Utilities, Facilities & Services

Aspiration

Foster equitable, efficient, accessible and resilient utilities, facilities and services networks that protect public health, sustain environmental quality, support economic development and facilitate new housing.

Goals, Strategies and Policies

Goal 1. Evolve coordinated planning, investment and operations across all utility, facility and service systems.

Strategies:

1.1. Identify:
    a) opportunities to consolidate, jointly manage or coordinate utilities, facilities and services across municipal boundaries; and
    b) inconsistencies between municipal, regional and state infrastructure priorities that create inefficiencies, redundancies or barriers to implementation.

1.2. Align utilities, facilities and services planning with regional land use, hazard mitigation, housing, transportation and economic development priorities.

1.3. Provide technical assistance to municipalities to inventory, map and assess utilities, facilities and services to support coordinated capital planning.

1.4. Partner with:
    a) state agencies to align funding cycles, regulatory requirements and project timelines; and
    b) municipalities, utilities and service providers to prioritize infrastructure investments and coordinate system upgrades, maintenance and emergency response.

1.5. Promote:
    a) coordinated capital planning;
    b) municipal adoption of capital improvement plans; and
    c) shared data standards and common reporting practices to preserve institutional knowledge and improve consistency.

1.6. Improve regional communication protocols related to system capacity, project timing, service disruptions and emergency response.

1.7. Evaluate proposed infrastructure projects for regional benefit, cost-efficiency, long-term resilience and operational sustainability.

1.8. Discourage siloed planning and uncoordinated service expansions that increase costs or long-term maintenance burdens.

1.9. Advance a unified regional framework that guides utilities, facilities and services planning, capital investment and long-term operations.

1.10. Implement joint training programs and regional coordination forums for municipal and utility staff.

1.11. Participate in statewide and multi-jurisdictional planning initiatives addressing cross-border service challenges.

Policies:
1.1.

Goal 2. Increase the efficiency and reliability of utilities, facilities and services.

Strategies:
2.1. Identify system vulnerabilities, capacity constraints and aging infrastructure that reduce service reliability or increase operational costs.
2.2. Improve system reliability by integrating redundancy, backup capacity, coordinated maintenance scheduling and emergency preparedness into infrastructure planning.
2.3. Promote:
  a) preventative maintenance, modernization programs, lifecycle planning and coordinated upgrade schedules across utilities, facilities and services;
  b) energy- and water-efficient technologies that reduce operating costs and resource demand; and
  c) the use of shared services or contracted support models that improve efficiency for small or rural municipalities.
2.4. Partner with utilities and service providers to test and deploy emerging technologies that improve efficiency and reliability.
2.5. Evaluate performance metrics to identify opportunities for system optimization and cost savings.
2.6. Discourage:
  a) projects or technologies that increase long-term maintenance costs or reduce system reliability; and
  b) the installation of outdated or high-maintenance systems where cost-effective alternatives exist.

Goal 3. Maintain and enhance the sustainability and resilience of utility and service systems.

Strategies:
3.1. Identify critical utilities, facilities and services at risk from flooding, erosion, heat, energy disruption or other hazards.
3.2. Provide technical assistance to municipalities to:
  a) improve long-term sustainability by prioritizing upgrades that reduce environmental impacts and operating costs; and
  b) improve system resilience through redundancy, distributed systems and adaptive design.
3.3. Promote:
  a) demand-reduction strategies across utility systems;

b) system redundancy and continuity planning to ensure service delivery during disruptions; and

c) renewable energy integration and sustainable design practices across utility networks and public facilities.

3.4. Align infrastructure resilience goals with watershed planning, conservation strategies and environmental protection objectives.

3.5. Evaluate long-term environmental and operational impacts of infrastructure investments.

3.6. Discourage infrastructure designs that increase exposure to hazards or environmental degradation.

Policies:

3.1. Oppose siting new infrastructure assets in high-risk hazard areas when alternatives exist

Goal 4.   Diversify and incentivize the efficient, affordable and equitable delivery of utilities, facilities and services.

Strategies:

4.1. Identify disparities in service access, cost burden and service quality across communities.

4.2. Provide technical assistance to municipalities to plan multi-use and integrated facilities that reduce operating costs.

4.3. Promote:
a) innovative service delivery models that expand access while maintaining efficiency and reduce per-unit service costs;
b) workforce development strategies that strengthen service delivery capacity;
c) shared services, coordinated purchasing and regional service models that improve affordability;
d) cost-effective design, operations, rate structures and assistance programs that reduce burdens on low-income households;
e) the expansion of low-income assistance programs; and
f) the preservation of essential services.

4.4. Partner with service providers, nonprofits and workforce programs to support equitable service provision

4.5. Advance universal service access by identifying and addressing physical, financial and informational barriers to participation.

4.6. Evaluate service delivery models for affordability, efficiency and equity outcomes.

4.7. Discourage:
a) design or operational practices that exclude or disadvantage vulnerable populations; and
b) cost-shifting practices that disproportionately impact low-income users.

Policies:

4.1.

Goal 5.   Expand utilities, facilities and services in planned growth areas and existing settlements.

Strategies:

5.1.   Identify:
   a) areas with existing infrastructure capacity suitable for additional development and reinvestment; and
   b) designated growth areas where infrastructure expansion can support compact development.

5.2.   Provide technical assistance to municipalities to:
   a) plan infrastructure expansions that reinforce compact settlement patterns; and
   b) preserve infrastructure capacity for priority housing, economic development and community projects.

5.3.   Prioritize infrastructure projects that enable infill, redevelopment and mixed-use development.

5.4.   Promote:
   a) the concentration of infrastructure investments in designated growth centers, established villages and planned growth areas; and
   b) coordinated infrastructure investments that support housing, transportation and economic development goals.

5.5.   Evaluate infrastructure capacity to ensure expansions match projected growth.

5.6.   Discourage:
   a) service extensions that enable sprawl or conflict with municipal or regional plans; and
   b) low-density development patterns that require costly new infrastructure.

Policies:

5.1.   Support:
   a) funding strategies that support infrastructure investment in designated growth areas

Goal 6.   Limit adverse visual, cultural and environmental impacts from utilities, facilities and services.

Strategies:

6.1.   Identify scenic, cultural, historic and ecological resources vulnerable to infrastructure impacts.

6.2.   Provide technical assistance to municipalities to:
   a) strengthen siting, design and mitigation standards to minimize visual, cultural and ecological impacts;
   b) evaluate the visual and environmental impacts of proposed utility projects;
   c) prioritize infrastructure alternatives that minimize long-term environmental and visual impacts; and

    d) align infrastructure siting decisions with conservation plans, scenic resource inventories, cultural landscapes and habitat protection goals.

6.3.   Promote:

    a) low-impact technologies, underground utilities and context-sensitive design where feasible; and

    b) best management practices that reduce habitat fragmentation, water quality impacts and visual intrusion.

6.4.   Partner with cultural, tribal, environmental and historic organizations during infrastructure planning and review.

6.5.   Advance equitable impact mitigation by ensuring no community bears disproportionate visual or environmental burdens.

6.6.   Evaluate long-term visual, cultural and environmental impacts of infrastructure investments.

6.7.   Discourage large-scale or visually intrusive infrastructure in rural, scenic or culturally significant areas.

Policies:

6.1.   Employ data on viewsheds, historic assets and ecological resources in project review processes.