



1.0 Introduction

The County's population in 2000 was approximately 1.5 million people. Its population is expected to double by 2020, to reach approximately 3.5 million by 2030, and to be approximately 4.5 million by 2040, according to forecasts by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). This is nearly a 400% increase over the next 40 years. Most of Southern California's growth over the next 40 years is expected to occur in the Inland Empire (San Bernardino and Riverside Counties) (SCAG 2001). Accommodating an increase in population of this magnitude will involve urbanizing thousands of acres of undeveloped land and result in significant conflicts with regulations protecting species and their Habitats. Conflicts and delays will escalate costs for all Development projects, uncoordinated mitigation efforts will fragment Habitats, the region will miss opportunities to improve the quality of life and economic development opportunities for the current and future residents of the County will also not be realized.

1.2.2 Riverside County Integrated Project

The MSHCP is one element of a comprehensive regional planning effort begun in 1999. To accommodate the County's anticipated growth, the County must provide a range of housing alternatives, encourage economic development, create new jobs at a rate that exceeds its population growth, and build the supporting infrastructure. The natural question is how best to meet the demands of growth while protecting the environment. Local officials recognize that without a well-defined and implementable plan for the future, the County would face a very tenuous future.

To address this complex challenge, the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) initiated the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP). RCIP includes:

- A Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), which forms the nucleus of an open-space plan for the western part of the County.
- An updated General Plan for the unincorporated portion of the County; the General Plan addresses land use, circulation, housing and open space, conservation, and other mandatory elements in conformance with state statute. The General Plan includes several innovative programs, such as incentive programs, that will be utilized in implementing the MSHCP, programs to enhance transit alternatives, and programs that will encourage the development of mixed-use centers.



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- The Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) identifies future transportation Corridors in the western part of the County and provides the appropriate environmental documentation to allow early preservation of the necessary rights-of-way for future Corridor development. These Corridors will be designed to meet future mobility needs, for autos, buses, and trucks, as well as for goods and information. The Corridors will allow room to implement transit plans well into the next century. CETAP forms an essential component of the County's circulation element and its arterial highway plan, both associated with the General Plan.

Through RCIP, a broad array of stakeholders and individual citizens have been afforded opportunities to participate in the planning process and to communicate to the decision makers the factors that are important to improving their quality of life now and in the future. The purpose of RCIP is to integrate all aspects of land use, transportation, and conservation planning and implementation in order to develop a comprehensive vision for the future of the County.

In addition, a Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) planning process is being pursued to address watershed management and water-quality issues in the region will also be initiated.

On October 20, 1998, the County Board of Supervisors reviewed the following consensus "planning principles" submitted by the coalition of interest groups, and it endorsed their use as initial guidelines in the early stages of developing RCIP:

1. Create a new, comprehensive General Plan based on an overall vision of the future rather than piecemeal community plans.
2. Ensure that the General Plan anticipates future growth, with a sufficient measure of certainty, and provides for a high quality of life, including reasonable accommodation for housing, biological and multiple species resources, agriculture, watersheds, and scenic landscapes.
3. Acknowledge the rights of private property owners in the General Plan and offer just compensation according to federal and state laws regarding private property reserved for public purposes.
4. Include positive economic and regulatory incentives, where appropriate, in the General Plan.
5. Establish policies in the General Plan so that public benefits, improvements that serve the entire community are funded proportionately by the entire community, and new Developments bear their share of increased infrastructure costs.

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6. Base community Development in the General Plan on a balanced, sustainable, and integrated set of mapped land uses and promote the continued viability of agricultural lands.
7. When mapping areas for Development, consider the following factors:
 - location of resource and hazard areas
 - opportunity for redevelopment
 - availability of infill sites
 - proximity of existing infrastructure
 - proximity of existing municipal spheres of influence
 - conformance with the policies of communities of interest
 - appropriately site new towns and villages
8. Coordinate the new General Plan with local and regional planning efforts to the maximum extent possible, and encourage mutually reinforcing actions by the Cities and the Local Agency Formation Commissions (LAFCO), as appropriate.
9. Plan for and encourage in the General Plan, the development of diverse and distinctive communities.
10. Incorporate into the General Plan the goal of creating a more compact urban form that requires less land per capita than current modes of Development.
11. Plan for and encourage economic development within the General Plan; emphasize employment opportunities situated within or nearby existing and future communities.
12. Integrate the General Plan with transportation planning, so that land use and circulation elements reinforce one another. CETAP should fully examine transit/rail Corridors, and the new General Plan should include them to the maximum extent possible.
13. Plan for and encourage within the General Plan, a wide range of housing choices suitable for residents of all economic means.
14. Integrate a comprehensive MSHCP into the General Plan.
15. Update existing community plans as part of the General Plan planning process to bring them into conformance with revised General Plan policies. Delay finalizing new community plans, if any, and consistency zoning until the new General Plan is completed.