



GENERAL PLAN CERTAINTY SYSTEM

The Riverside County General Plan Certainty System provides clarity regarding the interpretation and use of the General Plan in ongoing decision making and sustains the General Plan's policy direction over time. Circumstances will change, imperfections in the General Plan will be discovered, and events will occur that require changes in the General Plan. Despite these probabilities, the intent is to maintain a high level of confidence in the General Plan and enable people affected by it to have reasonable expectation regarding how it will impact them. Its interpretation, application and amendment are very important matters, not to be taken lightly. Therefore, the Certainty System consists of four parts:

1. **Presentation.** To the maximum extent possible, provisions of the General Plan are clearly mapped. Further, the language of the General Plan seeks to be clear, simple and deliberate, with intent indicated for each provision of the General Plan (see Interpreting the General Plan's Intent section, above).
2. **Interpretation.** Guidelines for interpreting the intent of the General Plan where conflict arises are provided for resolution of the issue, including a defined process for making the interpretations and determining their potential for future changes in the General Plan (see Interpreting the General Plan's Intent section, above).
3. **Monitoring.** A responsive, highly automated system for monitoring implementation of the General Plan, including documentation of development and land preservation activities, is established and maintained. Reference to this monitoring information is an essential ingredient in the consideration of any change in the General Plan, especially regarding land use designations. The information in this system is maintained in such a way that basic development activity can be summarized at any time, including status as part of an annual report on General Plan progress (see Monitoring of Development and Conservation section, above).
4. **Amendment.** It is clear that the timing, rationale, and process for amending the General Plan are critical ingredients in maintaining the long term viability of the General Plan. That is why carefully crafted descriptions of this aspect of the Certainty System are included in the General Plan.

Objectives

The General Plan Certainty System seeks to satisfy the following objectives.

1. Maintain the integrity and confidence level in the new Riverside County General Plan.
2. "Stay the Course" regarding its direction long enough to be able to determine its workability.
3. Define categories of amendment activity so they are universally understood.
4. Establish a set of rules and procedures for amending the General Plan that are fair, firm and equitable.
5. Empower any property owner to seek an amendment according to established procedure.



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6. Avoid erosion of the foundation components upon which the General Plan is structured by requiring consideration of any changes to them to be conducted in a comprehensive manner.
7. Provide for extraordinary and unpredictable circumstances.
8. Establish clarity in assessing proposed amendments at the earliest possible time in the process.
9. Clarify the findings appropriate to each amendment category.
10. Monitor progress in implementing the General Plan and correct its direction where necessary.
11. Promote coordinated long-range planning and implementation between the Cities and the County.
12. Strike a sustainable balance between certainty in critical aspects of the General Plan, and flexibility in response to changing conditions and opportunities where such flexibility contributes to achieving the Vision.

Amendment Categories

Three amendment categories are part of the system:

1. Technical Amendment - involves changes in the General Plan of a technical nature, including technical corrections discovered in the process of implementing the General Plan. Some Entitlement Amendments may occur under this category if they are required to correct a documentable error in the General Plan. They may include:
 - a. Corrections to statistics;
 - b. Mapping error corrections;
 - c. Changes in spheres of influence and city boundaries;
 - d. Changes in Unincorporated Communities or Communities of Interest;
 - e. Editorial clarifications that do not change the intent of the General Plan;
 - or
 - f. Appendix information useful in interpreting the General Plan but which does not change the General Plan's intent.
2. Entitlement/Policy Amendment - involves changes in land use designations or policies that involve land located entirely within a General Plan Foundation Component but that do not change the boundaries of that component. This type of amendment may also involve changes in General Plan policy as long as it does not change the Riverside County Vision, Foundation Component, or a General Plan Principle. It may be proposed by:
 - a. The Board of Supervisors;
 - b. The Planning Commission;
 - c. A private property owner; or
 - d. An individual or organization with an interest in the General Plan.
3. Foundation Amendment - involves changes in:
 - a. The Riverside County Vision
 - b. The General Plan Planning Principles
 - c. A Foundation Component of the General Plan. These include any change to or from:
 - (1) Open space conservation or open space designated as a result of the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) or previously established open space policy.