

Integrated Water & Land Use Element General Plan Requirements



This guide is intended for use by city planners, planning commissioners, and/or community development personnel from the various municipalities and counties across the state of Utah as they are developing a new General Plan or comprehensive General Plan amendment.

Its specific focus is to provide guidelines for the legislative requirements related to integrating water and land planning that are detailed in *Utah Code 10-9a-403* and *17-27a-403*, as well as the time frame for adopting your new General Plan. The Division of Water Resources is not designated to respond as an enforcement agency in relation to this legislation, nor as an agency approving General Plan modifications. However, we are available to provide technical assistance for those that need help with integrating water into the land planning process.

Implementation of the water use & preservation element is required by all municipalities (except those communities that have less than 10,000 residents) and all counties pursuant to *Utah Codes 10-9a-403* and *17-27a-403*, respectively. Municipal or county legislative bodies are required to adopt and implement this new integrated water and land use element by **December 31, 2025**.

Water Use and Preservation Element

Four Primary Components

1. The effect of permitted development or patterns of development on water demand and water infrastructure.
2. Methods of reducing water demand and per capita water use for existing development.
3. Methods of reducing water demand and per capita water use for future development.
4. Modifications that can be made to a local government's operations to reduce and eliminate wasteful water practices.

As the planning commission is drafting the water use and preservation element, there are components that are considered mandatory to meet the legislative requirements. The mandatory requirements, mandatory outreach, and possible considerations to help develop your Water Use and Preservation Element are explored on the following pages.



Mandatory Requirements

- Address the Four Primary Components.
- Must identify water conservation policies implemented by the municipality or county.
- Specify landscaping options for current and future development that do not require the use of lawn or turf in a park strip.
- Specify low water use landscaping standards for any new:
 - Commercial, industrial, or institutional development.
 - Common interest community (**defined in Section 57-25-102**).
 - Multifamily housing project.

Mandatory Outreach:

Coordinating with your community water system and the Division of Water Resources will be the quickest and most impactful way to acquire the needed information regarding your local water system. This data will help you prepare a comprehensive water use and preservation element. While outreach is already considered mandatory as part of the Utah Code, creating a strategic communication with both of these entities is recommended. If you need more ideas on how to do this please consult our Integrating Water & Land Use Guide.

Public Water Systems

- Consult with the public water system(s) serving the municipality or county with drinking water regarding how implementation of this integrated water & land use element may effect:
 - Water supply planning
 - Drinking water sources
 - Storage capacity
 - Distribution planning
 - Current master plans
 - Infrastructure asset management or replacement plans
 - Impact fee facility plans

Division of Water Resources

- Consult with the Division of Water Resources for information and technical resources regarding:
 - Regional Water Conservation Goals
 - How the integrated water & land use element may effect the Great Salt Lake

Department of Agriculture and Food

- Consult with UDAF for information and technical resources regarding:
 - Agriculture conservation easements
 - Implementation of agriculture water optimization projects that would support Regional Water Conservation Goals

Local Irrigation or Canal Companies

Notify regarding new water use and conservation element creation to ensure that they can be involved in the protection and integrity of the irrigation or canal company's delivery system



Considerations

- Applicable **Regional Water Conservation Goals** recommended by the Division of Water Resources.
- A municipality's water conservation plan if the given municipality is required to adopt a water conservation plan pursuant to **Section 73-10-32**.
- Principles of sustainable landscaping, including:
 - Reduction or limitation of the use of lawn or turf as well as selecting appropriate grasses that are less water intensive.
 - Promotion of site-specific landscape design that decreases stormwater runoff or runoff of water used for irrigation.
 - Preservation and use of healthy trees that have a reasonable water requirement or are resistant to dry soil conditions.
 - Elimination or regulation of fountains, ponds, pools, and other features that promote unnecessary water evaporation.
- Land use ordinances and include a recommendation for changes to an ordinance that promotes the inefficient use of water.

May Include or Help Address Primary Components

- Creating a city or county wide water budget associated with particular development types and considering how much water is available for new development projects.
- Adopting new or modified lot sizes, configurations, and landscaping standards that will reduce water demand for new single family development.
- Providing one or more water reduction incentives for existing development such as modification of existing landscapes and irrigation systems and installation of water fixtures or systems that minimize water demand.
- Discouraging incentives for economic development activities that do not adequately account for water use or do not include strategies for reducing water demand.
- Adopting water concurrency standards requiring that adequate water supplies and facilities are or will be in place for new development.
- For a more thorough list of possible inclusions to help meet mandatory state requirements and Regional Water Conservation Goals, please review the resources section on page 11 of the Integrating Water and Land Use Planning Project Summary Memo, which can be found on our Integrating Water and Land Planning page.

Contact Information

If you have further questions or are in need of some technical assistance when it comes to creating this water use & preservation element please contact us via email at waterandland@utah.gov, or you can reach out to our Integrating Water & Land Specialist for questions, information, graphics, tips, and more.

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