



Santa Maria
General Plan

imagine



Public Facilities and Services Policy Framework

Public Draft | January 28, 2025

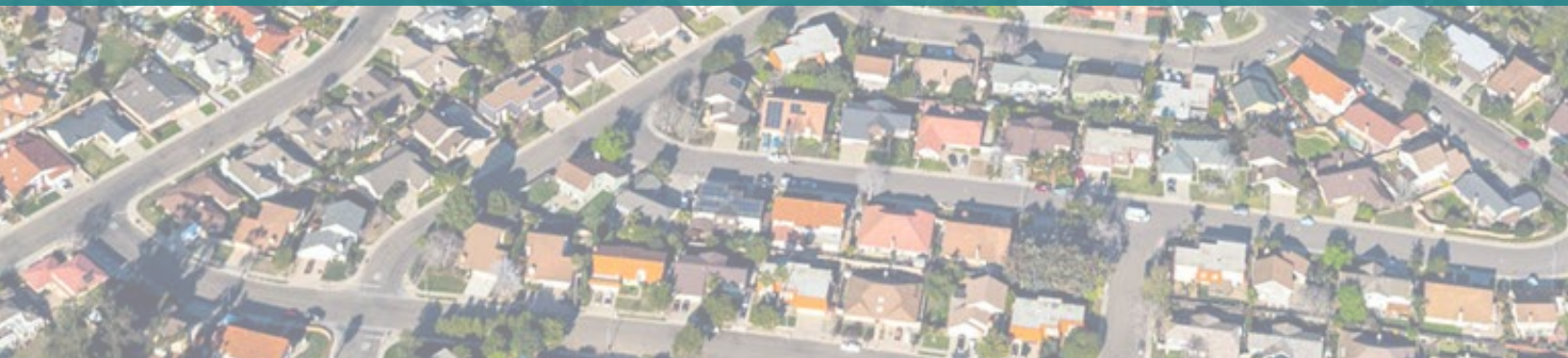


Table of Contents

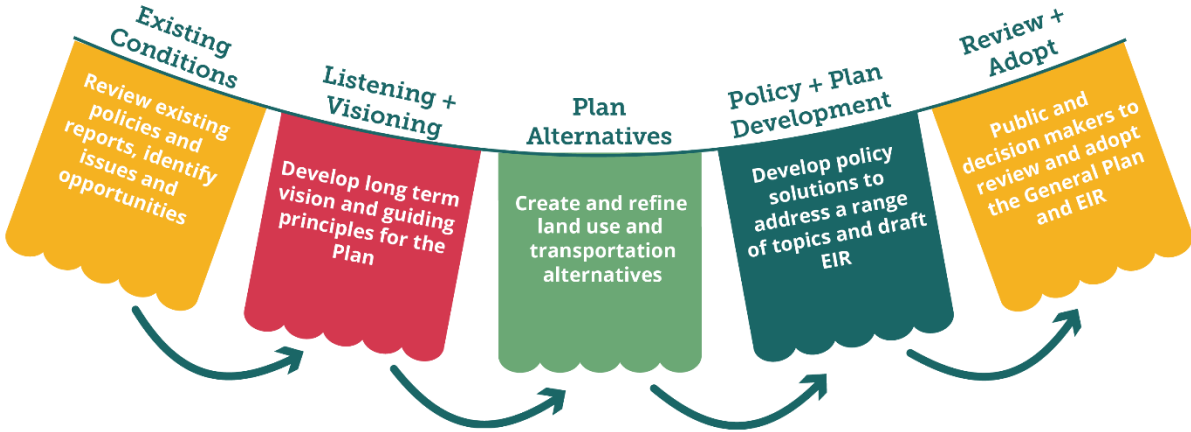
I. Introduction	1
II. Statutory Requirements.....	2
General Plan Requirements.....	2
Regulatory Setting	2
III. Related Vision and Guiding Principles.....	4
IV. Setting the Scene: Issues and Opportunities.....	6
Opportunities and Strengths	6
Issues and Challenges	6
V. Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions	7
Major Infrastructure	7
Schools.....	9
Libraries.....	10
Public Buildings.....	10
Police	11
Fire	11
Solid Waste.....	12

Public Facilities and Services Policy Framework

I. Introduction

The City of Santa Maria has embarked on its first comprehensive update to the General Plan, called “Imagine Santa Maria,” to create a forward-looking document that will serve as the blueprint for the city through the year 2045. A General Plan is a policy document required by State law that provides long-range guidance for land use, development and other issues such as economic growth, open space, conservation, affordable housing, and employment. The goals, policies, and implementation actions in the General Plan will serve as a compass for decision-makers and will shape future plans and actions of the City. This revised policy document will replace the existing General Plan.

The General Plan Update has five major phases, which are designed as step-by-step building blocks (see the image below). The project is currently in the “Policy and Plan Development” phase.



During the Existing Conditions phase, City staff worked closely with the consultant team to identify trends, issues, opportunities, and priorities, which are summarized in seven existing conditions reports that are available on the project website, www.ImagineSantaMaria.com. Throughout the Listening + Visioning Stage, community members shared their vision for the future, qualities of Santa Maria to preserve, and issues to address. This feedback was incorporated in the [Vision, Guiding Principles, and Areas of Change and Stability](#). From there, City staff and the consultant team developed [Plan Alternatives](#) to identify different land use, mobility, and urban design options the City has to achieve the community’s Vision and implement the Guiding Principles. City Council approved a [Preferred Land Use Alternative](#) in 2023.

This Public Facilities and Services policy framework is a step in the General Plan Update process prior to drafting General Plan Elements. This framework highlights the key direction for the Public Facilities and Services Element and includes goals, policies, and implementation activities to achieve that direction. Topics covered in this framework include major infrastructure, schools, libraries, public buildings, police

and fire facilities, and solid waste systems. This policy framework was developed by incorporating findings from previous project phases, including technical analysis, relevant content from the existing General Plan, current planning best practices and requirements from State law, and feedback from community members, Technical Advisory Committee members, Planning Commission, City Council, and City staff. Nine policy frameworks have been prepared covering the following topics: Conservation and Open Space, Safety, Land Use and Community Design, Circulation and Mobility, Public Facilities and Services, Economic Development, Noise, and Health and Environmental Justice. Community feedback on the frameworks will shape goals, policies, and implementation actions in the General Plan.

II. Statutory Requirements

General Plan Requirements

According to State law, General Plans must include information on “the general location and extent of existing and proposed public facilities and services” including “the proposed general distribution and general location and extent of land uses for... solid waste and liquid disposal facilities” (California Government Code section 65302[a]). While State law recommends that these topics be covered in the land use element, the City of Santa Maria will address these topics in a separate element to highlight their importance and role in supporting the overall high quality of life in the community.

Regulatory Setting

Regulations that affect policy direction of this Element include:

Federal Clean Water Act. The Federal Clean Water Act (FCWA) is the comprehensive federal law governing water quality and water pollution in the United States. The FCWA works to protect water resources by prohibiting unlawful discharge of any pollutant into local waterways and authorizing the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) to develop national water quality criteria for pollutants in surface water

Statewide General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Industrial Activities, Order 2014-0057-DWQ (Industrial General Permit or IGP). The IGP implements the federally required stormwater regulations in California for stormwater associated with industrial activities discharging to waters of the United States. The IGP regulates discharges associated with 10 federally defined categories of industrial activities.

Statewide General Permit for Waste Discharge Requirements for Storm Water Discharges from MS4s, Order 2013-0001-DWQ. This permit regulates the discharge of stormwater from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), requiring cities to implement specific practices to manage stormwater runoff and protect water quality by controlling pollutants entering waterways from storm drains. Practices include managing development projects to minimize stormwater impacts and implementing best management practices to reduce pollution from urban areas.

Statewide General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities, Order 2022-0057-DWQ. This regulates dischargers whose projects disturb 1 or more acres of soil or whose projects disturb less than 1 acre but are a part of a larger common plan of development that in total disturbs 1 or more acres. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading and disturbances to the ground such as stockpiling, or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore the original line, grade, or capacity of the facility.

Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018. In June 2018, voters in the State of California passed the Parks and Water Bond Act of 2018. This proposition allocated \$4 billion to put towards California’s most pressing water, park, and natural resource needs. Funding has gone toward issues such as regional water supplies and water quality, stormwater management, water recycling, flood protection and repairs, ocean and coastal protection, local parks and open districts, and clean water and drought preparedness. Many of the specific issues targeted by this bill are prevalent in the city, such as the need for flood protection and repairs, regional water supplies, and local parks and open space districts. Many cities like Santa Maria continue to rely on State and Federal funding in addition to local funding programs for the protection of natural resources.

III. Related Vision and Guiding Principles

The General Plan Vision Statement describes Santa Maria as the community would like to see it in 2045. The Guiding Principles establish the direction the community should follow and the major ideas that the General Plan Update will put forward to achieve the community’s shared Vision for 2045. The full [Vision, Guiding Principles, and Areas of Change and Stability](#), approved by the City Council in 2021, are available on the Imagine Santa Maria project website. The following full-sentence excerpts from the Vision and Guiding Principles informed the preparation of this policy framework:

Vision

Santa Maria in 2045 is a community where families can establish and maintain multi-generational roots. It is close-knit, culturally diverse, and economically inclusive...

...People are proud of their history and heritage. This is reflected in the diverse, well-preserved historical resources and the attractive, inviting streets and public gathering places. Museums, art venues, a strong civic sector, and the many welcoming community events and celebrations are all evidence of a vibrant local culture.

Residents have convenient access on foot and by car, bus, and bicycle to jobs, schools, community amenities like parks and sports fields, and the region’s natural environment.

Public services are reliable, inclusive, and efficient, and the community is well-served by equitable, modern, and sustainable infrastructure, facilities, and utilities.

Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles establish the direction to follow to achieve the community’s shared Vision for 2045.

Culture, History, and Art

Celebrate and share Santa Maria’s multicultural heritage and contemporary diversity. Preserve historic resources, foster the arts, maintain a strong sense of community through cultural festivals, and invite visitors to enjoy the richness of local expression and resources.

Community Design

Create public spaces that reflect the community identity, foster civic pride, and invite community members to gather, both informally and for events. Design streets, buildings, and landscaping that reflect the community’s history, culture, and natural environment. Use lighting, street trees, benches, and other amenities to make sidewalks and public spaces safe and welcoming, with a focus on the Downtown and along the Main and Broadway corridors.

Community Health

Grow and expand physical and mental healthcare services to meet the needs of all residents. Improve community health by addressing the environmental justice priorities of disadvantaged communities, including seniors, low-income households, linguistically isolated families, the homeless, and youth, who comprise 35% of residents. Minimize residents' potential for exposure to noise, pesticides, and industrial pollution. Foster healthy lifestyles by expanding safe and attractive options for physical activity and by expanding healthy food access.

Natural Environment and Resilience

Conserve water resources in the city and support efforts to maintain the Santa Maria River. Expand opportunities to enjoy the area's natural resources and the region's beauty. Safeguard the community from natural hazards, including those exacerbated by climate change.

Connected Growth

To accommodate projected population, housing, and jobs growth, focus on improvements to existing neighborhoods along with infill and vacant site development. Expand beyond current City limits when needed, weighing the short and long term environmental, economic, infrastructure, public service, and fiscal trade-offs. Establish strong cultural, design, and physical connections between newly developed areas and the rest of Santa Maria.

Utilities, Facilities, and Services

Provide residents and businesses with equitable access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable infrastructure and utilities, including water, wastewater, flood control, gas, phone, cable, and broadband internet. Deliver high-quality services and facilities for all community members, including expedient emergency response, accessible health care, high-quality education and career training, and convenient and equitable access to well-maintained parks and recreational facilities.

Governance and Engagement

Continue to conduct and increase meaningful and inclusive civic engagement that empowers a diversity of perspectives in public decision-making. Provide residents and businesses with high-quality, equitable, and accessible customer service, including City communications and events in multiple languages and interpretation services. Partner with community organizations and institutions to build trust and increase participation, including among youth, who will be the city leaders in 2045.

IV. Setting the Scene: Issues and Opportunities

The sections below outline opportunities, strengths, issues, and challenges that drove the direction of the Public Facilities and Services policy framework. This policy framework builds on the opportunities and strengths and identifies strategies to remedy the issues and challenges.

Opportunities, strengths, issues, and challenges were identified based on existing conditions, the Vision and Guiding Principles, technical studies, community engagement results, and conversations with City staff. Links to past project work may be found on the project website:

<https://www.imaginesantamaria.com/resources>.

Opportunities and Strengths

Quality public services. Santa Maria residents have expressed a clear commitment to maintaining high-quality public services as essential to the city's character. In the Qualities and Changes Survey (2020), 74% of survey respondents cited Santa Maria's "quality public services, including schools and local government," as being "very important" to preserve. This was identified as the most important quality to preserve over the next 20-30 years out of 10 potential qualities to choose from. 67% specifically cited "quality parks and trails." (*Finding from community engagement*).

Issues and Challenges

Annexation. As Santa Maria annexes new areas, the city faces the challenge of balancing new recreation and park facilities, utility infrastructure, and water supply with the maintenance of existing facilities and resources. Expanding services to annexed areas can strain city resources, placing additional pressure on water resources and potentially impacting the quality of upkeep in established parts of the city. Policies supporting phased development, sustainable water management, and cost-sharing will be essential to manage growth effectively while maintaining service quality across all neighborhoods. (*input from City staff*).

V. Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

The Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions section outlines the City of Santa Maria's strategic approach to managing and enhancing critical infrastructure, services, and facilities. This section serves as a roadmap to achieve the community's vision of a well-equipped, resilient, and thriving city that meets the needs of its current and future residents.

The goals are organized into key areas that address vital public infrastructure systems, including water resources, wastewater, stormwater management, schools, libraries, public buildings, and public safety services. By maintaining high standards of service, investing in future growth, and fostering regional collaboration, the City aims to create a balanced approach to resource management and service delivery.

Each goal, policy, and implementation action includes a source in parentheses. Sources include: the City's existing General Plan, State law, existing conditions reports, community input, guidance from City staff, industry or regional best practices, or related materials.

Major Infrastructure

Goal PFS-1: Public infrastructure. Public infrastructure provides a high level of service for the existing population and keeps pace with planned growth. (Revised; Goal 11 and 13)

Policy PFS-1.1: Resource and infrastructure capacities. Maintain resource and infrastructure standards and capacities to meet the city's needs. (Revised; Objective 13.1.a)

Action PFS-1.1.1: Conduct an analysis of the impacts of ADUs and increased density on public services and infrastructure, identifying areas where these changes may require system upgrades to maintain service levels. (Existing Conditions Report)

Action PFS-1.1.2: Review and update the City's Growth Mitigation Program to ensure it effectively addresses the needs of a growing population and infrastructure demands. (Revised; Goal 13 Implementation Program)

Policy PFS-1.2: Wastewater System. Maintain a wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system capable of meeting the daily and peak demand of existing and future city residents and businesses. (Retained; Objective 11.1.b)

Goal PFS-2: Water resources. High quality drinking water meets existing and future water demands. (Revised; Goal 1).

Policy PFS-2.1: Water system. Maintain and expand the existing water system to meet the daily and peak demands of existing and future city residents and businesses. (Revised; Objective 11.1.a(1))

Action PFS-2.1.1: Update the City's Utility Capacity Study to assess the adequacy of current infrastructure and identify necessary improvements to accommodate future growth. (Existing Conditions Report)

Policy PFS-2.2: Supply portfolio. Improve the reliability of the water supply for current and projected demand by diversifying the City's water supply portfolio, including maintaining and increasing the City's groundwater wells, implementing the use of well water and recycled water for landscaping, exploring additional sources of water supply, and supporting the State Water project. (Revised; Objective 1.1.a (1) and Goal 1 Implementation Programs)

Policy PFS-2.3: Groundwater. Improve the long-term recharge of the Santa Maria Valley Groundwater Basin by retaining natural watershed areas, developing regional recharge basins, and minimizing impervious surfaces in new development. (Retained; Objective 1.1.b)

Policy PFS-2.4: Regional coordination. Participate in regional coordination targeting aquifer recharge and sustainable groundwater supply. (Revised; Objective 1.1.c)

Action PFS-2.4.1: Establish regional recharge basins to enhance groundwater sustainability by capturing stormwater runoff and replenishing local aquifers. (Revised; Objective 1.1.b)

Policy PFS-2.5: Water Quality. Monitor potable water quality and treat, as necessary to meet drinking water standards. (Revised; Objective 1.1.d)

Policy PFS-2.6: Contaminant mitigation. Manage contaminated sites to protect natural systems from groundwater infiltration and stormwater runoff. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-2.7: Efficient Water Use. Participate in and implement programs and measures that promote the efficient use of water. (Revised; Objective 1.1.f)

Action PFS-2.7.1: Encourage conservation measures to promote the efficient use of water, and public awareness campaigns to promote conservation. (Revised; Objective 1.1.e)

Goal PFS-3: Stormwater management. The stormwater management system mitigates flood risks, enhances water quality, and promotes environmental health. (New)

Policy PFS-3.1: Conveyance of Surface Drainage. Ensure that all surface drainage is safely conveyed through the use of retardation basins, storm drains, recharge basins, and other infrastructure. (Retained; Objective 11.1.c(1))

Action PFS-3.1.1: Develop a Storm Drain Master Plan to address stormwater management, improve flood resilience, and reduce the impact of surface runoff. (Existing Conditions Report)

Action PFS-3.1.2: Study a potential assessment district for funding regional stormwater programs. (Existing Conditions Report)

Action PFS-3.1.3: Review and update the City's Grading and Drainage Standards. (Existing Conditions Report)

Action PFS-3.1.4: Implement capital improvement projects to prevent impacts from localized flooding events. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-3.2: Retardation basins. Requiring new development projects to construct retardation basins or to develop and pay into a regional system. (Revised; Objective 11.1.c(2))

Policy PFS-3.3: County Flood Control. Collaborate with County Flood Control to mitigate peak flows from east of US 101. (Existing Conditions Report)

Goal PFS-4: Annexation. Infrastructure, parks, and recreational facilities meet the needs of newly annexed parts of the city. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-4.1: Recreational and parks facilities. Develop recreational and park facilities in annexed areas to meet the needs of new residents, following standards for equitable access to parks and integrating recreational amenities into neighborhood planning. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-4.2: Infrastructure and municipal services. Ensure that annexed areas receive adequate infrastructure and municipal services, matching the quality and accessibility provided in existing city neighborhoods and aligning with the city's overall growth plan. (Community Input)

Schools

Goal PFS-5: Public and private schools. A collaborative relationship with educational institutions delivers high-quality education, provides safe and supportive environments, and enriches the lives of students and community members alike.

Policy PFS-5.1: School enrollment. Continue to work with the Santa Maria-Bonita School District, Santa Maria Joint Union High School District, private schools, and charter schools to monitor local K-12 enrollment and plan for impacts related to growth or decline. (Existing Practice)

Policy PFS-5.2: School siting. Work with public school districts, private schools, and charter schools to identify potential school sites to meet future growth. (Revised; Objective 12.1.a)

Policy PFS-5.3: Educational programming and afterschool care. Partner with schools to expand access to educational and afterschool programming that is affordable, inclusive, and supportive of working families. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-5.4: Safe Routes to School. Promote pedestrian safety and connectivity between homes and schools by supporting infrastructure improvements (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and bike lanes) to ensure safe, accessible pathways for students. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-5.5: Hancock College. Support the expansion of Hancock College's facilities and services outlined in their Facilities Master Plan in a manner that is compatible with the existing campus and surrounding neighborhoods. (Community Input)

Libraries

Goal PFS-6: High-quality libraries. An accessible, modern library system fosters lifelong learning, facilitates community engagement, and supports youth development through innovative services and resources. (Revised; Goal 10)

Policy PFS-6.1: Library service. Maintain a ratio of 0.5 square feet of library space per capita and 1.5 to 2 books per capita to keep library services apace with community growth. (Revised; Objective 10.1.c)

Policy PFS-6.2: Accessible libraries. Promote equitable access to library services through ADA-compliance, branch locations, mobile libraries, and online resources. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-6.3: Youth and afterschool programming. Expand library programming that supports youth education, literacy, and enrichment through afterschool and summer programs. (Best Practice)

Public Buildings

Goal PFS-7: Publicly owned buildings. City-owned buildings effectively serve public needs, honor historic assets, and provide adaptable, multi-use spaces that evolve alongside the community. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-7.1: City Hall. Maintain and enhance City Hall as a central hub for government services and community engagement by ensuring accessibility, modernizing facilities, and creating a welcoming environment for residents. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-7.2: Water conservation. Design new and renovated landscaping at all City buildings to efficiently use water. (Revised; Goal 1 Implementation Programs)

Policy PFS-7.3: Historic City-owned buildings. Preserve and rehabilitate historic City-owned buildings to maintain their cultural and architectural significance. (Community Input)

Policy PFS-7.4: Energy efficiency. To reduce operating and maintenance costs, identify opportunities for environmental performance improvements (e.g., equipment replacements, audits, retro-commissioning, and building retrofits). (Best Practices)

Policy PFS-7.5: Strategic siting. Promote the co-location of public parks and City facilities to enhance access to services and green space. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-7.6: Multi-use facilities. Design City-owned buildings to be adaptable for multiple uses by integrating flexible layouts and multi-functional spaces that support diverse community needs, gatherings, and events. (Best Practice)

Police

Goal PFS-8: Police facilities and services. Comprehensive police facilities and services ensure public safety, build community trust through engagement, and promote effective, responsive policing. (Revised; Goal 10)

Policy PFS-8.1: Adequate police service. Maintain a ratio of 1.3 sworn officers for each 1,000 residents to ensure that Santa Maria Police Department is sufficiently staffed and equipped to meet the community's safety needs. (Revised; Objective 10.1.a(1))

Policy PFS-8.2: Strategic siting. Locate police facilities to provide efficient coverage and improve response times throughout the city, strategically situating services to ensure broad access and address areas with higher emergency needs. (Best Practice)

Policy PFS-8.3: Community safety and outreach. Foster neighborhood safety and collaboration by promoting programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Community-Oriented Policing (COPS), and DARE to strengthen relationships between the Santa Maria Police Department and residents. Focus on community policing strategies, trust-building activities, and partnerships to enhance public safety awareness and address local concerns together. (Revised; Goal 10 Implementation Programs)

Fire

Goal PFS-9: Fire protection facilities and services. A highly effective fire protection system with well-planned facilities and adequate staffing safeguards lives, property, and environmental resources. (Revised; Goal 10)

Policy PFS-9.1: Adequate fire protection. Maintain a five-minute response capability to all areas within the City limits by ensuring facilities are strategically located and properly resourced for timely intervention. (Revised; Objective 10.1.b)

Action PFS-9.1.1: Monitor the City's existing and projected fire protection to inform facilities siting and resource management. (Revised; Goal 10 Implementation Program)

Policy PFS-9.2: Development review. Require fire department review of development plans to ensure compliance with fire codes, safety standards, and best practices for emergency access, incorporating fire prevention and mitigation measures as necessary. (Revised; Goal 10 Implementation Program)

Solid Waste

Goal PFS-10: Solid waste systems. An efficient, sustainable solid waste system minimizes landfill use, advances recycling efforts, and fosters regional cooperation to reduce environmental impact. (Revised; Objective 10.1.d(1))

Policy PFS-10.1: Waste diversion. Divert waste to meet state mandates, focusing on community education, recycling programs, and incentives that reduce landfill dependency. (Revised; Objective 10.1.d(2))

Policy PFS-10.2: Waste reduction through design. Promote sustainable building practices that reduce waste generation by encouraging developers to incorporate materials reuse, waste reduction, and recycling into their designs. (Revised; Objective 10.1.d(3))

Policy PFS-10.3: Regional cooperation. Collaborate with other agencies to develop coordinated waste management solutions, supporting a unified approach to recycling, waste diversion, and sustainable practices. (Revised; Objective 10.1.d(4))