Erin has an eclectic educational and professional background in urban policy, sustainability, design, and the arts. She recently completed an M.A. in Sustainable Urban Governance at the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica, where she researched sustainable development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and urban agriculture.

The water conservation cost-benefit analysis tool was used to estimate the potential water savings at all County-owned facilities. The results suggest a total potential savings of 10-15% from proposed upgrades, or 195-280 million gallons annually. This represents $1.7M in avoided costs and more than 300 MTCO₂e of GHG emissions reductions annually.

The County water use analysis led to the following recommendations:

- Prohibit the installation of new ornamental turf at all County facilities unless non-potable water is used for irrigation and encourage drought-tolerant landscaping.
- Replace all noncompliant plumbing fixtures in County-owned buildings by 1/1/2019.
- Upgrade water treatment systems to conserve water in cooling towers, if applicable.
- Implement a Countywide behavioral water conservation outreach program.

Creating lasting change

More than just a drop in the bucket…

About L.A. County COS

The L.A. County Office of Sustainability (COS), part of the Internal Services Department, coordinates sustainability programs for County facilities, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, water efficiency, and other green building services programs. With approximately 1,200 facilities in the County’s portfolio, there are significant opportunities for water savings in County operations.

CivicSpark Member Project

CivicSpark member Erin Brewster was tasked with supporting COS’s new water conservation program through the development of a comprehensive water conservation cost-benefit analysis tool to identify and prioritize potential water savings opportunities at County facilities. The tool uses basic information provided by facility managers to estimate potential water savings from plumbing fixture upgrades, advanced water treatment for cooling towers, and replacing ornamental turf with drought-tolerant landscaping. In addition to estimating water savings, the analysis tool quantifies the co-benefits associated with water conservation projects, including cost savings and GHG emissions reductions. After the Governor’s April 1st Executive Order on the drought, Erin also used this tool to help analyze the financial impact of the emergency water use regulations on the County’s building portfolio and identify new priorities for water conservation projects.

Annual Potential Water Savings

|Fixture Upgrades| 95-180 MG|
|Cooling Towers| 100 MG|
|Drought-tolerant Landscaping| Additional potential savings|

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1 MG saved annually!