



Conservation & Sustainability

As part of the Proposed FY 2025-26 Budget, a goal was set to create a “single unified division that brings together the City’s critically important conservation and sustainability policies, programs, and projects.” This summer, the Water Conservation, Sustainability, and Keep Santa Fe Beautiful sections were reorganized into the Conservation and Sustainability Division (CSD). The CSD is designed to be a cross-departmental hub for environmental innovation—beginning with water and waste, and expanding to citywide sustainability initiatives such as energy efficiency, carbon neutrality, city beautification, and climate adaptation.

City Leads by Example

The Water Conservation Program currently serves as a central partner across numerous city departments, providing both technical expertise and programmatic support. These established relationships highlight the integrative role water plays across municipal operations. Creating a dedicated Conservation and Sustainability Division will not only formalize and strengthen these collaborations but also improve quality of life with cleaner air, greener spaces, and healthier neighborhoods.

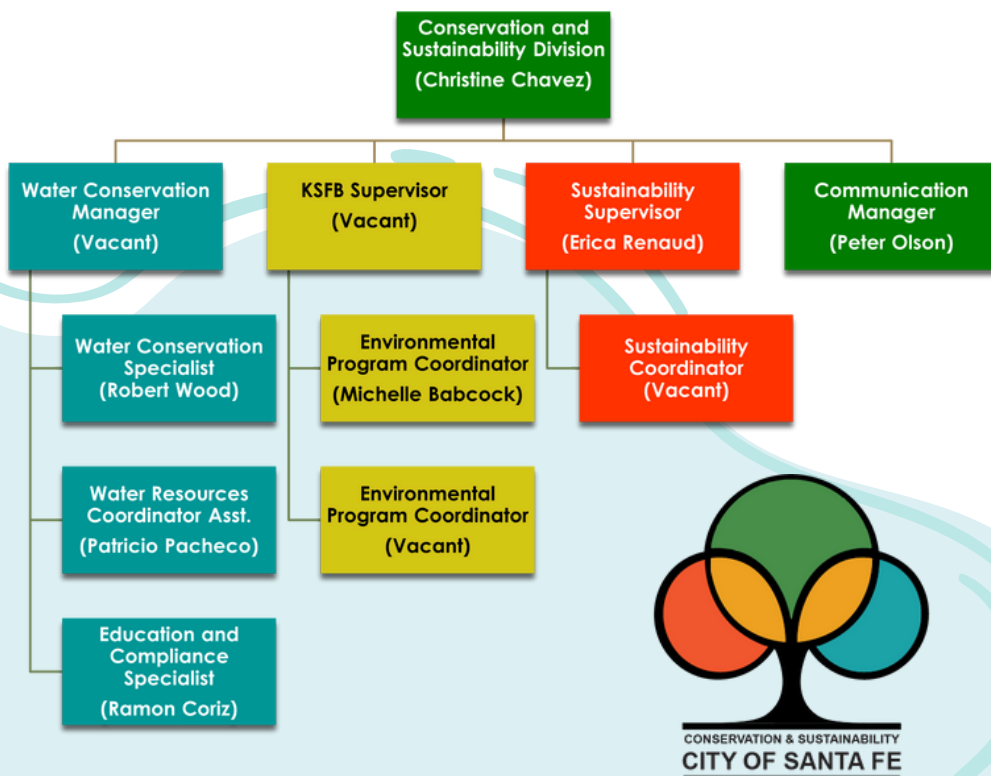
CSD can also help strengthen local economy by supporting green jobs, innovation, and sustainable development and equitable resource allocation like energy efficiency improvements for low-income households through our awarded CEED grant. As a unified division, it will also lead by example within City government, demonstrating how sustainable practices in operations, facilities, and public engagement reduce long-term costs through energy efficiency, waste reduction, and smarter infrastructure investments.



Initial Core Programs

The work of the division is organized into five program areas that reflect existing overlap:

- Enforcement & Compliance - Water ordinances, bag fee, and related enforcement.
- Beautification & Volunteer Engagement - Litter prevention, volunteer events, and community clean-ups. Supported by grants and fundraising events.
- Data & Performance - Scorecard tracking, program evaluation, and financial accountability.
- Marketing & Communications - Coordinated outreach campaigns and support for City messaging.
- Education & Outreach - Trainings, tabling, and unified public education.



Budget

Funding for the division will initially come from the consolidation of budget and grants from each section, including the Water Conservation Fee (paid annually by residents) and the Bag Ordinance Fee (paid by vendors). Program expenses, salary lines, and operational budgets are being merged into a single organizational code. This ensures transparency and long-term funding for water, waste, and energy-saving programs.

Accountability

The division's programs will be tracked through a Scorecard that measures progress on goals and documents outcomes. This tool allows staff to show where programs are succeeding, where adjustments are needed, and to provide regular updates to the public through the City's website.

Next Steps

- Fill vacant positions
- Update to the Water Conservation Plan in 2026
- Begin Updates to the Sustainability Plan
- Work with City Department Directors and staff to look at overlapping initiatives
- Work with the public for feedback on Division and Section scorecards

Marketing

By leveraging the current Save Water Santa Fe website and social media assets, all existing brands will be consolidated into one "Sustainable Santa Fe" brand. Once the rebranding is established, all the marketing efforts (radio, social media, print, etc.) will cover all topics under the Sustainable Santa Fe umbrella (water conservation, recycling, sustainability, KSFB initiatives, etc.). Additionally, recognizing the programmatic alignment of other divisions in PUD, this new division will also provide as-needed marketing services to these divisions so that all related parts have a cohesive look and broader reach.

Conclusion

The Conservation & Sustainability Division is a structural change designed to improve coordination, efficiency, and accountability. The Division will lead the city's efforts to Carbon Neutrality by 2040 - a legally adopted resolution requiring major reductions in greenhouse gases across all sectors. The mission is to balance environmental stewardship with economic vitality and community well-being.