Joint Village Strategic Planning Report to Hopi Tribal Council

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As Requested by the Hopi Tribal Council H-51-2022 Resolution

Project Purpose

The purpose of Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) is to address the impacts of the Bennett Freeze and Forced Relocation by planning for infrastructure, housing, community facilities, and economic development investments.

JVSP coordinates with the Hopi Tribal Council to advocate for such funding and investment.

Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) has been active since 2017.
JVSP has held weekly meetings most Tuesday mornings at 10 am MST since the spring of 2020.

For more information, visit www.HopiResilience.org

JVSP Planning Leading to Project Implementation

Joint Village Strategic Planning (JVSP) is now demonstrating what sustained Village outreach, strategic planning, advocacy, and implementation can accomplish. The story is especially important because the two Moenkopi Villages and Yuwehloo Pahki are geographically separated from the central concentration of Hopi villages. For years, residents and leaders in these communities often felt that their needs and priorities were distant from the center of attention. Village outreach led by the Hopi Office of Community Planning and Economic Development (OCPED), with Building Communities, helped change that dynamic: first by listening, then by developing community-driven plans, then by organizing the three communities through JVSP, and finally by helping pursue the resources and partnerships needed to implement those plans.

The Investment That Started the Process

The origins of Joint Village Strategic Planning can be traced to one of the Economic Development Team's earliest investments in community-based economic development. As Hopi confronted the announced closure of the Navajo Generating Station and the related economic consequences associated with the closure of the Peabody coal mine, the Economic Development Team committed $30,000 to a Village outreach initiative advocated by the Hopi Office of Community Planning and Economic Development (OCPED). The purpose was straightforward but important: go directly to Hopi Villages, listen to their leaders and residents, identify their priorities, and determine where focused planning and project-development assistance could make a difference.

Beginning in December 2017, that relatively modest investment supported an extensive outreach effort across Hopi. The resulting 2018 Village Outreach Final Report documented meetings throughout Hopi and a wide range of priorities involving water, housing, infrastructure, economic development, community facilities, and other needs. While many Villages participated, Upper Moenkopi, the Village of Moencopi (Lower), and Yuwehloo Pahki demonstrated particularly strong interest in continuing the process. That engagement led to individual community strategic planning and, ultimately, to the collaborative framework that became JVSP. The present report therefore tells not only the story of projects being implemented today, but also what grew from an early decision to invest in listening to Hopi communities.

The planning record shows how deliberate that outreach was. More than 40 meetings with Village leaders were held from December 2017 through September 2018. Those discussions helped connect the impacts of the Bennett Freeze at Moenkopi with the impacts of Forced Relocation at Yuwehloo Pahki and led to a joint approach among Upper Moenkopi, the Village of Moencopi (Lower), and Yuwehloo Pahki. Each community developed its own plan, but the plans were designed to work together and to provide a credible basis for approaching the Hopi Tribe, Congress, and other funding partners.

A Benchmark for Progress: "We Are Going to Run Out of Water by 2025"

Before JVSP was formally established and before the Upper Moenkopi Village Strategic Plan was completed, a conversation between Building Communities President Brian Cole and then-Upper Moenkopi Village Community Service Administrator Cedric Kuwaninvaya captured the urgency facing the Village. Kuwaninvaya was unequivocal: "Brian, if we don't do something, we are going to run out of water by 2025." The later Upper Moenkopi plan documented the same warning, identifying water as the Village's top development priority and stating that the existing supply could be exhausted by 2025 if alternatives were not developed.

A Defining Conversation That Changed Our Trajectory

In 2019, before JVSP existed, a conversation between Building Communities President Brian Cole and Upper Moenkopi CSA Cedric Kuwaninvaya created the critical benchmark from which we measure progress.

> *"Brian, if we don't do something, we are going to run out of water by 2025."*

That conversation became the benchmark from which we measure progress today.

That warning provides a powerful benchmark for measuring what has happened since. In 2020, the Village described water scarcity not simply as an infrastructure problem, but as a threat to housing, economic development, agriculture, and the future way of life at Moenkopi. By August 2026, the conversation had changed dramatically: the Side Rock water transmission project was complete, the tanks were full, additional wells were funded or moving toward construction, and Village leadership was discussing how new water capacity can support housing, commercial activity, recreation, and other community investments.

Upper Moenkopi: Water Infrastructure Moves from Crisis to Capacity

The most visible JVSP success is the transformation of the Moenkopi water outlook. The Side Rock wells at Range
Unit 251 created a new source of supply, and the approximately 22-mile Moenkopi Water Supply Improvement Project now connects that supply to Moenkopi. As of the August 18 JVSP meeting, the waterline project was reported complete ahead of its September 2026 deadline, the contractor had completed construction and moved out, and the Village water tanks were full.

Side Rock Well Field. *Construction of the Side Rock wells and the 22-mile transmission line that now delivers water to Upper Moenkopi Village through a partnership managed by HUC and the Moenkopi Utility Authority (MUA).*

The completed system includes a new 300,000-gallon tank, rehabilitation of existing 250,000- and 390,000-gallon tanks, SCADA improvements, and the transmission line. Upper Moenkopi has agreed to purchase approximately 1.5 million gallons per month, while the Side Rock wells have substantially greater production capacity. This matters because water infrastructure is not an end in itself. Reliable capacity creates the foundation for new homes, businesses, community facilities, and other development that could not responsibly move forward under the former water constraints.

Pasture Canyon Well #1. *MUA is advancing a $1.5 million project to connect the well to Upper Moenkopi's water system, including a transmission line, pump house, SCADA system, and new 230,000-gallon tank.*

Additional water projects continue to strengthen that foundation. Pasture Canyon Well No. 1 has been drilled and is funded for pumphouse, electric line, and waterline connection improvements, with construction proposed in 2026. Pasture Canyon Well No. 2 is funded and in planning, design, and bidding for drilling. The longer-term Black Mesa-based Water Well No. 9 concept and regional water-settlement opportunities remain part of the broader water strategy. What began as a warning that Moenkopi could run out of water has become a coordinated portfolio of water-supply solutions.

The Moenkopi Water Journey: From Crisis to Completion

1. Completed Project

Side Rock Wells at Range Unit 251 were drilled with Hopi Tribal funding.

A new water supply is in place for Side Rock and available to Moenkopi.

2. Project Under Construction (Completed!)

CDS funding up to $25M for the transmission line from Side Rock to Upper Moenkopi.

The line is complete ahead of schedule. Tanks are full. A ribbon cutting is planned.

3. Funded Project

EPA commitment to drill Water Well #2 in coordination with MUA. Now with funding secured, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is underway.

Managed by Hopi DNR and Hopi Water Resources Program with JVSP advocacy.

This success story is highlighted in the Hopi Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2025–2030.

See Pages 94–97 (Attachment A) for the full profile.

Current Initiatives Across Our Three Communities

Upper Moenkopi Village

- Water system complete and operational; adds two Pasture Canyon wells (5 & 6)
- 180 people on the housing waiting list; 12-home plot subdivision Phase III planned
- Shovel-ready sites for new housing; Northeast plot Subdivision Phase III planned
- Solar project underway at Senior Center and Administration Building
- New police office; audits may unlock up to $1 million in reserves

Lower Moenkopi Village

- Working together on flooding solutions and drainage improvements
- Coordinated support strengthens both Villages and regional resilience
- Developing an AML PFP grant proposal to renovate the bath house

Yuwehloo Pahki Community

- Expanding services: laundromat, porta pumping, building rental, backhoe, burial services, dump truck rental, towing (exploring), and more

Building Momentum

Village Outreach Created the Foundation

Hearing community voices led to plans that reflect local priorities and realities.

Advocacy Delivered Resources

JVSP advocacy helped secure funding at the Tribal and federal levels.

Implementation Is Delivering Results

Infrastructure, housing, energy, and community services are on the ground.

Partnerships Make It Possible

Collaboration among Villages, the Hopi Tribe, agencies, and partners multiplies our impact.

Looking Ahead

Sustained coordination and resources will ensure a stronger future for our communities.

Water Capacity Is Unlocking Housing and Economic Development
The benefits are already extending beyond the water system. Upper Moenkopi is coordinating with the Hopi Tribal Housing Authority (HTHA) on a 12-unit housing project for which the Village would provide land. Village leadership reported approximately 180 housing applications dating back decades, underscoring the depth of unmet demand. Plans are also moving forward for 12 trailer pads and for a future Northeast Hopi Subdivision Phase III that could accommodate both housing and commercial shopping. These projects are increasingly described as shovel-ready because the underlying infrastructure picture has improved.

The Village's August 2026 housing and infrastructure summary identifies multiple future housing sites, including a previously planned 12-home HTHA subdivision that was not constructed because of concerns about long-term water supply. The fact that housing can now be reconsidered illustrates the direct progression JVSP was intended to create: solve the infrastructure barrier, then unlock the next layer of community development.

Economic opportunities are following the same pattern. With water availability now more certain, Upper Moenkopi is again considering a Village laundromat and a public swimming pool. The Village is pursuing productive reuse of the Clifford Honahnie Building, has identified potential business frontage along Highway 160 near Range Unit 251, and is coordinating on potential office space for the Arizona Department of Economic Security. These opportunities build upon the Village's existing economic assets, including the Moenkopi Legacy Inn, Tuuvi Travel Center, and a Denny's restaurant.

Energy Improvements: Lower Costs and More Resilient Facilities
Renewable energy improvements are also moving from planning to construction. Thirteen residential grid surveys have been completed with HUC support, with 12 locations determined feasible. Current plans contemplate solar improvements for 13 grid-tied homes and 32 off-grid homes, together with completion of a community microgrid. The microgrid is planned as a 250-kW system with 1.5 MW of battery capacity, providing approximately four days of energy storage.

Community facilities are part of the same effort. Roof improvements and solar installations are planned or underway for the Upper Moenkopi Administration Building, Community Center, and Senior Center, with additional Upper Moenkopi entities also identified for solar. These investments are expected to lower long-term power costs while improving facility resilience. The August JVSP discussion also identified the practical economic ripple effect of implementation: NeRD Power is seeking temporary housing and business/staging space at Moenkopi while carrying out the work.

Community Capacity Is Growing Alongside Physical Infrastructure
JVSP progress is not limited to construction. Upper Moenkopi is also addressing institutional and service needs that have constrained the community for years. The Village is working toward establishing a police office near the Administration Building, supported by an existing memorandum of agreement, with the goal of having a permanently stationed officer at Moenkopi for the first time in many years.

The Village is also making substantial progress on overdue audits. Leadership reported that audits had not been current since 2017, but work is underway with the goal of bringing audits through 2023 up to date by December 2026. Completing that work could allow the Village to access approximately five years of otherwise-held funding at $200,000 per year, or roughly $1 million. At the same time, the Village is working to reactivate the assisted living facility, potentially as a nursing home, and is considering funding and partnerships for that effort.

A separate Congressionally Directed Spending request is also advancing through first-stage clearance. During the August JVSP meeting, the project budget was refined from approximately $3.0 million to $2.0 million for continued review and advocacy. JVSP participants emphasized that Congressionally Directed Spending has become an important pathway for infrastructure projects of a scale that Villages could not finance on their own.

The Two Moenkopi Villages: From Separate Needs to Shared Solutions
The current work also shows a strengthening relationship between Upper Moenkopi and the Village of Moencopi (Lower). The Lower Village's 2020 plan grew directly from the Hopi Tribe-funded Village outreach effort and identified permanent water solutions, infrastructure development, housing, the Poosiwlelena Community Development Project, and economic development as priorities. The two Villages had previously worked together to identify Bennett Freeze projects, and JVSP created a more sustained framework for collaboration.

That collaboration is now increasingly practical. Upper and Lower Moenkopi jointly established the Moenkopi Wood Bank, which has operated since March 2025. In the August 2026 JVSP discussion, Upper Moenkopi reported receiving a request from the Lower Village for assistance with flooding and irrigation needs affecting local farmers and expressed a willingness to help. This was specifically noted as a positive change from the relationship experienced between the two Villages years earlier. The result is more than cooperation on paper: the Villages are beginning to share capacity, equipment, infrastructure, and problem-solving.

Yuwehloo Pahki: A Community Once Overlooked is Delivering Services
Yuwehloo Pahki provides another clear example of why the original outreach mattered. The community was created because of Forced Relocation and is geographically remote from the central Hopi villages. Its 2019 Transition Plan stated plainly that community efforts and pleas for help had "largely gone unnoticed." The 2017-2018 OCPED outreach created a new opportunity for the community to articulate its priorities, develop a plan, and join with the Moenkopi Villages in what became JVSP.

Today, Yuwehloo Pahki is no longer represented only by a list of unmet needs. Post-COVID planning and subsequent implementation resulted in two significant operational assets: a Mobile Laundromat and a 999-gallon combination Pumper Truck. The community is building upon those investments by providing or developing mobile laundry and porta-pumping services, building rental, backhoe services and land clearing, burial services, dump truck rental, and potential towing services. A firewood initiative with Wood For Life and the U.S. Forest Service provides another practical service to Hopi households.

Those assets are also beginning to support cooperation among JVSP communities. When Upper Moenkopi identified a need for a front-end loader and grader, JVSP connected that need with Yuwehloo Pahki's emerging equipment-service capacity. NTUA has also expressed interest in connecting to the Yuwehloo Pahki water system, potentially increasing the utilization and regional importance of infrastructure that the community has worked to establish.

Other JVSP Infrastructure Coordination
JVSP continues to support infrastructure needs beyond the three founding communities. A potential water project benefiting Jeddito is advancing through coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority, and the Hopi Department of Natural Resources. Current work is focused on land and right-of-way requirements needed to move the project toward implementation. Housing coordination with HTHA also continues as the Tribe and communities look for additional development pathways.

Planning That Produces Results

The larger JVSP story is not simply that individual projects are moving forward. It is that a repeatable progression has emerged. Communities that felt distant from the center of Hopi decision-making were engaged directly. Their priorities were documented in community-driven strategic plans. The three communities organized around shared impacts of the Bennett Freeze and Forced Relocation. JVSP then maintained the conversation, coordinated with the Hopi Tribe, pursued outside resources, and stayed engaged as projects moved through funding, design, construction, and operation.

A Commitment That Extended Beyond the Contract

The original Village outreach was a limited engagement supported by a $30,000 Economic Development Team investment. What followed was not.

As Upper Moenkopi, the Village of Moencopi (Lower), and Yuwehloo Pahki expressed a desire to continue from outreach into strategic planning and implementation, Building Communities made a long-term commitment to stand alongside the three communities beyond the original contract. That commitment has meant continuing to provide strategic planning, grant development, project advocacy, and implementation assistance without charging the Villages for those services.

Seven years later, that commitment remains in place. JVSP's progress reflects what can happen when community priorities are not simply documented and filed away, but are carried forward through sustained planning, advocacy, funding, and implementation.

The clearest measure of progress may still be the 2025 water benchmark. A few years ago, Upper Moenkopi was planning around the possibility that it could run out of water. In August 2026, Village leadership reported that the Side Rock transmission project was complete, the tanks were full, housing development was becoming feasible, and new business and community projects could be considered because water was available. At Yuwehloo Pahki, a community whose plan said its pleas had largely gone unnoticed is now operating equipment and delivering services. Between the two Moenkopi Villages, cooperation is creating shared solutions rather than separate needs.

Together, these efforts illustrate the progression JVSP was designed to support:

- Listen to the Village and identify the need
- Develop a community-driven plan
- Build partnerships and advocate for resources
- Secure funding and remove implementation barriers
- Construct the project or launch the service
- Use the new capacity to unlock the next opportunity

The focus of JVSP remains the same: turn community priorities into tangible investments that improve infrastructure, expand services, strengthen local economies, and create lasting benefits for Hopi communities. The difference in 2026 is that there is now substantial evidence that this approach is working.