

General Plan

**Public Facilities  
Element**

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**County of Sacramento**  
Office of Planning and Environmental Review

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION I.....	1
WATER FACILITIES.....	1
Treatment And Distribution Facilities.....	1
Financing New Facilities.....	2
SECTION II.....	5
WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT.....	5
Growth And System Expansion.....	6
Extension Of Sewer System.....	8
Funding For Wastewater Collection And Treatment.....	9
<b>SECTION III.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>SOLID WASTE SERVICES AND FACILITIES.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Disposal Facilities.....	12
Land Use Compatibility.....	13
Solid Waste Disposal Financing.....	14
Public Safety In Solid Waste Handling.....	15
SECTION IV.....	17
PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES.....	17
Neighborhood Integration.....	18
Coordinated Planning Between School Districts.....	19
School Facility Levels.....	20
SECTION V.....	23
LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES.....	23
Library Level Of Service.....	25
Capital Facilities Funding For Libraries.....	26
Library Siting.....	27
SECTION VI.....	29
SHERIFF.....	29
Expand Law Enforcement Services.....	29
SECTION VII.....	32
FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES.....	32
Building And Neighborhood Design For Fire Prevention.....	32
Fire Protection Facilities Expansion.....	34
SECTION VIII.....	36

ENERGY FACILITIES.....	36
General Energy Facility Policy.....	37
<b>ELECTRIC GENERATION POLICY</b> .....	39
Cogeneration.....	39
Solar Electric And Other Renewable Energy Generating Facilities.....	40
Electric Distribution Policy .....	43
Electric Transmission And Subtransmission Delivery System .....	43
Electric Transmission Facility Siting And Design .....	44
Electric Subtransmission Facility Siting And Design .....	46
Electric And Magnetic Field Policy .....	47
Natural Gas Production And Distribution Facility Policy.....	49
Coordination With Energy Providers .....	49
<b>SECTION IX</b> .....	52
LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARK ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND MAINTENANCE.....	52
Governmental Framework and Administration.....	52
Park Planning In Sacramento County.....	55
Park Types And Functions .....	55
Policies For Provision Of Parks And Recreation Facilities.....	57
Policies Supporting Park Operations And Maintenance .....	59
Interagency Coordination .....	60

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION I

WATER FACILITIES

**GOAL:**       **Water facilities developed in an environmentally sound, economically efficient, and financially equitable manner.**

**Introduction**

This Water Facilities Section addresses how future water supply facilities might be financed and provided in an equitable fashion, while minimizing impacts on ground and surface water resources, as well as riverine and wetland environments. These facilities are a vital part of ensuring that enough public water is available to serve both existing residents as well as anticipated growth through 2030. This section describes policies and programs under two objectives:

- Environmentally sensitive and cost efficient placement of water treatment and distribution facilities.
- Timely and equitable financing of new water facilities.

Additional discussion of issues and policies directly affecting water allocation can be found in the Conservation Element and the Land Use Element.

**Treatment And Distribution Facilities**

**Objective:**   **Water treatment and distribution facilities located to minimize environmental impact and maximize distribution efficiency with respect to point of withdrawal and area to be served.**

Intent: Water treatment and distribution facilities are expensive and comparatively permanent facilities which should be planned to provide high quality water distributed efficiently with minimal impact upon natural resources. The Sacramento and American Rivers provide most of the area's surface water needs and receive much of it back, although water composition and temperature are typically altered, via storm drains and treatment facilities. Such alterations may have a significant impact on the riverine environment depending upon the quality and quantity of the receiving waters, and the amount, location, and timing of withdrawals. Care in designing facilities will reduce detrimental effects on downstream water quality, maintain ecological health, and increase recreational opportunities. In addition, well planned placement of distribution networks can effectively reduce environmentally unsound urbanization, such as

sprawl or leapfrog development, by controlling extent and placement of pipes, pumps, and other infrastructure necessary to deliver water. Lastly, with a number of different water purveyors serving the County, any new extension should be furnished by an existing agency to minimize further fragmentation of service areas.

Policies:

- PF-1. New water facilities shall be planned to minimize impacts to in-stream water flow in the Sacramento and American Rivers.
- PF-2. Municipal and industrial development within the Urban Service Boundary but outside of existing water purveyors' service areas shall be served by either annexation to an existing public agency providing water service or by creation or extension of a benefit zone of the SCWA.
- PF-3. Public water agencies shall comply with General Plan policies prior to annexation of additional service areas.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Coordinate the preparation of long-range plans identifying new areas to be served, locating associated treatment facilities, and establishing time frames for plan review consistent with the 5 year review cycle of the General Plan. (SACRAMENTO COUNTY WATER AGENCY, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Review new development proposals to ensure water provisions requirements of this plan are satisfied. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

**Financing New Facilities**

**Objective: New water facilities financed in a timely and equitable manner.**

Intent: Financing for new treatment and distribution facilities should be planned well in advance of anticipated new development. In many areas of the County new development should only proceed if surface water is available and funds for constructing water facilities and a distribution network are obtained. Methods to increase revenue to accommodate the growing demand for such water facilities include connector fees, the sale of bonds, and increases in monthly service charges. Equitable distribution of various revenue increases should consider the beneficiaries, proximity to or within an existing water jurisdiction, and availability of surface water in areas where groundwater resources are diminishing.

Policies:

PF-4. Connector fees for new development shall cover the fair share of costs to acquire and distribute surface water to the urban area.

PF-5. New treatment facilities and all facility operations shall be funded by beneficiaries.

Implementation Measures:

A. Determine costs and appropriate fees and collection mechanisms for acquiring and distributing surface water to the unincorporated area. (ALL PURVEYORS)

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

**SECTION II**

**WASTEWATER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT**

**GOAL: Safe, efficient, and environmentally sound public sewer system and treatment facility serving all urban development.**

**Introduction**

Existing public liquid waste facilities in Sacramento County include the regional sewerage system for the urbanized area; localized sewer systems in Galt, Rancho Murieta, Hood, Courtland, Walnut Grove, and Isleton; and dedicated, single-facility systems at Boy's Ranch and Metro Airport. The remainder of the County is served by private septic systems. County Sanitation District No. 1 (CSD No. 1) and the Cities of Sacramento and Folsom operate sewage collection systems, but do not operate sewage treatment facilities. The city of Galt owns and operates its own sewerage collection and treatment system.

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) serves over 1.2 million residents in the urban area. The Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, located in Freeport, is permitted to treat an average dry weather flow of 181 million gallons per day (mgd) and a daily peak wet weather flow of 392 mgd. Large interceptors conveying wastewater from preexisting trunks and collection points in the urban area are also maintained by SRCSD. SRCSD is responsible for constructing new interceptors as the need requires.

The SRCSD and CSD No. 1 are both separate political subdivisions of the State of California formed under the State of California Health and Safety Code. As such the Districts' policies must conform to the statutes of the Health and Safety Code. Additionally, the Districts are separately funded entities which do not depend upon Sacramento County for funding capital improvements, maintenance or operations. Revenues collected by the Districts are restricted to uses which conform to the Districts' legislated mission and responsibilities.

Generally the Cities and Districts are meeting the goal for safe, efficient and environmentally sound wastewater collection and treatment. User fees provide for the system's operation and maintenance, while hookup fees provide most of the funding for new trunks and interceptors. Treatment plant expansion is funded by revenue bonds repaid via levies on system users. The SRCSD recently completed a master plan for the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP) to address services needs through the year 2020. The goals of this master planning effort, called the SRWTP 2020 Master Plan, is to accommodate future growth, maintain treatment reliability, and to meet future regulatory requirements. The major outcome of the planning effort is capital improvement plan that identifies all of the major projects required to accommodate the major goals of the master plan. Additionally, CSD No. 1 recently completed the CSD-1 Sewage

Facilities Expansion Master Plan 2006 Update. The goals of CSD No. 1's master plan are to estimate the future capital needs of the CSD No.1 trunk sewer system and to provide a conceptual plan for providing sewer service to undeveloped areas.

A major issue associated with the regional sewage system relates to the size and timing of new trunks and interceptors so as to be consistent with the General Plan's growth horizons, yet also be consistent with the SRCSD's policy instrument, the Master Interagency Agreement (MIA), to allow planning, design and construction of the facilities needed to cost-effectively provide for long-term urban growth. Such flexibility is necessary for the implementation of the comprehensive and long range program required for major sewerage facilities with a 50 year projected service life. The Urban Service Boundary provides a long range urban growth horizon compatible with the Districts' long range implementation needs. A related issue is the provision of sewer service in agricultural-residential areas. Policies in this section provide direction on the County's position on regional sewer issues related to the timely extension of sewer service consistent with growth management policies of the General Plan.

This section describes policies and programs under three objectives:

1. Treatment plant, regional interceptors and trunk system expansion completed prior to construction in urban expansion areas and/or flows reaching critical capacity limits.
2. Within the unincorporated area of the County, established limits on extension of public sewer service to ensure long-term available treatment capacity, cost-effective use of revenues and support of open space preservation objectives.
3. Equitable fees adequate to support wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal.

Additional information concerning wastewater collection and treatment may be found in the background section of this element. Additional discussion of issues and policies affecting water runoff quality can be found in the Conservation Element.

### **Growth And System Expansion**

**Objective:** Treatment plant, regional interceptors and trunk system expansion completed prior to construction in urban expansion areas and/or flows reaching critical capacity limits.

**Intent:** Timely construction of sewer trunks, interceptors, and treatment plant capacity is essential to provide for new development without moratoriums or delays. It is equally important to ensure that new development doesn't create capacity problems within the existing system. Accomplishing this objective requires coordination between planners and facility engineers, advance planning for capital improvement programs, funding commensurate with need, and careful monitoring of new development. One ongoing issue concerns trunk and interceptor size. Sacramento's reliance on one regional treatment plant requires an extensive system of trunks and interceptors to convey

wastewater for treatment. In order to minimize the need for installing expensive parallel sewer lines, it is important to size facilities to accommodate long-term growth. Yet, capital facilities must be consistent with the General Plan, which typically identifies growth areas for only the next 20 years. The Urban Services Boundary, together with Policy PF-11, provides a basis for long range facility planning consistent with the General Plan.

Policies:

- PF-6. Interceptor, trunk lines and flow attenuation facilities shall operate within their capacity limits without overflowing.
- PF-7. Although sewer infrastructure will be planned for full urbanization consistent with the Land Use Element, an actual commitment of additional sewer system capacity will be made only when the land use jurisdiction approves development to connect and use the system.
- PF-8. Do not permit development which would cause sewage flows into the trunk or interceptor system which would cause an overflow.
- PF-9. Design trunk and interceptor systems to accommodate flows generated by full urban development at urban densities within the ultimate service area. System design may take into consideration land that cannot be developed for urban uses due to long-term circumstances including but not limited to conservation easements, floodplains, public recreation areas etc. This could include phased construction where deferred capital costs are appropriate.
- PF-10. Development along corridors identified by the Districts in their planning documents as locations of future sewerage conveyance facilities shall incorporate appropriate easements as a condition of approval.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Request SRCSD to prepare a trunk sewer and interceptor planning document that addresses the facilities needed, timing, and the cost of extending sewerage services to both the urban policy and urban service areas. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, SRCSD)
- B. Request the Districts to identify needed trunk and interceptor system improvements and incorporate these into the Districts' five year project list. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, SRCSD)
- C. Request the Districts to determine the revenue requirements necessary to meet the needs identified in the sewerage system expansion documents. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, SRCSD)

- D. Review all proposed development projects within the urban policy area for appropriate easements and facility needs, and identify potential capacity problems and suggest changes from the facilities identified in the sewerage system expansion documents. (COUNTY ENGINEERING, SRCSD)
- E. Prepare five-year estimates of the amount and extent of expected growth in urban expansion areas, updated biannually, to assist in capital improvement planning for sewers. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

### **Extension Of Sewer System**

**Objective: Established limits on extension of public sewer service in the unincorporated area to ensure long-term availability of conveyance and treatment capacity, cost-effective use of revenues and support open space preservation objectives.**

Intent: While sewer service could be provided to serve development almost anywhere in Sacramento and adjoining Counties, there are important practical and environmental reasons to place limits on service. A recent issue concerns extending trunk lines to rural residential areas where densities exceed that which will ensure long-term protection of groundwater from contamination by septic system seepage. The policies below clarify appropriate limits. The Urban Services Boundary contained in the General Plan will provide a long range urban growth horizon compatible with the Districts' long range needs to implement planning, design and construction of cost-effective public sewerage facilities; which are in conformance with both the SRCSD's policy instrument, the Master Interagency Agreement (MIA), and the Sacramento County General Plan.

The MIA, to which Sacramento County is a signatory, contains provisions whereby service cannot be extended beyond the current service area if such an extension would impact the ability of any SRCSD's Contributing Agency to receive sewer services for its existing and future customers. Additionally, the MIA only allows the SRCSD to annex properties that are designated for urban uses in the General Plans of Sacramento County and the Cities of Sacramento and Folsom.

In the event that a proposal is made to provide sewer services to an adjacent county which required construction of sewers across rural or agricultural lands, the Board of Supervisors would be able to address the issue in terms of conformance to the requirements of the MIA. Any proposal to provide service outside Sacramento County would, under the existing MIA, be through a contract.

Important in establishing benefit are findings that extension of the sewer system is needed to ensure Sacramento's surface water quality, that the ultimate capacity of the SRWTP will be sufficient to accommodate full development within the Urban Service Area as well as out-of-County flows, that out-of-County urban areas can be equitably connected to the regional sewer system's service area, and that extension of the sewer system into other counties be in the context of other regional issues such as water supply and transportation.

Policies:

- PF-11. The County shall not support extension of the regional interceptor system to provide service to areas within the unincorporated County which are beyond the Urban Service Boundary. This shall not prohibit the County from supporting the extension of the regional interceptor system to areas outside the USB which are being proposed for annexation to a city.
- PF-12. Sacramento County will support extension of sanitary sewer services outside of Sacramento County by the SRCSD and its Contributing Agencies:
- if it complies with the conditions set forth in the MIA which governs the policies and operating responsibilities of the SRCSD and its Contributing Agencies.
- PF-13. Public sewer systems shall not extend service into agricultural-residential areas outside the urban policy area unless the Environmental Management Department determines that there exists significant environmental or health risks created by private disposal systems serving existing development and no feasible alternatives exist to public sewer service.
- PF-14. Independent community sewer systems shall not be established for new development.

### **Funding For Wastewater Collection And Treatment**

**Objective: Equitable fees adequate to support wastewater collection, treatment and disposal.**

Intent: It is the policy of SRCSD and CSD-1 to generate the revenues required for construction of new trunk and new interceptor sewers related to growth through connection fees for new development. Connection fees are imposed on new development, on previously unserved properties and for previously served properties where redevelopment requirements exceed the basic capacity allocation. Treatment plant upgrading and existing trunk and interceptor replacement or improvement will be funded by all users through sewer service charges.

Since treatment plant expansions require large expenditures of funds for a single contract, SRCSD will retain the flexibility to utilize funding mechanisms other than connection fees to fund these improvements. However, connection fees may be used to either fund or augment other funding mechanisms for treatment plant expansions depending upon the availability of such monies at the time expansions are required.

The County recognizes that there is a public role in the financing of public infrastructure and services, and that this responsibility must be addressed to allow the County to retain control of the planning process. Lack of such control could result in development occurring wherever sufficient private funding exists to supply the services and infrastructure necessary for urban uses, possibly contrary to the goals of the County.

Policies:

- PF-15. Support CSD-1 and SRCSD policies to fund new trunk and interceptor capital costs through connection fees for new development.
- PF-16. Support SRCSD policy to fully fund treatment plant operation through monthly service charges to system users. Fund treatment plant expansion and upgrades, and existing trunk and interceptor replacements or improvements through connection fees or other revenue sources.
- PF-17. Support a policy requiring monthly service charges to users that reflect differences in the volume and concentration of wastewater generated by nonresidential users.
- PF-18. New development projects which require extension or modification of the trunk or interceptor sewer systems shall be consistent with sewer facility plans and shall participate in established funding mechanisms. The County should discourage development projects that are not consistent with sewer master plans or that rely upon interim sewer facilities, particularly if the costs of those interim facilities may fall on ratepayers. Prior to approval of a specific Commercial Corridor redevelopment project which requires extension or modification of the trunk or interceptor sewer systems, a sewer study and financing mechanism shall be prepared and considered along with the proposed Corridor redevelopment project, in consultation with the Sacramento Area Sewer District.
- PF-19. Extension or modification of trunk or interceptor sewer systems that are required for new developments shall be consistent with sewer facility plans and shall participate in an established funding mechanism. New development that will generate wastewater for treatment at the SRWTP shall not be approved if treatment capacity at the SRWTP is not sufficient to allow treatment and disposal of wastewater in compliance with the SRWTP's NPDES Permit.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT

**SECTION III**

**SOLID WASTE SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

**GOAL:**       **Safe, efficient, and environmentally sound operation of solid waste facilities in Sacramento County.**

**Introduction**

Solid waste is any garbage, or refuse, sludge from a wastewater treatment plant, water supply treatment plant, or air pollution control facility and other discarded material, including solid, liquid, semi-solid, or contained gaseous material resulting from industrial, commercial, mining, and agricultural operations; and from community activities<sup>1</sup> It is important to plan for Solid Waste facilities and services to accommodate the future population growth that will continue to generate garbage and other waste materials. The California Integrated Waste Management Act (AB 939) of 1989 directed Counties and/or Regional Agencies and Cities to prepare a Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. The County of Sacramento adopted the Sacramento County Integrated Waste Management Plan in March 1996, approved by the California Integrated Waste Management Board in May 1998, consisting of the following:

- Siting Element (entire county: cities and unincorporated areas)
- Summary Plan (entire county: cities and unincorporated areas)
- Source Reduction and Recycling Elements (by City, County, or Regional Agency)
- Household Hazardous Waste Elements (by City, County, or Regional Agency)
- Non-disposal Facility Elements (by City, County, or Regional Agency)

These documents are the main sources and references for solid waste facility planning in Sacramento County. The Siting Element and Summary Plan are prepared and administered by the County of Sacramento, Department of Waste Management & Recycling. The remaining documents are prepared and administered by each individual jurisdiction or regional agency. This section is a broad level overview of unincorporated Sacramento County solid waste facilities and policies.

Sacramento County has eight active permitted solid waste facilities, including three material recycling/transfer stations and one landfill that are publicly owned and operated. There are also three material recycling/transfer stations and two landfills (one is an unclassified inert landfill, currently without a solid waste facilities permit) that are privately owned within Sacramento County. The County owns and operates Kiefer Landfill, located on a 660 acre site at Kiefer Boulevard and Grantline Road. One of the publicly owned and operated material

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Glossary for Decision Maker's Guide to Solid Waste Management, US Environmental Protection Agency Wastes Website, <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/osw/glossary.htm>.

recycling/transfer stations hosts a permanent household hazardous waste facility. Another permanent household hazardous waste facility is located at one of the three material recycling/transfer stations that is privately owned and operated. A map of active and inactive solid waste facilities in Sacramento County is in the Solid Waste Services and Facilities Background Section of this Element.

An issue associated with the location of additional transfer stations is the appropriate setback distance from more restrictive zones, other than industrial, and the types of activities and machinery involved. Standards and noise contours contained in the Noise Element should provide appropriate guidelines for proper setback distances.

The rationale for a fee system based on the quantity of waste collected is to give County residents an incentive to recycle. This is consistent with the Conservation Element's Materials Reuse recommended measure to provide financial incentives to increase public participation in recycling efforts.

This section describes policies and programs under four objectives:

- Adequate sanitary landfill and transfer station capacity to meet long-term growth needs.
- Land use compatibility with all solid waste facilities.
- Fee-supported solid waste collection and disposal.
- Safe and environmentally sensitive transportation of solid waste.

### **Disposal Facilities**

**Objective: Adequate sanitary landfill and transfer station capacity to meet long-term growth needs.**

Intent: The County landfill has enough capacity to meet demand through the year 2037. Successful implementation of waste reduction mandates has extended the life at Kiefer landfill. The County Integrated Waste Management Plan, prepared in 1996 and approved in 1998, developed recycling means consistent with the goals of statewide legislation. Additional transfer stations may be appropriate as the County expands its recycling program and commercial self-haul activities increase.

There are three publicly owned and operated transfer stations in Sacramento County. One is located in North Highlands, another in South Sacramento and the other in Folsom. Transfer stations offer a convenient public service to garbage haulers by providing a closer site than the landfill and cost savings to Solid Waste collection vehicles and crew. Transfer stations also offer a disposal site within ten miles of most urban areas. An additional transfer station to potentially service Fair Oaks, Orangevale, and portions of Rancho Cordova may be appropriate.

Policies:

- PF-20. Support the implementation of recycling programs for the unincorporated area of Sacramento County through the Source Reduction and Recycling Element of the County Integrated Waste Management Plan in order to meet the requirements of AB 939.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Determine feasibility of additional transfer station locations through the Siting Element of the County Integrated Waste Management Plan. (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

**Land Use Compatibility**

**Objective: Land use compatibility with all solid waste facilities.**

Intent: Sanitary landfill operations by their very nature have the potential to create public nuisances. Heavy truck traffic, dust, litter, and offensive odors require that planned land uses surrounding solid waste facilities protect the public health and minimize complaints from nearby residents. For these reasons the Department of Waste Management & Recycling has established a 2,000 foot buffer in all directions around the County landfill on Kiefer Boulevard through the purchase of surrounding properties or the establishment of easements through legal settlements. Appropriate uses within the buffer are open space, agriculture, and recreational uses such as hunting clubs, golf courses and recreational lakes. This policy assures the unfettered long-term operation of the site well into the future.

Transfer stations need to be located in industrial areas at a distance from populated centered activities and residential areas in conformance with standards contained in the Noise Element. The planning review process should be sensitive to conflicting land uses within the vicinity of transfer station sites.

Policies:

- PF-21. Property buffering the County landfill shall remain in agricultural, recreational or other open space uses and extend at least 2,000 feet in all directions, measured from the landfill's permitted boundary, unless the Department of Waste Management and Recycling determines that the use is compatible with landfill operations and the Board of Supervisors makes the finding that the uses are compatible with the existing or future operations of the landfill.
- PF-22. New transfer station facilities shall be located in industrially zoned areas at distances from residential areas consistent with standards contained in the Noise Element.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Require review of all projects within a one mile radius of a solid waste facility. (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

**Solid Waste Disposal Financing**

**Objective: Fee-supported solid waste collection and disposal.**

Intent: Collection, recycling, composting, transfer and disposal activities are funded primarily through customer service fees, facility tipping fees, permit fees, etc. charged to private collectors, and monthly collection service charges on county residents. Fees are adjusted for any new recycling efforts, or other programs to cover the additional costs. Any new facilities and programs may be financed through rate structures and tipping fees.

The second policy and program represent the role that fees can ultimately have on encouraging and promoting maximum public participation in recycling efforts. Recycling programs are described in greater detail in the Regional Agency's (City of Citrus Heights and the Unincorporated Areas of Sacramento County) Source Reduction and Recycling Element as part of the Countywide Integrated Waste Management Plan. The Materials Reuse Component of the Conservation Element addresses recycling related issues more in depth.

Policies:

- PF-23. Solid waste collection, handling, recycling, composting, recovery, transfer and disposal fees shall recover all capital, operating, facility closure and maintenance costs.
- PF-24. Solid waste disposal fees and rate structures shall reflect current market rates and provide incentives for recovery.

Implementation Measure:

- A. Continue the implementation of Residential Tiered Rates based on the quantity of waste set out for disposal and provide incentives for recovery. (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING)

## **Public Safety In Solid Waste Handling**

**Objective: Safe and environmentally sensitive transportation of solid waste.**

Intent: The concern is with public safety and periodic monitoring of long-haul and short-haul collection vehicle routes. Transportation of solid waste should avoid congested and dangerous routes. Periodic monitoring of routes helps promote the safe collection and disposal of solid waste by avoiding congested and dangerous routes. The other policy reflects ongoing efforts of the Sacramento County Department of Waste Management & Recycling.

### Policies:

PF-25. Transportation of solid waste shall utilize the safest practical means and routes of transport.

PF-26. Solid waste collection vehicles shall minimize dispersion of litter, odor and fumes.

### Implementation Measures:

- A. The Department's safety personnel shall review periodically and adjust field collection activities with due consideration to public safety. (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING)
- B. The Department shall establish an incentive program to reward good safety and driving records of its employees. (WASTE MANAGEMENT & RECYCLING)

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION IV

PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

**Goal:**        **New public schools which serve as a neighborhood focus and maintain a quality learning environment for Sacramento County's residents as the County population increases.**

**Introduction**

The remarkable residential growth being experienced throughout the County continues to put pressure on schools to expand their facilities while maintaining the highest possible quality service. Accommodating the expected increase of school age children will require the construction or renovation of many additional school facilities over the next 20 years. These schools will function as both educational institutions and community centers and should be planned accordingly. Stakeholders must be involved early on in the planning and siting process to insure proper integration of future schools into new and existing communities. The planning, financing and building of quality schools must keep up with population increases to avoid classroom overcrowding and facility shortages, ensuring a top-notch education for all children living in the County.

With these issues in mind, the goal enumerated in this section of the Public Facilities Element has been formulated to ensure that this future demand is managed in ways that enable school districts to supply the needed facilities. More specifically, this section:

- Establishes guidelines and standards for adequate provision of public school facilities;
- Encourages greater coordination amongst school districts for the purpose of instituting county-wide public school facility planning; and
- Encourages greater coordination between the County and community college districts in planning future on- and off-campus facilities.

The policies and programs which follow provide mechanisms which will assist school districts in their efforts to meet this future demand in a sufficient manner under the following objectives:

- Public schools physically and functionally integrated with their surrounding neighborhoods.
- School facilities planning coordinated between school districts.
- Facility levels equal to state standards for school enrollment, and school site size for all of Sacramento's public schools.

## **Neighborhood Integration**

**Objective: Public schools physically and functionally integrated with their surrounding neighborhoods.**

Intent: Schools are an important part of any neighborhood. In addition to their central educational role, they serve as a place for meetings, special programs, after-school play, soccer and little league games, and precinct voting. How well the school functions in these various roles depend very much on the school's location with respect to other community uses and how accessible it is.

Unlike General Plans in many other jurisdictions, the scale of Sacramento's General Plan doesn't permit identifying all existing and planned school sites on the land use diagram (although it does identify existing high school sites). The community plans for the unincorporated area provide a much more appropriate scale for delineating new schools and ensuring their thoughtful location with respect to surrounding land uses.

The following policies recognize that school siting and design should be a key element of a neighborhood planning effort. There remain many opportunities for design innovation and good, sensible planning to achieve neighborhoods which better integrate the school into the fabric of neighborhood life. Additional guidelines concerning school location are included in the TOD Design Guidelines.

### Policies:

- PF-27. Community plans shall identify all existing and planned school sites and shall include guidelines and conceptual examples for incorporating new schools into overall neighborhood design.
- PF-28. Community and Specific Plans shall consider the needs of community colleges and address the feasibility and appropriateness of off-campus facilities, particularly in TODs.
- PF-29. Schools shall be planned as a focal point of neighborhood activity and interrelated with neighborhood retail uses, churches, neighborhood and community parks, greenways and off-street paths whenever possible.
- PF-30. New elementary schools in the urban area should be planned whenever possible so that almost all residences will be within walking distance of the school (one mile or less) and all residences are within two miles of a school.
- PF-31. Schools shall be planned adjacent to neighborhood parks whenever possible and designed to promote joint use of appropriate facilities. The interface between the school and park shall be planned with an open design and offer unobstructed views to promote safety.

- PF-32. Elementary schools shall not be located along arterials and thoroughfares. Junior high and high schools should be located near roadways with adequate capacity and should provide adequate facilities for the transport of students.
- PF-33. New community college campuses and high schools within the urban service boundary shall be located along arterial or thoroughfare streets, with high priority to location adjacent to transportation corridors identified on the Transportation Plan Map.
- PF-34. All school site plans shall be designed to minimize traffic speed and maximize traffic flow around the school, allowing for several access points to and from the site.
- PF-35. New schools should link with planned bikeways and pedestrian paths wherever possible.

**Implementation Measure:**

- A. Amend individual community plans to show the location of all existing and planned schools and to reflect General Plan policies regarding school and neighborhood design. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Consult with community college and public school facility planners during the creation or update of Community and Specific Plans. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Coordinate the design, operation and maintenance of joint use facilities by agreements between the affected parties. (REGIONAL PARKS, LOCAL PARK DISTRICTS, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- D. Inform the school districts early in planning process of any comprehensive planning effort. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

**Coordinated Planning Between School Districts**

**Objective: School facility planning coordinated between school districts.**

**Intent:** State law requires that all schools prepare and adopt a school facilities master plan, with a minimum five-year time horizon, which identifies districts' facility needs. Within Sacramento County, there is considerable variability in student projection methods, planning horizons, and plan detail. The comprehensiveness of plans is a function of a district's size, management capability, and rate of growth.

There needs to be better coordination between school districts and consistency in their facilities plans, guided by a County-wide assessment of school needs for a common time horizon. The County Office of Education, City and County Planning staff, and SACOG, which provides demographic and development data, need to be more involved in the school planning process. The Placer County Office of Education has recognized this need by hiring a facilities planner to improve coordination between districts and to assist smaller districts. The policies and measures below represent a beginning toward the accomplishment of this objective.

Policies:

- PF-36. Support the establishment of a County-wide public schools planning program.
- PF-37. Review district school facility plans with respect to their relationship to County-wide school facility planning objectives in conjunction with Board of Supervisors' adoption of supplemental financing programs.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Establish a coordinating committee of district facility planners, City and County Planning representatives, and SACOG to identify problems, discuss issues, explore solutions, and identify criteria to improve school facility planning in Sacramento County. (COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION)
- B. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a facilities planning program to provide coordination and assist smaller districts in developing plans. (COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION)

**School Facility Levels**

**Objective: Facility levels equal to state standards for school enrollment and school site size for all of Sacramento schools.**

Intent: The goal of achieving a quality learning environment for Sacramento's children has many aspects. But from a school facilities perspective, school enrollment and the size of the school site are basic requirements. The state has established minimum standards (see background section) for facilities, and for the most part school districts strive to meet them. They are incorporated here to provide a quantitative measure of achieving the overall goal. However, in growing districts the problems of timely school construction and, above all, funding new school facilities requires resolution in order to achieve this objective.

Although the state has the primary role of seeing that school districts achieve standards, the County should reinforce its support of service level standards where mitigation of school impacts is necessary. Moreover, the subdivision review process frequently involves decisions regarding the dedication or reservation of school sites. The following policies provide specific direction,

including assistance to school districts in acquiring future school sites via the Specific Planning process.

Policies:

PF-38. Land dedications or reservations for schools should meet state guidelines for school parcel size. Where more than one owner or development project is involved, there shall be appropriate assurances and conditions to assure that requisite acreage can and will be assembled to meet facility site requirements.

PF-39. Specific Plans shall show the location of future school sites based upon adopted school district master plans and criteria in the General Plan.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Provide an annual report to the Board of Supervisors on the status of individual school district compliance with state service level guidelines and their efforts to resolve problem areas. (COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION)
- B. Address the need for reservation of school sites in all subdivision and parcel maps. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Develop procedures to incorporate school site location and acquisition as part of the Specific Planning process. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION V

LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**GOAL: Well-designed, safe, and well-maintained library facilities using current and future technologies in Sacramento County.**

**Introduction**

Libraries are critical public services such as schools, parks and public safety. A well developed library system is a signature of a healthy community and helps define the quality of life for the businesses, families and individuals that live in that community. Libraries in the future will play a dynamic and evolving role in Sacramento County. In addition to traditional services such as best sellers, children’s story times, and reference, libraries will also be providing public use computers, literacy training, focused small business services, teen centers, and health and safety programming, all directed to specific community needs. As such, they have graduated from being just “important” public services to “critical” public services that need to be planned, financed and constructed, as older areas redevelop and as new areas are approved for development. This planning and construction should occur in the same fashion and time as schools, parks, fire and police stations and other vital public services.

The Sacramento Public Library system houses a collection of over 2 million items. There are 27 libraries and two bookmobiles serving all residents of Sacramento County, with the exception of those in the City of Folsom, which maintains its own library. There are 10 facilities serving the unincorporated areas, one each serving the cities of Citrus Heights, Galt, Rancho Cordova, and Isleton, and two in Elk Grove. Ten branch libraries plus the Central Library serve the City of Sacramento. The 160,000 square-foot Central Library in downtown Sacramento houses 350,000 volumes and has 300 reader seats. The branches offer books, magazines, and non-print materials for customers of all ages. Customer services include children’s and teen services, information services, reader’s advisory, meeting rooms, computer access to the Internet, subscription information databases, an on-line catalog, intra-branch and inter-branch loans. The Library system functions as a joint City-County library under a 1993 Joint Powers Authority agreement. It operates as a single agency and is governed by a Board comprised of four Sacramento City Council members and the five members of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors. The Joint Powers Authority is currently under review and may be modified to provide board representation from all municipalities within the County.

In 2005, the Library Authority embarked upon an ambitious, but important effort to update an outmoded Facility Master Plan (FMP) last adopted in 2000. The new Facility Master Plan, which will be in place by early 2007, will contain a baseline analysis of where the Library system has been with respect to facilities and also a projection of what it will need to serve the municipalities

and unincorporated areas of the County as each jurisdiction grows through the year 2025. The FMP is the Library Authority's "Blue Print" for future siting and land needs, renovation and relocation of older libraries as well as construction of new libraries.

The FMP sets forth general standards and criteria for the renovation and construction of all new libraries. Existing and future library need is largely population driven, e.g., for every 30,000 residents in a community, at least one full service library is required. Ideally, new libraries would have 0.4 to 0.6 square foot per capita with some basic minimum and maximum sizes. The Facility Master Plan also establishes, in addition to preferred sizing and footprint, desirable components: volumes and collection, meeting rooms, study areas, computer terminals and so on. Each of these items is standards driven. One of the most critical items for future library development is "location, location, location."---- "a nice, new library in a poor location is an under-utilized library; an older, under-sized library in a good location is a highly used library." Important locational criteria include: land availability, cost, quality of the site, size, accessibility (parking, pedestrian access, public transportation), and synergy/location with other public and private uses. For example, a new library is often better positioned in a "new town square", rather than in a residential neighborhood.

Population growth in the Library system during the planning period will require 19 new and 21 expanded, relocated or renovated facilities to serve the residents in these new and growing areas. 8 new facilities and 4 expanded, relocated or renovated facilities will be necessary to service the unincorporated area alone. The required new and/or renovated libraries may be stand alone or joint use facilities with other public agencies or private concerns. According to the Joint Powers Agreement that created the Sacramento Public Library Authority, the signatory parties to the agreement have the sole responsibility to plan, construct, and maintain all library facilities. "All permanent and leased library facilities existing now or in the future shall be provided by the PARTY in which they are located, at no cost to the Authority". The Sacramento Public Library's overriding future concerns will be:

- Early identification of library sites in new growth areas or older areas that are redeveloping
- Planning for and construction of the "right" library for the community it will serve
- Identification of realistic funding sources both for construction, "outfitting" and operation of new libraries.

The top six priority services that the Library system has identified are:

- Children's/preschool services
- Large and varied, responsive collections
- Community living room activities
- Support for formal education and lifelong learning
- Extensive technology-based tools and resources
- Young adult and teen services.

The following policies and programs outline a library facilities and funding plan under these objectives:

- Library facilities and services in new and growing areas equivalent to established community areas without reducing service in established community areas.
- Adequate and timely funding for library capital construction costs shared equitably by existing and new residents.
- Future libraries located along well-traveled thoroughfares, in “new town centers” and/or transit routes accessible to the greatest number of people, to serve as civic anchors.

### **Library Level Of Service**

**Objective: Library facilities and services in new and growing areas equivalent to established community areas without reducing service in established community areas.**

Intent: The Sacramento Public Library Facility Master Plan contains established standards for providing library facilities based on population and service area criteria. Based on the development scenarios in the Facility Master Plan, the unincorporated County population is anticipated to grow by nearly 16% by 2025. This fact, coupled with the reality that many current facilities do not meet the FMP standards, means that the County will need a significant number of both new and renovated/enlarged libraries to ensure a continuing level of service in established and new communities. The Library will use its existing and future facilities more efficiently and at the same time make full use of remote access and technology-based services to County residents.

### Policies:

- PF-40. New and remodeled library facilities shall meet adopted standards for square footage and parcel size; materials and equipment; and services programs and staffing commensurate with the population served.
- PF-41. Library facilities planners shall meet with neighborhood and community groups to determine specialized community service needs and to incorporate them, to the extent possible.

### Implementation Programs:

- A. Construct or expand libraries as indicated in the Sacramento Public Library Facility Master Plan. (LIBRARIES)
- B. Periodically review, revise, and adopt the Master Library Plan to accommodate changes in service levels, customer expectation, and demographic changes. (LIBRARIES)

## **Capital Facilities Funding For Libraries**

**Objective: Adequate and timely funding for library capital construction costs shared equitably by existing and new residents.**

Intent: The Facility Master Plan identifies a variety of funding mechanisms for library capital projects. There presently exists no ongoing source of funds to pay for construction of new libraries in the County General Fund or the County Library Fund. Local funding could be obtained through a variety of mechanisms, including debt financing, benefit finance districts, and special taxes. Establishment of a benefit finance district, such as a Mello-Roos district, in a partially developed or growing community can provide some of the capital costs for facility expansion. Another option for funding library facilities is through the establishment and collection of development impact fees. These fees are calculated based on the impact of new growth and are intended to mitigate the impact through funding proportionate library expansion. However, residents of new development should not bear expansion costs for the entire community as there is demonstrated value to the community at large from new branches, increased book collections, and expanded service. Therefore, to augment funding from public financing fee programs or other current funding sources, the County should consider a countywide funding approach, such as a general obligation bond or a special tax to ensure funding of desired service levels.

### Policies:

- PF-42. Share capital costs of library construction and renovation for existing residents through bond financing or other appropriate measures and by new residents and workers through fees on new development.
- PF-43. Include community library needs among facilities to be financed by financing districts created in development areas.
- PF-44. Create financing districts or special taxes within existing library service areas to assist in financing library renovation and expansion needs and require new development to annex to the financing district.
- PF-45. New commercial development in financing districts shall contribute to library financing such that fees based on projected employment are approximately equivalent to the fees for an equivalent number of new residents.

### Implementation Measures:

- A Identify the service area boundaries for libraries which are planned for expansion or renovation and determine the total capital costs of constructing and stocking the facilities.  
(LIBRARIES)

- B. Establish annexable financing districts to provide revenues for libraries in areas of residential and commercial growth and development. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, LIBRARIES)

### **Library Siting**

**Objective: Future libraries will be located along well-traveled thoroughfares, in “new town centers” and/or transit routes accessible to the greatest number of people, to serve as civic anchors.**

Intent: Of all the decisions made concerning a library facility/building project, the single most important is the location. A public library should be accessible to the greatest number of users. Sites need to be identified and purchased early in the planning of new communities to obtain sites on major traffic routes, visible to people passing by, and with adequate parking. The intent of the first policy is to locate new libraries within pedestrian oriented developments as well as mixed use projects served by public transportation. Future library facilities should be centrally located along with other public and private uses such as post offices and retail/commercial to serve as anchors for new civic center development, in both new development areas and commercial corridor developments. Sites should not be in secondary residential areas requiring access by private vehicles. Some consideration must also be given to co-located facilities sited with schools, park districts, or other entities whose purpose is consistent with sharing a site with a public library.

### Policies:

- PF-46. Incorporate planned libraries into community and specific plans for new development.
- PF-47. Purchase library sites as early as possible in the development process.
- PF-48. Locate future library sites to be accessible by car, bicycle, foot, public transportation, and have sufficient off-street parking.
- PF-49. Locate future library sites so as to be visible to people passing by and be accessible to children unaccompanied by adults.

NOTE: The Sacramento Public Library Authority Facility Master Plan provides the basis for the discussion, conclusions and recommendations contained in the Library Section of the Public Service

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION VI

SHERIFF

**GOAL: Adequate Sheriff Services and Facilities for the Unincorporated Areas of Sacramento County.**

**Introduction**

The Sheriff's Department provides specialized law enforcement services to Sacramento County and local police protection to the unincorporated area. Specialized law enforcement includes providing court security services, operating a system of jails for pretrial and sentenced inmates, and operating a training complex. Local police protection includes response to calls and trouble spots, investigations, surveillance, and routine patrolling.

Demand for local police protection exceeds the supply of resources. Demand results from population growth; increased rates of crime, particularly major crimes and crimes associated with the use and sale of drugs; and services mandated by the State and the Courts. Supply of resources is linked primarily to the County General Fund. Growing demand and a relatively slower growing resource base leads to an inability to maintain historic levels of service.

Policies and programs in this section are designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Expand law enforcement services in area of crime prevention and public education;
- Design neighborhoods for personal safety.

**Expand Law Enforcement Services**

**Objective: Provide law enforcement services to the unincorporated area in accord with a commitment of crime prevention, control, and correction.**

Intent: Law enforcement professionals recommend education as means to address social issues that are the causes of crime, and recommend crime prevention as means to reduce the incidence of crime. Programs within schools, such as those focusing on self-esteem, have been developed in other jurisdictions. Proactive work within the community, including the maintenance of a physical presence, prevents crime. Eliminating educative and preventive services and programs to comply with short run funding limits is undesirable and it leads over the long run to a higher total cost of law enforcement. Policies in this Plan attempt to restore the Department's role as a provider of educative and preventive programs.

Policies:

- PF-50. Plan and develop law enforcement programs with a perspective toward reducing as well as controlling crime.
- PF-51. Plan and develop law enforcement facilities in keeping with overall needs and the distribution of growth.
- PF-52. Use education and crime prevention as integral parts of the practice of law enforcement.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Maintain a long-range plan of capital facilities which takes into account demographic projections, sociological forecasts, and other relevant planning data. (SHERIFF)
- B. Conduct a research effort to investigate links between public investment in education and crime prevention and the incidence of crime. (SHERIFF)
- C. Develop crime prevention strategy/plan based on available data. (SHERIFF)
- D. Expand efforts to demonstrate the long run cost to the community for lack of investment in education and prevention programs. (SHERIFF)
- E. Distribute results to all legislative delegations and to the entire community. (SHERIFF)

NOTE: PF-53 has been deleted with the adoption of the Environmental Justice Element on December 17, 2019.

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION VII

FIRE PROTECTION AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**GOAL: Efficient and effective fire protection and emergency response serving existing and new development.**

**Introduction**

Fire protection is an indispensable municipal service important to every County resident. Fire service is provided in the County of Sacramento by the cities of Folsom, Galt, Isleton and Sacramento, Elk Grove Community Services District, and seven other independent fire districts. Natomas Fire District is the only dependent district governed by the County Board of Supervisors. Portions of the eastern foothill areas are also protected by the State Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, although it provides no structural protection.

All fire districts provide emergency medical rescue and fire protection services. Some Districts also provide advanced life support via fire department ambulances, paramedic squads, and/or by the placement of Firefighter/Paramedics on engines. The largest number of calls fire districts receive is for medical-related aid while only a minor portion is for fire suppression.

The issues associated with providing effective fire protection and emergency services include financing the capital facilities costs of needed fire stations and equipment to serve new growth areas and incorporating fire and emergency safety measures into neighborhood and building design standards without compromising other design objectives. This section describes policies and programs for fire protection and emergency services under two objectives:

- 1) Fire and emergency safety measures integrated into all neighborhood and building design;
- 2) Equitable and adequate funding for new facilities, equipment and personnel to serve growth.

**Building And Neighborhood Design For Fire Prevention**

**Objective: Fire and emergency safety measures integrated into all neighborhood and building design.**

Intent: A critical aspect of effective fire protection is properly designed neighborhoods and buildings. Building codes have always addressed and regulated fire hazards and must continue to respond to technological change. Tall buildings four-stories or greater, particularly those

containing mixed land uses, are of special concern as they become more common in suburban areas. Interior street design, emergency access, parking, and street addressing of development projects are all of concern to fire protection districts. Adequate water supply and pressure are requisite to effective fire suppression, particularly in rural areas. The following policies and implementation measures reflect these concerns.

Policies:

- PF-54. Require new development to install fire hydrants and associated water supply systems which meet the fire flow requirements of the appropriate fire district.
- PF-55. New development shall provide access arrangements pursuant to the requirements of the California Fire Code.
- PF-56. Infill development shall be provided adequate off-site improvements to meet on-site fire flow requirements.
- PF-57. New development, redevelopment or traffic signal replacement shall require the installation of emergency signal activation systems in all street improvements requiring signalization when requested by a fire district.
- PF-58. Traffic calming measures should be used wherever possible in a manner that does not delay emergency vehicle responses.
- PF-59. Alternative methods of fire protection and access must be instituted if access is reduced to emergency vehicles.
- PF-60. Require that structures of four stories or more in height provide on-site equipment and facilities to the satisfaction of the appropriate fire district, consistent with industry norms and standards.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Amend County improvement standards to require that new development install necessary fire hydrants and associated water supply systems at the same time street improvements are made. (COUNTY ENGINEERING)
- B. Provide for review of all projects by fire districts having jurisdiction and maintain fire district representation on the Subdivision Review Committee. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Update and enforce the County's fire and building codes utilizing best and most cost-effective technologies available and TOD designs. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

- D. Include a cost/benefit analysis of sprinkler systems and property development incentives to reduce cost, which will encourage system installation for all new residential development in fire district master plans, including the feasibility of retrofitting residences at resale, and in Specific Plans. (FIRE DISTRICTS)

### **Fire Protection Facilities Expansion**

**Objective: Equitable and adequate funding for new fire protection facilities, equipment and personnel to serve growth.**

Intent: As with most public facilities, funding capital facilities and equipment is a significant issue with the districts. New development has occurred in conjunction with Mello-Roos district bond financing programs or mitigation fees which include fire stations and equipment. The General Plan formalizes this practice by placing primary responsibility for financing needed capital facilities for fire protection on new development. It is important from a planning perspective that funding mechanisms be based on well-conceived facility plans which in turn are based upon reliable growth projections for each service area. There is also a need to improve coordination between fire districts and planners in planning new facilities.

In all fire districts, the ongoing operating and maintenance costs come from the property tax base, resulting in funding shortfalls, particularly in urbanizing districts receiving the same relative level of funding that previously supported volunteer fire service. Although the policies below address facility needs, additional efforts are needed at the state and local levels to support on-going operation and maintenance costs. The County has the responsibility to ensure that new development does not occur when fire districts cannot provide fire protection and emergency services which meet minimally accepted standards. The policies below outline planning procedures required of fire districts prior to their requesting assistance from the Board of Supervisors to mitigate impacts from new development.

#### Policies:

- PF-61. Mitigation fees may be established by the Board of Supervisors or Fire Districts for the purpose of funding adequate fire protection and emergency medical response facilities provided they find that such fees are critical and necessary to meet the facility funding needs of the fire district and that existing methods of financing are inadequate.
- PF-62. The Board of Supervisors shall not require the collection of mitigation fees unless it has certified that the fire district has:
- Adopted a facilities plan consistent with industry norms and standards and the time horizon of the County General Plan that will maintain Insurance Service Office (ISO) ratings of 3 for hydrant areas and 8 for non-hydrant areas, and a response time of 5 minutes for emergency medical calls, where staffing levels are adequate. In areas that do not have public water supply which are increasing in

number due to urbanization, the fire district should be able to provide a sufficient flow shuttle.

- Adopted a financing plan delineating the source and amount of funds required to fully implement the facilities plan. Such plan shall indicate personnel requirements necessary to meet the standards in the facilities plan.
- Demonstrate a commitment to and reasonable progress towards achieving efficiency improvements, such as inter-district agreements for sharing resources or district consolidation.
- All reasonable efforts have been made to secure additional funding from any other available sources.

PF-63. Mitigation fees established by County ordinance or Fire District shall, together with other reasonably assured sources of funding identified in the fire district's financing plan, be sufficient to implement the adopted financing plan.

PF-64. No building permit for new residential or commercial construction shall be issued when there is a Board of Supervisors certified fire district financing plan for any applicable fire district, which provides for mitigation fees, until the applicant has contributed all required mitigation fees.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Provide fire districts with biannual estimates of planned growth and projected population within fire station service areas. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Prepare and maintain a facilities plan identifying station improvements, equipment needs and related costs to maintain adequate service in urban growth areas. (FIRE DISTRICTS, PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Develop a system of fire hazard mitigation based on the probability of occurrence and the number of people at risk. Acceptable mitigation shall include, but not be limited to, a staffed and equipped fire station. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, FIRE DISTRICTS)
- D. Modify procedures for fire district review of proposed development projects to incorporate response time analysis and potential mitigation. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, FIRE DISTRICTS)

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

SECTION VIII

ENERGY FACILITIES

**GOAL:** Appropriately sited energy facilities that efficiently and safely produce and distribute energy to Sacramento County residents without compromising environmental quality or human health.

**Introduction**

The projected rapid growth in Sacramento County will require an associated expansion of the energy supply infrastructure. Good planning is necessary to develop an efficient system with minimal impact to the county's natural resources and human population. This section offers facility siting policies designed to minimize environmental impacts caused by the construction and operation of energy facilities. Other policies address safety and health issues. Facility definitions and descriptions, as well as discussions of impacts, issues, and other technologies are contained in the Energy Facility Background Report in Section IX of this Element.

This section of the Public Facilities Element is concerned with the siting of energy facilities to protect biological and cultural resources and human health. The policies in this section relate to other General Plan Elements including:

- Land Use: Separation of conflicting land uses.
- Conservation: Protection of biological and cultural resources.
- Agricultural: Preservation of farmlands as viable units.

Further, the Energy Facility Siting Section promotes the goals of the Air Quality and Energy Elements through support of alternative energy technologies that provide relatively clean, safe electricity.

Sacramento County does not dictate policy regarding the development and efficiency of the energy supply system. The County does, however, recognize its responsibility for prudent infrastructure planning and implementation of conditions placed on plans and maps by SMUD, and supports planning initiatives such as SMUD's energy source diversification and demand-side conservation. Whenever possible, the County will inform SMUD of a potential large development at the pre-application and specific plan stages of the County's entitlement process. This will allow SMUD to inform the County and the developer of the potential for design components and measures that would promote resource conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable and distributed generation sources, as well as identify the location and size of electrical utility facilities that will be needed.

## **General Energy Facility Policy**

**Objective: Minimize the health, safety, aesthetic, cultural, agricultural and biological impacts of energy facilities in Sacramento County.**

Intent: The specific benefits and impacts of an energy facility vary with the type of facility, location, and community issues. The Board of Supervisors and County Planning Commission may evaluate energy production facility siting based upon many factors including safety, community economics, efficiency, reliability, aesthetics, and resource conservation. The priority of the siting factors may vary from project to project, requiring the decision-making body to compromise some policies in favor of others. In order to maintain the integrity of the policies, yet allow flexibility in decision making, the Board must provide findings explaining actions contrary to policies in this section.

### Policies:

- PF-65. The County will seek input from SMUD at the earliest possible stage in the development process.
- PF-66. The Board of Supervisors and the County Planning Commission may approve, or recommend approval wherein the county has jurisdiction, of development projects for energy facilities that are contrary to any of the policies in this section only when justification is provided through findings.
- PF-67. Cooperate with the serving utility in the location and design of production and distribution facilities so as to minimize visual intrusion problems in urban areas and areas of scenic and/or cultural value including the following:
- Recreation and historic areas.
  - Scenic highways.
  - Landscape corridors.
  - State or federal designated wild and scenic rivers.
  - Visually prominent locations such as ridges, designated scenic corridors, and open viewsheds.
  - Native American sacred sites.
- PF-68. Cooperate with the serving utility in the location and design of energy production and distribution facilities in a manner that is compatible with surrounding land uses by employing the following methods when appropriate to the site:

- Visually screen facilities with topography and existing vegetation and install site-appropriate landscaping consistent with surrounding land use zone development standards where appropriate, except where it would adversely affect access to utility facilities, photovoltaic performance or interfere with power generating capability.
- Provide site-compatible landscaping.
- Minimize glare through siting, facility design, nonreflective coatings, etc. except for the use of overhead conductors.
- Site facilities in a manner to equitably distribute their visual impacts in the immediate vicinity.

PF-69. Cooperate with the serving utility to minimize the potential adverse impacts of energy production and distribution facilities to environmentally sensitive areas by, when possible, avoiding siting in the following areas:

- Wetlands.
- Permanent marshes.
- Riparian habitat.
- Vernal pools.
- Oak woodlands.
- Historic and/or archaeological sites and/or districts.

PF-70. Cooperate with the serving utility so that energy production and distribution facilities shall be designed and sited in a manner so as to protect the residents of Sacramento County from the effects of a hazardous materials incident.

## **ELECTRIC GENERATION POLICY**

### **Cogeneration**

**Objective:** Encourage the service utility to develop cogeneration facilities in compliance with land use plans, ordinances, regulations, standards, and zoning restrictions without degrading natural and cultural resources.

Intent: The Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) is promoting clean, efficient, and reliable energy production through the use of cogeneration technology. These policies set forth regarding cogeneration facilities are not intended to apply to SMUD facilities which are expressly exempt from zoning ordinances under California Government Code Section 53091. Cogeneration land use issues are typically minor in most urban locations, however displacement caused by cogeneration projects may significantly impact existing biological and cultural resources in rural areas. Although natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel, cogeneration units may potentially emit nitrogen oxides and particulate matter. Some projects may use toxic chemicals, generate hazardous wastes, and may cause other environmental impacts if not properly mitigated.

The following siting policies guide the development of cogeneration technology in Sacramento County. The County requires mitigation of specific impacts associated with cogeneration facilities utilizing the guidelines provided in the Background Report.

### **Policies:**

- PF-71. Cogeneration facilities may be located in commercially zoned areas provided that the thermal host associated with the cogeneration facility is a conforming commercial use and the cogeneration facility does not adversely affect other commercial uses in the area.
- PF-72. Locate and screen cogeneration facilities in a manner that minimizes visual impacts on adjoining residential and/or commercial uses. These facilities shall also comply with noise ordinance requirements otherwise applicable in the area, or in adjacent zones that are potentially affected by facility noise.
- PF-73. Cogeneration facilities are prohibited outside the Urban Service Boundary, except as part of an existing processing operation such as for dairying, agricultural, or landfill purposes.
- PF-74. The design and scale of a cogeneration project should be consistent with the existing design and scale of the host plant. All on-site landscaping should comply with the landscaping development standards of the surrounding land use zone.

PE-75. Conduct an analysis of non-potable water availability prior to the development of any new cogeneration facility. The results of such an analysis shall be submitted to the State Water Resources Control Board for review and approval.

### **Solar Electric And Other Renewable Energy Generating Facilities**

**Objective:** Site solar electric and other renewable energy generation facilities for maximum operational efficiency and minimum aesthetic and environmental impact in designated areas.

Intent: At present there are two types of solar electric technologies, solar thermal and photovoltaics (PV), along with a number of available renewable energy technologies, including, but not limited to: wind turbines, fuel cells, biomass fuels and geothermal energy sources. Small-scale distributed renewable energy systems offer a variety of potential environmental and energy benefits. Such systems are to be encouraged and, where practical, sited near load centers, utilizing rooftops, commercial buildings and integrated into building envelopes when appropriate. Renewable energy systems are an excellent means of providing efficient, clean energy while reducing the strain on the County's electrical grid, the need for fossil fuel-based energy, and particulate matter emitted by large centralized plants. The main siting factors are aesthetic, biological, and cultural. Glare from solar facilities, defined as the reflectance of a harsh, uncomfortable brilliant light, is a potential problem that is usually mitigated through careful siting and design. Sprawling facilities can despoil pristine landscapes and natural resources such as oak woodlands and vernal pools. Larger scale multi-megawatt systems should be designed in a manner that minimizes land use and environmental impacts, and therefore should be located away from sensitive habitats.

The County supports distributed generation of renewable energy to preserve, protect and enhance the environment and quality of life in the County. Distributed generation of renewable energy can provide end users with clean, cost-effective and reliable power, while reducing the strain on the region's electrical grid, the need for fossil fuel-based energy, and particulate matter emitted by large centralized plants. Renewable energy generation on a larger, centralized scale is also desirable and supported by the County.

The following policies minimize the impact of future renewable energy projects to the County's open space. These policies address commercial electrical energy production by renewable energy facilities and do not apply to SMUD owned facilities. These policies also regulate private solar collectors and other renewable energy systems that do not provide energy for purchase. The Zoning Code does not specifically address solar collectors or other renewable energy systems, but provides language for regulating structural features incorporated into building design as incidental uses, subject to routine height limitations (24 feet in residential zones).

#### Policies:

PF-76. The County supports the generation and use of energy produced from renewable resources.

PF- 77. The County supports a variety of solar and other renewable energy sources, including:

- A dispersed system that feeds into the electric delivery system,
- On-site facilities that primarily supply energy for on-site uses, and
- Properly sited large, centralized facilities consistent with Policy PF-78.

PF-78 Large multi-megawatt solar and other renewable energy facilities should be sited at locations that will minimize impacts. The following guidelines should be considered, though it is recognized that each project is different and must be analyzed individually, and that other factors may affect the suitability of a site. Locational criteria for wind turbines should be determined on a case-by-case basis and referred to the Sacramento County Airport System and the FAA for review and comment.

- Desirable sites are those which will minimize impacts to county resources and will feed into the electrical grid efficiently, including:
  - Lands with existing appropriate land use designations, e.g. industrial.
  - Brownfield or other disturbed properties (e.g. former mining areas, mine tailings) or land that has been developed previously and has lost its natural values as open space, habitat or agricultural land.
  - Sites close to existing facilities necessary for connection to the electrical grid to minimize the need for additional facilities and their impacts, and to improve system efficiency.
- Other sites may be used for siting renewable energy facilities after consideration of important natural and historic values of the land, including:
  - Farmlands. Site on farmlands of the lowest quality, e.g. land classified by the Department of Conservation as “other land” or “grazing land”, then consider farmlands of local, unique or statewide importance. Avoid high quality farmlands, especially land classified by the Department of Conservation as prime and lands under active Williamson Act contracts.
  - Habitat and Other Open Space Lands. Site on lands with the lowest habitat and open space values, and consider how a site will affect conservation planning, e.g. the Conservation Strategy in the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan. Avoid areas containing vernal pool complexes and associated uplands.
  - Scenic Values. Site in areas of lowest scenic values and avoid visually prominent locations e.g. ridges, designated scenic corridors and designated historic sites.
  - Cultural Resources. Site in areas that are known to have limited potential for containing cultural resources. Otherwise, avoid sites with known cultural resources.

- PF-79. New solar and other renewable energy facilities should be designed and developed so as to minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources such as oak woodlands and vernal pools, cultural resources (including designated historic landscapes), or farmlands as defined by the California Department of Conservation. Nearby farm operations shall not be negatively affected by renewable energy facilities, per the policies of the Right-to-Farm Ordinance and the Agricultural Element.
- PF-80. Locate solar facilities, and design and orient solar panels in a manner that addresses potential problems of glare consistent with optimum energy and capacity production.
- PF-81. The County supports renewable energy facilities that convert and mitigate problem waste streams and residues that adversely impact environmental quality.
- PF-82. The County supports the placement of large multi-megawatt solar facilities on rooftops and over parking lots to minimize land use impacts associated with these systems.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Develop planning and building standards to encourage rooftop, parking lot and other joint use small-scale solar collector applications. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, COUNTY ENGINEERING)
- B. The County shall update the Energy, Public Facilities and other relevant Elements of the General Plan to include policies related to alternative energy production within the County, which may include a General Plan Land Use Diagram overlay designation reflecting prime or allowable areas for alternative energy production (such as large-scale solar or wind facilities). (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. The County shall amend the Sacramento County Zoning Code to regulate the siting and design of renewable energy facilities. The amendment should consider the broad spectrum of issues, including, but not limited to, fencing, landscaping, glare, decommissioning assurances and plans, land reclamation and a requirement for a Purchase Power Agreement. In addition, the amendment should evaluate the planning approval process for renewable energy facilities, considering the need for a permit process to mitigate potential impacts on neighboring farming operations and to allow opportunities for public review. County funding for the amendment process should be complemented by seeking multiple sources of funding from other stakeholders including SMUD, PG&E, WAPA and renewable energy producers. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

## **Electric Distribution Policy**

The following objectives and their associated policies address the main issues related to transmission and subtransmission facilities in Sacramento County. The policies address land use issues including aesthetics, human health and safety, and preservation of biological and cultural resources.

Sacramento County recognizes that SMUD has the primary responsibility for providing electric service within Sacramento County, and that paramount within that responsibility is the performance of the electric system. It is the intention of these policies to ensure that County land-use planning/development activities are coordinated with the associated facilities development responsibilities of SMUD.

## **Electric Transmission And Subtransmission Delivery System**

**Objective: Ensure the provision of safe, reliable, efficient and economical electric service while minimizing potential land use conflicts, and health, safety, environmental, and aesthetic impacts of transmission facilities.**

**Intent:** For SMUD, transmission is defined as 100 kV or greater, sub-transmission is defined as 35 to 76 kV, and distribution is defined as 4, 12, and 21 kV. Authority under the Gualco Act gives the county jurisdiction for facilities equal to or greater than 100 kV regardless as to use as sub-transmission or transmission (Public Utilities Code §12808.5, Government Code §53091 and §53096; Sacramento County Zoning Code §§ 301-10, 11, 12.) Rising energy demands will require additional transmission facilities for local needs and for transporting electricity across the county. Therefore, it is imperative that new transmission facilities, whether for regional or local use, be sited in manner that protects the county's visual and aesthetic resources to the best extent possible. To effectively accomplish this, Planning needs to play a more active role in the siting of new transmission facilities (i.e., bulk substations). Therefore, proposals to site new large-scale transmission facilities should be submitted to Planning under the guise of a General Plan conformity review request.

### **Policies:**

The first three policies listed below represent siting priorities for transmission lines, in order of most to least desirable.

- PF-83. New transmission corridors should be identified in all master plans created for new growth areas.
- PF-84. New transmission lines constructed within existing and planned urban areas should utilize existing transmission corridors whenever practical. Secondary preferred locations are adjacent to railway and freeway corridors when feasible.

- PF-85. To minimize visual impacts and protect the county's visual and aesthetic resources new bulk substations should be located in industrial and non-retail commercial areas when possible. To further minimize visual intrusion and potential land use conflicts, substations shall be enclosed with site-appropriate security fence in concert with a landscaped setback along all public street frontages.
- PF-86. Proposals to locate all new bulk substations and all other large scale energy transmission facilities equal to or greater than 100kV shall be submitted to Planning for review and comment in the form of a General Plan Conformity request.
- PF-87. Cooperate with local agencies in the locating and design of new transmission towers in urban areas in a manner that minimizes visual and environmental impacts, including impacts to historic buildings and view sheds.
- PF-88. In order to avoid interference with take-off and landing procedures, locate new transmission towers at a distance from airport runways consistent with Code of Federal Regulations, Part 77.

### **Electric Transmission Facility Siting And Design**

**Objective:** Plan and design transmission facilities to minimize visual impacts, preserve existing land uses, and avoid biological and cultural resources.

Intent: Policies throughout this Plan commit the County to preserve its important resources such as wetlands habitat, agricultural land, and aggregate deposits suitable for surface mining. New rights-of-way located in these areas may infringe upon existing land -uses. The following policies provide guidelines that minimize land use conflicts with high voltage transmission power lines. Undergrounding portions of the line may be a desirable mitigation measure in some instances, but these policies do not require undergrounding to achieve policy compliance. The cost of undergrounding transmission and sub-transmission lines and who bears that cost is determined by the utility provider.

These policies apply only to the extent statutory authority expressly grants local agency zoning authority over publicly-owned transmission facilities. Also, these policies are applicable to the transmission facilities of publicly-owned utilities as per state legislation granting local agencies siting review authority. These policies are advisory for SMUD, PG&E and WAPA facilities and are useful for formulating recommendations regarding proposed route alignments in Sacramento County.

Policies:

- PF-89. Wherever feasible, utilize existing transmission poles to accommodate new overhead transmission lines. If practical, existing and future transmission corridors should be shared by more than one utility company subject to the Northern California Joint Pole Agreement.
- PF-90. Transmission rights-of-way should avoid bisecting parcels wherever possible.
- PF-91. Careful consideration shall be taken when transmission lines cross farmland. The crossing of prime or statewide importance farmland with transmission lines should be avoided whenever possible. In those cases when crossing farmland in these categories is unavoidable, the County should recommend routing of the lines along the periphery of the site as the preferred alternative.
- PF-92. Transmission lines should avoid to the greatest extent possible, cultural resources and biological resources such as wetlands, permanent marshes, riparian habitats, vernal pools, and oak woodlands. When routed through such areas, transmission lines should have maximum line spans and cross at the narrowest points which involve minimal cutting and cropping of vegetation, maintaining the drainage regime of wetland basins. Additionally, when feasible, such routes should be maintained to serve as biological dispersion corridors between areas of high biodiversity.
- PF-93. Protect native and non-native bird populations by incorporating electrocution prevention measures into the design of transmission towers.
- PF-94. Avoid routing transmission lines through areas currently used or projected to be used for subsurface mining operations. Preferred routing should follow mining setbacks to adjacent roadways.
- PF-95. Transmission lines should avoid paralleling recreation areas, historic areas, rural scenic highways, landscaped corridors, drainage basins, wetland mitigation, tree planting, and designated federal or state wild and scenic river systems, although these areas may be considered as options if facilities already exist there.
- PF-96. Locate transmission facilities in a manner that maximizes the screening potential of topography and vegetation.
- PF-97. Utilize monopole construction, where practicable, to reduce the visual impact on a corridor's middle and distant views.

## **Electric Subtransmission Facility Siting And Design**

**Objective: Site sub-transmission facilities without compromising community aesthetic, health, and safety standards.**

Intent: The following policies are intended to minimize visual impacts and address community safety concerns of sub-transmission facilities without compromising the system's functional integrity, efficiency, or burdening local utilities with extraordinary costs. Undergrounding power lines may mitigate many aesthetic concerns, however the extra cost (approximately tenfold) and installation and maintenance problems make it feasible only under special circumstances. The cost of undergrounding transmission and sub-transmission lines and who bears that cost is determined by the utility provider. In most instances the impact of overhead sub-transmission power lines will be mitigated through appropriate design, placement, and landscaping.

Policies for siting sub-transmission facilities, typically 69 kV power lines and distribution substations, will provide guidance to minimize land use conflicts. Policies PF-101 to PF-107 and PF-109 to PF-111 are only advisory since the County does not have the authority to regulate sub-transmission line easements. Their intent is to foster a common ground for a coordinated approach to line siting.

### Policies:

- PF-98. The Board of Supervisors should utilize policies in this section as a basis for formulating recommendations for locating sub-transmission facilities, commenting on SMUD's electric facilities siting plans, and when providing input on sub-transmission siting locations for County Community Plans.
- PF-99. Minimize overhead wire congestion using techniques such as undergrounding or combining lines on poles for the same voltage.
- PF-100. Galvanize-coated steel poles should be used where practical.
- PF-101. Route new overhead sub-transmission lines within existing transmission line corridors, along railroad tracks, or major roadways. In an effort to reduce the visual impact of new lines combine circuits on existing 69 kV power poles, wherever feasible.
- PF-102. The preferred route when installing overhead sub-transmission lines through residential neighborhoods should be the landscape corridors located within arterial roadways. The County will include a map in all master plan documents that identifies the location of transmission, sub-transmission and substation facilities necessary to serve the new development.

- PF-103. Sub-transmission facilities should be entirely contained within a public utility easement or dedicated SMUD easements, as applicable.
- PF-104. Sub-transmission lines within landscape corridors shall be situated street-side of the corridor's center line to minimize the visual impact to adjacent residences, but at a distance that will not affect traffic safety.
- PF-105. Landscaping shall be included in corridor design which meets the standards of the surrounding land use zone and is compatible with the overhead line design.
- PF-106. To help reduce visual intrusion, landscape corridors with planned power lines along major streets in residential areas should be no less than 30 feet in width.
- PF-107. New sub-transmission lines should be routed along road rights-of-way in dedicated private or public utility easements. When necessary, sub-transmission lines can be routed along rear property lines in dedicated easements that provide adequate access for maintenance by the utility provider. Easements shall be granted as a condition of project approval. Lines near schools shall comply with California Codes and Regulations. Disclosure of future substations, transmission, and sub-transmission lines by developers is required before property sales are made.
- PF-108. To the maximum extent possible, locate distribution substations serving residential areas in adjacent commercial properties. When not feasible, these facilities should be designed in a manner to harmonize visually with the surrounding development, including the use of landscaped buffers.
- PF-109. Public facility financing plans for developing neighborhoods may include the cost of undergrounding new and existing sub-transmission lines. Costs should be shared by all participating developers.
- PF-110. In areas of renovation and redevelopment, install sub-transmission and distribution lines underground, when feasible, with installation costs provided to the utility by redevelopment funds. Installation should be designed in a manner that minimizes impacts to any historical features.

### **Electric And Magnetic Field Policy**

**Objective: Develop new land uses adjacent to transmission facilities without compromising the safety and health of residents.**

Intent: Land use regulations in Sacramento County serve many purposes, preserving a sense of public safety being paramount. How to regulate land uses with regard to EMF exposure is an issue addressed in this section. In spite of the numerous studies conducted in the past 20 years the scientific community has been unable come to a clear consensus with respect to the link between

EMF exposure and long-term health risks. Due to the lack of consensus, it seems prudent to take steps to safeguard children. Sacramento County is putting forth a policy that is consistent with the State's school siting regulations, which impose distance requirements for locating potential public school sites near high voltage transmission lines. The formulation of the siting standards is based on a graph of field strengths provided to the State School Facility Planning Division by the Southern California Edison Company. As a note, for many years these standards were considered guidelines, however in December of 1993 the State Legislature took action to adopt them as part of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (Chapter 1 of Division 13, Section 14010). The County has opted to craft policy language that covers both public and private school facilities. Lastly, it is recognized that EMF research is far from complete, meaning that any policy language put forth at the state or local level will need to be reevaluated at some time in the future. Additional information on the EMF issue may be found in the Background Documentation Section of this Element.

Policies:

PF-111. It is the policy of Sacramento County not to locate public school buildings or grant entitlements for private school buildings within, or directly adjacent to power line corridors as specified below:

<u>Power Line Capacity</u>	<u>Setback from the Corridor</u> (measured from edge of easement)
100-133kV	100 feet
220-230 kV	150 feet
500-550 kV	350 feet

The construction of transmission lines proximate to *an* existing and/or planned public or private school site and subject to the County Siting Process (100 kV or greater) should also comply with the distance criteria listed above unless compliance with these setbacks would result in a greater EMF impact on other adjacent uses.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Continue to coordinate with electric utilities and utility regulatory agencies on transmission line routing and EMF buffers. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Continue to monitor scientific research on EMF-related health effects and reexamine this policy approach as new information becomes available. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Employ no-and low-cost measures to reduce EMF levels at new and upgraded facilities. Such measures should be considered on a project-specific basis. These measures include, but are not limited to, increased distance from conductors and equipment and optimize phase configuration. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

## **Natural Gas Production And Distribution Facility Policy**

**Objective:     Distribute natural gas safely and efficiently, and withdraw underground gas reserves in an environmentally sensitive manner.**

Intent: Natural gas demand is projected to continue to rise. The growing demand may bring increases in gas prices, the number of gas lines, and gas well drilling and exploration operations in the county.

Long-term problems associated with gas main siting are minimal since all lines are underground. Siting problems are most likely to occur during the installation and repair phases when easements are excavated. Following installation, disturbed natural features are usually restored with little long-term environmental damage. Because gas lines require periodic repair and replacement, their rights-of-way should be designed to ensure maintenance access.

Policies below encourage siting gas mains within or near existing corridors to minimize disturbance to biological and cultural resources, and exposure to human populations. The utility company however, has additional siting factors to consider, including system efficiency and maintenance access which may affect the exact location proposed for the gas mains.

### Policies:

- PF 112.     New natural gas wells will be subject to the permitting process as regulated by the State Conservation Department, Division of Oil Gas, and Geothermal Resources as well as Sacramento County Zoning Code Section 301-19.
- PF-113.     Route new high pressure gas mains within railway and electric transmission corridors, along collector roads, and wherever possible, within existing easements. If not feasible these gas mains shall be placed as close to the easement as possible.
- PF-114.     Gas pipeline engineers must assess soil conductivity and induced current effects as part of the overall process. Pipeline trenching must not undermine power poles or towers. Construction of a pipeline involves cranes and other equipment that may not be able to be used if too close to energized power lines. Multiple worker safety issues to resolve make this policy very complex but not impossible to implement.

## **Coordination With Energy Providers**

**Objective:     Well-planned and timely siting of efficiently operating energy delivery facilities**

Intent: Sacramento County Planning and Environmental Review and local utility companies must cooperate and coordinate to provide efficient electric and gas service. In new developments the

planning is relatively simple; utilities are installed before or during the construction phase. In existing residential areas, however, power and gas line and substation proposals may encounter opposition from local residents. Coordination is also needed to ensure appropriate development practices in the vicinity of existing utility facilities to ensure continued safe, reliable maintenance and operation.

SMUD and PG&E are responsible for accommodating the energy demand resulting from growth approved by the County. Successful utility planning requires the ready transfer of information between County Planning and Environmental Review and the utilities responsible for establishing and implementing long-term plans.

#### Policies:

- PF-115. If a hearing body is considering a change to, or elimination of, a condition of approval that requests an easement for siting of electrical or gas facilities, they should consult with the appropriate service provider prior to taking such action.
- PF-116. Community Plan land use designations and policies should be consistent with the policies of this Energy Facilities Siting section of the Public Facilities Element.
- PF-117. All Community Plans shall include an Energy Facility Siting Element which indicates the location of existing and planned energy facilities. Community Plan Siting Elements and SMUD's Electric Study Plans for the corresponding area shall be consistent.
- PF-118. All tentative subdivision maps should identify the location of all utility easements sufficient to accommodate existing and future needs as determined by SMUD and PG&E.
- PF-119. County Planning and Environmental Review will notify SMUD's Real Estate Services Department and PG&E's Land Department when Planning and Environmental Review initiates studies to prepare, modify, or update the County General Plan, a Community Plan, or Public Facilities Infrastructure Plan.

#### Implementation Measures:

- A. Refer all pertinent subdivision and land use applications to SMUD and PG&E for review and comment within 30 days of the time of application. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Monitor and update coordination procedures between the County and SMUD in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, SMUD)
- C. Coordinate with SMUD, PG&E, and other utilities on pertinent land use proposals. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, SMUD, PG&E)

- D. Represent existing and planned subtransmission lines and substations on tentative subdivision maps. Label existing utility easements on Community Plans and other planning maps. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
  
- E. Amend Zoning Code Section 301-12 (Mitigation Measures for Transmission Facilities) to read as follows:

"Overhead electrical transmission lines of 100,000 volts or greater capacity shall be installed in a manner so as to minimize possible adverse impacts to existing land use and conditions, including health, safety, biological, archeological, visual, and aesthetic impacts. Consolidating lines on fewer poles should be explored whenever feasible, as long as doing so would not negatively affect reliability or safety. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS)
  
- F. Amend the Sacramento County Zoning Code to be consistent with California Government Code Section 53091 with respect to the County's regulatory authority for power plants, cogeneration facilities, and solar electric facilities, including mitigation measures for minimizing adverse health, safety, biological, historical, and archeological impacts. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS)

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY GENERAL PLAN  
PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT**

**SECTION IX**

**LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARK ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, AND MAINTENANCE**

**Goal: Adequate and well funded local and regional park facilities serving existing and newly developing neighborhoods**

**Introduction**

Parks and recreation facilities are essential for creating and maintaining healthy and vibrant communities. They provide value and quality of life to the residents and visitors of the Sacramento County region through access to both organized and informal recreational activities and services. People rely on Sacramento's parks and recreational facilities for the pursuit of health and fitness, self-education, connection with nature and positive social activities. From toddlers through teens, adults, and senior citizens, people of all ages enjoy the trails, natural and cultural resources, sports fields and courts, nature centers, playgrounds, swimming pools and community centers that the region provides. Parks define the quality of neighborhoods and communities and provide the setting for active and passive recreation which benefits the residents of the immediate neighborhood, the larger community, and the broader region. As places to exercise, play, and relax, parks and open space areas provide psychological relief to the developed urban landscape and help increase property values in surrounding neighborhoods. A strong local and regional park system also attracts economic development and tourism to the region. Parks may include developed recreation facilities and amenities, or they may consist of more natural habitat for native plants and wildlife.

**Governmental Framework and Administration**

In Sacramento County, parks are established and operated by three levels of local government. These are local recreation and park districts at the community level, the incorporated cities that operate park departments within their boundaries, and the County at the regional level. Unincorporated Sacramento County residents are provided local services by any of seventeen recreation and park districts or County Service Areas for parks. Table 1 lists these seventeen local park entities.

Most of the Recreation and Park Districts serving long developed suburban communities were established in the 1940s or 1950s. These Districts are predominantly governed as independent special districts by elected Boards of Directors. Three of the Districts are governed as dependent special districts by the County Board of Supervisors serving as the ex-officio board of directors. These are the Carmichael, Mission Oaks, and Sunrise Recreation and Park Districts. The three County Service Areas (CSAs) were established by the County under CSA law to provide recreation

services to outlying rural areas of the County (Wilton-Cosumnes, Delta, and Galt-Herald). The Elk Grove (now Cosumnes) CSD was formed in 1985 by combining the Elk Grove Recreation and Park District with the Elk Grove Fire District. The Sacramento County Department of Regional Parks was established in 1959. The regional parks it administers serve the entire County and region (e.g., the American River Parkway).

Name of Local Park District	Established	Status	Population#	Service Area
Arcade Creek Recreation & Park Dist.	1959	Independent	21,308	5 sq. mi.
Arden Manor Recreation & Park Dist.	1953	Independent	7,651	1.5 sq. mi.
Arden Park Recreation & Park Dist.	1950	Independent	6,500	1.5 sq. mi.
Carmichael Recreation & Park Dist.	1945	Dependent	49,742	9.3 sq. mi.
Cordova Recreation & Park Dist.*	1958	Independent	99,545	75 sq. mi.
Cosumnes (formerly Elk Grove) CSD**	1985 (1923)	Independent	170,000	130 sq. mi.
Fair Oaks Recreation & Park Dist.	1945	Independent	41,000	12.5 sq. mi.
Fulton-El Camino Rec. & Park Dist.	1956	Independent	32,000	5.3 sq. mi.
Mission Oaks Recreation & Park Dist.	1975	Dependent	61,500	8.5 sq. mi.
North Highlands Rec. & Park Dist.	1955	Independent	37,000	8 sq. mi.
Orangevale Recreation & Park Dist.	1983	Independent	33,000	16 sq. mi.
Rio Linda – Elverta Rec. & Park Dist.	1990	Independent	25,000	31 sq. mi.
Southgate Recreation & Park Dist.	1956	Independent	110,000	52 sq. mi.
Sunrise Recreation & Park Dist.***	1950	Dependent	165,000	27.5 sq. mi.
CSA 4B (Wilton-Cosumnes)	1962	Co. Service Area	6,549	114 sq. mi.
CSA 4C (Delta)	1962	Co. Service Area	5,968	90 sq. mi.
CSA 4D (Galt-Herald)	1962	Co. Service Area	8,221	97 sq. mi.

\*incl. City of Rancho Cordova; \*\*incl. City of Elk Grove; \*\*\*incl. City of Citrus Heights;  
#population per LAFCo

## **Park Planning In Sacramento County**

Planning for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space facilities to serve Sacramento County residents is a multi-jurisdictional process. The master planning of local parks and open space is accomplished by the individual recreation and park districts at the neighborhood and community levels, while the master planning of regional parks and open space is a function of the County Department of Regional Parks. The urban planning consultants who help plan new communities work in collaboration with the affected local park districts, community advisory groups, and County staff to plan for parks and open spaces within County designated urban growth areas (e.g., the North Vineyard Station Specific Plan).

At the broadest level of regional parks, the County Department of Regional Parks is the service provider. It operates with a goal to provide a total of 20 acres of regional parks and local parks per 1,000 residents from various sources. Of the 20 acres per 1,000 population target, County Regional Parks strives to provide 12 acres per 1,000 residents in its inventory of regional parks and open space while the balance is to be provided by local park districts and other entities, including the State of California, federal agencies, and conservation/land trust organizations. The 12 acres of regional parks targeted by the County are divided into 5 acres for active uses and 7 acres for passive open space and conservation uses. Local parks (pocket, neighborhood, and community) are primarily planned by the 14 local park districts serving the urbanized communities in the unincorporated County and by the three rural area park County Service Areas (CSAs) staffed by County Regional Parks. Most local park districts have master plan policies calling for 5 acres of local parks for every 1,000 residents, which is a standard recognized statewide and nationally.

California State law in the Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477) provides an enabling statute allowing counties and cities on behalf of local park agencies to exact from new residential subdivision development the dedication of land for parks or payment of fees in lieu. The law prescribes a standard for these exactions that is consistent with the existing level of service circumstances of each park district based on a minimum of 3 acres and a maximum of 5 acres of parks per 1,000 in population. The Quimby Act requirements are insufficient to provide both the land for park sites and the funding to install the necessary recreational improvements on the sites. Sacramento County Engineering and Planning and Environmental Review administer the Quimby requirements enacted in Title 22 of the County Code for the unincorporated area of the County.

## **Park Types And Functions**

There are five basic types of parks. Each has a different size, service area population, service area radius, and acreage to population standard (see Table 2, below). In addition, residents of Sacramento County have access to other parks and open space opportunities associated with several State Parks, National Wildlife Refuges, and open space preserves managed by conservancy organizations.

Pocket Parks: Pocket Parks are smaller mini parks, less than two acres in size. They can be used in constrained development areas or areas with unique recreation opportunities. Pocket Parks have limited facilities such as picnic areas, arbors or sitting areas.

Mini Park: Conventionally these small parks have been publicly owned sites of 2-5 acres with recreation facilities that serve residents within a radius of about 1/3 mile. They are located within easy walking distance for a parent with child or an elderly person. Increasingly, such pedestrian oriented recreation sites will be designed as integral components of urban infill and mixed use development, where they may take the form of urban plazas. Good visual access from surrounding homes and businesses, as well as by vehicular and pedestrian traffic is essential. Mini parks typically provide children's play areas, tables, shade structures, walkways, and landscaping, but urban plazas may also include such features as fountains, public art, performance spaces and community gardens.

Neighborhood Park: Neighborhood parks are publicly owned sites typically of 5 to 10 acres in size providing recreation facilities that serve residents within a radius of about 2/3 mile to one mile. Usually the service area is the residential neighborhood in which these medium-sized parks are located. Often neighborhood parks are situated adjacent to public schools and may be operated under joint use agreements between the applicable park and school districts. They should be within walking distance of the residents they serve, without access barriers such as drainage channels, inaccessible street patterns, or heavy vehicle traffic. Neighborhood parks typically provide playgrounds, playfields, and court game areas. Some neighborhood parks may have off-street parking areas and restrooms, but many do not.

Community Park: Community parks are publicly-owned sites typically larger than 10 acres in size providing recreation facilities to serve residents within a radius of up to three miles or more. The service population may include 10,000 to 25,000 residents. For ease of access by the service population, community parks are usually located by a major arterial and within bicycling distance of the people they serve. Community parks typically have off-street parking and restrooms and provide specialized facilities such as swimming pools, sports complexes, and community center buildings, in addition to basic neighborhood type park facilities.

Regional Parks: Regional parks typically provide a specialized recreation function such as a golf course, a regional trail system, or an interpretive center. A regional park often serves to preserve natural areas and cultural, historical, or archaeological features of countywide significance. Regional parks are usually greater than 75 acres in size, with a large service area and population, encompassing the entire County and extending to the Sacramento Region.

Other Park Types: Aside from regional parks operated by the County, local park districts may establish and maintain open space preserves, parkways along creeks and other drainage or power line corridors, and associated trails. Parks and open space resources located in Sacramento County that are administered by agencies other than the County or local park districts include State Parks (e.g., Folsom Lake State Recreation Area), wildlife refuges (e.g.,

Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge), and other open space preserves (e.g., Howard Ranch unit of the Cosumnes River Preserve). Protected acreage in these park and open space areas is considerable and serves to raise total park acres in the County to a level substantially above 20 acres per 1,000 residents.

Table 2 lists standards for the first four types of parks. It is intended to compare and contrast the scope and function of the typical park categories available to the residents of Sacramento County. The policies regarding the preferred mixture of local parks by type may vary somewhat from one local park district to the next according to their adopted Master Plans.

**Table 2**

**Standards for Mini/Pocket, Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Parks**

Park Type Standard	Typical Size (Acres)	Range of Service Area Population	Range of Service Area Radius	Acres per 1,000 Population
Pocket	0 - 2 acres	1,000 – 2,000	1/3 mile	0 to 2.0 acres
Mini/	2 - 5 acres	1,000 – 2,000	1/3 mile	0 to 2.5 acres
Neighborhood	5 – 10 acres	2,000 – 5,000	2/3 – 1 mile	0 to 2.5 acres
Community	10 – 75 acres	10,000 – 25,000	1 – 3 miles	2.5 acres
Local Subtotal:				5.0 acres
Regional	75 + acres	County +	County +	12.0 acres
Other (e.g., State)	N.A.	State	State	3.0+ acres
Total:				20.0+ acres

Source: Sub-committee of Park and Recreation Agency Administrators recommendations.

The following subsections contain policies that address park standards and fees; park operations and maintenance; and interagency coordination.

**Policies For Provision Of Parks And Recreation Facilities**

**Objective:** Sufficient funding to acquire and develop existing and new parks sufficient to meet the needs of a growing service population.

Intent: Sacramento County will coordinate with local recreation and park districts to help ensure the provision of adequate parks and recreational facilities to meet the needs of residents located in all parts of the unincorporated County, as established in General Plan policies and park district master plans. Statewide standards for provision of parks for new developments are only prescribed

by the Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477) as minimum and maximum levels of park sites required to be provided by residential projects. The Policy PF-123 below reflects the Quimby Act as incorporated in Chapter 22.40 of the Sacramento County Code (SCC). Implementation details are contained in SCC Chapter 22.40. These requirements provide only one component of any comprehensive strategy for the financing of park infrastructure to meet the needs of ongoing development. Typically, the Quimby Act exactions are sufficient for either acquisition of unimproved park sites or installing park facilities improvements, but not both. To the extent that Quimby in lieu fees are expended by a park district to provide park improvements, its acquisition of park land becomes deficient relative to its acreage standards. Other financing mechanisms that may be employed to assure that the park needs of new development are met include development impact fees, local assessment districts, community facilities districts, grants, donations, and cooperative agreements between local government agencies.

Policies:

- PF-120. The County will work cooperatively with the local recreation and park districts to help assure that the provision of additional parks and recreation facilities keeps pace with urban growth within the County.
- PF-121. The County supports the adoption and implementation of Parks and Recreation Master Plans by local recreation and park districts to establish goals and policies for community-oriented parks and recreation facilities that are consistent with the goals and policies of this General Plan.
- PF-122. To help assure that local recreation and park district Master Plan standards for levels of service may be achieved and maintained, the County may require new development to dedicate land, pay in-lieu fees, development impact fees, or otherwise contribute a fair share to the acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities. For development in infill areas where land dedication may not be practical, the County in cooperation with the affected park district may explore creative alternatives for providing park and recreation facilities.
- PF-123. At a minimum, new residential developments approved by the County shall provide sites for local parks for their prospective residents consistent with the Quimby Act and the land dedication standards for each local recreation and park district adopted by Sacramento County in Chapter 22.40 of the Sacramento County Code. These requirements may be satisfied by land dedication, payment of fees in lieu of dedication, or on-site improvements per the provisions of Chapter 22.40, which will be regularly updated to reflect changing demography. These include the baseline standard of three acres of land for parks per 1,000 residents or in cases where existing parklands within a park district exceed three acres per 1,000 population, that higher ratio shall be the standard for new developments up to a maximum of five acres of land for parks per 1,000 residents based on calculations specified in SCC Chapter 22.40.

- PF-124. Consistent with its infill development standards and mixed use Commercial Corridor plans, the County in consultation with the local recreation and park districts shall encourage new infill and Corridor development projects to provide small plazas, pocket parks, civic spaces, and other gathering places that are available to the public to help encourage pedestrian activity, meet recreational needs and service standards consistent with Smart Growth principles.
- PF-125. The County shall promote the provision of on-site recreational amenities and gathering places that are available to the public by large scale development projects and may consider providing incentives such as density bonuses or increases in building coverage for that purpose.

### Implementation Measures

- A. Update the calculation factors for determining required land dedication proportional to population of new residential developments based on the latest available U.S. Census information. When supported by updated park inventories and Census demographic statistics, encourage park districts to petition the County for review and adjustment of the land dedication factors when warranted per SCC Section 22.40.045. Existing park acreage service standards as documented by petitioning districts may include local park opportunities associated with school district and regional park facilities. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- B. Entertain initiatives from park districts and County Regional Parks for establishment of additional financing mechanisms for park acquisition and development including development impact fees, assessment districts, and community facilities districts. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. In the review of applications for new development projects, direct Planning and Environmental Review and the County Department of Regional Parks to consider the impacts on park facilities associated with such projects and the potential opportunities for the projects to mitigate those impacts. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, REGIONAL PARKS)
- D. Park and Recreation elements should be included as integral components of Commercial Corridor plans and should be considered early in the development of the plans. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)

### Policies Supporting Park Operations And Maintenance

**Objective: Sufficient funding to operate and maintain existing and new parks at an adequate level.**

Intent: Park operations and maintenance (O & M) are only partially fundable through park district tax revenues and user fees. Other sources of funds are necessary to supplement park operations and to maintain parks adequately. The County and park districts should consider funding options using other funding mechanisms including landscaping and lighting assessment districts (LLADs), services community facilities districts (CFDs), pursuit of all state and federal funding opportunities, grants from nonprofit organizations, collaborative efforts with school districts and other agencies including the County Department of Transportation and Planning and Environmental Review, along with the Sacramento County Water Agency and Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District, and greater reliance on user fees.

Policies:

- PF-126. Encourage local park districts to develop user fee supporting recreation programs for those activities that go beyond providing for basic recreation needs. Examples include sports leagues, tennis and other court complexes, leisure enrichment classes for all ages, aquatic centers and splash parks, and community centers.
- PF-127. Require new residential developments to participate in park O & M financing mechanisms where established by local park districts or the County.
- PF-128. Encourage park development adjacent to school sites and the formation of joint use agreements between school and park districts.
- PF-129. In cooperation with local park districts and County Regional Parks, the County shall assist in establishing permanent financing systems for the purpose of supporting an adequate level of park services and maintenance.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Continue to investigate alternative financing mechanisms for local and regional parks and recreation operations, and maintenance. (REGIONAL PARKS)
- B. Assist park agencies in identifying and pursuing supplementary financing mechanisms for local and regional parks and recreation services, including programs and maintenance. (REGIONAL PARKS)

**Interagency Coordination**

**Objective: Close coordination with park agencies to insure good regional and local planning, and an efficient use of available funding.**

Intent: Interagency coordination is particularly important when funding is limited. Coordinated planning among local and regional park agencies will yield better facilities for lower cost. Park

projects have the best chance for success when a comprehensive strategy is employed for park acquisition and development utilizing multiple agencies and funding sources.

Policies:

- PF-130. Encourage local park districts to collaborate and coordinate with other districts, agencies, and organizations.
- PF-131. Support the cooperation of local park districts and the County Department of Regional Parks to provide the most efficient delivery of parks and recreation services.

Implementation Measures:

- A. Work actively with other governmental agencies to develop strategies for meeting the local and regional park needs of a public that pays little attention to political subdivision boundaries when seeking recreational opportunities. (REGIONAL PARKS)
- B. Work in a coordinated fashion with local park districts, County Regional Parks, state and federal agencies, and non-profit entities to acquire sufficient acreage of park lands and funding for recreation facilities improvements to meet the long-range needs of the residents of Sacramento County. (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW)
- C. Encourage the collaboration of local park districts with County Departments of Regional Parks, Planning and Environmental Review, and Water Resources (Drainage and Water Supply) in the achievement of park and recreation objectives (e.g., as in the Upper Laguna Creek Collaborative). (PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, REGIONAL PARKS, DWR)