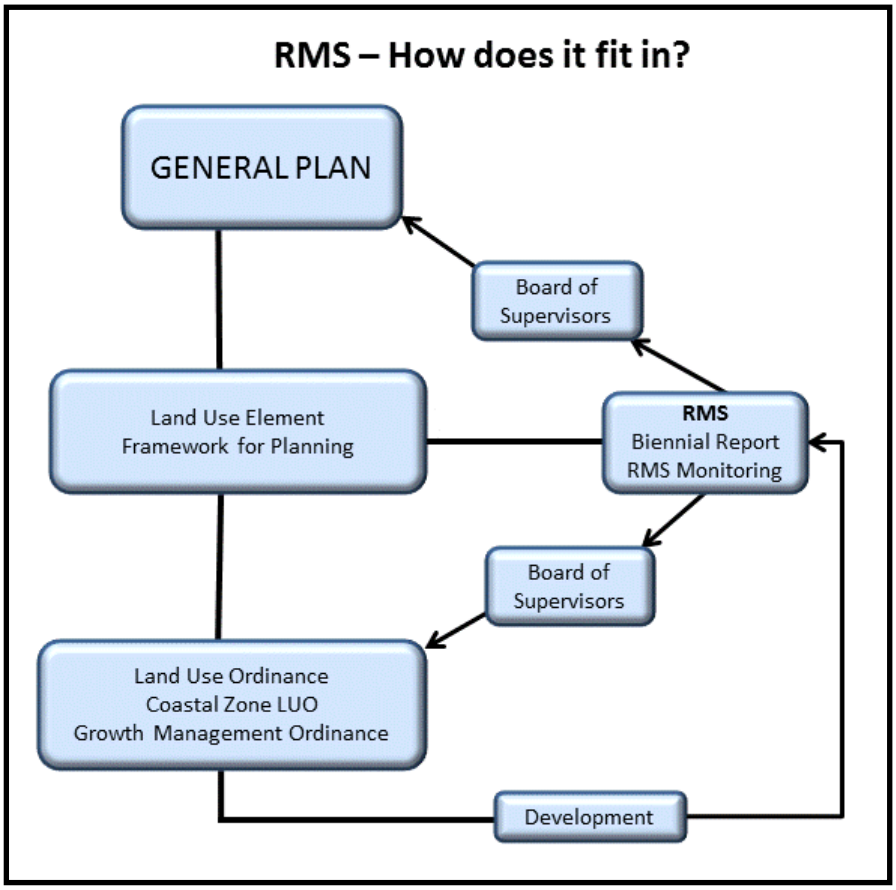
Chapter 3 of Framework for Planning (Inland) – Resource Management System – Planning Commission Recommendation - Clean

CHAPTER 3: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A. INTRODUCTION - HOW RESOURCES AND GROWTH ARE RELATED

The General Plan, its Resource Management System (RMS), and the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) work in concert to guide decisions on future development. The General Plan's Land Use Element (LUE) focuses development in specified communities and land use designations. The LUO sets minimum parcel sizes, density requirements and other standards for creation of new parcels and development of existing parcels. The RMS provides an alert system for services and resources to support the new development envisioned in and allowed by the General Plan and LUO. In that way, the RMS is essential to carrying out the General Plan's vision.



As the county enters the 21st century, the public and decision makers have become more aware of the limits of our natural resources, the cost of expanded infrastructure and its maintenance and the difficulties in finding solutions to these problems. Deficiencies in many man-made resources such as sewers, schools, police and fire protection can be overcome by upgrading or expanding such facilities. Although augmentation of man-made resources may be costly, the solutions are tangible and easily identified. This is often not the case with natural resource limitations. Solutions are not always obvious and technical data may be confusing or lacking altogether. There may also be significant, even prohibitive, costs involved in determining resource capacity and availability.

San Luis Obispo County is

experiencing problems with both natural and man-made resources (e.g. water supply and wastewater facilities). In some communities, schools are overcrowded, or are anticipated to be. Communities have also experienced problems with septic systems and water supply. In addition, many roads and freeway interchanges are nearing unacceptable levels of service, and air quality in some areas is deteriorating.

The net result of such problems has been a never-ending game of "catch-up," where rates of growth and development outstrip the upgrading and renewal of community resources. Since most resources extend beyond political boundaries, cities, special districts and the County must work together to identify their resource capacities in relation to future growth and to implement solutions to resource deficiencies.

The RMS addresses resources at a community level for certain resources that are contained within communities, for example, community parks and water systems. However, many resources, such as groundwater basins and air quality, do not respect community boundaries and need to be addressed according to the geographic boundaries of the resource.

The RMS is an informational tool to be used in carrying out the Land Use Element aims of directing development toward communities and assuring that the amount, location and rate of growth are within the sustainable capacity of resources, public services and facilities. The LUE attempts to resolve issues of population distribution and location rather than growth versus no-growth. However, temporary growth control measures could sometimes be considered in order for resource capacities to catch up with development.

Sometimes the capacity of one or more resources cannot be expanded and special growth and resource management measures are needed. Such measures are described in the following Section F under "Resource Management Techniques." These measures help provide for sustained, long-term growth, as opposed to allowing unmanaged growth ~~were~~ to continue and exceed resource capacities at market-driven rates and locations. Growth and resource management measures can also allow for the additional lead times needed to develop and implement solutions to resource capacity problems.

B. FOCUS OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The focus of the RMS is on collecting data, identifying problems and helping decision-makers develop solutions to resource capacity problems.

The RMS supports the County's LUE goals by:

- Determining if the necessary resources exist;
- Identifying resources that can be readily developed to support new land uses; and
- Identifying critical points in time when decisions are needed to build facilities and avoid resource deficiencies.

The six resources/services addressed by the RMS are:

- Water Supply and Systems
- Wastewater Treatment
- Schools
- Roads and Freeway Interchanges

The RMS provides the information to plan for sustainable resources for long-term growth.

- Air Quality
- Parks

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The RMS is intended to provide information on resource capacities to guide decisions on the land uses envisioned in the LUE (e.g. community plan updates) through the following goals:

- Balancing land development and population growth with the resources required to support them.
- Avoid the use of public resources, services and facilities beyond their renewable capacities.
- Monitor new development to ensure that its resource demands will not exceed, existing and planned capacities or service levels.

The RMS objectives are:

1. Resource Conservation – To identify the sustainable capacities of the resources needed for growth and to minimize impacts of the development envisioned in the LUE on these resources.

2. Public Health and Safety - To support efforts to provide county communities with adequate supplies of water for domestic and fire suppression purposes, healthful air quality, facilities for wastewater disposal and safe streets and roads, by monitoring their capacities to accommodate development envisioned under the LUE.

3. Public Services and Facilities -To support the provision and upgrading of public services and facilities at a rate that keeps pace with population growth, by anticipating resource needs in advance of critical necessity.

4. Agricultural Lands - To encourage protection of productive agricultural land, by considering the effects of current and future development on area-wide water resources needed for agriculture.

5. Community Character - To support the diversity of life-styles and physical character in county communities by tailoring solutions to resource capacity issues so that they are specific to the community.

6. Economic Impacts - To delay or avoid the adverse economic effects of development moratoria and more severe growth restrictions through proactive management of resources.

7. Public Involvement -To provide a public forum for reaching decisions affecting community growth and development, where goals and policies can be discussed, and where such decisions are subject to public scrutiny.

8. Agency Cooperation - To establish a system that supports coordination and cooperation between the various public, quasi-public and private entities providing services and facilities.

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D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

Responsible Agency

The operation of the RMS is the responsibility of the Department of Planning and Building with input from other public and private resource management entities and agencies.

Levels of Severity for Monitored Resources

The RMS is designed to deal with resource capacity issues at local and areawide scales:

- Neighborhood-level problems, such as a needed collector street
- Communitywide problems, such as the need for public sewers
- Areawide problems, such as overdraft of a groundwater basin.

The RMS uses three levels of alert (called levels of severity) – Levels I, II, and III – to identify potential and progressively more immediate resource deficiencies. The alerts are intended to occur while sufficient time is available to avoid or correct a shortage before a crisis develops.

In general, a Level of Severity III occurs when resource use meets or exceeds the capacity of the resource. For instance, when a wastewater treatment plant is operating beyond its design capacity, that particular resource operates at Level III. However, in the case of water supply, Level of Severity III occurs well before the resource capacity is reached (see Table F and the discussion in the following Section E, Resource Management System Process). Criteria for Levels I and II precede the threshold for Level III by providing lead times necessary for avoiding or correcting particular resource deficiencies.

The criteria for each resource are described in tables and text in Section F of this chapter entitled "Resource Management Issues, Criteria for Levels of Severity, and Recommended Actions". The criteria for each level of severity are not absolute, as particular community conditions or circumstances may logically support alternative criteria. Instead, they offer general guidelines for determining when resource management measures should be enacted.

Threshold population levels or dates corresponding to the three levels of severity may be defined in the LUE area plans and community plans for the resources of each area and community. A summary of the current estimated levels of severity are listed in Appendix D.

E. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCESS

This section describes the activities that produce information to identify levels of severity, and the process for determining appropriate policy decisions in response to new information. The basic products of the information-gathering aspect of the RMS include:

- **Resource Inventories**: Data collection through the update of the LUE;
- **RMS Monitoring Program**: Periodic status reports on resource usage in areas with levels of severity;
- **Biennial Resource Summary Report**: Report prepared by the Department of Planning and Building with input from other County departments and service providers.
- **Resource Capacity Studies**: Special studies of resource usage when ordered by the Board of Supervisors upon its determination that a new level of severity has been reached through the advisory process described below.

Resource Inventories

As part of the update of the LUE, the Planning and Building Department prepares an inventory of local water supplies, wastewater disposal facilities, air quality, parks, schools and road and freeway interchange capacities for each area and community plan, as applicable. The inventories are developed jointly with the Public Works and Health Departments, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Air Pollution Control District, water purveyors and other responsible agencies. The inventories should:

1. Identify existing resources, their location, estimated quantity and quality,
2. Describe known problem areas or deficiencies,
3. Estimate populations that an existing resource can support,
4. Identify alternative or additional available resources, where known,
5. Estimate the lead time needed for correcting a previously identified deficiency,
6. Identify capital projects or other programs that can be funded and implemented within critical time periods.

Resource inventories are based upon the most current information available. However, the data for some areas of the county are of limited availability. The area and community plans indicate whether resource data mentioned are immediately usable for resource management purposes, or whether additional information is needed. Consequently, the area plan inventories can be used for some areas to indicate where problems may exist and how priorities should be set for needed resource capacity studies.

Any resource data used as the basis for general plan policies is periodically reviewed and updated as new information becomes available, through the LUE update program, capital improvement program review and RMS monitoring programs.

Monitoring Program

The Department of Planning and Building collects data, monitors resource usage, ~~to~~ updates earlier resource inventories and identifies possible corrective measures to address resource capacity issues. Status reports are part of the Biennial Resource Summary Report described below. Each report should include the following:

1. A brief synopsis of the status of resource use,
2. Any additional resource information,
3. Current and projected capacities,
4. An analysis of corrective actions, and
5. Recommendations for action.

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Resource Capacity Advisory Process

When the Planning and Building Department determines that a level of severity should be established, or modified as a consequence of an LUE update, the RMS monitoring program, a Water Resource Advisory Committee recommendation, or the Biennial Resource Summary Report, it sends a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors advising it of the need to establish or modify a level of severity. An illustration of the advisory process is shown in Figure 3-1.

The Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing to review the data received from the Department of Planning and Building. After the initial advisory memorandum, it may be necessary to continue to issue status reports to the Board in order to keep it advised of the situation. Implementation of a program (i.e., a public works project, management techniques, etc.) would then occur only after public hearings on the resource information being used, preparation of a resource capacity study, and action by the Board, including the adoption of ordinances if necessary to address specific community resource problems.

If an affected resource is not under County jurisdiction (e.g., a community service district may have responsibility over a local water supply problem), the Department of Planning and Building sends a copy of the advisory memorandum to the responsible agency advising that a potential problem may exist, based upon data available to the County, and to urge that the agency prepare a resource capacity study. Staff contacts and recommendations to the agency should occur in advance of the agency's budget preparation process so the necessary work can be included in its financial considerations.

The following sections describe in more detail the procedures for considering and reporting each of the three levels of severity:

Level I:	Resource capacity concern
Level II:	Diminishing resource capacity
Level III:	Resource capacity met or exceeded

Levels of severity are recommended by the Planning and Building Department and certified by the Board of Supervisors through the following procedures. County staff may recommend to the Board of Supervisors or the Board may initiate specific actions to respond to levels of severity, such as special water conservation ordinances and special land use and growth limitation measures. However, such measures can only be implemented following specific approval by the Board at a public hearing.

LOS I: Resource Capacity Concern

LOS I is the earliest indication that a resource capacity problem could occur. Its threshold is intended to be early enough to provide time to avoid exceeding the capacity of the resource. LOS I is established when resource use will reach capacity in approximately the time required to expand capacity (including planning, funding and construction of a project where appropriate). Critical time periods for Level I problems for each resource are summarized in Tables F through J.

Level of Severity I is established when resource use will reach capacity in the time required to expand capacity.

Under normal circumstances, community development is intended to continue through a LOS I condition without any restrictions being enacted. Projects should still be evaluated without the LOSI determination affecting them, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Supervisors.

LOS I Procedure

When available data suggest a resource problem exists or is anticipated, the following procedure is to be used:

1. Staff forwards an advisory memorandum to the Board of Supervisors (with copies to the Planning Commission for their information). The memorandum identifies the capacity problem and enables the Board to review the data upon which the staff recommendation is based.

2. If the Board agrees that a resource capacity concern exists, it initiates preparation of a resource capacity study, if necessary. The Board may also initiate, through an ordinance, any conservation measures deemed necessary.

3. Preparation of a resource capacity study, if necessary, should be undertaken by the County department or outside agency providing the particular service or resource being considered, in cooperation with the County and any other affected agencies (such as public or private water companies, sewer districts, community service districts, school districts and incorporated cities). A resource capacity study should:

    a. Determine the capacity of the resource being studied;
    b. Identify thresholds for LOS II and III deficiencies;
    c. Identify alternate measures for avoiding a predicted resource deficiency and evaluate the feasibility (and possible funding methods) of each measure;
    d. Provide an estimated timetable for funding and completion of a public works project to correct the resource deficiency, if applicable;
    e. Recommend techniques for growth management to be used if needed to extend the resource capacity.

4. Upon completion, a resource capacity study is forwarded to the Planning Commission for public hearing. The Commission reviews study data and recommends to the Board of Supervisors as to its adequacy. Commission review should be completed and reported to the Board of Supervisors within a maximum of 40 days from when the study is first placed on the Commission agenda.

5. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission recommendation, the Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing to review the resource capacity study, and consider public testimony. The Board should determine whether the study adequately assesses the affected resource as a basis for policy decisions. The data in the certified resource capacity study is then incorporated into the County General Plan as new resource data at the next available time for processing general plan amendments.

LOS II: Diminishing Resource Capacity

A LOS II is established when the current rate of resource use will deplete the resource before its capacity can be increased. When this condition occurs, the rate of resource depletion must be decreased to avoid exceeding the resource capacity. This may be accomplished through infrastructure improvements to increase the

availability of resources, conservation, growth-management techniques, or a combination of measures. If a funding decision cannot be made, for a variety of reasons, the Board of Supervisors may choose to enact development measures to increase the lead time for avoiding the deficiency. When the Board of Supervisors finds that a resource deficiency has been corrected, any ordinance that enacted development limitation measures should be repealed or allowed to expire. Applications would then be processed and reviewed as normal.

Level of Severity II is established when the rate of resource use must be decreased to avoid exceeding the resource capacity.

LOS II Procedure

At this level:

1. Department of Planning and Building staff advises the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission when the capacity of a particular resource is diminishing past the point of merely being a concern. The basis for this recommendation may come from:

    a. Completion of a previously ordered resource capacity study
    b. A monitoring program
    c. A Biennial Resource Summary Report, or
    d. Information developed for the Land Use Element update.

2. The Department of Planning and Building forwards an advisory memorandum to the Board of Supervisors. Upon review of the LOS II advisory memorandum, the Board evaluates the data upon which the recommendation is based, and forwards the memorandum to the Planning Commission for a public hearing on the recommendation. The Board may also initiate a resource capacity study if more complete information is needed.

3. If the advisory memorandum is sent to the Planning Commission for a public hearing, then the Commission recommends an appropriate course of action to the Board of Supervisors. Commission review must be completed and reported to the Board within a maximum of 40 days from the first Commission hearing date.

4. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission recommendation, the Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing to consider relevant resource data and public testimony, determine whether LOS II and the resource capacity study should be certified, and implement the actions recommended in the study.

5. If the Board determines that LOS II does not exist, staff is directed to either continue monitoring the resource and report back to the Board; terminate monitoring; or take other action the Board finds appropriate.

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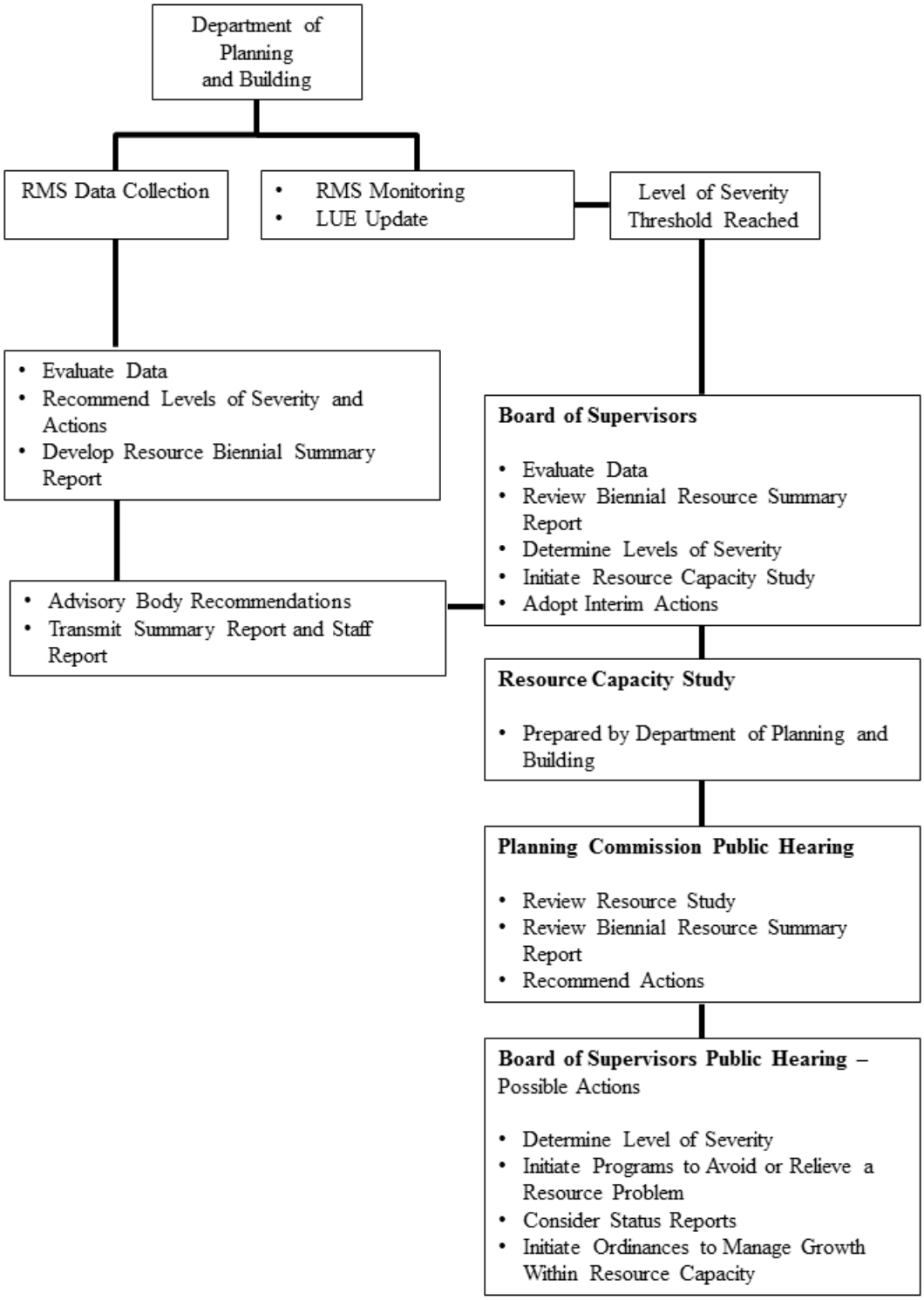
Figure 3-1

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS



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LOS III: Resource Capacity Met or Exceeded

In general, LOS III is established when the capacity (maximum safe yield) of a resource has been met or exceeded. However, in the case of water supply, Level of Severity III occurs when projected water demand over 15 years meets or exceeds the dependable supply, or when there is not enough time to correct the problem before the dependable supply is reached. At LOS III, there is a deficiency of sufficient magnitude that immediate actions may be needed to protect public health and safety. While the intention of the RMS is to avoid reaching LOS III through the proactive management of a resource, it is still possible that such a situation may occur.

With the exception of Water Supply, Level of Severity III is established when the capacity of a resource has been met or exceeded.

LOS III Procedure

The procedure for a LOS III alert is as follows:

1. An advisory memorandum is sent to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and referral to the Planning Commission. The basis of this memorandum shall come from completion of a previously ordered resource capacity study, monitoring program, Biennial Resource Summary Report, or information developed from the LUE update. The Board evaluates the advisory memorandum and the data upon which it is based. The Board should consider whether there is a need to adopt appropriate interim actions.
2. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the advisory memorandum. The Commission has a maximum of 40 days to hold the public hearing and report to the Board.
3. After receiving the Planning Commission report, the Board holds a public hearing to consider relevant resource data and public testimony, determine whether LOS III and the resource capacity study should be certified, and consider implementation of the actions recommended in the study.

Resource Management System Coordination

Resource inventories and resource capacity studies should clearly describe short and long-term capital improvement programs that can improve the availability of the resource. Detailed feasibility studies need to be funded to evaluate alternatives and make recommendations for the preferred capital improvement program(s) that can be permitted, funded, and constructed.

Resource capacity studies are to be forwarded to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for its use when considering requests for expansion of spheres of influence and spheres of service, or when considering proposed annexations to any incorporated cities. Because LAFCo definitions of "sphere of service" and "sphere of influence" correspond to the LUE definitions of urban service line and urban reserve line, respectively, such coordination is necessary to support orderly urban expansion.

Coordination between service agencies and the LUE is mandated by the Government Code (Section 65401) requirement that agencies involved in evaluating, planning or constructing major public works annually provide the County with a list of their proposed projects. The County must then prepare "...a coordinated program of proposed public works for the ensuing fiscal year." The coordinated program is then submitted to the County Planning Commission for review and a report "...as to conformity with the adopted general plan or part thereof." Participation of relevant service agencies and companies in the RMS System is encouraged to

coordinate solutions to resource problems, particularly through the capital improvement program process, also described in Chapter 8.

F. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, CRITERIA FOR LEVELS OF SEVERITY, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Resource Management Techniques

The methods used in the management of new growth are a) the distribution of land use categories in the LUE b) development standards in the LUO which are intended to ensure compatibility between different types of land use, and c) establishment of growth limitations in the Growth Management Ordinance, Title 26 of the County Code. It is important to recognize that the County often does not have authority over the resource or service in question. In these instances, collaboration with other agencies is essential to conserving or expanding the resource. Issues of water supply, wastewater and water systems will almost always include cooperative approaches between the County (with authority over land use and building) and the service provider (with authority over provision of water or wastewater service).

The capital improvement program also plays an important role in growth management because it determines the timing of new or expanded public facilities (such as roads, water supply and wastewater disposal systems) which enable new development at the densities planned by the LUE. There are also a variety of growth management techniques which may be appropriately used by local governments where resource limitations affect the normal operation of the private land development process.

The LUE is not intended to predetermine which techniques would be appropriate in a specific situation, since resource capacity problems can vary widely. The choice of any implementing actions is made by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors based on the particular resource capacity problem. Implementation of restrictions will occur after a public hearing and adoption of an ordinance to enact specific measures in a defined area. Techniques for correcting local problems are evaluated in the area plan resource inventories, advisory memoranda and resource capacity studies prepared at LOS I, II and III.

Some representative examples of methods that could be used to conserve resources and effectively intervene in different situations are summarized in the following list:

1. Density limitations to limit the number of people that could potentially reside in an area.

2. Building intensity or use limitations that would limit the potential scale and intensity of nonresidential development.

3. Target ceiling for the maximum population that could reside within resource capacities, with a limit on the corresponding number of building permits.

4. Controls on the rate of new development and subdivisions to provide more lead time for resource management decisions and for funding to be programmed where it is feasible, by limiting the annual number of permits, or to sustain growth longer under a population ceiling.

5. Phasing policies on the extension of services such as sewage disposal, and on recommended annexations.

6. Locating public improvements to influence the location and direction of growth where resources are identified to be more adequate.

7. Scheduling public capital expenditures to influence growth into more desirable areas with resource availability.

~~8.~~ Retirement of lots or development rights, or combining lots in areas with resource capacity problems.

9. Development impact fees to provide funding for necessary public facilities that will minimize the impacts of growth.

10. Revising the metric or timeframe being measured (e.g. Avila Beach Drive traffic count).

If a growth management limitation is considered as an amendment of the county's general plan or its enacting ordinances (LUO and Subdivision Ordinance), the Government Code requires specific findings concerning the efforts the county is making to implement its Housing Element and the public health, safety and welfare considerations that justify reducing the housing opportunities of the region (Government Code Section 65302.8). The State's zoning and subdivision laws include provisions that cities and counties implementing these State laws through enacting ordinances and other actions must consider their effects upon the housing needs of the region (Government Code Sections 65863.6, 65913.2, and 66412.2). The laws further require cities and counties to balance the housing needs of the region against the needs of their residents for public services and the available fiscal and environmental resources (Government Code Sections 65863.6 and 66412.2).

General Recommended Actions for Levels of Severity

When the Board of Supervisors finds that a level of severity exists, it considers and institutes any or all of the following or other actions as needed. These general actions are in addition to the more specific recommended actions for each resource as listed in the following section.

LOS I Recommended Actions

If sufficient progress is not made toward alleviating the level of severity, the Board of Supervisors may adopt an appropriate action such as the following

1. Funding of projects necessary to address the resource problem.

2. In the case of special districts, recommend to LAFCo that annexations that increase demand for the affected resource address the resource problem prior to approval.

3. The Board may impose conservation measures within the service area.

LOS II Recommended Actions Requirements

In addition to the preceding action requirements for LOS I, the Board may adopt land use policies that respond to a delay in funding for a necessary project such as the following:

1. Manage the rate of resource depletion within the affected community or area to extend the availability of the resource until such time as the project will provide additional resource capacity.

2. Initiate appropriate financing mechanisms to recover the project cost including, but not limited to, capital improvement bonds, assessment districts, developer fees, etc.

3. Use RMS information to evaluate the appropriate scale and timing of discretionary projects within the remaining resource capacity to determine whether they should be approved.

4. Enact restrictions on further land development in the area that is affected by the resource problem.

5. Enact adjustments to land use categories so that they will accommodate no more than the population which can be served by the remaining available resource, or redirect growth to communities or areas that have available resource capacity.

6. Give a higher priority to serving existing and strategically planned communities with adequate resources, streets and infrastructure, over outlying rural areas.

LOS III Recommended Actions

In addition to the preceding actions action requirements in addition to those for LOS I and II, the Board may institute measures such as the following:

1. Institute appropriate measures (including capital improvement programs) to correct the critical resource deficiency, or at least restore LOS~~I~~ II so that severe restrictions will be unnecessary. In many cases, other agencies or districts will control decisions about necessary measures. The Board of Supervisors shall only seek cooperative assistance for a certain time period, beyond which measures may be considered to enact County ordinances or standards affecting resource usage such as development restrictions.

2. Adopt growth management or other urgency measures to initiate whatever restrictions are necessary to minimize or halt further resource depletion. Restrictions enacted by means other than an urgency ordinance shall be reduced or removed after a public hearing at which the Board of Supervisors determines that LOS III no longer exists and any dangers to public health or safety have been eliminated.

3. Enact a moratorium on land development or other appropriate measures in the area that is affected by the resource problem until such time that the project provides additional resource capacity to support such development.

Issues, LOS Criteria and Recommended Actions by Resource

As resources are studied to identify their capacities and rates of use, several countywide resource policy issues become apparent. Their importance demands careful scrutiny and evaluation of alternatives. While the RMS has been designed to support improvement of local situations, long-term solutions may not be possible unless broader issues are also resolved.

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Those issues are presented here only to indicate some of the major resource questions that will be facing the county in the near future. More specific resource capacity information is included in the area plans. This chapter, including the following descriptions of those issues, shall not be considered in evaluating individual development proposals or questions of land division consistency.

Each resource has unique characteristics that require a varied approach to establishing the levels of severity. For each resource, this section describes policy issues, criteria to identify when each level of severity is reached, and recommended actions. Each resource topic also includes recommended subjects for resource capacity studies that will be prepared through the RMS advisory process.

Water Supply Policy Issues

The water resources that serve the County are replenished through rainfall, the amount of which can vary significantly from year to year, or through imported water supplies. The County's water resources can be classified into the three categories below:

1. Local groundwater basins (e.g. Los Osos, Santa Maria, Paso Robles);
2. Local surface water storage and associated distribution facilities (Lopez Lake, Whale Rock reservoir, Santa Margarita Lake, Lake Nacimiento), and
3. State Water Project.

Water supplies in the county often are not geographically located in areas of water demand, and water delivery systems are not completely interconnected. Excess water in one part of the county often cannot reach those areas where it is needed without water transfers or system upgrades.

The County has limited authority to directly regulate the use of water; other tools must be identified and used to address water supply issues. Besides water conservation, management of the location, density and rate of development can minimize the increased use of groundwater and provide lead time for developing supplemental sources. However, land use measures alone can be limited as effective water management tools because they primarily affect new development.

The most basic policy issues in the County General Plan regarding county water resources are:

1. Efficient use of our existing water supplies;
2. Identifying new water resources that can be developed;
3. Maintaining groundwater for agricultural purposes per AGP11in the Agriculture Element; and
4. Improving how water is distributed.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan (COSE) guides what new water resources should be developed. It prioritizes water efficiencies over development of new water supplies.

The policies in the COSE include:

a. Development of new water supplies should focus on efficient use of our existing resources.

b. Use of reclaimed water, interagency cooperative projects, desalination of contaminated groundwater supplies, and groundwater recharge projects should be considered prior to using imported sources of water or seawater desalination, or dams and on-stream reservoirs.

In order to achieve strategic growth, adequate services such as water and wastewater need to be available in the urban areas where development is encouraged.

In support of the basic policy issues above and in order for continued development in the unincorporated area to be consistent with these policies, Chapter 1 of the Framework for Planning describes strategic growth and its eleven planning principles.

Strategic growth is a compact, efficient and environmentally sensitive pattern of development that provides people with additional travel, housing and employment choices. It focuses future growth away from rural areas and limited resources, closer to existing and planned job centers and public facilities where sustainable resources are available.

The General Plan acknowledges that groundwater is vital to the continued success of the agricultural sector. A policy in the Agriculture Element of the General Plan states:

AGP11: Agricultural Water Supplies.

a. Maintain water resources for production agriculture, both in quality and quantity, so as to prevent the loss of agriculture due to competition for water with urban and suburban development.

The policies mentioned above work cooperatively to:

1. Maintain groundwater for agriculture.
2. Ensure water service is available to the urbanized areas of the county; and
3. Support efficient use of water resources.

The question of agricultural and urban water use is likely to become more important over time because urban and agricultural users most often draw from a single groundwater source, and agriculture generally requires significantly more water than urban use. The Conservation and Open Space Element includes a policy that groundwater management strategies give priority to agricultural operations.

The county's primary groundwater basins that provide water to urban, rural and agricultural users are all designated LOS III: Los Osos, Santa Maria (only the portion known as the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area), Paso Robles, San Simeon, and Santa Rosa). The resource capacity studies prepared for these basins identified multiple users of each basin: urban, rural and agricultural. Because the County's authority to directly regulate the use of water is limited, other tools must be identified and used to address water supply issues. The response to the LOS designation has been similar in each basin: 1) institute land use measures that allow continued urban development without increasing water demand; 2) develop an overall management plan to address water problem over the long term; and 3) implement water conservation programs.

While it is important to carefully analyze the water problems and potential solutions through the preparation of a resource capacity study, this process can take a long time to complete. In the meantime, water supply and demand can become more unbalanced, leading to groundwater basin overdraft or growing system reliability issues. The resource capacity study process can address this problem by looking at a series of standard

solutions that are used in other areas of the county.

Water Demand and Dependable Supply

Water Demand
Water demand can be defined as the total amount of water used by all sectors in a water service area or groundwater basin over a period of time. Water demand is usually expressed in acre-feet per year (afy).

The California Water Plan (2013) defines water demand as:

> *The desired quantity of water that would be used if the water were available and if a number of other factors, such as price, did not change. Demand is not static.*

Water demand in a service area or groundwater basin is calculated for all types of water users or sectors. The calculation of water demand in the RMS differs depending on what types of water users exist in the study area. For example, in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, water use sectors include:

- Municipal: This sector includes such jurisdictions as the City of Paso Robles and the Templeton Community Services District. The municipal water users are the only sector that meters water use and provides accurate water demand figures.

- Rural Residential: This sector is made up of residential demand outside Urban Reserve Lines and is made up almost totally of individual wells. No accurate meter readings are available from these individual water users so demand is estimated using demand assumptions. Demand assumptions are usually divided into indoor and outdoor water demand. Per capita indoor demand for new residences is relatively easy to calculate using the recently adopted Cal green building standards.

Outdoor water use is far more difficult to estimate as there are no standards to try to apply. Also, outdoor water use is chiefly dependent upon climate: coastal communities use approximately 30% of water outdoors and north county communities use approximately 60% to 65% of water use outdoors due to the differences in their climates.

- Small Community/Commercial: This sector combines small commercial water users such as wineries and golf courses with the small community systems such as Whitley Gardens and Garden Farms. The commercial sector does not report water use, so all winery water use in the basin is estimated using assumptions of gallons of water per case of wine. Small community systems do meter water use and usually report it to the County.

- Agriculture: The agricultural sector is the largest user in the basin. Demand in this sector is estimated using evapotranspiration rates of different crops and calculations of applied water requirements for the various crop types. There is also some data available from water studies conducted in the area.

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Dependable Supply
The California Department of Water Resources defines dependable yield (supply):

> *The average quantity of water that can be extracted from an aquifer or groundwater basin over a period of time (during which water supply conditions approximate average conditions) without resulting in adverse effects such as subsidence, seawater intrusion, permanently lowered groundwater levels of degradation of water quality.*

The definition has several parts to it. First, it is expressed as an average and requires a period of time, not just one yearly data point. Second, it assumes average conditions, which take many years to establish. Lastly, it requires a finding that no adverse effect has resulted. Examples of adverse effects in our groundwater basins include seawater intrusion in the Los Osos Groundwater Basin and lowered groundwater levels in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (although the permanency of the groundwater decline has not yet been established).

Lastly, there are other similar terms used in groundwater studies such as perennial yield, safe yield and in the Los Osos Basin Management Plan, sustainable yield. It's important to use consistent terms and also to define the term that is used.

Water Supply Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table F
Water Supply: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Water demand projected over 20 years equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply. LOS I provides five years for preparation of resource capacity studies and evaluation of alternative courses of action.	Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program, if appropriate.
II	Water demand projected over 15 to 20 years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Develop a written plan for actions to be implemented to address the situation. 3. Evaluate projects and programs that will increase water supply and/or reduce water demand.
III	Water demand projected over 10 years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply OR The time required to correct the problem is longer than the time available before the dependable supply is reached.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Either cease issuing building permits in the affected area or

		establish a program of water offsets that requires a measurable and sustainable water reduction in the affected area for both domestic and agricultural water as a condition of issuing a permit. 3. All new groundwater wells or replacement wells shall be metered and water use shall be monitored by the property owner and reported to the County. 4. Implement or continue implementation of projects and programs which will increase water supply and/or reduce water demand.

Water Supply Resource Capacity Study:

A Resource Capacity Study should: 1) inventory existing water resources available to the agency operating the system and/or within the groundwater basin boundaries; 2) document existing demand for water by all area user-groups; ~~and~~ 3) explore any conservation measures that could reasonably be imposed by the water agency or applicable regulatory authority; and 4) identify water sources that may be connected or transferred to areas in need.

Water supply studies have been conducted since 2008 for the Los Osos, Santa Maria (Nipomo Mesa Management Area) and Paso Robles groundwater basins. Los Osos is in the process of court-ordered adjudication, and the Nipomo Mesa Management Area has been adjudicated. The adjudications have resulted in cooperative groundwater management plans and discussion of importing supplemental water. The County's authority to regulate extractions from groundwater basins is limited, so it instead uses its land use and building permit authorities to address new development's demand for water.

Water Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

A water system is an infrastructure facility that delivers water to an end user. The water may be either potable or non-potable depending on the needs of the end user. Examples of components associated with a water system include, but are not limited to, extraction groundwater wells, well-head treatment facilities, pumping stations, water treatment facilities, water storage tanks, piping and canal conveyance systems, dams and associated appurtenances, backflow preventers, pressure regulating systems, and other associated infrastructure.

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Table G
Water Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	The water system is projected to be operating at the design capacity within seven years. Two years would then be available for preparation of a resource capacity study and evaluation of alternative courses of action.	Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program, if appropriate.
II	A five-year or less lead time (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) needed to design, fund and construct system improvements necessary to avoid a LOS III problem.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Develop a written plan for actions to be implemented to address the situation.
III	Water demand equals available capacity: a water distribution system is functioning at design capacity or will be functioning at capacity before improvements can be made. The capacity of a water system is the design capacity of its component parts: storage, pipelines, pumping stations and treatment plants.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. . Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Either cease issuing building permits in the affected area or establish a program of water offsets that requires a measurable and sustainable water reduction in the affected area for both domestic and agricultural water as a condition of issuing a permit. 3. Begin implementation of an action plan.

Wastewater Policy Issues

As our communities are expected to handle a majority of the unincorporated area's population growth, installation and maintenance of wastewater facilities (including collection and disposal) is a vital link in the county's infrastructure.

Wastewater treatment and disposal can affect such resources and services as water quality, community development and groundwater recharge. The county's urban areas rely chiefly on

wastewater treatment plants that in many cases recharge groundwater basins with treated effluent. The rural areas of the county (and a very limited number of urban and village areas) rely on septic tank and leach field disposal methods. Similar to wastewater treatment plants, leach fields can also recharge groundwater. These benefits of wastewater service need to be maintained when new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities are planned.

Expanded wastewater service can have two divergent effects on water supply. Wastewater treatment, collection and disposal facilities can affect both quality and quantity of groundwater. Wastewater effluent can be used in lieu of potable water sources for outdoor landscaping, agricultural irrigation, and groundwater recharge. If wastewater treatment is not appropriate for the site or density of development, it can have negative groundwater quality effects (e.g. nitrates).

A second group of concerns relating to wastewater treatment and disposal involves urban infill development and expansion. A new or expanded wastewater system can induce growth into areas not planned for higher densities. On the other hand, a lack of wastewater facilities can prevent strategically planned infill development or expansion of communities. It is important to consider that growth potential can be created if sewers are constructed where none formerly existed. Decisions to construct major sewer truck lines or treatment facilities can have substantial impacts on lands traversed by new lines or in proximity to a treatment plant. The growth-inducing effects of such facility improvements must be considered in ongoing planning efforts to enable conscious land use policy decisions about the potential long-range effects of facility improvements. The extension of sewers into heretofore unsewered areas should occur in a manner consistent with the Strategic Growth Principles of the Framework for Planning.

The County does not generally have authority over wastewater treatment and disposal facilities (except in isolated cases). However, the County closely reviews wastewater project proposals by other agencies. Review and coordination enables the County to anticipate and accommodate or mitigate the effects of such projects. Such review is possible through a cooperative approach with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

The RWQCB issues permits for wastewater treatment and disposal facilities. Wastewater discharges to surface waters require a National Pollutant Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Treated wastewater discharges using land disposal are regulated using permits referred to as "Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). These permits have standard requirements that include submittal of a technical report prepared with public participation and reviewed and approved by all agencies having jurisdiction over the waste collection, treatment, or disposal facilities.

The required technical report includes:

a) the best estimate of when the monthly average daily dry weather flow rate will equal or exceed design capacity; and,
b) a schedule for studies, design, and other steps needed to provide additional capacity for waste treatment and/or disposal facilities before the waste flow rate equals the present design capacity.

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Wastewater: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table H
Wastewater: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Treatment Plant Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	The service provider or RWQCB determines that monthly average daily flow will or may reach design capacity of waste treatment and/or disposal facilities within 4 years. This mirrors the time frame used by the RWQCB to track necessary plant upgrades.	Discuss progress on necessary plant expansions with the service provider and/or the RWQCB. The purpose of the discussions is to ensure continued availability of wastewater service for development projects that are consistent with County General Plan policies, including strategic growth and affordable housing projects.
II	RWQCB determines that the monthly average daily flow will or may reach design capacity of waste treatment and/or disposal facilities within 2 years.	Discuss progress on necessary plant expansions with the service provider and/or the RWQCB. The purpose of the discussions is to ensure continued availability of wastewater service for development projects that are consistent with County General Plan policies, including strategic growth and affordable housing projects.
III	Peak daily flow equals or exceeds the capacity of a wastewater system for treatment and/or disposal facilities.	Support RWQCB actions that seek to expand plant capacities and reduce levels of severity. Use appropriate growth management techniques to ensure continued availability of services for projects consistent with the County General Plan (e.g. strategic growth and affordable housing projects).
	Wastewater Collection System Criteria	
I	2-year projected flows equal 75% of the system capacity. A 2-year period is recommended for the preparation of resource capacity study.	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.
II	• System is operating at 75% capacity OR • The five-year projected peak flow (or other flow/time period) equals system capacity OR • The inventory of developable land in a community would, if developed, generate enough wastewater to exceed system capacity.	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.
III	Peak flows fill any component of a collection system to 100% capacity.	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.

1. A wastewater collection system includes facilities that collect and deliver wastewater to a treatment plant for treatment and disposal (sewer pipelines, lift stations, etc.)

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Wastewater: Resource Capacity Study

A Resource Capacity Study is prepared by the Department of Planning and Building with the assistance of the service provider and the RWQCB. The study should:

Inventory annual flows into the wastewater treatment plan;

- Identify any additional capacity consistent with anticipated growth projections that may be available for new connections without creating water quality problems;
- Determine potential effects of water consumption reductions on long-term plant capacity;
- Estimate timing of plant expansion.

Table I
Septic Tank Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Failures occur in 5% of systems in an area or other number sufficient for the County Health Department to identify a potential public health problem.	Consult with County Health and RWQCB on actions and monitor.
II	Failures reach 15% or monitoring indicates that conditions will reach or exceed acceptable levels for public health within the time frame needed to design, fund and build a project that will correct the problem, based upon projected growth rates.	Evaluate alternatives to septic systems such as a public sewer system, a community septic system maintenance program, or a collection and disposal system to existing on-site treatment tanks.
III	Failures reach 25% of the area's septic systems or the County Health Department and RWQCB find that public health is endangered.	Design, fund and construct a public sewer system or a collection and disposal system to replace existing on-site treatment tanks. Initiate a septic system maintenance program.

1. Includes septic tank systems or small aerobic systems with subsurface disposal. Typical disposal systems include leach fields, seepage pits, or evapotranspiration mounds.

Septic Tank Systems: Resource Capacity Study:

The resource capacity study should include the following:

- Inventory the extent of existing septic tank leaching field failures and their potential water quality impacts on surface and groundwater;
- Identify the locations where septic tanks can be approved (if any) and standards for such approval;
- Evaluate the need for alternative methods of wastewater disposal, including community or package sewer treatment systems.

In areas with septic systems, identifying specific severity levels can be difficult. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has primary responsibility for protecting groundwater resources and surface water bodies from wastewater pollution. The control board's "Water Quality Control Plan" notes that septic systems are sometimes seen as an interim wastewater disposal in urbanizing areas, but must often function for years before a community sewer system becomes available. The County Health Department works closely with the RWQCB in determining where potential septic problem areas may exist (i.e., increased septic system density, poor soils, high groundwater). The Health Department and RWQCB use the following criteria to identify septic system failures:

- Evidence of wastewater, or waters of wastewater origin on the ground surface;
- Plumbing fixtures that drain improperly because of a problem in individual subsurface disposal systems;
- Frequent pumping of subsurface wastewater systems for reasons other than normally scheduled maintenance;
- Persistent odors traceable to any individual subsurface wastewater system(s);
- Pollution of wells or underlying groundwater that is attributable to septic systems;
- Restricted use of plumbing fixtures to prevent occurrence of criteria one through five above.

In areas where soil percolation characteristics particularly favor the use of septic disposal fields, other problems can arise, including degradation of groundwater by nitrate buildup. That condition is of particular concern where septic systems are used over a groundwater basin serving as a community water supply. The RWQCB recommends that monitoring of surface and groundwater should be initiated to determine whether such problems are developing. Such a program would constitute a LOS I resource capacity study.

Roads (Including Highway 101), Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Policy Issues

Traffic congestion occurs in many communities of the County because levels of development exceed the capacity of existing transportation facilities. As growth continues, the County will need to accommodate increased traffic by funding road and freeway improvements and by developing alternative programs to minimize impacts to these facilities.

Roads and freeway improvements are completed through various funding mechanisms, including

1. Requirements of land use permits and land divisions
2. Traffic impact fee programs
3. State or Federal funds
4. County or property owner-initiated assessment districts
5. Countywide sales tax increase
6. Countywide motor vehicle fuel tax

The County General Plan Circulation Element includes several goals and objectives to address the timing and funding of circulation improvements, including:

- Planning transportation improvements consistent with the land use patterns allowed in the County

Land Use Element;

- Integrate land use and transportation planning so that necessary transportation facilities and services can be provided to accommodate urban and rural development; and
- Coordinate the transporation system between different modes of travel ….Insert Goal 4 (pg 5-2)
- Encourage policies for new development to finance adequate additional circulation and access as a result of the increased traffic it will cause.

Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table J
Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Roads (Including Highway 101), Circulation and Highway Interchange Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Traffic volume projections indicate that Level of Service "D"[1] would be reached at build-out of the General Plan when it occurs in more than 10 years.	1. Establish traffic impact fees 2. Complete initial project descriptions for needed road and circulation improvements. 3. Initiate a study of costs and funding for needed road and circulation improvements and alternatives.
II	Traffic volume projections indicate that Level of Service "D"[1] would be reached within ~~two~~ 10 years.	Seek state and federal funding as applicable. Consider Transportation Demand Management measures, transit, and different transportation modes.
III	Traffic volume projections indicate that the road or facility is operating at Level of Service "D."	Secure funds to make needed road, circulation and highway interchange improvements.

1. Level of Service "D" is the criteria threshold for urban roads. For rural roads, the criteria threshold is Level of Service "C".

Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Resource Capacity Study:

The Public Works Department prepares a resource capacity study that:

- Evaluates roadway capacity against the County General Plan's development capacity and any proposed and recently approved major projects,
- Identifies alternative improvements and their costs at different allowable densities and uses, in cooperation with the Planning and Building Department; and
- Recommends feasible improvements and/or revisions to the General Plan.

Identifying the traffic capacity of roads requires use of several traffic engineering standards. Roads are evaluated for their "level of service" characteristics to assess the ability of a given road segment to satisfy

projected travel demand. The Highway Capacity Manual establishes service levels A through F based on such factors as safety, freedom to maneuver, travel time and driver comfort. Table K shows the level of service for various road types. When a road has reached "capacity," it is considered to be at a Level of Service E. That volume represents the maximum number of vehicles per hour that the road can safely accommodate.

The Planning and Public Works Departments operate a monitoring and reporting system in order to anticipate potential problems. The Levels of Service are calculated for selected roads and freeway interchanges in the county on, annual, basis. This information is supplied to the Planning and Building Department in order to determine the level of severity. In addition, road maintenance is monitored and reported by the Public Works Department through the existing Pavement Management Program, which is a report prepared in December 2012 that includes a maintenance strategy plan.

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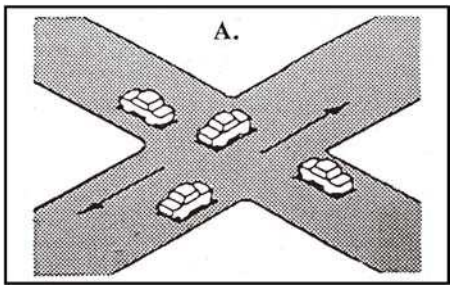
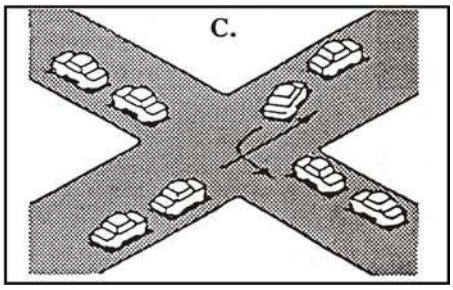
Table K
Streets and Highways Levels of Service Concept



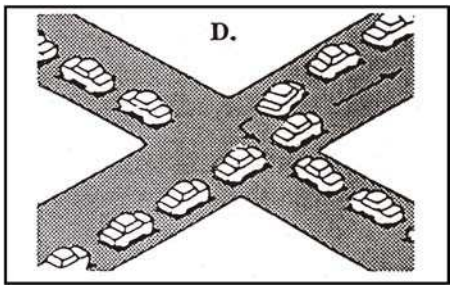
Level of Service A
1 Free flow conditions
2 Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream

Level of Service B
1 Stable traffic flow
2 Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver

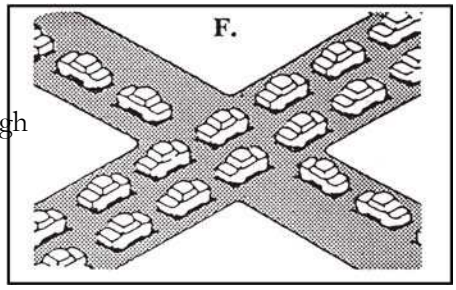


Level of Service C
1 Stable and acceptable flow but speed and maneuverability somewhat restricted due to higher volumes
2 Operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by the presence of others

Level of Service D



1 High density but stable flow
2 Driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience
3 Small increases in traffic flow will cause operational problems
4 Maneuverability restricted



Level of Service E
1 Speeds reduced to low, but relatively uniform value
2 Freedom to maneuver is extremely difficult, frustration is high
3 Volume at or near capacity
4 Unstable flow

Level of Service F
1 Forced or breakdown flow conditions
2 Stoppage for long periods due to congestion
3 Volumes drop to zero in extreme cases

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Schools: Policy Issues

Some school districts have seen substantial growth in past years and have experienced overcrowding. County policies on future development in these school districts are important because new development which occurs faster than school facilities develop can aggravate existing overcrowding or create overcrowding where it had not been previously experienced. State legislation provides money for new school construction; however, school districts are required to match that funding. In order to accomplish this, the legislation permits school districts to collect fees from developers. As of 2013, districts may levy fees of no more than $3.20 per square foot for residences and $1.00 per square foot for commercial projects. The fees collected are matched with state funds. This legislation enables school districts to help fund much needed permanent facilities.

Schools: Level of Severity Criteria

LOS III: enrollment equals or exceeds the maximum student/classroom ratio.

LOS II: when enrollment projections indicate that school capacity will be reached within five years or other shorter time increment identified by a school district projection. It is estimated that five years are needed to plan, finance and construct new school facilities, though that lead time could be extended by using mobile classrooms.

LOS I: enrollment projections reach school capacity in seven years. Seven years is the maximum period over which school districts can project enrollment with reasonable accuracy.

The capacity of a school is the maximum number of students that can be accommodated without exceeding school district standards for the maximum number of students per classroom. Those standards are based upon educational quality and efficient use levels for facilities and personnel.

When determining school capacity, adopted school district standards should be accepted by the County. Most school districts prepare their own population estimates for making enrollment projections. If available, district population projections should be used to determine threshold levels, instead of population projections the Planning and Building Department has prepared.

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Air Quality Policy Issues

The air quality of the county is not as tangible or easily understood as some of our other resources. Nonetheless, clean air is a valuable and essential natural resource which affects many aspects of our daily lives. It is vital to our health and welfare, to tourism and the local agricultural economy, and to the aesthetic beauty and quality of life enjoyed by county residents. The capacity of the air to absorb environmental contaminants is limited, however, and must be managed wisely to avoid significant deterioration of the resource.

The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has the primary responsibility of protecting and managing air quality within the county. This responsibility involve regulatory and planning efforts to assure that air quality within the county meets the requirements of state and national air quality standards. California and the US EPA have adopted ambient air quality standards for six common air pollutants of primary public health concern: ozone, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulfur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), and lead. These are called "criteria pollutants" because the standards establish permissible airborne pollutant levels based on criteria developed after careful review of all medical and scientific studies of the effects of each pollutant on public health and welfare. Air Quality Standards are used to designate a region as either "attainment" or "non-attainment" for each criteria pollutant. A non-attainment designation can trigger additional regulations for that region aimed at curbing pollution levels and bringing the region into attainment.

According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), state standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM10) are currently exceeded in San Luis Obispo County. As a result, CARB has designated the county a nonattainment area for these pollutants. In addition, the Federal EPA designated Eastern San Luis Obispo County as nonattainment of the ozone standard.

State law delegates regulatory authority to the APCD over all non-vehicular sources of air pollution within the District. New and modified stationary sources must comply with the District's source review rule. This generally requires stringent emission controls and a demonstration that project emissions will not cause a violation, or interfere with the attainment and maintenance, of any California or national ambient air quality standard. With the exception of ozone, ambient concentrations of these pollutants are primarily influenced by nearby sources of emissions. High concentrations of sulfur dioxide, for example, can usually be traced back to a specific source, where regulatory measures or other actions can be implemented to correct an identified problem. Ozone, on the other hand, tends to be regional in nature and is therefore more difficult to control.

Ozone is not emitted directly to the air, but is formed by an atmospheric chemical reaction between reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) in the presence of sunlight. These compounds are generally emitted through the combustion of fossil fuels. Motor vehicles represent the largest category of combustion sources and generate over 50% of the ROG and NOx emissions in the county. Land use decisions which result in increased vehicle use will contribute to regional ozone formation. Thus, a number of critical

determinants of air quality are related to such issues as population distribution, vehicle miles traveled and locations of available housing and jobs. These determinants are largely the result of land use decisions made by cities and the County. Careful and informed planning is needed to ensure that the air quality resource is adequately protected.

Another important pollutant in our air is particulate matter that is comprised of various small particles, including acids, organic chemicals, metals and dust. Of primary concern are particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller (PM10) and particles that are 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller PM (2.5). Particles within those ranges can enter the lungs and cause health problems.

The current Clean Air Plan (CAP) was adopted by the APCD in 2001. The Plan contains the strategies that will be employed for the county to reach attainment of air quality goals. The CAP strategies include application of best available control technology and transportation measures to reduce the rate of growth of vehicles miles traveled. Generally, the CAP will be revised if progress toward the plan goals is not realized as forecasted.

Air Quality: Relationship to the County General Plan

The County of San Luis Obispo has the authority under the police power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens from such environmental hazards as air pollution. The County General Plan acknowledges the relationship between the APCD air quality goals and policies and the County General Plan policies. For example, the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan states that the County should amend the General Plan to avoid General Plan Amendments and land use designation changes that are not consistent with the APCD's plans (i.e., Toxic Risk Management Plan, PM Report, Clean Air Plan, and CEQA Handbook). In addition, general plan amendments should encourage land use patterns that enable efficient development focused in urban areas that reduces vehicle miles traveled and air pollution.

Air Quality: Reporting

The APCD continuously monitors and reports on air quality in the county and plays a primary role in enabling the county to attain air quality goals.

Table L
Air Quality: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Air monitoring shows periodic but infrequent violations of a state air quality standard, with no area of the county designated by the state as a non-attainment area	Consult with the APCD to assess whether actions are needed to prevent further deterioration of air quality.
II	Air monitoring shows one or more violations per year of a state air quality standard and the county, or a portion of it, has been designated by the state as a non-attainment area.	Monitor APCD's progress in developing written plans for actions to be implemented to address the deterioration of air quality. APCD to begin implementation of mitigation measures described in

		action plan.
III	Air monitoring at any county monitoring station shows a violation of a federal air quality standard on one or more days per year, and the county or a portion of the county qualifies for designation as a federal non-attainment area.	Consult with the APCD to assess whether mitigation measures are improving air quality and reducing number of violations. Monitor APCD's progress in developing additional measures if it is determined that existing measures are not adequate to address the deteriorating air quality.

Parks: Policy Issues

Parks are an important part of our communities. The County General Plan's Parks and Recreation Element (PRE), adopted in 2006, states that:

> "Recreation and exercise are fundamental to a healthy life. The benefits include greater productivity, less disease, and a brighter future. As the population grows, competition for recreational resources increases. Wide open spaces, once the haven of the equestrian, hiker and poet, are more often fenced and the right of exclusivity enforced. As the development and formality of our area increases, so must the provision of recreation spaces that are available to all people."

With County acknowledgement of the importance of parks in our lives, the RMS is a good tool to assess our success in providing this important community need.

The PRE describes not only the difficulties of funding new parklands and park development, but also the challenge of funding their ongoing operations and maintenance. Policy 6.4 addresses the importance of ongoing funding of parks:

> "Prior to accepting or developing a new park, County Parks shall determine the long-term maintenance and operating costs associated with the proposed project. The County shall not develop the park until adequate funds are available for maintenance."

The PRE includes several park classifications, which include mini-parks, linear parks, neighborhood and community parks, regional parks, and recreation settings. The criteria for levels of severity for parks consist of both nationally recognized park acreage standards and the ability to fund park maintenance activities. The criteria also recognize the need to provide proper distribution of the various park classifications throughout each community and the availability of recreational facilities within parks.

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Table M
Parks: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions[1]

Level of Severity	Parks Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	An unincorporated community has between 2.0 and 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are somewhat inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the following considerations: i) substantial concentration of parkland in too few areas of a community, leaving other areas with insufficient parkland, ii) insufficient parkland within a particular park classification, or iii) an insufficient amount of active park recreation facilities (i.e. sports fields, courts) for a community, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 2 years of maintenance activities.	1. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 2. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.
II	An unincorporated community has 1.0 to 2.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are substantially inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the considerations described in the criteria for Level of Severity I, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 5 years of maintenance activities.	1. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors that maintenance should be increased at certain park facilities. 2. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 3. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.

III	An unincorporated community has 1.0 acre or less of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are mostly inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the considerations described in the criteria for Level of Severity I, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 8 years of maintenance activities.	1. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors that maintenance should be increased at certain park facilities. 2. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 3. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.

1. Levels of severity are recommended by County Parks (General Services Agency) using the criteria in this table.

Parks: Resource Capacity Study

A resource capacity study is prepared by County Parks (General Services Agency). It should:

1. Inventory existing parkland in the affected unincorporated community.
2. Document existing shortfalls in park acreage.
3. Describe the distribution and classification levels of parkland throughout the community.
4. Determine maintenance shortfalls.

Table 1 of Framework for Planning (Inland)

Table 1	
General Plan Elements	Descriptions
Land Use Framework for Planning 13 Area Plans (4 in the Coastal Zone) Local Coastal Program (or Plan) Coastal Plan Policies	Designations and descriptions of types of land use and density of dwellings-per-acre that are allowed in mapped districts or land use categories, also showing areas subject to flooding Land Use Element within the Coastal Zone is the Local Coastal Program, which implements the Coastal Act and is certified by the California Coastal Commission.
Circulation	Maps and policies for transportation routes and modes such as vehicles and transit, correlated with the Land Use Element
Housing	A plan with analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and goals, policies and programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing
Agriculture and Open Space	A plan that balances protection of natural resources and open space with the needs of production agriculture, and that minimizes impacts to ongoing production agriculture, while recognizing that open space is a limited and valuable resource which must be conserved wherever possible.
Conservation	A plan for the conservation of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, harbors, wildlife and other biological resources
Noise	An analysis of existing noise problems and projected noise levels, with policies and implementation measures to minimize exposure to excessive noise
Safety	A plan for the protection of the community from unreasonable risks associated with earthquakes, geologic hazards, flooding and fires
Energy	A plan for the efficient use of energy resources, electricity generation and transmission and fossil fuel production
Offshore Energy	A plan for the location and extent of on-shore resources and facilities that would be appropriate for addressing off-shore oil development and production
Economic	Policies to establish a context and priorities for economic development
Parks and Recreation	Policy guidance regarding the provision of park and recreation services, documenting the county's existing park and recreation resources, and evaluating park and recreation needs

Chapter 8 of Framework for Planning (Inland)

B. ADMINISTRATION

Official Maps

The Official Land Use Maps of San Luis Obispo County constitute Part III of the Land Use Element. They illustrate the land use categories and combining designations that are applied to specific parcels throughout the county. The official maps are available for review or purchase from the county Department of Planning and Building. While approximating the official maps as closely as possible given their smaller size, the maps in the LUE area plans are for preliminary reference only. The official maps themselves must be reviewed to determine the land use designations that apply to a particular parcel.

Interpretation of the Land Use Element

In any case where uncertainty exists regarding the location of any Land Use category or other symbols or designations on the official maps, or any uncertainty concerns the definition of a proposed use of land, refer to the Land Use Ordinance, Chapter 22.02, Rules of Interpretation.

Coordination of Land Use Decisions with other Agencies

The Land Use Element applies to all agencies and departments of the county where their actions affect the use of land, and will be used in conformity reports on acquisition or disposal of public property (as required by Government Code Section 65402). The county, the cities, special districts, state and federal agencies have the responsibility to coordinate land use planning.

Incorporated Cities

It is the policy of the county that the incorporated cities and the county should:

1. Coordinate land use planning.

2. Make available to each other for review and comment proposed changes in their general plans, zoning and land use applications that may affect property adjacent to their boundaries.

3. Share population, housing and land use statistics and resource capacity data.

4. Share information on proposed public works recommended for planning, initiation or construction during the ensuing fiscal year that affect other areas or have a possible effect on land use plans (e.g., park expansions, water capability for future urban expansion, etc.) in accordance with the provisions of the capital improvement program.

Special Districts and School Districts

It is the policy of the county that special districts and school districts within the county should:

1. Biennially provide the Department of Planning and Building with a report on current service capabilities, including existing levels of service and present or proposed service capacities, in accordance with the requirements of the Resource Management System. (Amended 2011, Ord. 3220)

2. Biennially provide the Department of Planning and Building with a list of proposed public works recommended for planning, initiation or construction during the ensuing fiscal year, in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65401.

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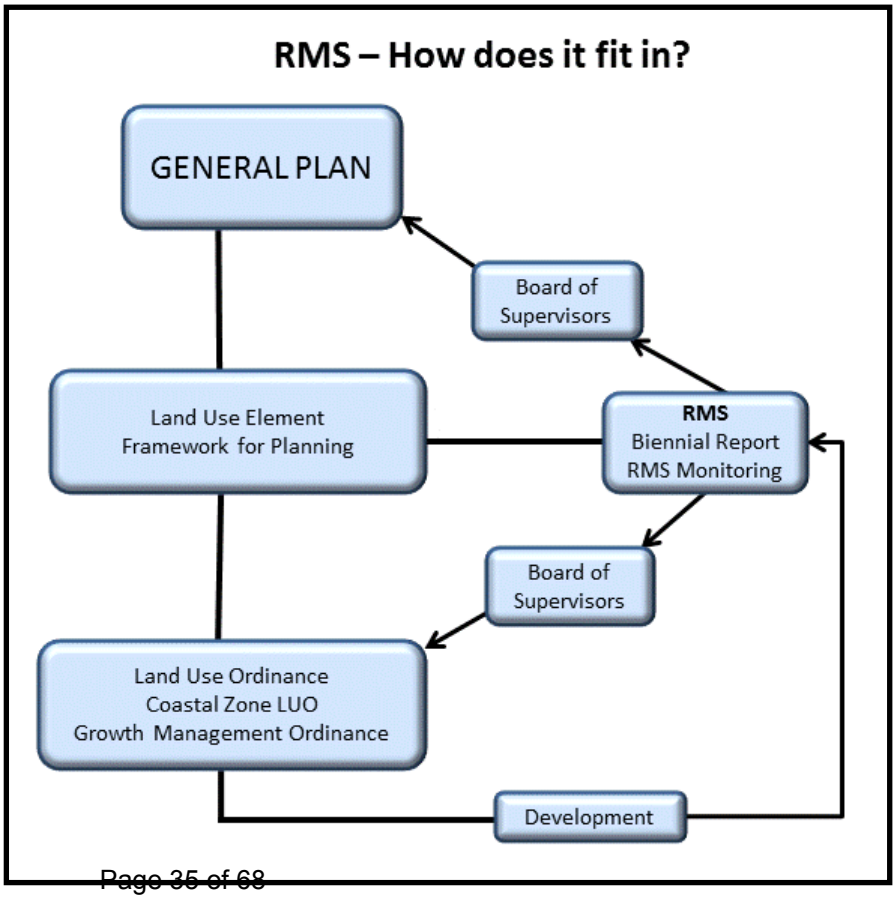
CHAPTER 3: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A. INTRODUCTION - HOW RESOURCES AND GROWTH ARE RELATED

The General Plan, its Resource Management System (RMS), and the Land Use Ordinance (LUO) work in concert to guide decisions on future development. The General Plan's Land Use Element (LUE) focuses development in specified communities and land use designations. The LUO sets minimum parcel sizes, density requirements and other standards for creation of new parcels and development of existing parcels. The RMS provides an alert system for services and resources to support the new development envisioned in and allowed by the General Plan and LUO. In that way, the RMS is essential to carrying out the Local Coastal Program's vision.

As the county enters the 21st century, the public and decision makers have become more aware of the limits of our natural resources, the cost of expanded infrastructure and its maintenance and the difficulties in finding solutions to these problems. Deficiencies in many man-made resources such as sewers, schools, police and fire protection can be overcome by upgrading or expanding such facilities. Although augmentation of man-made resources may be costly, the solutions are tangible and easily identified. This is often not the case with natural resource limitations. Solutions are not always obvious and technical data may be confusing or lacking altogether. There may also be significant, even prohibitive, costs involved in determining resource capacity and availability.



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The Coastal Zone, as well as the rest of the county, is experiencing problems with both natural and man-made resources (e.g. water supply and wastewater facilities). In some communities, schools are overcrowded, or are anticipated to be. Communities have also experienced problems with septic systems and water supply. In addition, many roads and freeway interchanges are nearing unacceptable levels of service, and air quality in some areas is deteriorating.

The net result of such problems has been a never-ending game of "catch-up," where rates of growth and development outstrip the upgrading and renewal of community resources. Since most resources extend beyond political boundaries, cities, special districts and the County must work together to identify their resource capacities in relation to future growth and to implement solutions to resource deficiencies.~~,~~

The RMS addresses resources at a community level for certain resources that are contained within communities, for example, community parks and water systems. However, many resources, such as groundwater basins and air quality, do not respect community boundaries and need to be addressed according to the geographic boundaries of the resource.

The RMS is an informational tool to be used in carrying out the Land Use Element aims of directing development toward communities and assuring that the amount, location and rate of growth are within the sustainable capacity of resources, public services and facilities. The LUE attempts to resolve issues of population distribution and location rather than growth versus no-growth. However, temporary growth control measures could sometimes be considered in order for resource capacities to catch up with development.

Sometimes the capacity of one or more resources cannot be expanded and special growth and resource management measures are needed. Such measures are described in the following Section F under "Resource Management Techniques." These measures help provide for sustained, long-term growth, as opposed to allowing unmanaged growth to continue and exceed resource capacities at market-driven rates and locations. Growth and resource management measures can also allow for the additional lead times needed to develop and implement solutions to resource capacity problems.

B. FOCUS OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The focus of the RMS is on collecting data, identifying problems and helping decision-makers develop solutions to resource capacity problems.

The RMS supports the County's LUE goals by:

- Determining if the necessary resources exist;
- Identifying resources that can be readily developed to support new land uses; and
- Identifying critical points in time when decisions are needed to build facilities and avoid resource deficiencies.

The six resources/services addressed by the RMS are:

- Water Supply and Systems
- Wastewater Treatment
- Schools

The RMS provides the information to plan for sustainable resources for long-term growth.

- Roads and Freeway Interchanges
- Air Quality
- Parks

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The RMS is intended to provide information on resource capacities to guide decisions on the land uses envisioned in the LUE (e.g. community plan updates) through the following goals:

- Balancing land development and population growth with the resources required to support them.

- Avoid the use of public resources, services and facilities beyond their renewable capacities.

- Monitor new development to ensure that its resource demands will not exceed, existing and planned capacities or service levels.

The RMS objectives are:

1. Resource Conservation – To identify the sustainable capacities of the resources needed for growth and to minimize impacts of the development envisioned in the LUE on these resources.

2. Public Health and Safety - To support efforts to provide county communities with adequate supplies of water for domestic and fire suppression purposes, healthful air quality, facilities for wastewater disposal and safe streets and roads, by monitoring their capacities to accommodate development envisioned under the LUE.

3. Public Services and Facilities -To support the provision and upgrading of public services and facilities at a rate that keeps pace with population growth, by anticipating resource needs in advance of critical necessity.

4. Agricultural Lands - To encourage protection of productive agricultural land, by considering the effects of current and future development on area-wide water resources needed for agriculture.

5. Community Character - To support the diversity of life-styles and physical character in county communities by tailoring solutions to resource capacity issues so that they are specific to the community.

6. Economic Impacts - To delay or avoid the adverse economic effects of development moratoria and more severe growth restrictions through proactive management of resources.

7. Public Involvement -To provide a public forum for reaching decisions affecting community growth and development, where goals and policies can be discussed, and where such decisions are subject to public scrutiny.

8. Agency Cooperation - To establish a system that supports coordination and cooperation between the various public, quasi-public and private entities providing services and facilities.

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D. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK

Responsible Agency

The operation of the RMS is the responsibility of the Department of Planning and Building with input from other public and private resource management entities and agencies.

Levels of Severity for Monitored Resources

The RMS is designed to deal with resource capacity issues at local and areawide scales:

- Neighborhood-level problems, such as a needed collector street
- Communitywide problems, such as the need for public sewers
- Areawide problems, such as overdraft of a groundwater basin.

The RMS uses three levels of alert (called levels of severity) – Levels I, II, and III – to identify potential and progressively more immediate resource deficiencies. The alerts are intended to occur while sufficient time is available to avoid or correct a shortage before a crisis develops.

In general, a Level of Severity III occurs when resource use meets or exceeds the capacity of the resource. For instance, when a wastewater treatment plant is operating beyond its design capacity, that ~~those~~ particular resource~~s~~ operates at Level III. However, in the case of water supply, Level of Severity III occurs well before the resource capacity is reached (see Table F and the discussion in the following Section E, Resource Management System Process). Criteria for Levels I and II precede the threshold for Level III by providing lead times necessary for avoiding or correcting particular resource deficiencies.

The criteria for each resource are described in tables and text in Section F of this chapter entitled "Resource Management Issues, Criteria for Levels of Severity, and Recommended Actions". The criteria for each level of severity are not absolute, as particular community conditions or circumstances may logically support alternative criteria. Instead, they offer general guidelines for determining when resource management measures should be enacted.

Threshold population levels or dates corresponding to the three levels of severity may be defined in the LUE area plans and community plans for the resources of each area and community. A summary of the current estimated levels of severity are listed in Appendix D.

E. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCESS

This section describes the activities that produce information to identify levels of severity, and the process for determining appropriate policy decisions in response to new information. The basic products of the

information-gathering aspect of the RMS include:

- **Resource Inventories**: Data collection through the update of the LUE;
- **RMS Monitoring Program**: Periodic status reports on resource usage in areas with levels of severity;
- **Biennial Resource Summary Report**: Report prepared by the Department of Planning and Building with input from other County departments and service providers.
- **Resource Capacity Studies**: Special studies of resource usage when ordered by the Board of Supervisors upon its determination that a new level of severity has been reached through the advisory process described below.

Resource Inventories

As part of the update of the LUE, the Planning and Building Department prepares an inventory of local water supplies, wastewater disposal facilities, air quality, parks, schools and road and freeway interchange capacities for each area and community plan, as applicable. The inventories are developed jointly with the Public Works and Health Departments, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Air Pollution Control District, water purveyors and other responsible agencies. The inventories should:

1. Identify existing resources, their location, estimated quantity and quality,
2. Describe known problem areas or deficiencies,
3. Estimate populations that an existing resource can support,
4. Identify alternative or additional available resources, where known,
5. Estimate the lead time needed for correcting a previously identified deficiency,
6. Identify capital projects or other programs that can be funded and implemented within critical time periods.

Resource inventories are based upon the most current information available. However, the data for some areas of the county are of limited availability. The area and community plans indicate whether resource data mentioned are immediately usable for resource management purposes, or whether additional information is needed. Consequently, the area plan inventories can be used for some areas to indicate where problems may exist and how priorities should be set for needed resource capacity studies.

Any resource data used as the basis for general plan policies is periodically reviewed and updated as new information becomes available, through the LUE update program, capital improvement program review and RMS monitoring programs.

Monitoring Program

The Department of Planning and Building collects data, monitors resource usage, updates earlier resource inventories and identifies possible corrective measures to address resource capacity issues. Status reports are part of the Biennial Resource Summary Report described below . Each report should include the following:

1. A brief synopsis of the status of resource use,
2. Any additional resource information,
3. Current and projected capacities,
4. An analysis of corrective actions, and
5. Recommendations for action.

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Resource Capacity Advisory Process

When the Planning and Building Department determines that a level of severity should be established, or modified as a consequence of an LUE update, the RMS monitoring program, a Water Resource Advisory Committee recommendation, or the Biennial Resource Summary Report, it sends a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors advising it of the need to establish or modify a level of severity. An illustration of the advisory process is shown in Figure 3-1.

The Board of Supervisors will conduct a public hearing to review the data received from the Department of Planning and Building. After the initial advisory memorandum, it may be necessary to continue to issue status reports to the Board in order to keep it advised of the situation. Implementation of a program (i.e., a public works project, management techniques, etc.) would then occur only after public hearings on the resource information being used, preparation of a resource capacity study, and action by the Board, including the adoption of ordinances if necessary to address specific community resource problems.

If an affected resource is not under County jurisdiction (e.g., a community service district may have responsibility over a local water supply problem), the Department of Planning and Building sends a copy of the advisory memorandum to the responsible agency advising that a potential problem may exist, based upon data available to the County, and to urge that the agency prepare a resource capacity study. Staff contacts and recommendations to the agency should occur in advance of the agency's budget preparation process so the necessary work can be included in its financial considerations.

The following sections describe in more detail the procedures for considering and reporting each of the three levels of severity:

Level I:	Resource capacity concern
Level II:	Diminishing resource capacity
Level III:	Resource capacity met or exceeded

Levels of severity are recommended by the Planning and Building Department and certified by the Board of Supervisors through the following procedures. County staff may recommend to the Board of Supervisors or the Board may initiate specific actions to respond to levels of severity, such as special water conservation ordinances and special land use and growth limitation measures. However, such measures can only be implemented following specific approval by the Board at a public hearing.

LOS I: Resource Capacity Concern

LOS I is the earliest indication that a resource capacity problem could occur. Its threshold is intended to be early enough to provide time to avoid exceeding the capacity of the resource. LOS I is established when resource use will reach capacity in approximately the time required to expand capacity (including planning, funding and construction of a project where appropriate). Critical time periods for Level I problems for each resource are summarized in Tables F through J.

Level of Severity I is established when resource use will reach capacity in the time required to expand capacity.

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Under normal circumstances, community development is intended to continue through a LOS I condition without any restrictions being enacted. Projects should still be evaluated without the LOS I determination affecting them, unless otherwise directed by the Board of Supervisors.

LOS I Procedure

When available data suggest a resource problem exists or is anticipated, the following procedure is to be used:

1. Staff forwards an advisory memorandum to the Board of Supervisors (with copies to the Planning Commission for their information). The memorandum identifies the capacity problem and enables the Board to review the data upon which the staff recommendation is based.

2. If the Board agrees that a resource capacity concern exists, it initiates preparation of a resource capacity study, if necessary. The Board may also initiate, through an ordinance, any conservation measures deemed necessary.

3. Preparation of a resource capacity study, if necessary, should be undertaken by the County department or outside agency providing the particular service or resource being considered, in cooperation with the County and any other affected agencies (such as public or private water companies, sewer districts, community service districts, school districts and incorporated cities). A resource capacity study should:

    a. Determine the capacity of the resource being studied;
    b. Identify thresholds for LOS II and III deficiencies;
    c. Identify alternate measures for avoiding a predicted resource deficiency and evaluate the feasibility (and possible funding methods) of each measure;
    d. Provide an estimated timetable for funding and completion of a public works project to correct the resource deficiency, if applicable;
    e. Recommend techniques for growth management to be used if needed to extend the resource capacity.

4. Upon completion, a resource capacity study is forwarded to the Planning Commission for public hearing. The Commission reviews study data and recommends to the Board of Supervisors as to its adequacy. Commission review should be completed and reported to the Board of Supervisors within a maximum of 40 days from when the study is first placed on the Commission agenda.

5. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission recommendation, the Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing to review the resource capacity study, consider public testimony, and determine whether the study adequately assesses the affected resource as a basis for policy decisions. The data in the certified resource capacity study is then incorporated into the County General Plan as new resource data at the next available time for processing general plan amendments.

LOS II: Diminishing Resource Capacity

Level of Severity II is established when the rate of resource use must be decreased to avoid exceeding the resource capacity.

A LOS II is established when the current rate of resource use will deplete the resource before its capacity can be increased. When this condition occurs, the rate of resource depletion must be decreased to avoid exceeding the resource capacity. This may

be accomplished through infrastructure improvements to increase the availability of resources, conservation, growth-management techniques, or a combination of measures. If a funding decision cannot be made, for a variety of reasons, the Board of Supervisors may choose to enact development measures to increase the lead time for avoiding the deficiency. When the Board of Supervisors finds that a resource deficiency has been corrected, any ordinance that enacted development limitation measures should be repealed or allowed to expire. Applications would then be processed and reviewed as normal.

LOS II Procedure

At this level:

1. Department of Planning and Building staff advises the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission when the capacity of a particular resource is diminishing past the point of merely being a concern. The basis for this recommendation may come from:

    a. Completion of a previously ordered resource capacity study
    b. A monitoring program
    c. A Biennial Resource Summary Report, or
    d. Information developed for the Land Use Element update.

2. The Department of Planning and Building forwards an advisory memorandum to the Board of Supervisors. Upon review of the LOS II advisory memorandum, the Board evaluates the data upon which the recommendation is based, and forwards the memorandum to the Planning Commission for a public hearing on the recommendation. The Board may also initiate a resource capacity study if more complete information is needed.

3. If the advisory memorandum is sent to the Planning Commission for a public hearing, then the Commission recommends an appropriate course of action to the Board of Supervisors. Commission review must be completed and reported to the Board within a maximum of 40 days from the first Commission hearing date.

4. Upon receipt of the Planning Commission recommendation, the Board of Supervisors holds a public hearing to consider relevant resource data and public testimony, determine whether LOS II and the resource capacity study should be certified, and implement the actions recommended in the study.

5. If the Board determines that LOS II does not exist, staff is directed to either continue monitoring the resource and report back to the Board; terminate monitoring; or take other action the Board finds appropriate.

LOS III: Resource Capacity Met or Exceeded

In general, LOS III is established when the capacity (maximum safe yield) of a resource has been met or exceeded. However, in the case of water supply, Level of Severity III occurs when projected water demand over 15 years meets or exceeds the dependable supply, or when there is not enough time to correct the problem before the dependable supply is reached. At LOS III, there is a deficiency of sufficient magnitude that immediate actions may be needed to protect public health and safety. While the intention of the RMS is to avoid reaching LOS III through the proactive management of a resource, it is still possible that such a situation may occur.

With the exception of Water Supply, Level of Severity III is established when the capacity of a resource has been met or exceeded.

LOS III Procedure

The procedure for a LOS III alert is as follows:

1. An advisory memorandum is sent to the Board of Supervisors for consideration and referral to the Planning Commission. The basis of this memorandum shall come from completion of a previously ordered resource capacity study, monitoring program, Biennial Resource Summary Report, or information developed from the LUE update. The Board evaluates the advisory memorandum and the data upon which it is based. The Board should consider whether there is a need to adopt appropriate interim actions.
2. The Planning Commission holds a public hearing on the advisory memorandum. The Commission has a maximum of 40 days to hold the public hearing and report to the Board.

3. After receiving the Planning Commission report, the Board holds a public hearing to consider relevant resource data and public testimony, determine whether LOS-III and the resource capacity study should be certified, and consider implementation of the actions recommended in the study.

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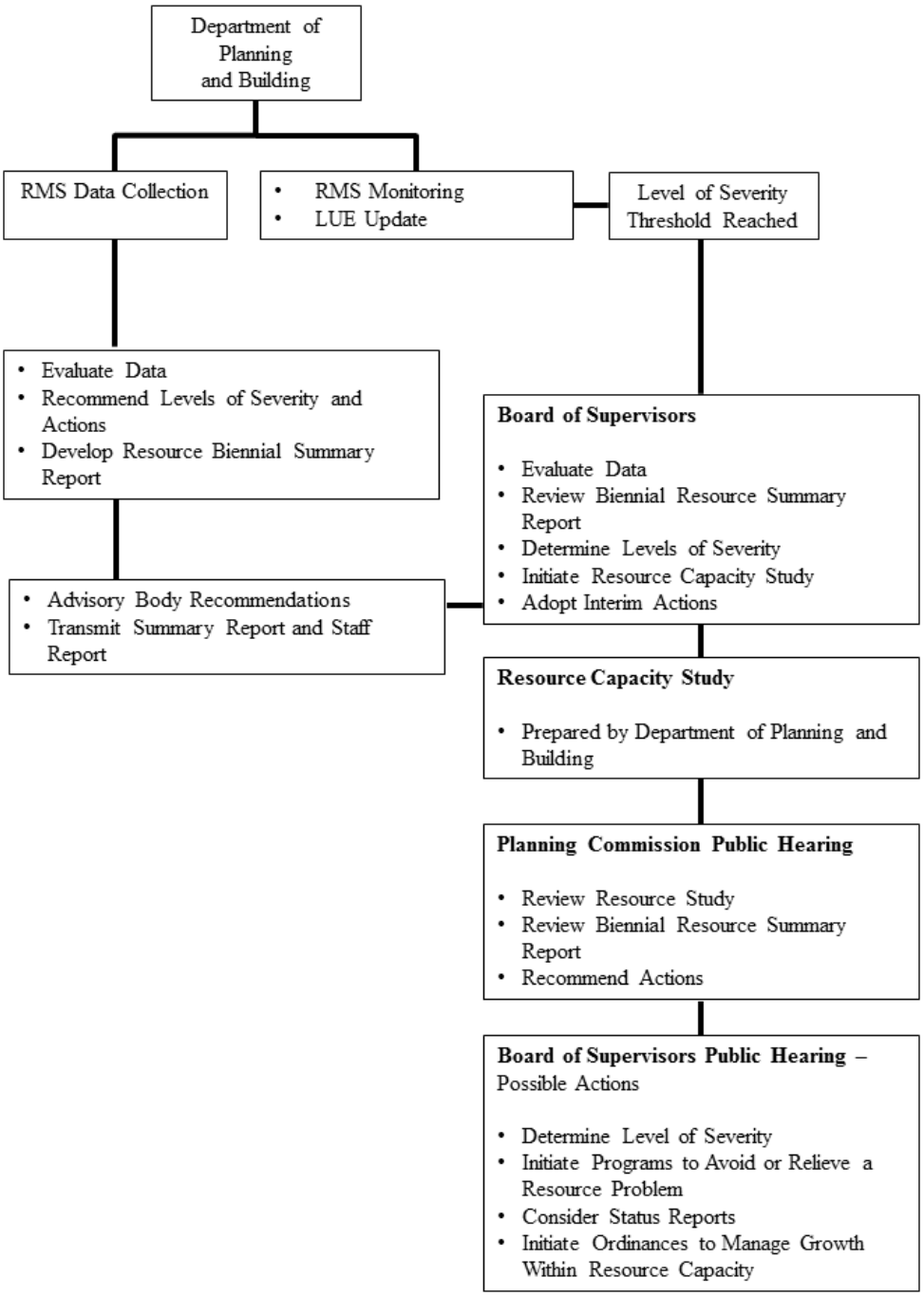
Figure 3-1

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROCESS



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Resource Management System Coordination

Resource inventories and resource capacity studies should clearly describe short and long-term capital improvement programs that can improve the availability of the resource. Detailed feasibility studies need to be funded to evaluate alternatives and make recommendations for the preferred capital improvement program(s) that can be permitted, funded, and constructed.

Resource capacity studies are to be forwarded to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) for its use when considering requests for expansion of spheres of influence and spheres of service, or when considering proposed annexations to any incorporated cities. Because LAFCo definitions of "sphere of service" and "sphere of influence" correspond to the LUE definitions of urban service line and urban reserve line, respectively, such coordination is necessary to support orderly urban expansion.

Coordination between service agencies and the LUE is mandated by the Government Code (Section 65401) requirement that agencies involved in evaluating, planning or constructing major public works annually provide the County with a list of their proposed projects. The County must then prepare "...a coordinated program of proposed public works for the ensuing fiscal year." The coordinated program is then submitted to the County Planning Commission for review and a report "...as to conformity with the adopted general plan or part thereof." Participation of relevant service agencies and companies in the RMS is encouraged to coordinate solutions to resource problems, particularly through the capital improvement program process, also described in Chapter 8.

F. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES, CRITERIA FOR LEVELS OF SEVERITY, AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Resource Management Techniques

The methods used in the management of new growth are a) the distribution of land use categories in the LUE b) development standards in the Coastal Zone LUO which are intended to ensure compatibility between different types of land use, and c) establishment of growth limitations in the Growth Management Ordinance, Title 26 of the County Code. It is important to recognize that the County often does not have authority over the resource or service in question. In these instances, collaboration with other agencies is essential to conserving or expanding the resource. Issues of water supply, wastewater and water systems will almost always include cooperative approaches between the County (with authority over land use and building) and the service provider (with authority over provision of water or wastewater service).

The capital improvement program also plays an important role in growth management because it determines the timing of new or expanded public facilities (such as roads, water supply and wastewater disposal systems) which enable new development at the densities planned by the LUE. There are also a variety of growth management techniques which may be appropriately used by local governments where resource limitations affect the normal operation of the private land development process.

The LUE is not intended to predetermine which techniques would be appropriate in a specific situation, since resource capacity problems can vary widely. The choice of any implementing actions is made by the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors based on the particular resource capacity problem. Implementation of restrictions will occur after a public hearing and adoption of an ordinance to enact specific measures in a defined area. Techniques for correcting local problems are evaluated in the area plan resource inventories,

advisory memoranda and resource capacity studies prepared at LOS I, II and III.

Some representative examples of methods that could be used to conserve resources and effectively intervene in different situations are summarized in the following list:

1. Density limitations to limit the number of people that could potentially reside in an area.

2. Building intensity or use limitations that would limit the potential scale and intensity of nonresidential development.

3. Target ceiling for the maximum population that could reside within resource capacities, with a limit on the corresponding number of building permits.

4. Controls on the rate of new development and subdivisions to provide more lead time for resource management decisions and for funding to be programmed where it is feasible, by limiting the annual number of permits, or to sustain growth longer under a population ceiling.

5. Phasing policies on the extension of services such as sewage disposal, and on recommended annexations.

6. Locating public improvements to influence the location and direction of growth where resources are identified to be more adequate.

7. Scheduling public capital expenditures to influence growth into more desirable areas with resource availability.

~~8.~~ Retirement of lots or development rights, or combining lots in areas with resource capacity problems.

9. Development impact fees to provide funding for necessary public facilities that will minimize the impacts of growth.

10. Revising the metric or timeframe being measured (e.g. Avila Beach Drive traffic count).

If a growth management limitation is considered as an amendment of the county's general plan or its enacting ordinances (Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and Subdivision Ordinance), the Government Code requires specific findings concerning the efforts the County is making to implement its Housing Element and the public health, safety and welfare considerations that justify reducing the housing opportunities of the region (Government Code Section 65302.8). The State's zoning and subdivision laws include provisions that cities and counties implementing these State laws through enacting ordinances and other actions must consider their effects upon the housing needs of the region (Government Code Sections 65863.6, 65913.2, and 66412.2). The laws further require cities and counties to balance the housing needs of the region against the needs of their residents for public services and the available fiscal and environmental resources (Government Code Sections 65863.6 and 66412.2).

General Recommended Actions for Levels of Severity

When the Board of Supervisors finds that a level of severity exists, it considers and institutes any or all of the following or other actions as needed. These general actions are in addition to the more specific recommended

actions for each resource as listed in the following section.

LOS I Recommended Actions

If sufficient progress is not made toward alleviating the level of severity, the Board of Supervisors may adopt an appropriate action such as the following

1. Funding of projects necessary to address the resource problem.

2. In the case of special districts, recommend to LAFCo that annexations that increase demand for the affected resource address the resource problem prior to approval.

3. The Board may impose conservation measures within the service area.

LOS II Recommended Actions Requirements

In addition to the preceding action requirements for LOS I, the Board may adopt land use policies that respond to a delay in funding for a necessary project such as the following:

1. Manage the rate of resource depletion within the affected community or area to extend the availability of the resource until such time as the project will provide additional resource capacity.

2. Initiate appropriate financing mechanisms to recover the project cost including, but not limited to, capital improvement bonds, assessment districts, developer fees, etc.

3. Use RMS information to evaluate the appropriate scale and timing of discretionary projects within the remaining resource capacity to determine whether they should be approved.

4. Enact restrictions on further land development in the area that is affected by the resource problem.

5. Enact adjustments to land use categories so that they will accommodate no more than the population which can be served by the remaining available resource, or redirect growth to communities or areas that have available resource capacity.

6. Give a higher priority to serving existing and strategically planned communities with adequate resources, streets and infrastructure, over outlying rural areas.

LOS III Recommended Actions

In addition to the preceding actions action requirements in addition to those for LOS I and II, the Board may institute measures such as the following:

1. Institute appropriate measures (including capital improvement programs) to correct the critical resource deficiency, or at least restore LOS II so that severe restrictions will be unnecessary. In many cases, other agencies or districts will control decisions about necessary measures. The Board of Supervisors shall only seek cooperative assistance for a certain time period, beyond which measures may be considered to enact County ordinances or standards affecting resource usage such as development restrictions.

2. Adopt growth management or other urgency measures to initiate whatever restrictions are necessary to minimize or halt further resource depletion. Restrictions enacted by means other than an urgency ordinance shall be reduced or removed after a public hearing at which the Board of Supervisors determines that LOS III no longer exists and any dangers to public health or safety have been eliminated.

3. Enact a moratorium on land development or other appropriate measures in the area that is affected by the resource problem until such time that the project provides additional resource capacity to support such development.

Issues, LOS Criteria and Recommended Actions by Resource

As resources are studied to identify their capacities and rates of use, several countywide resource policy issues become apparent. Their importance demands careful scrutiny and evaluation of alternatives. While the RMS has been designed to support improvement of local situations, long-term solutions may not be possible unless broader issues are also resolved.

Those issues are presented here only to indicate some of the major resource questions that will be facing the county in the near future. More specific resource capacity information is included in the area plans. This chapter, including the following descriptions of those issues, shall not be considered in evaluating individual development proposals or questions of land division consistency.

Each resource has unique characteristics that require a varied approach to establishing the levels of severity. For each resource, this section describes policy issues, criteria to identify when each level of severity is reached, and recommended actions. Each resource topic also includes recommended subjects for resource capacity studies that will be prepared through the RMS advisory process.

Water Supply Policy Issues

The water resources that serve the County are replenished through rainfall, the amount of which can vary significantly from year to year, or through imported water supplies. The County's water resources can be classified into the three categories below:

1. Local groundwater basins (e.g. Los Osos, Santa Maria, Paso Robles);
2. Local surface water storage and associated distribution facilities (Lopez Lake, Whale Rock reservoir, Santa Margarita Lake, Lake Nacimiento), and
3. State Water Project.

Water supplies in the county often are not geographically located in areas of water demand, and water delivery systems are not completely interconnected. Excess water in one part of the county often cannot reach those areas where it is needed without water transfers or system upgrades.

The County has limited authority to directly regulate the use of water; other tools must be identified and used to address water supply issues. Besides water conservation, management of the location, density and rate of development can minimize the increased use of groundwater and provide lead time for developing

supplemental sources. However, land use measures alone can be limited as effective water management tools because they primarily affect new development.

The most basic policy issues in the County General Plan regarding county water resources are:

1. Efficient use of our existing water supplies;
2. Identifying new water resources that can be developed;
3. Maintaining groundwater for agricultural purposes per AGP11in the Agriculture Element; and
4. Improving how water is distributed.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan (COSE) guides what new water resources should be developed. It prioritizes water efficiencies over development of new water supplies.

The policies in the COSE include:

a. Development of new water supplies should focus on efficient use of our existing resources.
b. Use of reclaimed water, interagency cooperative projects, desalination of contaminated groundwater supplies, and groundwater recharge projects should be considered prior to using imported sources of water or seawater desalination, or dams and on-stream reservoirs.

In order to achieve strategic growth, adequate services such as water and wastewater need to be available in the urban areas where development is encouraged.

In support of the basic policy issues above and in order for continued development in the unincorporated area to be consistent with these policies, Chapter 1 of the Framework for Planning describes strategic growth and its eleven planning principles.

Strategic growth is a compact, efficient and environmentally sensitive pattern of development that provides people with additional travel, housing and employment choices. It focuses future growth away from rural areas and limited resources, closer to existing and planned job centers and public facilities where sustainable resources are available.

The General Plan acknowledges that groundwater is vital to the continued success of the agricultural sector. A policy in the Agriculture Element of the General Plan states:

AGP11: Agricultural Water Supplies.

a. Maintain water resources for production agriculture, both in quality and quantity, so as to prevent the loss of agriculture due to competition for water with urban and suburban development.

The policies mentioned above work cooperatively to:

1. Maintain groundwater for agriculture.
2. Ensure water service is available to the urbanized areas of the county; and
3. Support efficient use of water resources.

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The question of agricultural and urban water use is likely to become more important over time because urban and agricultural users most often draw from a single groundwater source, and agriculture generally requires significantly more water than urban use. The Conservation and Open Space Element includes a policy that groundwater management strategies give priority to agricultural operations.

The county's primary groundwater basins that provide water to urban, rural and agricultural users are all designated LOS III: Los Osos, Santa Maria (only the portion known as the Nipomo Mesa Water Conservation Area), Paso Robles, San Simeon, and Santa Rosa). The resource capacity studies prepared for these basins identified multiple users of each basin: urban, rural and agricultural. Because the County's authority to directly regulate the use of water is limited, other tools must be identified and used to address water supply issues. The response to the LOS designation has been similar in each basin: 1) institute land use measures that allow continued urban development without increasing water demand; 2) develop an overall management plan to address water problem over the long term; and 3) implement water conservation programs.

While it is important to carefully analyze the water problems and potential solutions through the preparation of a resource capacity study, this process can take a long time to complete. In the meantime, water supply and demand can become more unbalanced, leading to groundwater basin overdraft or growing system reliability issues. The resource capacity study process can address this problem by looking at a series of standard solutions that are used in other areas of the county.

Water Demand and Dependable Supply

Water Demand
Water demand can be defined as the total amount of water used by all sectors in a water service area or groundwater basin over a period of time. Water demand is usually expressed in acre-feet per year (afy).

The California Water Plan (2013) defines water demand as:

> *The desired quantity of water that would be used if the water were available and if a number of other factors, such as price, did not change. Demand is not static.*

Water demand in a service area or groundwater basin is calculated for all types of water users or sectors. The calculation of water demand in the RMS differs depending on what types of water users exist in the study area. For example, in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, water use sectors include:

- Municipal: This sector includes such jurisdictions as the City of Paso Robles and the Templeton Community Services District. The municipal water users are the only sector that meters water use and provides accurate water demand figures.

- Rural Residential: This sector is made up of residential demand outside Urban Reserve Lines and is made up almost totally of individual wells. No accurate meter readings are available from these individual water users so demand is estimated using demand assumptions. Demand assumptions are usually divided into indoor and outdoor water demand. Per capita indoor demand for new residences is relatively easy to calculate using the recently adopted Cal green building standards.

Outdoor water use is far more difficult to estimate as there are no standards to try to apply. Also, outdoor water use is chiefly dependent upon climate: coastal communities use approximately 30% of water outdoors

and north county communities use approximately 60% to 65% of water use outdoors due to the differences in their climates.

- Small Community/Commercial: This sector combines small commercial water users such as wineries and golf courses with the small community systems such as Whitley Gardens and Garden Farms. The commercial sector does not report water use, so all winery water use in the basin is estimated using assumptions of gallons of water per case of wine. Small community systems do meter water use and usually report it to the County.

- Agriculture: The agricultural sector is the largest user in the basin. Demand in this sector is estimated using evapotranspiration rates of different crops and calculations of applied water requirements for the various crop types. There is also some data available from water studies conducted in the area.

Dependable Supply
The California Department of Water Resources defines dependable yield (supply):

> *The average quantity of water that can be extracted from an aquifer or groundwater basin over a period of time (during which water supply conditions approximate average conditions) without resulting in adverse effects such as subsidence, seawater intrusion, permanently lowered groundwater levels of degradation of water quality.*

The definition has several parts to it. First, it is expressed as an average and requires a period of time, not just one yearly data point. Second, it assumes average conditions, which take many years to establish. Lastly, it requires a finding that no adverse effect has resulted. Examples of adverse effects in our groundwater basins include seawater intrusion in the Los Osos Groundwater Basin and lowered groundwater levels in the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin (although the permanency of the groundwater decline has not yet been established).

Lastly, there are other similar terms used in groundwater studies such as perennial yield, safe yield and in the Los Osos Basin Management Plan, sustainable yield. It's important to use consistent terms and also to define the term that is used.

Water Supply Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table F
Water Supply: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Water demand projected over 20 years equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply. LOS I provides five years for preparation of resource capacity studies and evaluation of alternative courses of action.	Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program, if appropriate.
II	Water demand projected over 15 to 20 years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale

		or remodel of properties. 2. Develop a written plan for actions to be implemented to address the situation. 3. Evaluate projects and programs that will increase water supply and/or reduce water demand.
III	Water demand projected over 10 years (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) equals or exceeds the estimated dependable supply OR The time required to correct the problem is longer than the time available before the dependable supply is reached.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Either cease issuing building permits in the affected area or establish a program of water offsets that requires a measurable and sustainable water reduction in the affected area for both domestic and agricultural water as a condition of issuing a permit. 3. All new groundwater wells or replacement wells shall be metered and water use shall be monitored by the property owner and reported to the County. ~~4.~~ Implement or continue implementation of projects and programs which will increase water supply and/or reduce water demand.

Water Supply Resource Capacity Study:

A Resource Capacity Study should: 1) inventory existing water resources available to the agency operating the system and/or within the groundwater basin boundaries; 2) document existing demand for water by all area user-groups; 3) explore any conservation measures that could reasonably be imposed by the water agency or applicable regulatory authority; and 4) identify water sources that may be connected or transferred to areas in need.

Water supply studies have been conducted since 2008 for the Los Osos, Santa Maria (Nipomo Mesa Management Area) and Paso Robles groundwater basins. Los Osos is in the process of court-ordered adjudication, and the Nipomo Mesa Management Area has been adjudicated. The adjudications have resulted in cooperative groundwater management plans and discussion of importing supplemental water. The County's authority to regulate extractions from groundwater basins is limited, so it instead uses its land use and building permit authorities to address new development's demand for water.

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Water Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

A water system is an infrastructure facility that delivers water to an end user. The water may be either potable or non-potable depending on the needs of the end user. Examples of components associated with a water system include, but are not limited to, extraction groundwater wells, well-head treatment facilities, pumping stations, water treatment facilities, water storage tanks, piping and canal conveyance systems, dams and associated appurtenances, backflow preventers, pressure regulating systems, and other associated infrastructure.

Table G
Water Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	The water system is projected to be operating at the design capacity within seven years. Two years would then be available for preparation of a resource capacity study and evaluation of alternative courses of action.	Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program, if appropriate.
II	A five-year or less lead time (or other lead time determined by a resource capacity study) needed to design, fund and construct system improvements necessary to avoid a LOS III problem.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Develop a written plan for actions to be implemented to address the situation.
III	Water demand equals available capacity: a water distribution system is functioning at design capacity or will be functioning at capacity before improvements can be made. The capacity of a water system is the design capacity of its component parts: storage, pipelines, pumping stations and treatment plants.	1. Institute a vigorous and verifiable water conservation program. . Consider requiring replacement with low flow fixtures upon sale or remodel of properties. 2. Either cease issuing building permits in the affected area or establish a program of water offsets that requires a measurable and sustainable water reduction in the affected area for both domestic and agricultural water as a condition of issuing a permit. 3. Begin implementation of an action plan.

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Wastewater Policy Issues

As our communities are expected to handle a majority of the unincorporated area's population growth, installation and maintenance of wastewater facilities (including collection and disposal) is a vital link in the county's infrastructure.

Wastewater treatment and disposal can affect such resources and services as water quality, community development and groundwater recharge. The county's urban areas rely chiefly on wastewater treatment plants that in many cases recharge groundwater basins with treated effluent. The rural areas of the county (and a very limited number of urban and village areas) rely on septic tank and leach field disposal methods. Similar to wastewater treatment plants, leach fields can also recharge groundwater. These benefits of wastewater service need to be maintained when new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities are planned.

Expanded wastewater service can have two divergent effects on water supply. Wastewater treatment, collection and disposal facilities can affect both quality and quantity of groundwater. Wastewater effluent can be used in lieu of potable water sources for outdoor landscaping, agricultural irrigation, and groundwater recharge. If wastewater treatment is not appropriate for the site or density of development, it can have negative groundwater quality effects (e.g. nitrates).

A second group of concerns relating to wastewater treatment and disposal involves urban infill development and expansion. A new or expanded wastewater system can induce growth into areas not planned for higher densities. On the other hand, a lack of wastewater facilities can prevent strategically planned infill development or expansion of communities. It is important to consider that growth potential can be created if sewers are constructed where none formerly existed. Decisions to construct major sewer truck lines or treatment facilities can have substantial impacts on lands traversed by new lines or in proximity to a treatment plant. The growth-inducing effects of such facility improvements must be considered in ongoing planning efforts to enable conscious land use policy decisions about the potential long-range effects of facility improvements. The extension of sewers into heretofore unsewered areas should occur in a manner consistent with the Strategic Growth Principles of the Framework for Planning

The County does not generally have authority over wastewater treatment and disposal facilities (except in isolated cases). However, the County closely reviews wastewater project proposals by other agencies. Review and coordination enables the County to anticipate and accommodate or mitigate the effects of such projects. Such review is possible through a cooperative approach with the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

The RWQCB issues permits for wastewater treatment and disposal facilities. Wastewater discharges to surface waters require a National Pollutant Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Treated wastewater discharges using land disposal are regulated using permits referred to as "Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs). These permits have standard requirements that include submittal of a technical report prepared with public participation and reviewed and approved by all agencies having jurisdiction over the waste collection, treatment, or disposal facilities.

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The required technical report includes:

a) the best estimate of when the monthly average daily dry weather flow rate will equal or exceed design capacity; and,

b) a schedule for studies, design, and other steps needed to provide additional capacity for waste treatment and/or disposal facilities before the waste flow rate equals the present design capacity.

Wastewater: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table H
Wastewater: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Treatment Plant Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	The service provider or RWQCB determines that monthly average daily flow will or may reach design capacity of waste treatment and/or disposal facilities within 4 years. This mirrors the time frame used by the RWQCB to track necessary plant upgrades.	Discuss progress on necessary plant expansions with the service provider and/or the RWQCB. The purpose of the discussions is to ensure continued availability of wastewater service for development projects that are consistent with County General Plan policies, including strategic growth and affordable housing projects.
II	RWQCB determines that the monthly average daily flow will or may reach design capacity of waste treatment and/or disposal facilities within 2 years.	Discuss progress on necessary plant expansions with the service provider and/or the RWQCB. The purpose of the discussions is to ensure continued availability of wastewater service for development projects that are consistent with County General Plan policies, including strategic growth and affordable housing projects.
III	Peak daily flow equals or exceeds the capacity of a wastewater system for treatment and/or disposal facilities.	Support RWQCB actions that seek to expand plant capacities and reduce levels of severity. Use appropriate growth management techniques to ensure continued availability of services for projects consistent with the County General Plan (e.g. strategic growth and affordable housing projects).
	Wastewater Collection System Criteria	
I	2-year projected flows equal 75% of the system capacity. A 2-year period is recommended for the preparation of resource capacity study.	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.
II	• System is operating at 75% capacity OR • The five-year projected peak flow (or other flow/time period) equals system capacity OR • The inventory of developable land in a community	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.

	would, if developed, generate enough wastewater to exceed system capacity.	
III	Peak flows fill any component of a collection system to 100% capacity.	Discuss progress on necessary system upgrades with the service provider.

1. A wastewater collection system includes facilities that collect and deliver wastewater to a treatment plant for treatment and disposal (sewer pipelines, lift stations, etc.)

Wastewater: Resource Capacity Study

A Resource Capacity Study is prepared by the Department of Planning and Building with the assistance of the service provider and the RWQCB. The study should:

Inventory annual flows into the wastewater treatment plan;

- Identify any additional capacity consistent with anticipated growth projections that may be available for new connections without creating water quality problems;
- Determine potential effects of water consumption reductions on long-term plant capacity;
- Estimate timing of plant expansion.

Table I
Septic Tank Systems: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Failures occur in 5% of systems in an area or other number sufficient for the County Health Department to identify a potential public health problem.	Consult with County Health and RWQCB on actions and monitor.
II	Failures reach 15% or monitoring indicates that conditions will reach or exceed acceptable levels for public health within the time frame needed to design, fund and build a project that will correct the problem, based upon projected growth rates.	Evaluate alternatives to septic systems such as a public sewer system, a community septic system maintenance program, or a collection and disposal system to existing on-site treatment tanks.
III	Failures reach 25% of the area's septic systems or the County Health Department and RWQCB find that public health is endangered.	Design, fund and construct a public sewer system or a collection and disposal system to replace existing on-site treatment tanks. Initiate a septic system maintenance program.

2. Includes septic tank systems or small aerobic systems with subsurface disposal. Typical disposal systems include leach fields, seepage pits, or evapotranspiration mounds.

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Septic Tank Systems: Resource Capacity Study:

The resource capacity study should include the following:

- Inventory the extent of existing septic tank leaching field failures and their potential water quality impacts on surface and groundwater;
- Identify the locations where additional septic tanks can be approved (if any) and standards for such approval;
- Evaluate the need for alternative methods of wastewater disposal, including community or package sewer treatment systems.

In areas with septic systems, identifying specific severity levels can be difficult. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) has primary responsibility for protecting groundwater resources and surface water bodies from wastewater pollution. The control board's "Water Quality Control Plan" notes that septic systems are sometimes seen as an interim wastewater disposal in urbanizing areas, but must often function for years before a community sewer system becomes available. The County Health Department works closely with the RWQCB in determining where potential septic problem areas may exist (i.e., increased septic system density, poor soils, high groundwater). The Health Department and RWQCB use the following criteria to identify septic system failures:

- Evidence of wastewater, or waters of wastewater origin on the ground surface;
- Plumbing fixtures that drain improperly because of a problem in individual subsurface disposal systems;
- Frequent pumping of subsurface wastewater systems for reasons other than normally scheduled maintenance;
- Persistent odors traceable to any individual subsurface wastewater system(s);
- Pollution of wells or underlying groundwater that is attributable to septic systems;
- Restricted use of plumbing fixtures to prevent occurrence of criteria one through five above.

In areas where soil percolation characteristics particularly favor the use of septic disposal fields, other problems can arise, including degradation of groundwater by nitrate buildup. That condition is of particular concern where septic systems are used over a groundwater basin serving as a community water supply. The RWQCB recommends that monitoring of surface and groundwater should be initiated to determine whether such problems are developing. Such a program would constitute a LOS I resource capacity study.

Roads (Including Highway 101), Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Policy Issues

Traffic congestion occurs in many communities of the County because levels of development exceed the capacity of existing transportation facilities. As growth continues, the County will need to accommodate increased traffic by funding road and freeway improvements and by developing alternative programs to minimize impacts to these facilities.

Roads and freeway improvements are completed through various funding mechanisms, including

1. Requirements of land use permits and land divisions

2. Traffic impact fee programs
3. State or Federal funds
4. County or property owner-initiated assessment districts
5. Countywide sales tax increase
6. Countywide motor vehicle fuel tax

The County General Plan Circulation Element includes several goals and objectives to address the timing and funding of circulation improvements, including:

- Planning transportation improvements consistent with the land use patterns allowed in the County Land Use Element;
- Integrate land use and transportation planning so that necessary transportation facilities and services can be provided to accommodate urban and rural development; and
- Coordinate the transportation system between different modes of travel
- Encourage policies for new development to finance adequate additional circulation and access as a result of the increased traffic it will cause.

Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Table J
Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Roads (Including Highway 101), Circulation and Highway Interchange Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Traffic volume projections indicate that Level of Service "D"[1] would be reached at build-out of the General Plan when it occurs in more than 10 years.	1. Establish traffic impact fees 2. Complete initial project descriptions for needed road and circulation improvements. 3. Initiate a study of costs and funding for needed road and circulation improvements and alternatives.
II	Traffic volume projections indicate that Level of Service "D"[1] would be reached within 10 years.	Seek state and federal funding as applicable. Consider Transportation Demand Management measures, transit, and different transportation modes.
III	Traffic volume projections indicate that the road or facility is operating at Level of Service "D."	Secure funds to make needed road, circulation and highway interchange improvements.

1. Level of Service "D" is the criteria threshold for urban roads. For rural roads, the criteria threshold is Level of Service "C".

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Roads, Circulation, Highway Interchanges: Resource Capacity Study:

The Public Works Department prepares a resource capacity study that:

- Evaluates roadway capacity against the County General Plan's development capacity and any proposed and recently approved major projects,
- Identifies alternative improvements and their costs at different allowable densities and uses, in cooperation with the Planning and Building Department; and
- Recommends feasible improvements and/or revisions to the General Plan.

Identifying the traffic capacity of roads requires use of several traffic engineering standards. Roads are evaluated for their "level of service" characteristics to assess the ability of a given road segment to satisfy projected travel demand. The Highway Capacity Manual establishes service levels A through F based on such factors as safety, freedom to maneuver, travel time and driver comfort. Table K shows the level of service for various road types. When a road has reached "capacity," it is considered to be at a Level of Service E. That volume represents the maximum number of vehicles per hour that the road can safely accommodate.

The Planning and Public Works Departments operate a monitoring and reporting system in order to anticipate potential problems. The Levels of Service are calculated for selected roads and freeway interchanges in the county on~~,~~ annual, basis. This information is supplied to the Planning and Building Department in order to determine the level of severity. In addition, road maintenance is monitored and reported by the Public Works Department through the existing Pavement Management Program, which is a report prepared in December 2012 that includes a maintenance strategy plan.

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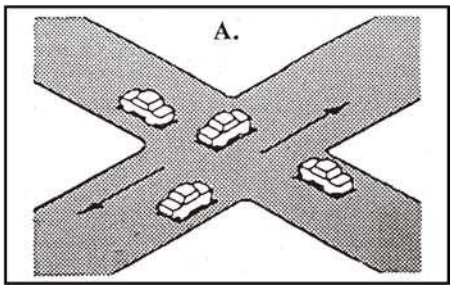
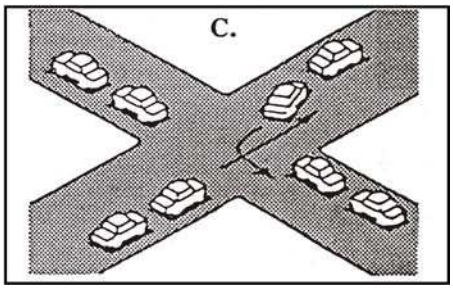
Table K
Streets and Highways Levels of Service Concept



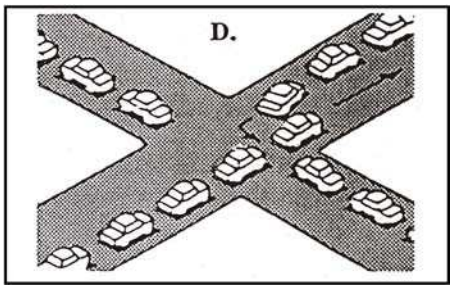
Level of Service A
1 Free flow conditions
2 Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream

Level of Service B
1 Stable traffic flow
2 Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver

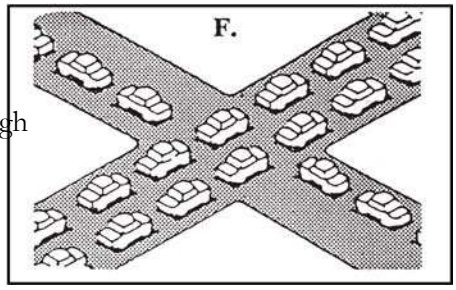


Level of Service C
1 Stable and acceptable flow but speed and maneuverability somewhat restricted due to higher volumes
2 Operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by the presence of others

Level of Service D



1 High density but stable flow
2 Driver experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience
3 Small increases in traffic flow will cause operational problems
4 Maneuverability restricted



Level of Service E
1 Speeds reduced to low, but relatively uniform value
2 Freedom to maneuver is extremely difficult, frustration is high
3 Volume at or near capacity
4 Unstable flow

Level of Service F
1 Forced or breakdown flow conditions
2 Stoppage for long periods due to congestion
3 Volumes drop to zero in extreme cases

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Schools: Policy Issues

Some school districts have seen substantial growth in past years and have experienced overcrowding. County policies on future development in these school districts are important because new development which occurs faster than school facilities develop can aggravate existing overcrowding or create overcrowding where it had not been previously experienced. State legislation provides money for new school construction; however, school districts are required to match that funding. In order to accomplish this, the legislation permits school districts to collect fees from developers. As of 2013, districts may levy fees of no more than $3.20 per square foot for residences and $1.00 per square foot for commercial projects. The fees collected are matched with state funds. This legislation-enables school districts to help fund much needed permanent facilities.

Schools: Level of Severity Criteria

LOS III: enrollment equals or exceeds the maximum student/classroom ratio.

LOS II: enrollment projections indicate that school capacity will be reached within five years or other shorter time increment identified by a school district projection. It is estimated that five years are needed to plan, finance and construct new school facilities, though that lead time could be extended by using mobile classrooms.

LOS I: enrollment projections reach school capacity in seven years. Seven years is the maximum period over which school districts can project enrollment with reasonable accuracy.

The capacity of a school is the maximum number of students that can be accommodated without exceeding school district standards for the maximum number of students per classroom. Those standards are based upon educational quality and efficient use levels for facilities and personnel.

When determining school capacity, adopted school district standards should be accepted by the County. Most school districts prepare their own population estimates for making enrollment projections. If available, district population projections should be used to determine threshold levels, instead of population projections the Planning and Building Department has prepared.

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Air Quality Policy Issues

The air quality of the county is not as tangible or easily understood as some of our other resources. Nonetheless, clean air is a valuable and essential natural resource which affects many aspects of our daily lives. It is vital to our health and welfare, to tourism and the local agricultural economy, and to the aesthetic beauty and quality of life enjoyed by county residents. The capacity of the air to absorb environmental contaminants is limited, however, and must be managed wisely to avoid significant deterioration of the resource.

The Air Pollution Control District (APCD) has the primary responsibility of protecting and managing air quality within the county. This responsibility involve regulatory and planning efforts to assure that air quality within the county meets the requirements of state and national air quality standards. California and the US EPA have adopted ambient air quality standards for six common air pollutants of primary public health concern: ozone, particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5), nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulfur dioxide (SO2), carbon monoxide (CO), and lead. These are called "criteria pollutants" because the standards establish permissible airborne pollutant levels based on criteria developed after careful review of all medical and scientific studies of the effects of each pollutant on public health and welfare. Air Quality Standards are used to designate a region as either "attainment" or "non-attainment" for each criteria pollutant. A non-attainment designation can trigger additional regulations for that region aimed at curbing pollution levels and bringing the region into attainment.

According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), state standards for ozone and fine particulate matter (PM10) are currently exceeded in San Luis Obispo County. As a result, CARB has designated the county a nonattainment area for these pollutants. In addition, the Federal EPA designated Eastern San Luis Obispo County as nonattainment of the ozone standard.

State law delegates regulatory authority to the APCD over all non-vehicular sources of air pollution within the District. New and modified stationary sources must comply with the District's source review rule. This generally requires stringent emission controls and a demonstration that project emissions will not cause a violation, or interfere with the attainment and maintenance, of any California or national ambient air quality standard. With the exception of ozone, ambient concentrations of these pollutants are primarily influenced by nearby sources of emissions. High concentrations of sulfur dioxide, for example, can usually be traced back to a specific source, where regulatory measures or other actions can be implemented to correct an identified problem. Ozone, on the other hand, tends to be regional in nature and is therefore more difficult to control.

Ozone is not emitted directly to the air, but is formed by an atmospheric chemical reaction between reactive organic gases (ROG) and nitrogen oxides (NOx) in the presence of sunlight. These compounds are generally emitted through the combustion of fossil fuels. Motor vehicles represent the largest category of combustion sources and generate over 50% of the ROG and NOx emissions in the county. Land use decisions which result in increased vehicle use will contribute to regional ozone formation. Thus, a number of critical determinants of air quality are related to such issues as population distribution, vehicle miles traveled and

locations of available housing and jobs. These determinants are largely the result of land use decisions made by cities and the County. Careful and informed planning is needed to ensure that the air quality resource is adequately protected.

Another important pollutant in our air is particulate matter that is comprised of various small particles, including acids, organic chemicals, metals and dust. Of primary concern are particles that are 10 micrometers in diameter or smaller (PM10) and particles that are 2.5 micrometers in diameter or smaller PM (2.5). Particles within those ranges can enter the lungs and cause health problems.

The current Clean Air Plan (CAP) was adopted by the APCD in 2001. The Plan contains the strategies that will be employed for the county to reach attainment of air quality goals. The CAP strategies include application of best available control technology and transportation measures to reduce the rate of growth of vehicles miles traveled. Generally, the CAP will be revised if progress toward the plan goals is not realized as forecasted.

Air Quality: Relationship to the County General Plan

The County of San Luis Obispo has the authority under the police power to protect the health, safety, and welfare of citizens from such environmental hazards as air pollution. The County General Plan acknowledges the relationship between the APCD air quality goals and policies and the County General Plan policies. For example, the Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan states that the County should amend the General Plan to avoid General Plan Amendments and land use designation changes that are not consistent with the APCD's plans (i.e., Toxic Risk Management Plan, PM Report, Clean Air Plan, and CEQA Handbook). In addition, general plan amendments should encourage land use patterns that enable efficient development focused in urban areas that reduces vehicle miles traveled and air pollution.

Air Quality: Reporting

The APCD continuously monitors and reports on air quality in the county and plays a primary role in enabling the county to attain air quality goals.

Table L
Air Quality: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions

Level of Severity	Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	Air monitoring shows periodic but infrequent violations of a state air quality standard, with no area of the county designated by the state as a non-attainment area	Consult with the APCD to assess whether actions are needed to prevent further deterioration of air quality.
II	Air monitoring shows one or more violations per year of a state air quality standard and the county, or a portion of it, has been designated by the state as a non-attainment area.	Monitor APCD's progress in developing written plans for actions to be implemented to address the deterioration of air quality. APCD to begin implementation of mitigation measures described in action plan.

III	Air monitoring at any county monitoring station shows a violation of a federal air quality standard on one or more days per year, and the county or a portion of the county qualifies for designation as a federal non-attainment area.	Consult with the APCD to assess whether mitigation measures are improving air quality and reducing number of violations. Monitor APCD's progress in developing additional measures if it is determined that existing measures are not adequate to address the deteriorating air quality.

Parks: Policy Issues

Parks are an important part of our communities. The County General Plan's Parks and Recreation Element (PRE), adopted in 2006, states that:

> "Recreation and exercise are fundamental to a healthy life. The benefits include greater productivity, less disease, and a brighter future. As the population grows, competition for recreational resources increases. Wide open spaces, once the haven of the equestrian, hiker and poet, are more often fenced and the right of exclusivity enforced. As the development and formality of our area increases, so must the provision of recreation spaces that are available to all people."

With County acknowledgement of the importance of parks in our lives, the RMS is a good tool to assess our success in providing this important community need.

The PRE describes not only the difficulties of funding new parklands and park development, but also the challenge of funding their ongoing operations and maintenance. Policy 6.4 addresses the importance of ongoing funding of parks:

> "Prior to accepting or developing a new park, County Parks shall determine the long-term maintenance and operating costs associated with the proposed project. The County shall not develop the park until adequate funds are available for maintenance."

The PRE includes several park classifications, which include mini-parks, linear parks, neighborhood and community parks, regional parks, and recreation settings. The criteria for levels of severity for parks consist of both nationally recognized park acreage standards and the ability to fund park maintenance activities. The criteria also recognize the need to provide proper distribution of the various park classifications throughout each community and the availability of recreational facilities within parks.

Chapter 3 of Framework for Planning (Coastal) – Resource Management System – Planning Commission Recommendation - Clean

Table M
Parks: Level of Severity Criteria and Recommended Actions[1]

Level of Severity	Parks Criteria	Recommended Actions
I	An unincorporated community has between 2.0 and 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are somewhat inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the following considerations: i) substantial concentration of parkland in too few areas of a community, leaving other areas with insufficient parkland, ii) insufficient parkland within a particular park classification, or iii) an insufficient amount of active park recreation facilities (i.e. sports fields, courts) for a community, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 2 years of maintenance activities.	1. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 2. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.
II	An unincorporated community has 1.0 to 2.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are substantially inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the considerations described in the criteria for Level of Severity I, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 5 years of maintenance activities.	1. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors that maintenance should be increased at certain park facilities. 2. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 3. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.

III	An unincorporated community has 1.0 acre or less of parkland per 1,000 population, OR Parkland or recreation facilities are mostly inconsistent with the Parks and Recreation Element. This may include the considerations described in the criteria for Level of Severity I, OR Deferred maintenance on a park has accrued to greater than 8 years of maintenance activities.	1. Recommend to the Board of Supervisors that maintenance should be increased at certain park facilities. 2. Collaborate with County Parks (General Services Agency) to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement. 3. Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.

1. Levels of severity are recommended by County Parks (General Services Agency) using the criteria in this table.

Parks: Resource Capacity Study

A resource capacity study is prepared by County Parks (General Services Agency). It should:

1. Inventory existing parkland in the affected unincorporated community.
2. Document existing shortfalls in park acreage.
3. Describe the distribution and classification levels of parkland throughout the community.
4. Determine maintenance shortfalls.

Table 1 of Framework for Coastal Planning

Table 1 General Plan Elements	
General Plan Elements	Descriptions
Land Use Framework for Planning (Inland and Coastal) 13 Area Plans (4 in the Coastal Zone) Coastal Plan Policies (Coastal only)	Designations and descriptions of types of land use and density of dwellings-per-acre that are allowed in mapped districts or land use categories, also showing areas subject to flooding. Land Use Element within the Coastal Zone is the Land Use Plan of the Local Coastal Program, which implements the Coastal Act and is certified by the California Coastal Commission
Circulation	Maps and policies for transportation routes and modes such as vehicles and transit, correlated with the Land Use Element
Housing	A plan with analysis of existing and projected housing needs, and goals, policies and programs for the preservation, improvement and development of housing
Agriculture	A plan that balances protection of natural resources and open space with the needs of production agriculture, and that minimizes impacts to ongoing production agriculture, while recognizing that open space is a limited and valuable resource which must be conserved wherever possible.
Conservation and Open Space	A plan for the conservation of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, harbors, wildlife and other biological resources
Noise	An analysis of existing noise problems and projected noise levels, with policies and implementation measures to minimize exposure to excessive noise
Safety	A plan for the protection of the community from unreasonable risks associated with earthquakes, geologic hazards, flooding and fires
~~**Master Water & Sewer Plan**~~	~~A plan for the collection, storage and distribution of water supplies and sewage disposal~~
Energy	A plan for the efficient use of energy resources, electricity generation and transmission and fossil fuel production
Offshore Energy	A plan for the location and extent of on-shore resources and facilities that would be appropriate for addressing off-shore oil development and production
Economic	Policies to establish a context and priorities for economic development
Parks and Recreation	Policy guidance regarding the provision of park and recreation services, documenting the county's existing park and recreation resources, and evaluating park and recreation needs

B. ADMINISTRATION

Official Maps

The official land use maps of San Luis Obispo County Constitute Part III of the Land Use Element. They illustrate the land use categories and combining designations that are applied to specific parcels throughout the county. The official maps are available for review or purchase from the county Department of Planning and Building. Due to their smaller size, the maps in the LUE Area Plans are for preliminary reference only. The official maps themselves must be referenced to determine the land use designations that apply to specific parcels. [Amended 1993, Ord. 2634]

Interpretation of the Land Use Element

Where uncertainty may exist regarding the location of any land use category or other symbols or designations on the official maps, or any uncertainty concerning the definition of a proposed use of land, the Rules of Interpretation found in the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Section 23.01.041, are to be referenced. [Amended 1993, Ord. 2634]

Coordination of Land Use Decisions with other Agencies

The Land Use Element applies to all agencies and departments of the county where their actions affect the use of land, and will be used in conformity reports on acquisition or disposal of public property (as required by Government Code Section 65402). The county, the cities, special districts, state and federal agencies have the responsibility to coordinate land use planning.

Incorporated Cities

It is the policy of the county that the incorporated cities and the county should:

1 Coordinate land use planning.

2 Make available to each other for review and comment proposed changes in their general plans, zoning and land use applications that may affect property adjacent to their boundaries.

3 Share population, housing and land use statistics and resource capacity data.

4 Share information on proposed public works recommended for planning, initiation or construction during the ensuing fiscal year that affect other areas or have a possible effect on land use plans (e.g., park expansions, water capability for future urban expansion, etc.) in accordance with the provisions of the capital improvement program.

Special Districts and School Districts

It is the policy of the county that special districts and school districts within the county should:

1. ~~Annually~~ Biennally provide the Department of Planning and Building with a report on current service capabilities, including existing levels of service and present or proposed service capacities, in accordance with the requirements of the Resource Management System.

2. Annually the Department of Planning and Building should try to obtain a list of proposed public works recommended for planning, initiation or construction during the ensuing fiscal year, in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 65401.

3. Submit proposed construction projects to the county Department of Planning and Building for review, comment and findings on their conformity with the county general plan.