



Chapter 3

UTILITIES

A place where all citizens enjoy opportunities to thrive in a safe, healthy, and productive community.
- The Tuolumne County Vision

Introduction

An adequate and high quality water supply is considered a basic need, and the use and quality of water has long been regulated by government. Since water moves easily across jurisdictional boundaries, much of the regulation is at the regional, state and federal levels. However, since cities and counties have legal authority over development and land use, they must consider the adequacy of water supplies and how development affects the quantity and quality of water available for other beneficial uses.

Purpose

Support actions that provide adequate water, waste water, and solid waste disposal on a Countywide basis, to balance the needs for residents, agriculture, development and other users.

This Utilities Element is intended to include water policies that focus on the infrastructure and delivery of water service, not on water supply and source issues. Supply and capacity is discussed in the Water Element. The purpose of the waste disposal portion of this Element is to provide general direction for establishing and maintaining adequate systems for sewage disposal during further development of the County and maintaining existing systems. Goals and policies related to solid waste address the conservation, development, and utilization of programs related to solid waste, green waste, and recycling.

Overarching Vision

OAV1. Promote development in Tuolumne County that reflects the values and vision of the community and implements the latest legal, statutory, scientific, and technical changes and advances.

OAV2. Achieve, enable and preserve maximum flexibility within the constraints of state and federal law and an ever-evolving legal, cultural and environmental landscape.

OAV3. Recognize that the County has a unique role to collaborate with special districts/stakeholders within the County to promote the delivery of efficient and cost effective public services.



GOAL 3A:

Establish standards for water service for new development and protect the quality and quantity of existing supplies of ground and surface water.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 3.A.1: Encourage the siting of new urban development either within or adjacent identified communities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and encourage the logical extension of public water services infrastructure. When new urban development is proposed to be located outside but adjacent to identified communities, it should be located in proximity to existing water supply infrastructure.

Policy 3.A.2: Require new commercial development to be served by public water systems, except for development in areas designated as Special Commercial on the General Plan land use diagrams.

Implementation Program

3.A.a - Utilize the Special Commercial (SC) General Plan land use designation on property suitable for commercial development of a neighborhood, rural or tourist-oriented nature but lacking service from a public water system. Development of a commercial nature on land designated SC is allowed with applicant permits without having service from a public water or sewer system, but only where service is not reasonably available, and the development will not significantly impact water quality and/or water supply, or unreasonably overburden County services, unless the County finds that the development's benefits outweigh these significant impacts.

Policy 3.A.3: Continue to require new urban residential development with a density of one dwelling unit per two acres, or greater, and commercial development, except on land designated as Special Commercial (SC) by the General Plan land use diagrams, to be served with public water.

Policy 3.A.4: Reserved

Policy 3.A.5: Protect the geologic landscape for water quality and quantity and the functionality of the geology for water recharge from new development.

Policy 3.A.6: Require new commercial development in areas designated as Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial or Heavy Commercial on the General Plan land use diagrams and urban residential development (densities greater than one dwelling unit per two acres) to be served by a public water distribution system. Prior to approval of any discretionary entitlement for such development, a public water distribution system must have indicated that service is available and it has a reliable source of water to serve their existing and future customer's foreseeable needs. Prior to occupancy of the development, the service must be in place.

GOAL 3B:

Plan new development and water supply infrastructure in a cooperative fashion.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS



Policy 3.B.1 Require that development is consistent with the applicable water purveyor standards and specifications, including as applicable, the proper design and sizing of water distribution lines, storage tanks, and other aspects of the water infrastructure system both on and off the site of development.

Policy 3.B.2 Consider whether the water system proposed to serve a new development has a reliable source of water, sized to serve their existing and future customer's' foreseeable demands. Projects shall only be approved where the water supply system has reliable sources of water capable of meeting present and future demands.

Implementation Programs

3.B.a - Continue to require new urban development needing discretionary entitlements to secure a letter from the jurisdictional public water agency stating that the proposed project can be served by that agency and that there is an available water supply.

3.B.b - Encourage new industrial development to locate in areas which have the capability of being served by a public water system, or a private system when it can be reasonably demonstrated that the development will not cause an adverse public health problem by maintain zoning code standards for the provision of public water for industrial zoning districts and requiring review by the Environmental Health Division when exceptions are requested.

3.B.c - New development shall not be approved that is proposed to be served by a public water purveyance system that does not include the project area within the defined geographic limits of service unless the public water purveyance system is in the process of or agrees to pursue action to include the project area within the purveyor's limits of service.

Policy 3.B.3 Encourage the logical extension of public water services infrastructure during review of new land development projects to provide a reliable and adequate distribution system to meet the future needs of the water purveyor.

GOAL 3C: Encourage consolidation of existing small water systems and discourage the creation of new ones.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 3.C.1: Support the consolidation of water purveyors in the County to facilitate improvements to the infrastructure and consistency of water quality of the systems.

Implementation Program

3.C.a - Establish and update a database of all the service areas of the water supply systems in the County to assist with land use planning. Support the master planning of water purveyance systems that define the geographic limits of their service areas.

Policy 3.C.2: Consider the undesirability of proliferation of small water systems, as defined in the California Health and Safety Code, during the development review process.

Implementation Program



3.C.b - Assist and support actions by larger water purveyors and special districts to incorporate and maintain existing smaller systems and isolated privately or mutually-owned water supply systems.

Policy 3.C.3: Discourage additional water purveyors in the County, particularly stemming from new development.

Implementation Program

3.C.c - Require residential development projects that are proposed to be served by a public water system to be served by an existing water purveyor that is either a district, or water company that is privately-owned, or a mutually-owned system. The new or expanded water service from a privately-owned or mutual water company must be geographically contiguous with the existing system and have a direct infrastructure link between the existing and new system. This requirement is not intended to apply to isolated commercial or industrial developments which are served by water systems which are transient-noncommunity or nontransient-noncommunity water systems.

Policy 3.C.4: Discourage creating new discontinuous water systems operated by existing water purveyors.

Implementation Program

3.C.d - Require amendments to the General Plan land use diagrams to add new areas designated for urban residential or commercial development, with the exception of new areas designated for Special Commercial (SC), be approved only with assurance that the area can be served by public water from either an existing district, or from an existing privately-owned or mutually-owned water company. The public water service from an existing privately-owned or mutually-owned water company is only acceptable if it would not create discontinuous service systems. Discontinuous service systems are those operated by the same company but are geographically separated and not related by a shared infrastructure.

GOAL 3D: **Promote the logical extension or expansion of sewer system infrastructure as development occurs in areas where the expansion of public sewer systems is feasible.**

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 3.D.1: Encourage the installation of public sewage systems in existing communities that are experiencing repeated septic system failures.

Policy 3.D.2: Encourage new urban development to be served by public sewer systems.

Implementation Program

3.D.a - Require the logical extension of sewer lines and infrastructure to areas of existing development where there are known limitations or problems associated with on-site underground sewage disposal.

Policy 3.D.3: Assist and cooperate in master planning sewer facilities and encourage the extension of additional public services through the installation of appropriately sized utility collection system piping and other on-site and off-site improvements on new developments.



Implementation Programs

3.D.b - Provide land use data from the General Plan, proposals being considered for updating the land use diagrams of the General Plan, and other relevant maps and data to districts who provide sewage disposal to be used in preparing their master plans. Data and maps showing areas noted as being hazardous for underground disposal or areas of known leach field failures, as well as relevant land use data, shall be shared.

3.D.c - Review and consider land use implications of sewer master plans prepared by any of the sewer districts in the County.

3.D.d - Provide descriptions of proposed land development projects that may require sewer service or in some way affect the ability of the sewer purveyor to provide service, to all affected utility districts or public sewer systems and consider comments in the evaluation process.

GOAL 3E:

Maintain a healthy environment for the citizenry by setting standards for the types and methods of sewage disposal to be used by new development.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 3.E.1: Maintain standards for residential development that sets a minimum lot size that can be created without service by a public sewer system.

Implementation Program

3.E.a - Continue to require new urban residential development with a density of three dwelling units per acre, or greater, and commercial development, except that on land designated Special Commercial (SC) by the General Plan land use diagrams, to connect to public sewer.

Policy 3.E.2: Require that proposed development in areas of known or suspected geological limitations to underground sewage disposal either be served by a public sewer system, or successfully demonstrate that on-site underground sewage disposal can be accomplished with no lessening of quality to ground or surface waters.

Policy 3.E.3: Encourage new industrial and commercial development in areas where a public sewer system is available, or require evidence that there is a capability of functioning on a private system without any adverse public health impact.

Policy 3.E.4: Require development to connect to a public sewer system if it is reasonably available.

Implementation Programs

3.E.b - Encourage the siting of urban development either within or adjacent to identified communities to maximize the use of existing infrastructure and reduce the need for expansion of the public sewer system. Where urban development is proposed to be located outside of identified communities, it should be preferentially located in proximity to existing public sewer infrastructure.

3.E.c - Consider whether areas proposed for designation as Neighborhood Commercial, General Commercial, Heavy Commercial, Business Park, Mixed Use, Light Industrial or Heavy Industrial on the General Plan land use diagrams can be served by a public sewer system. If public sewer service is available, the public sewer system shall be used for commercial or industrial



development. Public sewer service is considered "available" according to the definition in Chapter 13.08 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code. Prior to approval of any discretionary entitlement for such development, a public sewer purveyor must have indicated that service is available, or an acceptable plan for sewage disposal through a private system must be approved by the Environmental Health Division or the State Water Resources Control Board. Prior to occupancy of the development, the service must be in place.

3.E.d - Continue to allow development to be served by private water and sewage disposal systems provided that they are first approved by the agency having jurisdiction by law.

3.E.e - Require buildings subject to a building permit proposed on a parcel within 300 feet uphill or 100 feet downhill of a public sewer system's primary pipeline to connect to that system for service in accordance with Chapter 13.08 of the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code. This includes all urban residential development, and commercial and industrial development. This does not apply when the public sewer system's treatment plant is at its capacity level or the sewer purveyor indicates the connection is not feasible, or the project lies outside the defined service area established for a district.

GOAL 3F:

Maintain opportunities for residents and businesses to efficiently recycle or dispose of waste products.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 3.F.1: Require proposed solid waste facilities and all other new development to comply with the Tuolumne County Integrated Waste Management Plan and all adopted elements thereof.

Implementation Programs

3.F.a - Encourage alternative methods of disposal of vegetative matter, including, but not limited to, composting, mulching or transporting the material to biomass facilities that accept it.

3.F.b - Continue to offer a program for processing brush and yard debris in the County which avoids adverse impacts to energy consumption and generates a usable product.

Policy 3.F.2: Encourage the recycling of products and materials and support the efforts of agencies, businesses and the general public to reduce the waste stream.

Implementation Programs

3.F.c - Support existing and encourage the development of new recycling facilities.

3.F.d - Continue to require franchise waste haulers to offer the Commingled Recycled System or a similar recycling program.

3.F.e - Create and implement a countywide green waste and recycling program for residential and non-residential land uses. Implement a program to educate residents and business owners about recycling requirements and opportunities.

3.F.f - Encourage the development of new and expansion of existing businesses which reuse products and materials, recycle waste materials or convert waste products to energy.