

West San Gabriel Valley Area Plan: Public Services and Facilities Element Summary

1. Existing Conditions

COUNTY FIELD OFFICES

Unincorporated areas in the WSGV rely on County field offices for essential public services, typically provided by a municipality. Enhancing access, awareness and utilization of County field offices is essential to improve service delivery and community engagement.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

Distribution of and access to healthcare facilities varies across the Plan Area communities and healthcare services are offered by a combination of private and public providers. Noteworthy among these is the County-operated Department of Health Services (DHS), which operates a comprehensive network of 28 health centers and four hospitals. The closest County hospital to the Planning Area is the Los Angeles General Medical Center located just east of Downtown Los Angeles and about seven miles west of the Planning Area. The closest County-operated health center to the Planning Area is the El Monte Comprehensive Health Center in the City of El Monte, just one mile north of the South El Monte Island community.

PARKS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Parks in the WSGV represent integral parts of the County's commitment to enhancing the well-being of residents and promoting environmental stewardship. Within the WSGV, the County manages 3,540 acres of parkland, organized into two categories, local and regional parks, each catering to distinct needs within the WSGV communities. Within these 3,540 acres of County-managed parkland in WSGV, 1,627 acres have been identified as conservation priority areas, highlighting the County's effort to preserve and protect natural habitats. Local parks, comprising 56 acres in the WSGV, serve as neighborhood hubs, offering various recreational opportunities for daily use, such as play equipment, sports fields, picnic areas, and restrooms. Yet, with a current deficit of 435 acres in local parkland, there is an ongoing commitment to meet the established goal of 4 acres per 1,000 people outlined in the County General Plan. The regional park system, covering 3,484 acres in the WSGV, strives to meet broader recreational needs. The County General Plan also sets goals of 6 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 people. A current regional park shortage of 2,007 acres indicates continuous effort is needed to meet the park standards. Despite these challenges, the County remains dedicated to providing accessible and well-maintained green spaces for the WSGV community, ensuring that parks continue to enrich the lives of residents.

LIBRARIES

In the WSGV, the LA County Library Department operates most libraries. These libraries offer a wide range of services through numerous branches and extend beyond traditional book lending resources with a comprehensive online platform. Broader services include eBook and audiobook lending, household tool borrowing, laptop and hotspot loans, employment preparation programs, and health-related programs like vaccine clinics. Enhancing the promotion of these diverse services is key to increasing community utilization and awareness.

SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In the WSGV, education is supported by a variety of school districts, each offering a range of schools and services. This diversity reflects the unique educational needs throughout the Planning Area. All of the communities in the Planning Area except for Whittier Narrows have at least one day care or childcare facility within their boundaries. Whereas, just over half of the WSGV communities, including Altadena, East Pasadena-East San Gabriel, La Crescenta Montrose, South Monrovia Islands, and South San Gabriel have access to a variety of grade schools within or just outside their community boundary.

SANITARY SEWER & STORMWATER FACILITIES

In the WSGV, stormwater and sewage systems are managed separately by the Los Angeles County Flood Control Districts and the Los Angeles County Sanitation Districts, respectively. All of the communities in the Planning Area are within the urban regions of the LA River watershed. Collaboration between agencies is necessary for effective water management and environmental protection. In the Planning Area, most residential and business properties are connected to small sewers maintained by the Consolidated Sewer Maintenance District of Los Angeles (CSMD), a division of the County's Public Works Department. Larger sewers and lines that carry sewage to wastewater facilities in these areas are operated by the LA County Sanitation Districts. The agency operates two wastewater treatment facilities in the Tributary Area of the communities which make up the Planning Area.

SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

The County of LA has the largest solid waste management system in the country. LA County Public Works manages waste management contracts, ensuring efficient collection and recycling services for residents and businesses. In the unincorporated communities throughout the County, including WSGV, LA County Public Works manages two types of waste management contracts, residential and commercial franchise systems. Residents in single family and duplex properties within the Planning Area fall under the County's Residential Franchise System where private waste haulers sign exclusive contracts with the County to provide services in particular unincorporated communities. For businesses, multi-family properties (5+ units), and other customers needing dumpster services in the Planning Area, the County utilizes an Exclusive Commercial Franchise system. The Planning Area is divided into two Commercial Service Areas (CSA) for commercial solid waste collection. Customers that fall under the Exclusive Commercial Franchises system in Altadena and La Crescenta Montrose are covered in the Foothills CSA and are serviced by American Reclamation Inc, while commercial customers in the remaining six communities fall under the San Gabriel Valley West CSA and are serviced by Valley Vista Services.

UTILITIES

Electricity in the Planning Area is provided by Southern California Edison, and natural gas services are provided by SoCal Gas. The California Public Utilities Commission provides regulatory oversight to both utility providers in an effort to support renewable energy initiatives and promote safety and conservation awareness.

WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

WSGV is provided with a continuous supply of clean water for everyday uses through a comprehensive water management system, which consists of numerous water providers, water control boards and other agencies. Water is imported into the County from three sources: the Colorado River, the Bay Delta in Northern California via the State Water Project, and the Owens Valley via the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Water services are provided by a network of

water districts, water wholesalers and private companies that specialize in developing and improving water service for their customers.

2. Issues & Opportunities

ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES

Expanding County capacity and visibility of County field offices is crucial for enhancing access to public services information and resources. Integrating community councils can facilitate direct communication and advocacy with County representatives, improving public service delivery and representation.

HEALTHCARE SERVICES ACCESS

Inconsistent distribution of healthcare facilities poses challenges for some WSGV communities. Addressing transportation barriers and strategically placing new healthcare facilities can improve accessibility for residents, especially those without personal vehicles.

PARKS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Limited space and conflicting needs challenge park development and expansion in the WSGV. Innovative land-use solutions and multi-functional spaces can optimize existing resources. Ensuring safe and inclusive facilities and climate resilience strategies are essential for enhancing community well-being.

LIBRARY ACCESS AND SERVICES

Improving physical resources and exploring alternative library services can increase accessibility for communities without direct library access. Co-locating facilities with other public resources and expanding outreach programs enhance community engagement and address the digital divide.

SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Uneven distribution of early childhood care centers in the WSGV calls for improved transportation services, technology or outreach services to improve access to education centers. Joint use of school facilities offers benefits to communities by allowing community members access to school amenities such as playgrounds, sports fields, and gymnasiums during non-school hours. School facilities can also serve as a venue for community engagement events, after-school and adult educational programs, multilingual educational programs and voting centers.

SANITARY SEWER & STORMWATER FACILITIES

Impervious surfaces and aging infrastructure can pose challenges for stormwater management. However, the unique geographic features of many WSGV communities, especially those located near the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and Puente Hills, present opportunities for the efficient capture of stormwater runoff. Implementing rain capture gardening techniques and bioswales for stormwater capture can absorb runoff and help recharge groundwater.

SOLID WASTE FACILITIES

The complexity of LA County's sanitation system, with separate waste management contracts for different types of residences and businesses, may be confusing for the community to navigate. This is compounded by the fact that

each Planning Area is serviced by a variety of different companies, leading to potential inconsistencies in service quality and access to information.

UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Investing in the both new and existing infrastructure and resources in the Planning Area is necessary to maintain service levels, accommodate growth, and improve resilience against storms and other climate-related hazardous events. County oversight and community engagement are crucial for balancing utility needs with community concerns.

WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

The diversified nature of water service delivery in the Planning Area results in a variety of conservation approaches and pricing structures. This diversity can make it challenging for residents to understand their service providers and responsibilities as neighboring residents may be serviced by completely different water providers. This stratification may complicate the process of accessing support for water related questions or concerns and make it difficult for residents to understand where they can access conservation resources and support.

3. Policy Recommendations

INCREASE ACCESS TO COUNTY SERVICES

Recommended policies include establishing more physical County field offices or mobile units in underserved areas, supporting community groups in areas lacking existing representation, and coordinating the siting of meetings in appropriate, accessible public facilities such as libraries or schools. These policies can help to foster collaborative relationships and improve the communication between community members and the County.

EXPAND HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

One focus of the Public Services and Facilities Element is to help improve community access to public and private healthcare services. Policies to achieve this include encouraging the siting of new healthcare facilities within the Planning Area based on the location of existing facilities and gaps in resources. Similarly, supporting transportation to healthcare facilities can help develop solutions to addressing service and accessibility gaps in the Plan Area.

INVEST IN PARKS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This Element includes a range of policies to support regular, ongoing maintenance of existing parks and community gardens in the WSGV, including waste management services, sufficient water resources, and regular upkeep of interiors, as well as creating safe, accessible community spaces and recreation areas. Multipurpose infrastructure such as pavilions and stages in public parks can help support a range of cultural and community events throughout the WSGV. Policies in this element emphasize the importance of ensuring that all WSGV communities have access to safe, inclusive, and creatively designed play areas that cater to children of all abilities. Strategies to ensure parks are safe and accessible, especially in underserved areas communities in the Plan Area, may include installing clear-defined pathways and easy-to-locate entrances and exits, distributing good lighting features throughout the park area, and ensuring play equipment and park spaces are clean and well maintained. Informative, interactive, multilingual, and educational signage throughout parks, trails and pedestrian pathways can also promote a safer, more enriched visitor experience.

ACCESSIBLE LIBRARY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Policy recommendations in this Element related to library services and resources center around improving access for local community members and enhancing existing facilities. To improve the experience of existing library facilities, new shaded outdoor public spaces and gardens could be incorporated into existing and proposed facilities. When determining the location of new library facilities, policies direct the County to evaluate where co-location would benefit community members most based on identified needs and distribution of existing library facilities in the WSGV.

SCHOOLS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Policy recommendations related to schools and early childhood education focus on improving access to schools and resources on site, as well as maximizing community uses of school facilities during non-school hours. Specific strategies include promoting the creation of green spaces, edible gardens, and native plant gardens in schools, especially in disadvantaged communities and enabling school districts and education authorities to optimize the use of underutilized school sites and facilities for joint use, including for community-serving facilities such as libraries or community centers.

SANITARY SEWER AND STORMWATER FACILITIES

Effective management of sanitary sewer and stormwater systems that serve the WSGV is key to ensuring existing and new infrastructure and services are maintained and environmentally safe. Policy recommendations in this Element address maintaining and improving these systems, including identifying critical areas where aging infrastructure poses the highest risk and prioritizing upgrades in such areas. Other policies include ensuring residents are aware of their own responsibilities in maintaining sewer infrastructure on their own properties.

UTILITIES

Policy recommendations for public utilities services aim to ensure services are provided in a manner that is considerate of community needs, are cost-effective and resilient to potential impacts. The siting of new utility infrastructure needs to consider optimal and equitable service delivery and aim to minimize development impacts on existing communities. Policy recommendations encourage community engagement for new and upgraded utility projects to improve transparency, foster community support, and address concerns.

WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

Efforts to conserve and protect water supply are encouraged through policies focused on sustaining a reliable water supply and informing residents of their water resources and providers. Policies in this Element are designed to foster a cohesive and integrated approach to monitor and manage water resources. The County can coordinate with water suppliers in evaluating water usage and capacity in conjunction with demographic and economic forecasts to anticipate and plan for future water needs.