



The Process: Foundation

BACKGROUND

The last update of the County's General Plan, prior to this Plan revision, was in 1987. At that time the Plan did not contain a countywide land use map for the unincorporated area. Instead, policy direction was given in relation to land use at the General Plan level, and the Open Space, Agriculture, Mountainous, and approved Specific Plans' areas of the County were mapped for reference. The Plan has been amended over 300 times since that date. Eleven Community Plans describing and mapping land use, policy direction and consistency zoning had also been adopted by the Board of Supervisors as part of the General Plan. Four more Community Plans were in draft form.

This update of the General Plan was undertaken by a team of consultants over a 36-month period of time, in order to:

- *clearly map the County's land use designations for the unincorporated areas;*
- *develop a streamlined, consistent set of land use categories for the County;*
- *update and restructure the existing Community Plans and translate them into a new set of 19 Area Plans covering most of the western County area, the Coachella Valley, Desert Center and the Palo Verde Valley.*

Team

The consulting team developed the General Plan in concert with County staff. Perhaps most significant is that a General Plan Advisory Committee also worked closely with consultants and staff as an integral part of the team, and strongly influenced the content of the General Plan. The General Plan Advisory Committee met monthly for the entire life of the project. A Subcommittee of the GPAC met weekly and at key intervals in the project with consultants and County staff.

The GPAC was comprised of two representatives appointed directly by each County Supervisor, as well as representatives of the Western Riverside Council of Governments, Building Industry Association, California Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Community Access Center, Endangered Habitats League, Sierra Club, Farm Bureau, Riverside County Office of Education, Riverside County Economic Development Agency, Riverside County Property Owners Association, and selected cities.

The CETAP effort included preparation of the circulation element, examination of transit options, and identification and refinement of four new transportation corridors for the County. The consultant's work was also undertaken in concert with County staff and an Advisory Committee composed of a diverse group of County stakeholders.

The MSHCP for Western Riverside County is integrated into the General Plan in the Multipurpose Open Space element, and at the Area Plan level. The MSHCP Advisory Committee, a third stakeholder group, also played a key role in shaping the development of the habitat conservation plan, together with County staff and consultants. The Coachella Valley MSHCP is referred to in the General Plan Multipurpose Open Space Element, as well as the Area Plans for REMAP, The Pass, Western Coachella Valley and Eastern Coachella Valley.

VISION PROCESS

Public Meetings & Survey—Between June and October of 1999, two rounds of community meetings were held to determine the issues that residents of



Riverside County wanted to have considered in planning for the County's future. The meetings were designed to engage the public in dialog with County staff and the consultants, and with each other, about issues critical to the success of the Plan and to Riverside County's future in general. (See Appendix D for a summary of these community workshops.) A survey relating to planning, traffic and circulation, and multi-species habitat areas was distributed, and the results were incorporated into the subsequent refinement of the RCIP Vision statement. At the same time a professional research firm completed a telephone survey of 600 registered voters in Riverside County, including 120 from each Supervisorial District. (See Appendix C for a summary of the community survey results.) Additional input came from a workshop that involved members of the Board of Supervisors and the Riverside County Transportation Commission.

The public input garnered from the public in the Vision outreach process did shape the structure of the Vision statement, which was further developed and deepened under the leadership of the General Plan Advisory Committee.

Resident's responses in the outreach process indicated their support for the following key ideas related to the General Plan:

1. Continued planned growth in response to population growth;
2. Road corridors that connect communities and connect Riverside County and adjacent counties;
3. Open space corridors that connect habitats;
4. No leapfrog development;
5. Less sameness, greater densities for "smart" developments;
6. Regional north/south and east/west solutions to congestion;
7. Better air quality through less traffic congestion and more local jobs;
8. A Plan that has a financing strategy; and
9. A planning pact with cities to help achieve the plan.

TECHNICAL STUDIES

Fiscal/Financial Analysis—Growth scenarios were prepared incorporating analysis of: employment and payroll trends, demographics, residential real estate trends, taxable retail sales, industrial and commercial real estate trends, community characteristics, competitive advantage, and infrastructure environment. The scenarios predicting low, medium, and high potentials for growth over the next 20 years were then used to evaluate the land use alternatives generated in the preparation of the Plan. (See Appendix F, Riverside County Population & Employment Forecasts, and Appendix G, Fiscal Analysis)

Existing Conditions Report—The Existing Conditions Report prepared as part of this General Plan update provides a description of the countywide conditions that form the assumptions upon which the plan is based. This report covers land use, circulation, housing, open space and conservation and public safety conditions, and is published as part of the Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan.