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the County of Ventura that the excavation activity will not interfere with or affect groundwater quality and quantity.
8. All *discretionary development* shall be conditioned for the proper drilling and construction of new oil, gas, and water wells and destruction of all abandoned wells on-site.
9. New wells in the Oxnard Plain pressure basin shall not be allowed if they would increase seawater intrusion in the Oxnard or Mugu aquifers.
10. All new golf courses shall be conditioned to prohibit landscape irrigation with water from groundwater basins or inland surface waters identified as Municipal and Domestic Supply or Agricultural Supply in the California Regional Water Quality Control Board's Water Quality Control Plan unless either: a) the existing and planned water supplies for a Hydrologic Area, including interrelated Hydrologic Areas and Subareas, are shown to be adequate to meet the projected demands for existing uses as well as reasonably foreseeable probable future uses within the area, or b) it is demonstrated that the total groundwater extraction/recharge for the golf course will be equal to or less than the historic groundwater extraction/recharge (as defined in the Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines) for the site. Where feasible, reclaimed water shall be utilized for new golf courses.

1.3.3 Programs

1. The Public Works Agency and the United Water Conservation District will continue to support the Seawater Intrusion Abatement Project.
2. The County Public Works Agency will continue to enforce Chapter 70 (Excavation and Grading) of the Uniform Building Code, as incorporated by reference in and amended by the

Ventura County Building Code, to ensure that any proposed grading in a waterway or wetland is adequately investigated and that any *development* incorporates appropriate design provisions to protect waterways or wetlands.

3. The County will continue to support the Fox Canyon Groundwater Management Agency Plan for both the Upper and Lower Aquifer Systems.
4. The County Environmental Health Division will take all administrative, fiscal, and legal measures necessary to provide the services of County Service Area 32.
5. The Planning Division and Public Works Agency will continue to coordinate with water districts and other appropriate agencies to establish a database on actual available supply, projected use factors for types of land use and *development*, and threshold limits for *development* within available water resources.
6. The Planning Division will continue to promote the efficient use of water through the Landscape Design Criteria Program.
7. The Public Works Agency, in cooperation with the Environmental Health Division, will continue to pursue the use of reclaimed water for agricultural irrigation.
8. The Environmental Health Division will continue to monitor, inspect, and regulate underground storage tanks.
9. The Environmental Health Division will continue to identify *waste-disposal sites* and seek to mitigate impacts to water resources.
10. The Planning Division will prepare, for the consideration of the Board of Supervisors, a Countywide water-conservation-retrofit program to fund the installation of water-conservation fixtures (defined as 1.6 gallons per flush toilets, one gallon per flush urinals, and 2.5 gallons per minute showerheads) for businesses and residents located within Ventura County.

Sample General Plan Policies from Other Jurisdictions - Applicable to Development Projects

- "New [water] wells in the Oxnard Plain Pressure Basin shall not be allowed if they would increase seawater intrusion."
- "The City shall continue and enhance its voluntary water-conservation program, including the mandatory installation of ultra-low flush toilets and reduced-flow-showerheads, and faucets in new development."
- "Landscape Plans for discretionary development shall incorporate water-conservation measures."
- "Discretionary development shall be conditioned to incorporate water-conservation techniques and the use of drought-resistant native plants."
- "The California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Audubon Society, and the California Native Plant Society shall be consulted when discretionary development may affect significant biological resources."
- "Buffer barrancas and creeks that retain natural soil slopes from development with a minimum of 50 feet of natural existing or restored vegetation."

- "Prohibit placement of material in watercourses other than native plants and required flood control structures and remove debris periodically."

As part of the General Plan Update 2040, the County will add a Water Resources Element:

"Update to the Resources Chapter/Appendix of the General Plan (Countywide): *The SEIR for the focused update of the County General Plan illuminated the need to update certain sections within the Resources Chapter and Appendix, some of which have not been updated since the early 1980's. Specifically, the Biological Resources, Water Resources, and Farmland Resources sections are in need of updating*."

12.3.2 Additional County of Ventura Land-Use Programs Impacting Water Management

A. One Stop Permitting

The County of Ventura and many cities have undertaken significant outreach and coordination effort to integrate land-use decisions and water management. The County has done this with the "One Stop Permitting" process. Relevant federal, state, county, and city water-resource regulations and programs have been included in the online "One Stop Permitting," http://onestoppermit.ventura.org/index.html. Many city-planning websites also feature integrated land use and water-resource planning. For this discussion, the County of Ventura's "One Stop Permitting" is provided as an example and serves as a County-wide resource.

"One Stop Permitting" brings together County agencies, divisions, land-use planning, and water resources among them, in the discretionary permit process. It provides both an overview of the development process and step-by-step guidance to individuals seeking land-use permits for residential, commercial, and industrial development projects or subdivisions within unincorporated Ventura County. Links to water-resource protection and guidance from Planning, Environmental Health, Floodplain Management, Watershed Management, and others are provided. The website displays nine (9) steps of the permit process explaining the pre-submittal, submittal, environmental review, and hearings before the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors. A featured highlight of the web page is the Countywide Municipal Stormwater Quality Permit (MS 4 Permit).

B. Municipal Stormwater Permit (MS4)

Included in "One Stop Permitting," Ventura County and cities have adopted and amended a host of permits and ordinances that affect water resources. This includes the Ventura County Municipal Stormwater Permit - MS4 issued by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board on July 8, 2010, and subsequent amendment and adoption of the County Stormwater Quality Management (SWQM) Ordinance No. 4142. New development or redevelopment as defined by the ordinance must comply with water quality protection measures through the permit process. Under the Municipal Stormwater Permit, the County is required to regulate discharges into the County storm-drain system to protect quality of the Waters of the State. In addition, a Ventura County Technical Guidance Manual provides detailed design guidelines for stormwater retention and Best Management Practices (BMP's). The Watershed Protection District requires compliance with stormwater discharge along with NPDES construction requirements, construction BMP's for less than one (1) acre of soil disturbance, post-construction requirements for single-family hillside homes, horse-manure management, and watershed-protection ordinance for projects which may affect a watercourse or District facilities.

The MS4 permit, Technical Guidance Manual, along with the US EPA Management Wet Weather with Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID), provides a significant step forward in guiding protection of water resources and ensuring interaction between watershed managers and city councils/Board of Supervisors.

C. Water Quality Testing, Soils Report, and Water Will Serve

"One Stop Permitting" provides information on regulations and policies as well as brochures for each permitting agency. For example, if a project will be utilizing a water well for water supply, applicants must submit water-quality testing and a soils report for projects utilizing onsite sewage-treatment systems. Requirements are provided for projects utilizing onsite sewage treatment systems, water-board requirements for subdivision of three (3) or more lots utilizing onsite sewage treatment systems and a technical-information manual for onsite sewage-treatment systems. The County Environmental Health Division (EHD) also requires a Water Supply Certificate (will-serve letter) from the water district to provide water to a newly created subdivision and in compliance with state laws.

Wetland Project Permitting Guide and Guide to Native and Invasive Streamside Plants - Grant programs geared to integrating water resource and land use have resulted in creation of a Wetland Project Permitting Guide http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio/FinalPDF.pdf and Guide to Native and Invasive Streamside Plants http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio/compwebRipPlntGde.pdf. Both are included in "One Stop Permitting".

D. Conservation Parcels

Amendment of the County Non-Coastal Subdivision Ordinance and Land Conservation Act Contract Guidelines allows for Conservation Parcels, which may otherwise be non-conforming parcels, but can be donated or sold to a Land Conservation Organization that have targeted rivers and wetlands for permanent protection.

E. Groundwater and Watershed Protection

Groundwater use requires a different set of guidelines and ordinances through the Groundwater section of the Watershed Protection District. Subdivisions are restricted based upon Nitrate loading for impacted groundwater basins, along with nitrate loading of septic systems.

F. Floodplain Management Ordinance

Ventura County is highly vulnerable to damage from floods due to the geographic location and orographic conditions. Since 1992, there have been five presidential disaster declarations for flooding in Ventura County. In addition, at least every five years, a flood or flood-related hazard causes damage that is not significant enough for a disaster declaration but, nonetheless, costs county residents, businesses, and taxpayers millions of dollars. These risks posed by these hazards increase as the county's population continues to grow.

Watershed Protection District (District) implements the Floodplain Management Ordinance 3841 on behalf of the County of Ventura to ensure compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program. This includes permit review for structures built in the floodplain and evaluation of site

plans for developments that include identified floodplains. For incorporated jurisdictions, each city serves as the floodplain manager for its sphere of influence.

G. Flood Mitigation Plan/Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plans

The Ventura County District has developed a flood mitigation plan in parallel with the multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan for Ventura County. The flood-mitigation plan addresses planning for risks associated with flooding, post-fire debris flow, and dam failure. It also addresses how to mitigate and reduce the number of repetitive loss structures in the county. Actions listed in the Flood-Mitigation Plan that link land use with flood mitigation include:

- Review Ventura County General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, and Floodplain Management Ordinance for consistency.

- Coordinate more closely with the State Coastal Conservancy, the Nature Conservancy, and the Friends of the Santa Clara River in their efforts to acquire and manage the lower Santa Clara River corridor to allow for the restoration of the natural processes of the river to prevent continued flooding and damage.

H. Green Building Codes

The 2010 Ventura County Building Code incorporates changes based on the State of California CalGreen Code Title 24. This includes expedited processing for structures voluntarily in compliance with the California Green Building Code Tier 1 and Tier 2. Provisions address onsite drainage with permeable features to allow percolation and filtration, water-conservation measures, low-impact development features, water-efficient plumbing links land use practices in direct response to water resource concerns.

I. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Review

The California Environmental Quality Act Review Process is also presented in detail in the "One Stop Permitting" website. This process is dependent upon the technical review of each responsible agency and input from the public on proposed development. To guide this process, the County has developed the Initial Study Assessment Guidelines (ISAG). ISAG provides a method to determine significant impacts and potential mitigation measures as a result of proposed development. Each issue area such as land use, biological resources, water resources, agriculture, transportation, air quality, etc. and is defined based upon the most recent science and expertise of the responsible agency.

As a result of the recent ability to clearly identify and map resources with Geographic Information System (GIS) data, water resource, groundwater, and biological-resource data have become more available and known. Several grant programs developed definitive methods of evaluating impacts and developed acceptable mitigations based on the expertise and input of many scientists, biologists, botanists, from County, State and Federal Agencies. The ISAG's, as amended in 2011, provide a greater degree of specificity and confidence in protecting the County's water and biological resources.

A few examples of CEQA review requirements include:

- Groundwater Quantity - "Any land use that will directly or indirectly decrease, either individually or cumulatively, the net quantity of groundwater in a basin that is overdrafted, shall be considered to have a potentially significant impact."

- Surface Water Quality - "For proposed land uses where the resulting surface water-quality impacts are known by previous data at other sites or on-site data, they should be compared with the objectives for groundwater's contained in the most recently adopted 4A, 3, or 5D Plans."

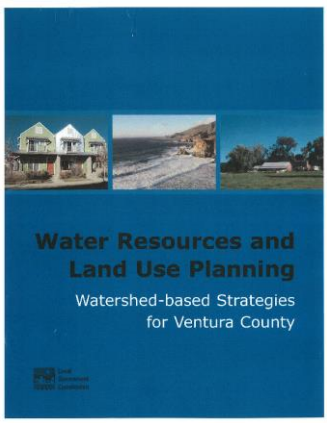
J. Aligning Land Use and Water Quality Protection in Ventura County - A Watershed-Based Strategy for Ventura County Communities (Local Government Commission Report)

Ventura County was one of three counties selected for the 2006 Local Government Commission (LGC) study on Ventura County Watersheds and Land-use planning. The County is highlighted in the LGC First Stop Shop for Water Resources web page. http://water.lgc.org/ventura/ventura-county-project-background. LGC worked with local governments, water agencies, and local residents and businesses to enhance the protection of water resources through better, more coordinated land-use decisions. The LGC Study offers an in-depth review of existing land-use design, ordinances, general plans, and policies and offers suggestions for improvement in the future. One conclusion of the report is that "Ventura County and the 10 cities within it have a history of relatively advanced land-use planning and watershed-management protection. However, the County is poised for additional growth, and the ultimate shape of that growth will either support or hinder watershed protection in the region."

The LGC's Ahwahnee Water Principles provide the framework for the study based upon planning principles that implement watershed-based strategies. This includes natural systems and green infrastructure, infill and redevelopment, compact design, use mix, streets and mobility, parking and loading, and watershed planning through compact district design. Recommendations include an audit to be performed by each jurisdiction to remove undesirable land uses from sensitive water-resource areas and to more closely integrate watershed protection with the land-use process.

Ahwahnee Water Principles:

The County of Ventura and the cities of Ventura, Santa Paula, and Port Hueneme are signatory to the Ahwahnee Water Principles for Resource Efficient Land Use, http://www.lgc.org/ahwahnee/ahwahnee_water_principles.pdf. The Principles promote compact community design, mixed use, walkable transit-oriented development to minimize urban runoff, identification of wetlands, floodplain, open space and native habitat identified to preserve and restore



for flood protection, water-quality improvement, groundwater recharge, permeable surfaces instead of hardscape for driveways and streets, dual plumbing, community design for recycled water use, and urban water conservation, and water-efficient plumbing fixtures.

In recent years, some local cities and the County have taken further actions to implement recommendations in the LGC report. For example, the County of Ventura has revised the landscape ordinance and guidelines for treating stormwater, stabilizing slopes, and controlling erosion. Parking standards in the non -coastal zoning ordinance require a demonstration of

compliance with stormwater-management requirements. Parking-area design must incorporate methods of accommodating infiltration or filtration onsite through pervious pavements, drainage swales, bio-retentions areas, tree-box filters, dry swales, or other means. The County General Services Agency has installed permeable surface parking areas and adjacent to curbs in several parking lots on the Government Center Campus.

12.3.3 Interaction of Planning Agencies and Water Management Agencies in Ventura County

The Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County (WCVC), formed in April 2006, maintains a strong link between land-use planning entities and water-resource managers. The WCVC members represent virtually all stakeholders in water management including representatives of local cities and the County. The WCVC consists of more than 60 local entities that are actively participating in the WCVC IRWM Program. WCVC encompasses planning efforts for the three major watersheds in the County, the Ventura River, Santa Clara River, and Calleguas Creek watersheds.

The Ventura River Watershed Council is a stakeholder group for watershed planning in the Ventura River Watershed. It is an open group with active participation by government agencies, water and sanitation districts, environmental and educational non-profits, agricultural organizations, community-volunteer groups, as well as engineers, biologists, businesses, and private citizens. The Watershed Council is a key participant in WCVC and contributed to the development of the Ventura County Integrated Water Management Plan. They also completed a comprehensive watershed management plan for the Ventura River watershed (included as Appendix C).

The Santa Clara River Watershed Committee (SCRWC) was formed in July 2006 as a coalition of stakeholders addressing issues critical to the watershed. The SCRWC is engaged in a variety of local planning efforts including development and implementation of the IRWMP, implementation of integrated projects identified in the IRWM Plan with Prop. 50 and 84 funds, and development of future project ideas to address the objectives developed by the Committee. See Appendix B of the 2014 WCVC IRWM Plan Update for more specific information regarding the Santa Clara River Watershed.

The Calleguas Creek Watershed Management Plan/IRWM Plan was prepared under the auspices of the Calleguas Creek Steering Committee and included stakeholders from local cities, water districts and planning entities, among many others. The Land-Use Subcommittee of the Calleguas Creek Steering Committee provides a link between local planning agencies and the IRWM Plan by offering

a forum for discussion in their meetings, providing accurate, consistent land-use planning information, and incorporating local planning documents and goals into the project objectives. See Appendix A for more specific information regarding the Calleguas Creek Watershed planning efforts.

Development of the 2019 IRWM Plan amendment and associated implementation strategies is also being coordinated with the planning/community development directors of the ten Cities and County through the Ventura County-City Planning Association (VCCPA). A number of water-management strategies can be effectively implemented through land-use policies and controls, many of which are already in place throughout Ventura County.

City and County planning commissions, city councils, and Board of Supervisors interact with water-resource managers on plans, policies, grants, and through committees and forums such as WCVC. The input of water-resource managers is sought throughout the land-development process which is discussed further in the next section.

There are other forums or groups that provide for input and collaboration on land use and water resources. Table 12-2 provides a list of such groups along with the jurisdiction and purpose.

TABLE 12-2
Water Management and Land Use:
Interaction of Land Use Decision-Making Bodies and Water Agencies

Groups or Forum	Jurisdiction	Purpose/Function and Frequency of Meeting/Interaction
Watersheds Coalition of Ventura County WCVC.org	City/County/Region	The coalition is comprised of a consortium of local cities, wholesale and retail water agencies, special districts, the County of Ventura, and non-governmental agencies interested in promoting and implementing integrated regional water-management planning efforts in Ventura County. The primary objectives of the WCVC are to: Reduce dependence on imported water and protect, conserve, and augment water supplies; Protect and improve water quality; protect people, property, and the environment from adverse flooding impacts; Protect and restore habitat and ecosystems in our watersheds; Provide water-related public access, recreational, and educational opportunities. Meetings are monthly within each of three watersheds.
Ventura County-City Planning Association	Cities/County Planning/VCTC/APCD	VCCPA is composed of Land-use planning representatives from all ten cities, County, Ventura Transportation Commission (VCTC), and Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The group has been meeting monthly since the 1970's and provides input on regional projects. VCCPA has been involved in review of WCVC IRWM plans.

Groups or Forum	Jurisdiction	Purpose/Function and Frequency of Meeting/Interaction
VCOG www.venturacog.org	City/County	The Ventura Council of Governments (VCOG) is a voluntary joint powers authority representing the 10 cities of Ventura County as well as the County. VCOG's goal is to facilitate cooperative subregional and regional planning, coordination, and technical assistance on issues of mutual concern. VCOG is based on the premise that Ventura County can have more representation without more government and that issues of common concern often extend beyond the purview of local jurisdictions and agencies, requiring insight and input from a wide range of affected interests. VCOG holds workshops and provides input on land use/water resource issues including Sustainable Communities, Low Impact Development, Population Forecasts, and Water Resources.
Local Agency Formation Commission http://www.ventura.lafco.ca.gov/	Countywide	LAFCos implement state-law requirements and state and local policies relating to boundary changes for cities and most special districts, including spheres of influence, incorporations, annexations, reorganizations, and other changes of organization. In this capacity, the Ventura LAFCo is the boundary agency for cities and most special districts in Ventura County.

Groups or Forum	Jurisdiction	Purpose/Function and Frequency of Meeting/Interaction
Ventura County Watershed Protection District/RMA/ Stormwater groups onestoppermit.ventura.org/	Countywide MS4 permit	The County Stormwater Program reviews proposed land-development projects to prevent adverse impacts to the surface water quality and ensure compliance with requirements in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Ventura County Stormwater Municipal Permit No. CAS004002 issued by California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) – Los Angeles Region (MS4). The County Stormwater Program's project review process generally focuses on the following areas: Post-construction impact on stormwater runoff; Construction, demolition, or soil disturbance impact on stormwater runoff; Proposed land-use impact on surface-water quality; Compliance with the County General Plan and Area Plans for water quality/resources; Potential impact of stormwater discharge from material storage areas, hazardous materials handling or storage areas, other outdoor work areas; Potential of stormwater discharge to impair the beneficial uses of the receiving waters; Potential impact of stormwater discharge to cause significant harm on the biological integrity of the waterways and waterbodies; Potential for significant changes in the flow velocity or volume of stormwater runoff to cause harm to or impair the beneficial uses of natural drainage systems; and Potential for significant increases in erosion at the project site or surrounding areas.
Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA)	Boundaries defined by each GSA	SGMA requires governments and water agencies of high and medium priority basins to halt overdraft and bring groundwater basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. The first step in the process laid out by the legislation is that local agencies must form local groundwater sustainability agencies (GSAs) within two years. These GSAs must be formed to address groundwater basins determined by the state to be of high or medium priority. In the County, seven (7) basins are designated as medium priority, and four are designated as high priority. 10% of all medium and high-priority basins are in Ventura County. In addition, three basins in the County are designated as critically overdrafted (Oxnard, Pleasant Valley, Cuyama Valley). GSAs meet regularly, typically every month. Over the next few years, the focus of all the local GSAs is development of their Groundwater Sustainability Plans.

12.4 Future Efforts to Establish Stronger Integration of Land-Use Planning and Water Management, and Address Climate Change Impacts

Ventura County is projected to have a population of approximately 1 million by 2050. How the County grows will determine future water-consumption rates and how pollution-prevention measures are implemented. The effects of population growth and development practices were recognized by the *California Water Plan* when it indicated, "Traditional-land-use patterns consume more water and increase surface runoff, relative to more compact and sustainable development. When prime and productive farmlands are converted to urban development, agriculture may be displaced to other locations, which can impact water and other resource uses (California Water Plan 2013, page 24-8)."

The manner in which new development occurs can have indirect effects on watersheds and the resources they support. For example, new studies demonstrate that increased wildfire risk in California will be driven to a large extent by changes in land use and development. Modeled simulations estimate that property damage from wildfire risk could be as much as 35 percent lower if smartgrowth policies were adopted and followed than if there is no change in growth policies and patterns (*Our Changing Climate, 2012*).

Watershed management is a broad-based method used by land-use planners for resolving specific water issues within a drainage basin. Even land-use practices on a small portion of a watershed can have serious consequences. For example, impervious surfaces result in more rapid and larger amounts of surface runoff. This change in runoff can alter stream flow and watershed hydrology, reduce groundwater recharge, increase stream sedimentation, and increase the need for infrastructure to control stormwater runoff. Integrating ecosystem functions as part of the rural and urban development can avoid conflicts with water resources (California Water Plan 2013).

Addressing Climate Change Impacts

As described at the beginning of this section (12) and in other sections of this IRWM Plan amendment, the future impacts of climate change on the local region's water resources and management systems, land-use patterns, economy, and ecosystems are being carefully considered. Through the forums established by, and as part of WCVC, the local planning association (VCCPA), The Association of Water Agencies, and other groups, local entities share information and collaborate on developing and implementing strategies and projects to help mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change. Major vehicles for this collaboration currently include the VC General Plan Update 2040, the VC Coastal Resilience Vulnerability Assessment, development of groundwater sustainability plans, and amendments to the WCVC IRWM Plan.

Ventura County's 2040 General Plan Update includes a Climate Action Plan. The County developed an integrated approach to addressing climate change in the General Plan by incorporating related policies and programs throughout the General Plan elements, such that the General Plan will also serve as the County's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The purpose of the Climate Change Appendix (Appendix B of the General Plan Update 2040) is to provide further details regarding the General Plan's integrated climate-action strategy, including a summary of results of key technical analyses used to develop the strategy.

Appendix B also includes components of the County's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction strategy, (GHG Strategy), and documents the County's vulnerability to climate change and the Climate Adaptation strategy.

Other current activities in the county focused on land-use patterns and practices, include planning being conducted by the Naval Base Ventura County, resource-protection efforts at Ormond Beach and the Santa Clara River estuary, The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Resilience Plan, the City of Oxnard's Local Coastal Plan Update, development of groundwater-sustainability plans and climate-action plans across the county, and ongoing efforts through the County's Multiple Hazard Mitigation Plan. These planning efforts include development of policies
For more information about ongoing efforts to strengthen the link between water management and land-use planning, see below:

Legislation Encouraging Compact Sustainable Development
AB 857, passed in 2002, establishes three priorities that encourage all state agencies to promote infill development within existing communities, protect the state's most valuable environmental and agricultural resources, and encourage efficient development patterns overall. SB 375, Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, sets emission reduction targets and incentives for local governments to support sustainable-growth patterns and AB 32, Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, establishes a target to reduce statewide carbon emissions to 1990 by the year 2020. SB 732 provides a statutory framework to implement new programs under Proposition 84 and establishes the Strategic Growth Council to coordinate the program aimed at improved air, water, and transportation. AB 162 was passed in 2007 as part of a package of six bills addressing flood-risk management and flood protection in California. This bill specifically requires additional consideration of flood risk in local land-use planning throughout California and named the Department of Water Resources (DWR) as a source for floodplain information and technical data that local governments will need to comply with AB 162.

The following issue areas identify opportunities for a better working relationship between water managers and land-use-decision makers.

IRWM Program, WCVC, and Ahwahnee Water Principles
A purpose and function of the IRWM Plan and the associated stakeholder group WCVC could be to review future increments of growth and development within the County to promote watershed protection. The IRWM Plan serves this purpose two-fold by ensuring ongoing communication and participation of water managers in land-use decisions and by providing incentives with grant funding for essential water supply and water-quality projects. The County and cities can continue to implement the sustainable development principles (Ahwahnee Water Principles) to adequately prepare for the next increment of growth.

Watershed-Based Planning
Jurisdictional boundaries (such as city/County, and water service) and land-use decisions based on the areas within those boundaries can present a barrier to watershed-based planning. Development projects that may result in negative impacts or increased costs for protection of groundwater recharge, flood protection, and runoff may nevertheless be approved because of existing general plan and zoning designations. Watershed-based planning may require jurisdictions to review their land-use plans to redirect growth (through rezoning) away from

sensitive resources such as floodplains and water-recharge areas and plan for growth through higher density in existing urbanized areas. Local jurisdictions should consider updating and amending zoning designations and permit conditions for land near river and creek corridors, floodplains, and aquifer recharge areas.

Implementation of Local Government Commission (LGC) Land Use and Water Quality Recommendations

The LGC report provides guidance for the compatibility of future growth and development with watershed and water-quality protection. To date it provides the most comprehensive overview of Ventura County land-use plans and ordinances for consistency with the Ahwahnee Principles. Recommendations are provided for each subject area such as natural systems, green infrastructure, infill and redevelopment, compact design, etc. A Watershed Planning code audit is provided to review planning documents for consistency with watershed-planning principles.

WCVC, CCPA, and local jurisdictions can provide forums for review of the LGC Report and consider the procedural and policy changes that may be needed for consistency with the Ahwahnee Principles and LGC report recommendations.

Implementation of Natural Floodplain Management Projects

Management of flood-prone areas has often focused on hard structures to move flood waters away from people and properties using a confined waterway or water body. Under such a framework, the floodplain served a singular, human-centered role as a conveyance network to pass the "excess" water as quickly as possible, with no consideration of the loss of ecological function, the potential damage to downstream property owners, or the cultural, economic, or environmental effects of that strategy. Further, floodplains have been viewed as suitable sites for human development; the concern, if any, has been to ensure that structures built there are elevated above some minimal flood level so they are considered "safe" and also to insure them. In coastal areas, the typical approach has been to place development, especially residences, as close to the water as possible and then, if necessary, to use structural measures to prevent the beach eroding. (Association of State Floodplain Managers, Floodplain Management, More than Flood Loss Prevention, 09/16/08)
Increases in flood losses and environmental degradation have made it clear that the floodplain cannot be viewed simply as a conveyance channel to keep water away from people. Nor can we continue to implement flood-damage reduction measures without considering impacts to riparian and coastal ecosystems.

In order to regain the sustainability of water-based ecosystems and resources, new approaches to floodplain management must be adopted. The recommendations of the Association of State Floodplain Managers are as follows:

1. Set a policy that the natural functions and resources of flood-prone areas are worthy of protection and should not be sacrificed for human development.
2. Prevent new development from encroaching on flood prone and environmentally sensitive areas.
3. Remove existing development from flood prone and environmentally sensitive areas whenever possible.
4. Rehabilitate and restore degraded riparian and coastal resources.

5. Incorporate into all public and private activities at all levels a respect for and understanding of the functions and resources of flood prone areas along our coasts and waterways.

Consideration of Watercourse Setback Ordinances with Riparian Corridor Buffers

The LGC "First Stop Shop for Water Resources' offers a "Tools" link that provides extensive information on watershed-planning efforts as well as sample ordinances and examples. An example of one community's watercourse setback ordinance follows:

*The model ordinance and resolution are based on the public health and safety services of riparian areas including flood control, erosion control, and water-quality protection. The models establish minimum setback widths to control the location of soil disturbance on a parcel. A key feature of the riparian-setback model is the emphasis on providing flexibility in other setbacks, such as side, rear, and front-yard setbacks, to enable landowners to place their development as far out of the riparian setback as possible while still developing their property. The recommended setback widths in the model range from 25 to 300 feet on either side of a watercourse as measured from the ordinary high-water mark. These minimum setbacks are extended to the full extent of the 100-year floodplain and to encompass riparian wetlands in the minimum setbac*k.

Implementation of Low Impact Development Strategies

- Reduce impervious surface areas in new development.
- Evaluation of water-related impacts during development review.
- Evaluate process for reconstruction following emergencies (floods, landslides).
- Create incentives and/or eliminate disincentives for land owners to protect and restore habitats and ecosystems on their property.