BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF UINTAH COUNTY, UTAH
RESOLUTION NO. 11-26-2025, R2
UINTAH COUNTY GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

A REOLUTION APPROVING THE ADDITION OF THE WATER USE AND PRESERVATION SECTION IN THE UINTAH COUNTY GENERAL PLAN 2017 AND AUTHORIZING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Board of County Commissioners of Uintah County, Utah, in a regular meeting, lawful notice of which has been given, finds that amendments to the Uintah County General Plan 2017 have been prepared, recommended and presented to the Board of County Commissioners by the Uintah County Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the County Land Use, Development and Management Act ("CLUDMA"), as set forth in Title 17, Chapter 27a, Part 4 Utah Code Annotated; the Planning Commission has conducted a public hearing following lawful notice; the Board of County Commissioners has given notice of its intent to consider the amendments to the General Plan; the amendments meet the requirements of CLUDMA; and it is in the best interest of the County and its citizens that the amendments to the Uintah County General Plan 2017 be approved, adopted and implemented.

THEREFORE, the Board of County Commissioners of Uintah County, Utah hereby adopts the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Section 1. Approval of Amendments to the Plan
The amendments to the Uintah County General Plan 2017 are hereby approved and adopted as the General Plan for Uintah County.

Section 2. Implementation of Plan
Implementation of the Uintah County General Plan 2017, under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners and the Community Development Director, or their designees, as provided in the General Plan, is hereby authorized.

Section 3. Effective Date
This resolution shall take effect on the date of adoption.

ADOPTED on this, the second (2nd) day of December, 2025.

IN WITNESS THEREOF:

John Laursen, Chair

John Laursen	✓ Aye	____ Nay	____ Abstain	____ Absent
Sonja Norton	✓ Aye	____ Nay	____ Abstain	____ Absent
Willis LeFevre	✓ Aye	____ Nay	____ Abstain	____ Absent

ATTEST:

MICHAEL W WILKINS
Clerk-Auditor

REVIEWED:

LOREN W ANDERSON
Deputy County Attorney

WATER USE AND CONSERVATION

J. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uintah County's Water Use and Preservation Element establishes a comprehensive framework for managing water resources considering projected population growth, climate variability, and evolving state requirements. As a semi-arid county reliant on both groundwater and surface water, Uintah County faces challenges and opportunities to ensure the sustainability of its long-term water supply. This element—prepared in accordance with Utah Code §17-27a-401, HB 121 (2022), and SB 110 (2022)—integrates water planning into land use policy, capital improvements, and conservation.

Uintah County utilizes approximately 7,450 acre-feet of culinary water annually, with a per capita consumption rate of 182 gallons per day. According to the Kem C. Gardiner Policy Institute at the University of Utah, by 2045, the population is projected to grow to 40,913, possibly increasing water demand to 9,715 acre-feet per year, based on current usage. The current usage is already below the 2015 State of Utah's regional goal of 234 gallons per capita per day by the year 2030.

This element identifies seven key components:

1.e Background and Purpose – Outlining the necessitye for integrated water-land use planning.e

2.e Existing Water Sources and Use – Summarizinge current sources, infrastructure, and consumptione patterns.e

3.e Projected Growth and Demand – Forecasting futuree water needs based on population trends.e

4.e Water Conservation Goals – Establishing ae measurable, long-term reduction target.e

5. Implementation Policies – Defining specifice strategies for development review, zoning, and education.e

6.e Compliance with State Law – Consistent with HBe 121 and SB 110.e

7.e Plan Integration and Conclusion – Positioning watere planning as a critical priority for Uintah County'se future.e

Additionally, the plan outlines goals related to watershed preservation, source water protection, and sustainable land use patterns. It includes a population-water demand chart, detailed data table, and comprehensive planning policies and objectives. Uintah County's commitment to conservation, resource protection, and interagency coordination ensures that its water future remains resilient, equitable, and sustainable.

I. INTRODUCTION

Water is a critical and finite resource for Uintah County, especially given its location in the arid Uintah Basin, where precipitation is low and seasonal demand for water is high. As the county plans for future growth and development, proactive water management must ensure a reliable, high-quality supply for residents, businesses, and essential services. This Water Use and Preservation Element provides a strategic framework for managing current resources, projecting future demand, and implementing effective conservation measures. In alignment with Utah Code § 17-27a-401, HB 121 (2022), and SB 110 (2022), this element integrates water preservation planning into Uintah County's General Plan to guide land use decisions, infrastructure investments, and regional coordination.

Understanding Water Conservation vs. Water Preservation

While often used interchangeably, water conservation and preservation reflect different but complementary approaches to managing water resources. Water conservation focuses on the efficient use and reduction of water waste, encouraging practices such as using low-flow fixtures and watering lawns during off-peak hours. On the other hand, water preservation emphasizes the protection and stewardship of water resources over the long term, including maintaining watershed health, safeguarding source water quality, and ensuring sustainable land use patterns. These approaches guide Uintah County's commitment to a reliable, resilient water future.

II. Background: Water Use and Preservation in Uintah County

Summary of Present Condition

Uintah County, located in Utah's Uintah Basin, experiences ae semi-arid climate characterized by hot summers, cold winters,e and low annual precipitation. The water supply in the countye comes from the Uinta Mountains in the Northern part of thee county. The county has not dealt with policy relating to watere use or conservation in the past.e

Culinary Water System Description

The majority of Uintah County's culinary water is sourcede from Ashley Springs and Red Fleet Reservoir. Thee Whiterocks River provides water for residents in the Tridelle and LaPoint areas. The Uriah Heeps Spring and treatmente facility owned by the Ute Tribe provides culinary water toe several districts on the West side of Uintah County. A smallere amount of water is provided by private wells. The State doese not track water usage of private wells as closely as they doe public water systems and therefore, we have not attempted toe compile water use data on private wells for this report.e

The two largest water treatment plants are the Ashley Valleye Water Treatment Plant (AVWTP) located at the mouth ofe Ashley Gorge near Ashley Spring, and the Ashley Watere Purification Plant located at Doc's Beach. Water for thee AVWTP is delivered from Ashley Creek. The water for thee AVWPP is delivered via the Tyzack Aqueduct system frome

Red Fleet Reservoir in addition to a pipeline from the Ashley Spring to the treatment facility. There is also a water treatment facility in Tridell serving the Tridell-Lapoint water system. The water from Uriah Heeps springs is treated at the Tribes facility before distribution on the West side of the county. The capacity of each facility is as follows:

AVWTP: 8 MG per day
AVWPP: 11 MG per day
Tridell WTP: 2 MG per day
Uriah Heeps (Water Delivered to Non-Tribal Culinary Districts Only): 0.093 MG per day information on the full production of the Uriah Heeps treatment facility is not available.

Each water district has their own water storage facilities to balance the flow and pressure throughout their delivery system. Total storage for each of the major public water suppliers is as follows:

Water Supplier	Tabulated Storage Capacity
Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District	8 MG & Shared in 10 MG Tank
Ballard Water Improvement District	1.5 MG
Jensen Water Improvement District	1.25 MGe
Johnson Water Improvement District	1.25 MGe
Maeser Water Improvement District	3 MG
Ouray Park Water Improvement District	0.5 MG
Tridell-LaPoint Water Improvement District	1.5 MG
Vernal City	6 MG & Shared 10 MG

Irrigation Water System Description

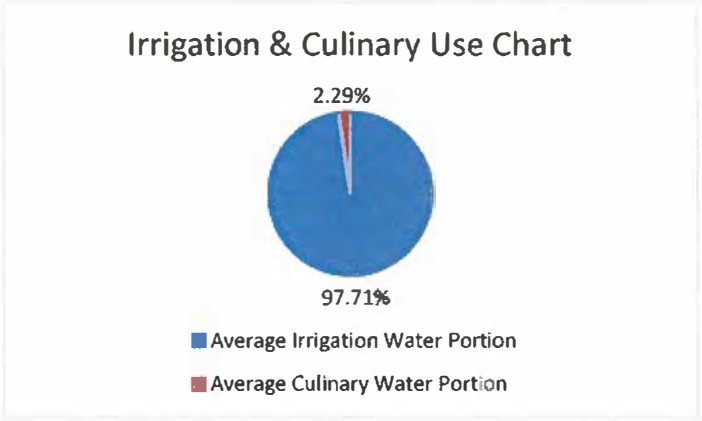
The majority of water in the Uintah Basin is used by agriculture. The following canal systems operate within Uintah County and are listed at waterrights.utah.gov:

Ashley Central Irrigation Company	Rock Point Canal and Irrigation Company
Ashley Upper Irrigation Company	Steinaker Canal and Irrigation Company
Ashley Valley Reservoir Company	Sunshine Canal Company
Burns Bench Irrigation Company	Uintah Independent Ditch Company
Dry Gulch Irrigation Company	Uintah Water Conservancy District
High Line Canal Company	Uintah River Irrigation Co.
Island Ditch Company	Union Canal Company
River Irrigation Company	Whiterocks Irrigation Company

*Additional systems may be operating but are not listed withe waterrights.utah.gov.e

**Some of the boundary maps for the above companies were available through the state website and are shown in Appendix A. Many system maps were not available to include in this data.

The river commissioner reports provided to the State of Utah on a yearly basis indicate that over a ten year period, from 2015 through 2024, the average of county wide irrigation water use was 274,445.87 ac-ft per year.



Water Consumption & Growth

- A 3 year average Culinary Water use from 2020-2024 ise 6,426.99 ac-ft per yeare
- 2024 Culinary Water Use: 7,906 ac-fte
- Population: ~32,922e
- Per Capita Use: 184 gallons/daye
- Annual Usage by Type (acre-feet):e
  - Residential (5,970)e
  - Commercial (778)e
  - Industrial (124)e
  - Institutional (968)e
- Growth Projection: 0.96% annual growth rate; populatione expected to reach 40,913by 2045e

From 2022 to 2024, Uintah County had an average increase of 6.27% in per capita culinary water use. However, the per capita use by Uintah County residents is still below the state goal of 234 gpcd by 2030.

Projections of Change or Transformation

As Uintah County continues to grow, pressures on water systems are expected to increase. Population growth, land development, and climate variability will drive higher demand and stress the current water infrastructure. Water-intensive landscaping and limited reuse systems may further contribute to peak-season shortages.

Statewide legislative changes—including HB 121 (2023), SB 76 (2023), and SB 110 (2022)—require counties to incorporate water use and preservation strategies directly into their general plans. In addition, the Utah Division of Water Resources has set regional water conservation goals that will necessitate new practices, technologies, and rate structures.

Current or Emerging Issues

Key challenges facing Uintah County's water future include:

- Aging infrastructure that may compromise leak detectiona and distribution efficiency;a
- Limited public awareness of individual water use anda conservation options;a
- The need for a tiered water rate structures that reflectsa actual usage and encourages efficiency, with a directiona toward water conservation.a
- Lack of redundancy or diversity in water supply sources,a increasing vulnerability to drought;a
- Compliance with new state mandates requiring measurablea goals and policies in land use planning documents.a
- Conversion of agricultural water to culinary water use.a

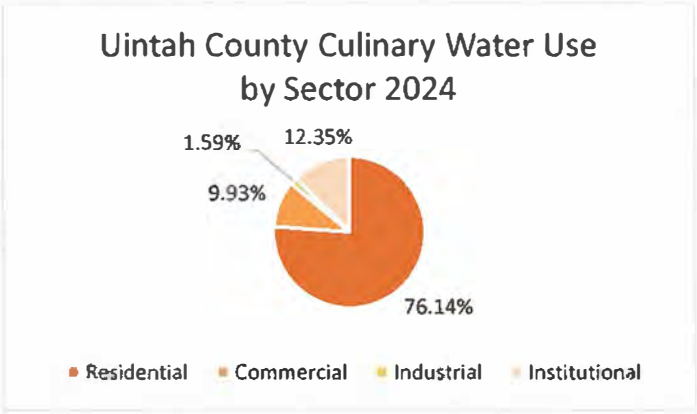
Addressing these issues will require an integrated and forward-looking approach that links land use, fiscal policy, infrastructure investment, and community engagement.

Culinary Water Use by Sector

Collective data from water suppliers show average culinary water use for the year 2024 is summarized as follows:

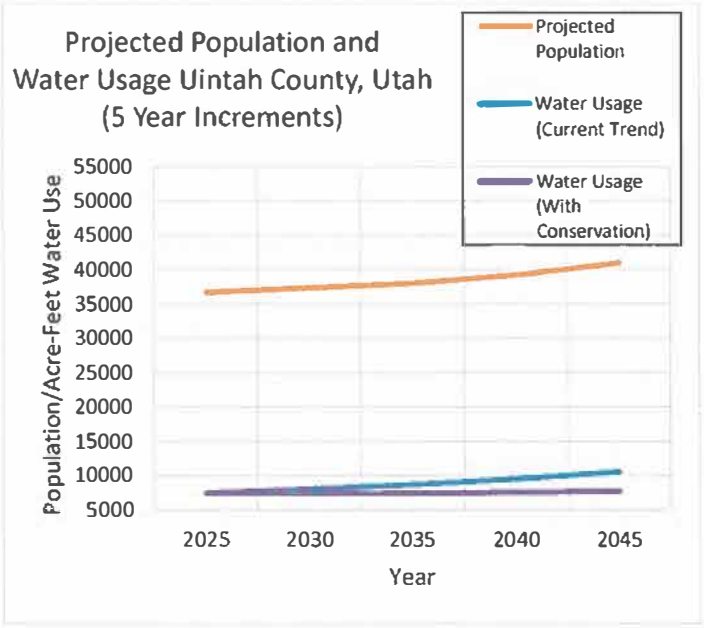
- Residential: 5,970 acre-feet (76.14%)a
- Commercial: 778 acre-feet (9.93%)a
- Industrial: 924 acre-feet (1.59%)a
- Institutional: 968 acre-feet (12.35%)a

Understanding this distribution supports the County's focus on residential conservation programs and targeted policy interventions. The pie chart below provides a visual representation of sectoral water use.



Projected Water Use and Population Growth

Future projections show Uintah County's population continues to grow through 2045, while water usage trends reflect anticipated demand and potential conservation impacts. If no additional conservation measures are implemented, water demand may rise proportionally with growth. However, with sustained efficiency efforts, usage can remain more stable. The chart below illustrates projected trends for total population and water demand, with and without conservation strategies.



The preceding chart illustrates Uintah County's projected population growth and corresponding water usage from 2025 to 2045 in five-year increments. As the population increases from approximately 32,922 to 40,913 residents, total water demand is expected to rise from 7,381 acre-feet to 10,520 acre-feet under current usage trends. However, if conservation measures are implemented, such as reducing per capita consumption, water demand could be limited to approximately 7,671 acre-feet by 2045. This comparison highlights conservation's critical role in ensuring long-term water supply sustainability amidst ongoing growth.

III. Vision Statement

Uintah County envisions a resilient, efficient, and sustainable water future where every drop is valued, infrastructure is modern and responsive, and the community works together to ensure that clean, reliable water remains available for future generations. Through proactive planning, technological innovation, and a shared conservation ethic, Uintah County will lead by example in preserving its precious water resources amid growth and environmental change.

Uintah County has identified strategic goals focused on measurable outcomes and long-term resilience to achieve this vision. These goals, supported by clear objectives and actionable policies, provide a framework for guiding decisions, allocating resources, and aligning future growth with sustainable water practices.

IV. Water Use and Preservation Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal 1: Coordinate with Water Districts and Cities as Development Occurs

Objective 1.1: *Does the proposed property development have sufficient water?*

Policy1.1.1: Involve water districts and cities at the start of each development

Policy 1.1.2: Work with the water districts and cities to convert agricultural water to culinary water when land to be developed is irrigated.

Policy 1.1.3: Coordinate with districts and cities to develop a plan to protect the water delivery systems and public health.

Policy 1.1.4: Develop policy to require water rights on land previously used for agricultural purposes to remain with the property when the use is changed.

Objective 1.2: *Provide Incentives for Developers to reduce water need in developments.*

Policy 1.2.1: Ensure County Codes are not requiring measures that will increase per-capita water usage

Policy 1.2.2: Allow innovative efforts to reduce outside water storage.

Policy 1.2.3: Establish landscape incentives allowing for differing levels of water dedications for lot and use type.

Objective 1.3: *Formalize agreements with Water Districts to share data, align on priorities and coordinate infrastructure investments.*

Policy 1.3.1: Meet with water districts on a regular basis.

Goal 2: Establish a County-wide Program to monitor water availability & usage trends

Objective 2.1: *Provide a reporting Platform accessible to the public for water usage from each water supplier in the County*

Policy 2.1.1: Link State of Utah Division of Water Rights usage data for Uintah County suppliers directly to the County website.

Objective 2.2: *Update the water use and preservation element of the general plan every 5 years and observe trends.*

Policy 2.2.1: Implement the goals and policies outlined in the general plan.

Policy 2.2.2: Educate incoming elected officials about the general plan and its importance.

Goal 3: Support and adopt regional water resource management strategies that prioritize long-term sustainability.

Objective 3.1: *Develop policies for prioritizing water allocation during shortages, giving precedence to critical needs.*

Policy 3.1.1: Work with the water wholesalers to ensure contracts for water give precedence to culinary use in the event of low availability.

Policy 3.1.2: Meet annually with culinary districts and water rights owners to keep dialogue open for agreement of just compensation to the water rights owner for culinary use of water rights in low availability situations.

Objective 3.2: *Develop an emergency response plan for drought conditions in cooperation with water districts to manage supply shortages.*

Policy 3.2.1: Coordinate with each of the culinary water suppliers to ensure their emergency response plans are in alignment with the county and regional goals.

Objective 3.3: *Create secondary water* systems in new developments within Uintah County.*

Policy 3.3.1: Develop policy incentivizing new developments to meet lower indoor use requirements while providing a secondary water system to serve outdoor water needs.

Policy 3.3.2: Work with water rights owners to make secondary water available to new developments.

*For the purposes of this report, secondary water refers to water that is used for outdoor watering, but is not treated for use in the various culinary water systems.

Objective 3.4: *Assist existing subdivisions within the county in getting secondary water systems installed in each neighborhood.*

Policy 3.4.1: Work with water wholesalers and irrigation companies to create a secondary water district (or districts) within Uintah County.

Policy 3.4.2: Assist secondary districts in obtaining funding for infrastructure to be installed in existing residential communities.

Policy 3.4.3: Work with water suppliers toward a goal of implementing the highest and best use of the water on each property within the county.

Goal 4: Seek State and Federal Grants to fund joint water projects with local water districts.

Objective 4.1: *Preserve and restore the ecological functions of Uintah County's watersheds.*

Policy 4.1.1 Implement riparian buffer requirements along streams, creeks, and wetlands.

Policy 4.1.2 Prohibit development on steep slopes and high-erosion hazard zones within watersheds.

Policy 4.1.3 Collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service and state partners on watershed restoration projects.

Objective 4.2: *Promote land use practices that support watershed sustainability*

Policy 4.2.1 Integrate watershed protection priorities into the General Plan's land use map and zoning designations.

Policy 4.2.2 Require site designs in watershed areas to use low-impact development techniques (e.g., green infrastructure, pervious surfaces).

Policy 4.2.3 Limit impervious surface coverage in sensitive recharge zones and floodplains.

Objective 4.3: *Educate and engage the public in watershed stewardship.*

Policy 4.3.1 Create a county-sponsored watershed education program at schools and public events.

Policy 4.3.2 Post interpretive signage at trailheads and public access points near sensitive watershed areas.

Policy 4.3.3 Organize annual community watershed cleanup and monitoring days in coordination with local organizations.

Goal 5: Invest in and protect the quality of Uintah County's source water to ensure safe and clean drinking water for current and future generations.

Objective 5.1: *Maintain regulatory compliance through proactive source water protection planning.*

Policy 5.1.1: Establish interagency agreements to monitor and manage pollution threats near source areas.

Policy 5.1.2: Require proof of source protection plan compliance for development applications near protected zones.

Policy 5.1.3: Develop a response plan for each source for actions to be taken when the source is threatened.

Objective 5.2: *Minimize contamination risks from land use and industrial activity.*

Policy 5.2.1 Prohibit hazardous materials storage or disposal in source water protection zones.

Policy 5.2.2 Require stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) for all construction sites within 1,000 feet of a source.

Policy 5.2.3 Restrict new septic systems in areas overlying groundwater recharge zones.

Objective 5.3: *Improve infrastructure to support long-term source water protection.*

Policy 5.3.1 Prioritize replacement of aging water distribution infrastructure near source water areas.

Policy 5.3.2 Develop and maintain spill response protocols for transportation routes near source waters.

Policy 5.3.3 Evaluate redundant water source development opportunities to reduce system vulnerability.

Objective 5.4: *Actively pursue new sources of water*

Policy 5.4.1 Actively seek a voice in water discussions and opportunities that will increase the water availability to the county.

Policy 5.4.2 Financially support efforts to increase water availability in the county.

Goal 6: Ensure sustainable land use patterns that align with Uintah County's long-term water availability and conservation objectives.

Objective 6.1: *Direct growth to areas with existing water infrastructure capacity.*

Policy 6.1.1 Use the General Plan's Future Land Use Map to guide growth toward served and serviceable areas.

Policy 6.1.2 Require water system capacity analyses for all major subdivisions and rezoning requests.

Policy 6.1.3 Encourage infill development and discourage leapfrog sprawl beyond water service boundaries.

Objective 6.2: *Coordinate land use approvals with long-range water planning.*

Policy 6.2.1 Mandate water availability assessments before final approval of large-scale developments.

Policy 6.2.2 Require consistency between zoning amendments and the County's general plan.

Policy 6.2.3 Include water demand projections in all Uintah County Capital Facilities Plans.

Policy 6.2.4: Consider creating zones within the county that will lock in the current use of the land in perpetuity.

Objective 6.3: *Promote compact and efficient land development forms that reduce water consumption.*

Policy 6.3.1 Establish water-efficient development design guidelines for site plan review.

Policy 6.3.2 Provide density bonuses for projects incorporating comprehensive water-saving features.

Policy 6.3.3 Limit turf installation in new commercial, institutional, and multifamily developments.

Goal 7: Support and promote efficient irrigation practices in order to meet regional water conservation goals.

Objective 7.1: *Help irrigation companies make their water delivery systems more efficient in order to meet regional water conservation goals.*

Policy 7.1.1 Support, promote and help the irrigation companies develop plans to make their delivery systems more efficient.

Policy 7.1.2 Support irrigation companies efforts to find where water is leaking or being wasted throughout their systems.

Objective 7.2: *Help irrigation companies make their irrigation practices more efficient.*

Policy 7.2.1 Support, promote and help irrigation companies develop public information announcements and other media that will help to educate irrigators on efficient irrigation practices.

Policy 7.2.2 Support programs that incentivize irrigators to change from flood irrigation to water efficient sprinkler systems.

V. Agricultural Protection Areas

Uintah County has several parcels that are protected by an agricultural protection area. These parcels are identified by parcel number below:

060540079, 060440061, 060440075, 160270001, 051360006, 051360005, 051360001, 051250001, 060440003, 060530066, 060530075, 060530061, 060530086, 060530084, 060530041, 060510028, 060510039, 060510031, 060510147, 060510040, 060620010, 060620011, 060620012, 060530085, 060530087, 060620008, 060620052, 060920032, 061000001, 060920012, 060920021, 060920003, 060920020, 060930034, 060910013, 060870035, 060920025, 060940005, 060930028, 060920004, 060920013, 050850029, 050890028, 050850037, 050850030, 050860024, 050860007, 040710007, 040710006, 040700001, 050610012.

The agricultural protection areas within Uintah County have been set up to protect grazing and hay production, for the most part. This is not surprising since these are the two agricultural activities that are the most prevalent in Uintah County.

VI. Conclusion

Uintah County will begin proactively addressing water sustainability challenges through integrated planning, targeted conservation measures, and infrastructure modernization. This Water Use and Preservation Element reflects a coordinated response to local conditions, regional conservation goals, and state legislative mandates. By prioritizing leak detection, meter efficiency, and conservation-oriented rate structures, the county is laying the foundation for a resilient water system capable of supporting future growth while reducing waste and protecting valuable water resources.

The success of this plan depends not only on municipal action but also on community participation and regional collaboration. As the County continues to grow and climate pressures intensify, the strategies outlined in this document will help ensure long-term

water availability and system efficiency. Uintah County remains committed to leading with innovation, transparency, and stewardship, ensuring that future generations inherit a healthy, reliable, well-managed water supply.

VII. Compliance with Utah State Law

This element meets the requirements of Utah Code §17-27a-401, which mandates that general plans include a water use and preservation component. It also complies with HB 121 and SB 110, which require counties to plan for drought response, conservation, and long-term water needs.

VIII. Sources

- Utah House Bill 121 (2023) – Water Conservation and General Plan Requirements
- Utah Senate Bill 76 (2023) – Water Efficiency Amendments
- Utah Senate Bill 110 (2022) – Secondary Water Metering Requirements
- Utah Division of Water Resources – Regional Conservation Goals
- American Water Works Association (AWWA) M36 and M52 Guidelines
- Uintah County Population Estimates – Kem C. Gardiner