



and are contained in Appendix J to the General Plan. The second is the Environmental Impact Report. This document contains a wealth of information on background data and policy implications that provides a valuable reference for users of the General Plan.

A Vision for Riverside County

A Vision for Riverside County, presented in Chapter 2 of this General Plan, sets the stage for the entire General Plan. It describes the County that is envisioned to exist some 20 years in the future. While it is not policy directly, the Riverside County Vision should be referred to on any General Plan topic as an indication of General Plan intent, and as a description of the context in which any General Plan issue should be considered. The key question to be asked when relating a proposed project to the Vision is: will this proposed action move the County toward the Vision to the maximum extent possible?

General Planning Principles

Considerable effort was expended in deriving a set of planning principles from the Vision. They are presented in Appendix B of this General Plan. These principles reflect extensive deliberation by the General Plan Advisory Committee to translate the Vision ideas into more specific direction for preparation of the General Plan policies. Consequently, reference to these principles will provide further insight into the intent of the General Plan. Moreover, these principles and, in fact the Vision as well, derive from 15 Consensus Planning Principles that were developed by a voluntary coalition of diverse interest groups who invested considerable effort in setting direction for the entire Riverside County Integrated Project, one major portion of which was the preparation of this General Plan. So there is a long history of direction and intent that flows from that original thinking.

Countywide Elements and Planning Policies/Area Plans

The General Plan provides policy direction at two levels: 1) Countywide for the entire unincorporated portion of the County under Board of Supervisors' Authority; and 2) for 19 sectors of the County in the form of Area Plans. The intent of this tiered system of policy direction is to distinguish between policies that apply uniformly everywhere in unincorporated territory and those that apply explicitly in distinct geographic areas. In this version of the General Plan, 19 Area Plans provide this more detailed policy direction. A large portion of the eastern desert area of the County is not covered by area plans and thus falls under direction of the countywide policies. March Air Reserve Base is also excluded from any area plan because the policies guiding the base are contained in a general plan prepared by the March Joint Powers Authority (JPA).

The countywide policy direction is captured in traditional topical elements as depicted in the California Government Code: Land Use, Circulation, Multipurpose Open Space (Open Space and Conservation as specified in the law), Safety, Noise and Housing. An additional optional element, Air Quality, also operates at the countywide level. Policies at this level apply to all Area



County of Riverside General Plan - *Hearing Draft*

Administration Element

Plans in addition to the localized policies contained in them, but do not have to be duplicated in the area plan documents.

A new feature of this General Plan in comparison to past versions is that only four categories of land use apply at the countywide scale:

- Multipurpose Open Space;
- Agriculture;
- Rural; and
- Community Development.

These are defined as Foundation Components. They are basic to the entire process of land management in the County. Each foundation component is intended to accommodate a prescribed array of uses, with Multipurpose Open Space being the least intensive, followed by Agriculture, then Rural, and finally, Community Development. Please see Chapter 3, Land Use Element, for more extensive description of the components. The designation that is intended to accommodate the greatest amount of anticipated growth is the Community Development component, with the Multipurpose Open Space component providing most of the "remarkable environmental setting" that encompasses Riverside County's "family of special communities", as reflected in the Vision for Riverside County.

Area Plan land use designations are based on a consistent system of land use definitions that specify desired and undesired uses. These are the land use designations to be used in evaluating proposed development or conservation projects. Rules for considering land use changes at both the countywide and area plan levels are specified below in the General Plan Certainty System.

Community Center Guidelines

One of the central concepts in this General Plan is the selective identification of community centers: focal points for a number of the unincorporated communities found within the system of area plans. These locales are intended to be compact, self-sufficient combinations of uses that share a distinct identity and function with a powerful synergy.

The closest example to this idea is the small, traditional downtown or focused, highly urban neighborhood in which living, working and recreation/entertainment all flourish in close proximity to each other. Certainly not all essential services and functions occur in such places, but they typically enable residents and employees to satisfy a significant number of their daily needs without having to leave the area. This typically involves the ability to walk or bicycle within the community center core and does not depend exclusively on the automobile for mobility.

In some cases transit opportunities are also a part of the mix, making mobility options even more diverse. Particularly in community centers served by transit, the degree of compactness and attraction of the area to more remote visitors becomes even greater. However, the key point is that these are not envisioned solely as major commercial or employment centers to which the only means of access is an automobile commute.