

**SOURCE WATER PROTECTION GUIDELINES
FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

The City of San Diego has nine raw drinking water reservoirs. The reservoirs capture local rainwater and runoff; these local sources supply up to 20 percent of the City's water. The reservoirs also store imported water that is piped into the region through aqueducts. The reservoirs are critical components of the regional water supply system. However, the quality of water stored in these reservoirs is at risk because of residential and commercial development in the watershed lands draining into them. Recent studies have identified runoff from urban land uses, construction projects, and related development activities in the watersheds as the largest sources of pollution to the reservoirs. Nearly all the watershed lands draining into these reservoirs are located outside of the City; therefore the City currently has little ability to influence or guide land use and development practices in these areas.

The City uses many methods to ensure a healthful, high quality water supply. These methods include protecting the raw water supply, filtering and disinfecting the raw water at a treatment plant, and delivering this treated water through a closed, secure distribution system. The City faces significant challenges protecting its raw water supply because so much of the watershed areas are outside of its jurisdiction and, thus, are outside of the City's jurisdictional sphere of authority for land use planning, zoning, and building codes.

Currently, the City of San Diego Water Department evaluates and comments on new developments in its water supply watersheds on a case-by-case basis without the benefit of an overall strategy or guidelines for protection of water quality. There is a need, therefore, to establish uniform Source Water Protection Guidelines for New Development Projects to protect drinking water quality. The purpose of the Guidelines is to ensure that development in the water supply watersheds occurs in ways that protect the City's local source waters. City staff and possibly other local agencies will use the Guidelines as part of the development review, comment, and approval process. Land developers may use the Guidelines in conceiving and designing projects located in the water supply watersheds. Therefore, stakeholder involvement (e.g., County of San Diego, developers) will be critical in developing the Guidelines.

The Guidelines will build upon existing land use, zoning, and building code regulations. They will establish water quality control measures, specific to drinking water sources, for construction and new development. The Guidelines will also include recommendations for long-term maintenance of the control measures and monitoring of their effectiveness, plus public information and outreach strategies.

Protecting existing local water sources is a critical, though often overlooked, component of planning for regional water supply reliability. Planning for drinking water protection by creating the Source Water Protection Guidelines for New Development Projects will provide a road map for sensible development, will increase the reliability of the water supply system, and will likely reduce the cost of drinking water treatment. These Guidelines should also make cross-jurisdictional review of development plans more efficient and provide more insight and predictability for developers seeking approvals of new projects.