



## COUNTYWIDE VISION WATER ELEMENT UPDATE

San Bernardino County Water Conference  
August 23, 2013

### ***REGIONAL, INTEGRATED, STRATEGIC PLANNING***

Since January 2012, leaders representing public and private water agencies, regulators, planners, education, and business have been working together to develop a long-range plan to ensure water sustainability for San Bernardino County's future. The effort marked the first time that San Bernardino County endeavored to address its water needs in a comprehensive, collaborative environment that incorporated multiple watersheds.

The Countywide Vision Water Element Group immediately began work on a comprehensive survey of current and future water needs based on available water resources and planned projects. The result was a countywide water inventory that revealed the County has enough water to supply residents, business, and agricultural needs through 2035, if there is a commitment from the whole community to invest in capital projects and programs to store new water supplies, protect current water supplies, and increase water conservation efforts.

### ***MANAGING THE COUNTY'S WATER PORTFOLIO***

Critical to the County's success in ensuring sustainable water supplies is managing and enhancing the region's water portfolio through conservation efforts; investment in improved infrastructure for local, imported and recycled water supplies; and environmental stewardship.

While imported water is an important part of the County's supply, it is only one part of a healthy water portfolio. The foundation of this portfolio is built on reducing demands through water conservation and optimizing our local water supplies, which became the focus for the Countywide Vision Water Element Group this year. Two products were developed: a countywide inventory of water conservation programs and a countywide inventory that identifies land to protect for future local water recharge projects.



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### ***WATER CONSERVATION INVENTORY***

In San Bernardino County, one-third of per capita water consumption is based on indoor use and the remaining two-thirds is outdoor use. A multitude of water conservation programs have been underway for many years throughout the County; however, a comprehensive inventory of these programs had never been developed. The resulting draft Water Conservation Inventory includes participation from 24 water agencies and 11 city public utilities/water departments. The document encompasses indoor products such as low-flow toilets and shower heads, as well as outdoor programs and products including turf replacement programs, smart timers, and drip irrigation systems; and conservation ordinances.

Programs aimed at changing water habits are equally important, and are included in the inventory such as incentive and disincentive programs featuring rebates, tiered water rates, and budget-based rebates; land use planning efforts such as form-based codes and low-impact development; and education and outreach programs including school gardens, water fairs and workshops, and demonstrations.

### ***NEXT STEP IN CONSERVATION***

The Water Element Group will evaluate the impact of the water use efficiency programs in order to identify and promote best practices that can be adopted by all. The water use efficiency data will be made available online to water agencies and anyone else who may be interested.

### ***LAND INVENTORY***

Charting where San Bernardino County's population growth might occur was the first step in identifying land to protect for future water recharge projects. The analysis assumes that population growth would likely occur inside water agency boundaries. Of the land identified for potential recharge projects, 60 percent is in public ownership. The remaining 40 percent will require the Water Element Group to work closely with land use planning agencies and private owners.

### ***NEXT STEP IN LAND INVENTORY***

In the coming months, the County of San Bernardino and San Bernardino Associated Governments will assist the Water Element Group by facilitating discussions with business, residents, and land use planning agencies that will review the need for water conservation, landscaping ordinances, and the protection of land for stormwater and imported water recharge sites.