

CHAPTER 7

CONSERVATION ELEMENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Conservation Element is to provide direction regarding the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources. It serves as a guide for the City of Cerritos, its residents and businesses to understand what natural or other resources exist in the City, how development impacts these resources and what methods should be employed to maintain, preserve or conserve these resources. The Conservation Element will look at the following resources: water, energy, solid waste, biological and cultural/historical.

2.0 AUTHORITY FOR THE ELEMENT

The State of California Government Code Section 65302(d) requires that a General Plan include:

“..a conservation element for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources.

The conservation element may also cover: (1) the reclamation of land and waters; (2) prevention and control of the pollution of streams and other waters; (3) regulation of the use of land in stream channels and other areas required for the accomplishment of the conservation plan; (4) prevention, control and correction of the erosion of soils, beaches and shores; (5) protection of watersheds; (6) the location, quantity and quality of the rock, sand and gravel resources; and (7) flood control.”

3.0 SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The following section provides an inventory of conservation resources in the City of Cerritos, including water resources, biological resources, energy resources, solid waste, land resources and cultural/historical resources.

3.1 WATER RESOURCES

3.1.1 WATER SUPPLY AND SOURCES

The City of Cerritos receives its water from two primary water sources – the Central Basin Municipal Water District (CBMWD) and local groundwater. The City receives its water from the CBMWD via Service Connection CEN. B-46, which is located near the intersection of Woodruff Avenue and South Street. In 2000, the City of Cerritos received approximately 1.07 billion gallons, or 26.1 percent of its total water supply from the CBMWD, which is a member agency of The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). MWD water is transported from the Colorado River and State Water Project in northern California.

Water distribution to consumers within the City of Cerritos is distributed through a City-owned system of pipes, ranging in size from six inches to 30 inches in diameter. Approximately 177 miles of pipe supply water to approximately 16,000 homes, businesses and industrial sites.

The water system also utilizes one 12-million gallon tank at the Reservoir Hill site and two six-million gallon tanks at the C-2 Corporate Yard Site.

3.1.2 LOCAL GROUNDWATER

Local groundwater resources originate from three deep wells within the City of Cerritos. These wells are drilled to a depth of between 700 and 1,000 feet. The C-1 well is located in the area of Bloomfield Avenue and Artesia Boulevard. The C-2 well is located at the City's Corporate Yard at 166th Street and Marquardt Avenue and the C-4 well is located in the area of Reservoir Hill Park at Studebaker Road and 166th Street. These three groundwater sources supplied approximately 3.04 billion gallons, or 73.9 percent of the City's total water supply in 2000.

The pumping station at the C-4 well site is capable of delivering approximately 18,000 gallons per minute. The G2 pumping station is capable of delivering approximately 17,000 gallons per minute.

The City of Cerritos recently expanded its municipal water supply system with the addition of a new water well. While the G5 well is still under construction, when complete it will have an operational capacity of 2,500 to

3,500 gallons per minute. The City's water system uses a combination of electrical and natural gas power to ensure uninterrupted water service. The location of the City's water wells is shown on Exhibit CON-1, Water Sources. The operational capacity of the four wells is shown in Table CON-1, Existing Groundwater Resources.

**Table CON-1
Existing Groundwater Resources**

Well	Operational Capacity (gpm)
C-1	2,000 gpm
C-2	3,500 gpm
C-4	3,500 gpm
C-5	3,000 gpm

Source: City of Cerritos.

3.1.3 SURFACE WATER

No naturally occurring permanent surface water features exist within the City of Cerritos. A number of man-made lakes are located within the City's recreational facilities, at Cerritos Regional Park, Heritage Park and Iron-Wood Nine Golf Course. In addition, existing storm drain facilities carry water during wet weather events.

3.1.4 RECYCLED WATER

The City of Cerritos has made significant efforts to conserve water. The City's existing recycled water distribution system saves approximately 815 million gallons of potable water each year.

In efforts to reduce potable water consumption, the City of Cerritos irrigates more than 200 acres of City-owned property, which includes most parks, parkways and medians with recycled water. The wastewater originates from industries, businesses and homes and is treated by a tertiary (three-stage) process by the County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County before being used for irrigation.

The City of Cerritos purchases its recycled water from the Los Coyotes Water Reclamation Plant, located west of the I-605 freeway and north of the SR-91 freeway, adjacent to the Iron-Wood Nine Golf Course. The City of Cerritos has constructed a 15,000 gallon per minute pump station on the County Sanitation District's property, along with a recycled water distribution system that distributes recycled water through 25 miles of water lines citywide.

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In addition, recycled water is also used for landscape irrigation at schools, Cerritos Community College, a county park, cemetery, freeway landscaping and privately-owned landscape areas, such as the Cerritos Towne Center and commercial nurseries located in the City. The City-owned Iron-Wood Golf Course was the first facility in the City to utilize recycled water for irrigation purposes.

To encourage homeowners in the City to reduce the use of potable water for irrigation purposes, the City has established a 2,500 square-foot water conservation and demonstration garden at Cerritos Park East. Located in the southeast section of the park along Ironbark Drive, the garden features nearly 40 varieties of drought-tolerant trees, ground cover and shrubs.

3.2 ENERGY RESOURCES

3.2.1 ELECTRICITY AND POWER

Southern California Edison (SCE) is the primary supplier of electricity for the City of Cerritos. SCE has a total service area of over 50,000 square miles. The City of Cerritos represents a very small share of the total energy market.

The State of California deregulated the energy generation market in early 1998. Deregulation allowed other providers the opportunity to supply electricity to the consumer. Since this time, the State has experienced periods of insufficient power generation, rapid increases in wholesale energy costs and increased costs to consumers. As a result, the State has imposed rolling blackouts across the State that are expected to continue until power supplies can be increased. Until the power crisis is resolved, the City of Cerritos will continue to promote methods of conservation and investigate ways to ensure an adequate and reliable energy source for its residents.

3.2.2 NATURAL GAS

The Southern California Gas Company supplies natural gas to 18 million consumers, for over 23,000 square miles of Southern California, including the City of Cerritos.

Southern California Gas Company has the ability to serve existing and future residents in Cerritos, as indicated in this General Plan.

3.3 WASTE MANAGEMENT

3.3.1 SOLID WASTE

Solid waste collection and recycling in the City of Cerritos is provided by a private contractor, CalMet Services, Inc. CalMet trucks pick up trash from residents, businesses and industrial customers weekly. The refuse is first hauled to a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) in the City of Downey, where recyclable items are pulled from the waste stream.

The Cerritos recycling program was implemented on June 1, 1995 in response to Assembly Bill 939, the California Integrated Waste Management Act. Under this law, all California cities are required to divert 25 percent of their waste stream from landfill by 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000. Cerritos is succeeding in these goals. Each year, the MRF system diverts more than 15,000 tons of Cerritos trash from landfills.

3.3.2 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

The City of Cerritos understands stormwater runoff is a significant contributor to local and regional pollution. Urban stormwater runoff is the largest source of unregulated pollution to the waterway and coastal areas of the United States. Stormwater can be contaminated with a variety of pollutants that contribute to increased health risks and environmental damage.

The City of Cerritos seeks to protect and promote the health, safety and welfare of its citizens by controlling non-stormwater discharges to the stormwater conveyance system. The City of Cerritos is required by the Clean Water Act and other federal, state and regional regulations to control the discharge of pollutants to the storm drain system, including the discharge of pollutants from construction sites and areas of new development or significant redevelopment.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Local stormwater pollution control measures are implemented pursuant to the Clean Water Act, Federal Water Quality Control Act and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act prohibits any person from discharging pollutants through a "point source" into a "water of the United States" unless they have an NPDES permit. NPDES permits regulate the discharges from publicly owned facilities. The NPDES program also regulates wet weather

discharges such as stormwater discharges from industrial activities, and municipal stormwater discharges including, urban stormwater runoff, combined sewer overflows and storm sewer overflows.

The Clean Water Act amendments of 1987 established a framework for regulating stormwater discharges from municipal, industrial and construction activities under the NPDES program. The primary objectives of the municipal stormwater program requirements are to effectively prohibit non-stormwater discharges and reduce the discharge of pollutants from stormwater conveyance systems to the maximum extent practicable (MEP), including management practices, control techniques and system, design engineering method and such other provisions that the U.S. EPA or the California State Water Resources Control Board deem appropriate for the control of such pollutants.

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program

Mandated by Congress under the Clean Water Act, the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program is a comprehensive two-phased national program for addressing the non-agricultural sources of stormwater discharges adversely affecting the quality of the nation's waters. The Program uses the NPDES permitting mechanism to require the implementation of control and monitoring measures designed to prevent harmful pollutants from being washed into local water bodies by stormwater runoff.

The NPDES program requires the owner or operator of any facility, or any person responsible for any activity that discharges waste into the surface waters of the U.S. to obtain a NPDES permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, as mandated by the Clean Water Act.

STATE AND REGIONAL PROGRAMS

The Clean Water Act provides that states are authorized to operate their own NPDES programs provided such programs meet minimum federal requirements. The municipal storm water National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit is issued by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The City of Cerritos currently operates under Permit No. CAS004001, Order No. 01-182. The Permit was adopted on December 31, 2001 and expires on December 31, 2006.

The objective of Order No. 01-182 is to protect the beneficial uses of receiving waters in Los Angeles County. To meet this objective, the Order requires that the Los Angeles Countywide Storm Water Quality Management Plan (SQMP) specify Best Management Practices (BMPs) that will be implemented to reduce the discharge of pollutants in storm water to the MEP. Further, Permittees are to assure that storm water discharges

from the MS4 shall neither cause nor contribute to the exceedance of water quality, standards and objectives nor create conditions of nuisance in the receiving waters, and that the discharge of non-storm water to the MS4 has been effectively prohibited.

Permit No. CAS004001 requires the implementation of a Storm Water Quality Management Program (SQMP), which provides specific guidelines to control, reduce and monitor discharges of waste to storm drain systems. The emphasis of the SQMP is pollution prevention through education, public outreach, planning and implementation as source control BMPs first and structural and treatment control BMPs second.

Standard Urban Storm Water Mitigation Plan (SUSMP)

The Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) was developed as part of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board's Municipal Stormwater Program. The SUSMP addresses stormwater pollution from certain types of new development and redevelopment. The SUSMP specifies the minimum required Best Management Practices (BMPs) that must be used for a designated project. Additional BMPs may be required on certain targeted categories of projects based on these regulations at the discretion of the City of Cerritos. Applicable project applicants are required to incorporate appropriate SUSMP requirements into their development plans.

CITY OF CERRITOS PROGRAMS

The City of Cerritos provides local implementation of the Federal, State and Regional stormwater regulations through the establishment of ordinances, policies and programs.

Stormwater and Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Controls Ordinance

The Stormwater and Urban Runoff Pollution Prevention Controls Ordinance (Ord. 777) provides specific local regulations related to stormwater pollution prevention. The intent of the ordinance is to protect the health, safety and general welfare of the citizens of the City through regulating non-stormwater discharge to the storm drain system; providing for the control of spillage, dumping or disposal of materials into the storm drain system; and reducing pollutants in stormwater and urban runoff to the maximum extent practicable.

Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)

The City of Cerritos requires a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) be completed prior to any construction activity on projects that will

disturb more than two acres of soil. SWPPP's are operator/owner-prepared plans that identify BMP's for implementation and monitor the effectiveness of the BMPs. The SWPPP applies to all on-site construction activities and must identify the source control and/or treatment control practices (BMP's) that would significantly reduce, avoid or mitigate runoff pollutants to the "maximum extent practicable."

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Educating the public about stormwater pollution prevention contributes to the effectiveness of local and regional stormwater management programs. The County of Los Angeles and the City of Cerritos have implemented public information and outreach programs that assist residents and businesses to understand the current stormwater problem and implementation strategies that reduce stormwater pollution.

Consistent with Federal requirements, the County of Los Angeles has developed a five-year countywide stormwater public education strategy. This strategy focuses on residents, school children, businesses and public employees and includes a full range of outreach tools and methods to educate and train these audiences about stormwater pollution management and prevention. The City of Cerritos contributes financially to this program.

In addition, the City of Cerritos has implemented a local public education and outreach effort. This public outreach and education effort promotes public awareness of stormwater pollution thorough distribution of literature and other outreach materials so that residents are informed of ways to prevent stormwater pollution through safe housekeeping practices.

3.3.3 HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE

Cerritos residents can safely dispose of used motor oil, cleaners with acids or lye, paint, batteries, pesticides, weed killer and chemicals from hobby and art projects at a Household Hazardous Waste Roundup. In cooperation with the City of Cerritos, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works plans regular collection of household hazardous waste. In previous years, more than 500 Cerritos residents have appropriately disposed of more than 53,000 pounds of toxic materials.

3.3.4 USED OIL COLLECTION

The City of Cerritos has been awarded a three-year \$60,000 grant from the California Integrated Waste Management Board to educate residents about used motor oil recycling. The funds will be used for a public outreach and educational campaign, including printed materials, movie screen advertisements and other means of public outreach.

Used motor oil can be disposed of, free of charge, at two locations within the City of Cerritos:

- Cerritos Towne Center Chevron, 17255 Bloomfield Avenue; and
- Firestone Auto Square, 11524 South Street.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Biological resources include natural and altered biotic habitats (vegetative communities and corresponding wildlife habitat), as well as associated flora and fauna.

The City of Cerritos is almost entirely urbanized and landscaped with mostly non-native species. No rare or endangered plant or animal species have been identified within the City. The City's most significant plant resources are its ornamentals. The extensive urban landscaping that occurs within the City provides habitat for small animals. However, the urbanized nature of the City provides a less than ideal habitat.

3.5 COMMUNITY FOREST

The urbanized, built out nature of the City of Cerritos limits the existence of naturally occurring native tree stands. In an effort to capture the aesthetic quality of a "community forest," the City of Cerritos has made significant efforts in planting tree resources. The City's Tree Division has coordinated the planting of nearly 30,000 trees within the City. The City plants, or coordinates with developers to plant, an average of 250 new and replacement trees per year in an effort to preserve and enhance the park-like atmosphere.

The City of Cerritos has adopted a Tree Ordinance (Chapter 9.75) to ensure compliance with the City's objective of creating and maintaining a community forest. The Ordinance provides specific regulations, which strive to preserve and enhance the existing tree resources within the City. To exemplify this, the City was named a "Tree City USA" by the National Arbor Day Foundation. This designation was granted to the City of Cerritos through a proven record of tree care, planting and conservation.

The City of Cerritos has begun utilizing the City's GIS mapping capabilities to inventory existing street trees. The development of this inventory will assist the City in identifying important information regarding the age, type, and conditions of the various species.

3.6 CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

The City of Cerritos has a rich and diverse history. This history is comprised of buildings, trees, artifacts of historical significance, cultural traditions and community memories. The City takes pride in its heritage and seeks to preserve its historic resources and the memories they evoke. The City has created a special section dedicated to the history of Cerritos in the Cerritos Public Library. This collection of books, documents, photographs and other resources provides a substantial documentation of Cerritos' past.

4.0 PLANNING FACTORS, GOALS AND POLICIES

WATER RESOURCES

Planning Factor

The City of Cerritos recognizes that water is a limited resource requiring conservation. Therefore, protection and conservation of the City's water resources should be a factor in all land use decisions.

Goal *CON-1 Protect and conserve the City of Cerritos' existing and future water resources.*

Policies CON-1.1 Continue to expand the utilization of recycled water for irrigation purposes and other appropriate uses.

CON-1.2 Enhance outreach activities to educate residents on the importance of water conservation (e.g., promote use of drought tolerant plant material in both residential and commercial applications).

CON-1.3 Reduce the demand for non-local water resources through the utilization of local groundwater resources.

CON-1.4 Establish and implement water conservation methods for all city-maintained facilities in order to provide a demonstrable example of conservation techniques.



ENERGY

Planning Factor

Energy issues have become a local and statewide concern in recent years. The ability of the state's energy producers to supply the City of Cerritos with a sufficient and reliable energy source can have significant impacts on safety and economic integrity. Therefore, the City must investigate ways to generate and conserve our energy resources so that it contributes to reductions in demand locally and statewide.

Goal *CON-2* *Conserve and generate energy resources through the use of available technology and conservation practices.*

Policies *CON-2.1* Pursue new opportunities to enhance the provision of safe, reliable and affordable energy to Cerritos residents, businesses, public facilities, institutional uses, and educational facilities.

CON-2.2 Apply applicable government energy standards to all new development.

CON-2.3 Establish a standardized menu of incentives for future development activity, so that conservation methods are an integral part of new development.

CON-2.4 Strive to incorporate energy conservation methods into all city facilities to set an example for the community.

SOLID WASTE

Planning Factor

The City of Cerritos understands that the generation of solid waste impacts local landfills. The limited capacities of our region's landfills requires a universal effort by all communities. Therefore, the City must continue its efforts in source reduction of solid wastes and recycling.

Goal *CON-3* *Establish programs and policies to reduce the generation of solid waste.*

- Policies**
- CON-3.1 Continue to fulfill requirements as set forth in California Integrated Waste Management Act for the diversion of solid waste within the City.
 - CON-3.2 Continue to provide education and outreach to residents and businesses to contribute to the reduction, recycling and disposal of solid wastes.
 - CON-3.3 Continue to expand recycling efforts.

WASTEWATER

Planning Factor

The City of Cerritos understands that wastewater, if not properly conveyed, can have dire consequences to the health of residents and the health of the environment. Not only does wastewater have effects on the local environment, it can also affect environments downstream.

Goal *CON-4 Ensure proper conveyance and disposal of wastewater within the City of Cerritos.*

- Policies**
- CON-4.1 Ensure major collection and trunk lines and lift stations within the City are adequately maintained through continued monitoring and maintenance.
 - CON-4.2 Ensure new development provides an analysis of potential impacts to the existing conveyance system.

STORMWATER POLLUTION

Planning Factor

Stormwater resulting from periods of wet weather can influence the quality of the environment. Not only does polluted stormwater flow and non-stormwater flow cause potential safety concerns, it also can increase the level of pollutants in the local and regional environment. Periods of rapid runoff can carry pollutants into the existing drainage system, resulting in high concentrations of pollutants in the local and downstream environment.

The City of Cerritos is authorized to discharge stormwater, and in some instances, non-storm water into the storm drain system under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.

- Goal** CON-5 *Ensure the adequate conveyance of stormwater, and introduce techniques and methods that reduce the presence of pollutants consistent with regional, state and federal standards.*
- Policies**
- CON-5.1 Ensure existing drainage facilities are properly maintained and absent of debris or other material that may impact stormwater flow and water quality.
 - CON-5.2 Ensure the appropriate stormwater mitigation techniques are employed for all construction and grading activities.
 - CON-5.3 Ensure all project-related stormwater mitigation techniques are sufficiently monitored.
 - CON-5.4 Ensure all new development complies with Federal, State and City regulations and ordinances related to stormwater.
 - CON-5.5 Continue to implement development planning requirements specified in the City's municipal NPDES permit, including, to the maximum extent practicable, watershed protection measures.

Related Goals and Policies: Refer to Goal OSR-7 and its related policy, which address the benefits that open space provide related to stormwater runoff.

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TREE PRESERVATION

Planning Factor

The City of Cerritos takes great pride in its efforts to develop its “Community Forest”. Preserving and enhancing these resources contributes to the community’s image, provides visual buffers and improves the aesthetics of the built environment.

- Goal** CON-6 *Preserve and enhance the City’s “Community Forest.”*
- Policies**
- CON-6.1 Enforce the City’s Tree Preservation Ordinance in order to preserve the City’s existing urban forest.
 - CON-6.2 Continue to utilize GIS as a tool for mapping existing and future tree resources.

- CON-6.3 Ensure the continued planting and proper maintenance of tree resources within the City.
- CON-6.4 Strive to identify and honor “Landmark” trees that have been identified as having significant historical or cultural significance as “Heritage Trees.”
- CON-6.5 Ensure that the City retains its Tree City USA designation with the continued implementation of the City’s tree care, planting and conservation measures.

CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

Planning Factor

The City of Cerritos values its history. The historic and cultural resources and the memories they evoke are unique to the City and should be documented, preserved and made available to all residents of Cerritos.

Goal *CON-7 Promote community knowledge and appreciation for the heritage of the City of Cerritos.*

Policies CON-7.1 Provide access to information on Cerritos’ history to schools, organizations, groups and individuals.

CON-7.2 Encourage the involvement of all sections of the community in learning about the historic and cultural resources in Cerritos.

Goal *CON-8 Enhance, preserve and protect the City of Cerritos’ historic and cultural resources.*

Policies CON-8.1 Ensure that all items of historic and cultural significance, including houses, are preserved for the enjoyment by all Cerritos residents.

CON-8.2 Identify, record, map and evaluate all potential historic and cultural resources within the City.

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