



# COUNTYWIDE PLAN

## COUNTY BUSINESS PLAN Governance Element Public Hearing Draft

August 2020

**HARD COPY VERSION.** The following is a hard copy version suitable for use during public review and discussion at public hearings, and for eventual adoption by the Board of Supervisors, as recorded by the County Clerk of the Board. A web-based version of the Governance Element is provided at [www.countwideplan.com](http://www.countwideplan.com) for easier use, review, and navigation. The Implementation Plan is the second part of the County Business Plan and is provided under separate cover. Tools associated with implementation of the Countywide Plan include a tracking & feedback system and a fiscal analysis model. Additional information on these tools can be found at [www.countywideplan.com](http://www.countywideplan.com).

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# Governance Element

The Governance Element promotes effective decision making, transparency, long-term value, accountability, and inclusivity. The Element includes a set of high-level goals and broad policies that support consistent County leadership sustained through time and succession.

## Purpose

The Governance Element:

- Provides guidance on County decision-making processes for officials, staff, the public, and other stakeholders.
- Commits the County to operating in a business-like manner.
- Incorporates the concept of adding long-term value into the decision-making process.
- Integrates the Countywide Plan into the County's ongoing operations.
- Links the budget process (the most tangible expression of the County's commitments) with the long-term goals of the Countywide Plan and the Board of Supervisors' priorities.
- Provides for effective administration and implementation of the Countywide Plan.

## Principles

We believe:

- Stable, consistent, and timely governance is essential to achieving the Countywide Vision.
- Effective governance attracts investment, which can generate more revenue for reinvestment, creating a self-sustaining cycle of prosperity.
- Informed decision making requires a Countywide Plan that is clearly communicated from County leaders and staff to the public, transparent and easy access to information, and processes through which an informed public can participate and provide feedback.
- We create, maintain, and grow economic value by providing efficient and effective public services and facilities necessary to support them.
- Achievement of our long term goals facilitates a system of continuous improvement through routine, iterative tracking of progress and a feedback loop to adjust policies and activities.
- Implementing the Countywide Plan requires the County to leverage the federal and state programs it administers and to partner with public agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.
- Fostering a system of continuous improvement within the County organization, including continuing education, improved technology, and innovative approaches, is essential to a proactive approach and high quality public facilities and services.

## Goals & Policies

### Goal GV-1 Decision Processes

**Decision making that implements the Countywide Plan in a clear and consistent manner.**

Policy GV-1.1 **Consistency with policies and priorities.** We require that staff recommendations to the Board of Supervisors be consistent with: the Countywide Plan; the Board's priorities; other County strategic plans, master plans, and other long term planning documents; and the parts of the Countywide Vision that are within the authority and responsibility of the County.

Policy GV-1.2 **Long-term benefit.** When considering and evaluating short term opportunities, we prioritize those that best move the County towards its long-term Countywide Plan goals and adds long-term value.

Policy GV-1.3 **Policy Plan amendments.** We will consider approving amendments to the Policy Plan only when the following conditions are met:

A. The proposed change is and will be fiscally neutral or positive.

B. The proposed change can be adequately served by public facilities and will not negatively impact existing level of service or the ability to provide future development with County services.

C. Amendments that do not meet the conditions in A or B above may still be considered for approval if the amendment is needed to satisfy state or federal mandates (for example: state housing laws), or to enact new policy decisions consistent with the Countywide Vision.

Policy GV-1.4 **Data use for decisions and regulations.** We make decisions and adopt regulations based on the best data available. In order to determine the quality of data, we evaluate the legitimacy of the data source, accuracy, timeliness, resolution, and completeness.

### Goal GV-2 Staff Resources

**County staff that have the education and skills necessary to provide responsive and effective service to the County's residents, businesses, and visitors.**

Policy GV-2.1 **Staff development.** We invest in the training and development of County staff to ensure the provision of quality services and support their career development, consistent with the availability of resources.

Policy GV-2.2 **Recruiting.** We seek to strike a balance between promoting from within, in order to maintain institutional knowledge and employee morale, and the need to seek external sources, who may bring in new perspectives and skills.

**Goal GV-3 Implementation and Partnerships**

**Continuous progress toward achievement of the Policy Plan Goals and Countywide Vision through sustained initiatives and leadership by the County, in partnership with other agencies and organizations.**

- Policy GV-3.1 **Board of Supervisors priorities.** We set priorities and direct timely actions for implementing the Countywide Plan through periodic adoption of Board of Supervisors priorities.
- Policy GV-3.2 **Related planning.** We implement the Countywide Plan through strategic plans, master plans, and/or other long-term plans adopted and maintained by County agencies, departments, and divisions, consistent with the Policy Plan.
- Policy GV-3.3 **Tools.** We create and maintain systems, procedures and technology that leverage County resources and state and federal funding to implement the Countywide Plan.
- Policy GV-3.4 **Private sector.** We recognize the importance of private sector and nongovernmental organizations in helping implement the Countywide Plan, and we structure regulations and procedures to facilitate their role in implementation.
- Policy GV-3.5 **Interagency cooperation.** We collaborate with initiatives and programs of other agencies such as local, county, regional, state and federal governments and non-profit agencies to implement the Countywide Plan.
- Policy GV-3.6 **Data maintenance.** We regularly update County-maintained datasets as resources permit, and we encourage other agencies and organizations to regularly update their data that the County uses for decision making.

**Goal GV-4 Budgeting and Fiscal Sustainability**

**An easily understood, transparent, and accountable finance system that implements the Countywide Plan, safeguards the County's assets, and maintains the public's trust and confidence.**

- Policy GV-4.1 **Balanced budget.** We adopt an annual budget that is balanced inclusive of carry-over fund balances and reserves. We only use one-time funds for ongoing operational cost as part of a larger plan to balance ongoing revenues and expenses over a multi-year period.
- Policy GV-4.2 **Fiscal impact disclosure.** We require requests for Board of Supervisors action to disclose the full fiscal impacts, including direct and indirect costs, to ensure that all decisions are fiscally sustainable. Proposals for projects or programs requesting County support or funding must also disclose whether County support or funding is required to maintain the project or continue the program in the future.
- Policy GV-4.3 **Assessment of risk.** We require a thorough exploration and analysis of the short and long term risks associated with recommendations for Board actions on County commitments.
- Policy GV-4.4 **Resource allocation.** We consider the complete comparative context of all County needs and responsibilities when making resource allocation decisions.

- Policy GV-4.5 **District considerations.** We allocate resources, while acting as a body of the whole, for their highest and best use within the County. Each Supervisor is responsible for communicating the needs and opportunities within their District to the body, so that they can be given appropriate consideration by the entire Board in this process.
- Policy GV-4.6 **Budget forecasts.** We forecast revenues for the annual budget based on historical trends analysis of federal, state, and local economic projections, and an assessment of economic, demographic, business cycle, and other factors. We conservatively estimate and budget revenue sources that tend to be volatile and most sensitive to changes in the economy. We specify the assumptions underlying our forecast and adjust such assumptions based on actual performance.
- Policy GV-4.7 **Property tax revenue stabilization.** We appropriate anticipated property tax revenue growth, in excess of the lesser of eight percent or the average annualized rate of growth of actual revenues, to an ongoing revenue stabilization set-aside contingency.
- Policy GV-4.8 **Prop 172 revenue stabilization.** We set aside any Prop 172 revenue in excess of the lesser of eight percent or the average annualized rate of growth of actual revenues, to an ongoing Prop 172 revenue stabilization set-aside contingency.
- Policy GV-4.9 **Program efficiency.** We prioritize efficiency and economy in the provision of County services, and we measure and evaluate performance to encourage productivity improvements.
- Policy GV-4.10 **Grant funding.** We proactively pursue grant funding from federal, state, and local agencies and private foundations, but in deciding which opportunities to pursue, we consider the current and future implications of accepting or declining grants, including the amount of local matching funds required, the extent and nature of in-kind services required, duration, the obligation of the County to continue the service after the grant ends, and related operating expenditures.
- Policy GV-4.11 **Cost recovery.** We annually review and update the full direct- and indirect-costs of providing County services, and we establish and annually update fees or charges to recover the full cost of County services.
- Policy GV-4.12 **Maintenance and replacement costs.** We shall incorporate maintenance and replacement costs in the pricing of new programs and facilities as well as recording such deferred costs as debits against revenues.
- Policy GV-4.13 **Retirement system funding reserve.** For savings resulting from negative Unfunded Accrued Actuarial Liability contribution rates, we prioritize setting aside these savings in reserve for reduction of any existing pension obligation bonds or in reserve against future rate increases.
- Policy GV-4.14 **Risk management.** We maintain an 80 percent confidence level in all risk management self-insurance funds as determined by a yearly actuarial study.
- Policy GV-4.15 **Funding municipal services.** We seek to reduce and ultimately eliminate the ongoing subsidization of municipal services in unincorporated areas.

**Goal GV-5 Tracking and Feedback**

**A system and process that facilitates updates to the Countywide Plan and the Board's priorities, by tracking progress toward Policy Plan Goals and measuring the effectiveness of implementation objectives.**

- Policy GV-5.1 **Data-influenced decisions.** We maintain a tracking and feedback system to provide meaningful data and useful information to influence public decisions.
- Policy GV-5.2 **Awareness.** We monitor external forces impacting San Bernardino County to build on their positive impacts and to ameliorate their negative impacts.
- Policy GV-5.3 **Proactive approach.** We shall seek to influence external factors impacting San Bernardino County sooner rather than later.

**Goal GV-6 Communication and Participation**

**Informed and connected leaders, staff, and public through transparent, frequent, and effective communication.**

- Policy GV-6.1 **Quality and accessibility.** We require a professional standard of quality and accessibility, across mediums, to communicate information with the accuracy, validity, and honesty that befits this County.
- Policy GV-6.2 **Internal coordination.** We require coordination of communication activities and products across the County organization so that coherent and consistent information is delivered.
- Policy GV-6.3 **Regular communication.** We foster an organizational culture that communicates regularly and proactively with customers, employees, and stakeholders.
- Policy GV-6.4 **Public access.** We provide public access to non-confidential data that the County maintains. We also seek to provide public access to non-confidential data from outside sources which the County has access to and uses regularly.
- Policy GV-6.5 **Broad and diverse participation.** We engage all segments of the community in County planning efforts and local decision making and facilitate robust participation by:
- A. Providing materials and information to enable those interested in public processes to have informed and effective participation;
  - B. Using convenient and accessible locations and facilities for public meetings;
  - C. Providing other means of participation, such as written comments or online surveys, as an alternative to attending public meetings; and
  - D. Encouraging broad and diverse membership on County committees and commissions, seeking to provide voice to the underrepresented.

Policy GV-6.6 **Social capital.** We cultivate broad support for public decisions by encouraging voting and civic engagement, promoting the development and use of gathering places, and facilitating volunteerism in the public sphere. In unincorporated areas, we also coordinate such actions through Community Action Guides.