



## **Long-range Issues**

### **Sewer Service**

Highgrove is not currently sewered. For many years, the area's rural uses at low density have been satisfactorily served by septic tank. As the area transitions to a predominantly suburban residential community, development applicants will only be able to provide residential lots smaller than ½ acre if sanitary sewer service is extended. Current state Water Quality Control Board regulations to implement water quality standards for the Santa Ana River Basin require that residential lots smaller than ½ acre be connected to a public sanitary sewer system.

Also, much of the existing community would rather connect to a public sewer system than replace or rehabilitate aging septic systems. Such replacement or rehabilitation will be necessary soon as septic systems installed 30 to 40 years ago reach the end of their design life. One major variable influencing how quickly Highgrove is sewered is how the cost of doing so will be allocated.

The City of Riverside currently provides water to the western Highgrove urban core and to residential customers as far east as Walker Avenue. The City of Riverside's official policy is to provide sewer service only to customers within their corporate boundaries. The City of Riverside could potentially provide sewer service to Highgrove, if the City Council approved an arrangement to do so. Riverside County and the City of Riverside have discussed sewer service provision to Highgrove, but no agreement had been announced at this writing.

The remaining current residential uses south of Spring Street and east of Michigan Avenue have potable water service through the Riverside Highland Water Company, a mutual water company headquartered in Colton. Riverside Highland has historically served the area for irrigation water to the groves, and has expanded its domestic service system to cover most of the tract home development that has occurred in Highgrove since the 1970s. Riverside Highland's Board of Directors has approved sewer service extension as an addition to the range of services provided by the company.

### **Transportation Corridors**

To promote a richer quality of life, the Highgrove community will have to exploit more of its transportation assets in a coordinated way to allow for multiple modes of travel.

Improvements to intersections at Center Street and Main Street along Iowa Avenue, which are associated with the Interstate 215 widening project, will not be implemented until after 2010. Improving the freeway from State Route 60 as far as Orange Show Road in San Bernardino County has been under consideration for some time. The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), the California Department of Transportation (CALTRANS), and the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) have tried to assemble a joint scope of work and a shared funding arrangement to complete this highway construction. The project is still on hold at this time, and so too are the local intersection improvements that could benefit Highgrove.



## County of Riverside General Plan - Hearing Draft

### Highgrove Area Plan

As previously noted, the BNSF and UP lines are actively used to transport freight through Highgrove within the western urban core. Also, MetroLink operates passenger trains over the westerly branch of the BNSF line from San Bernardino to the downtown Riverside station and on to points in western Riverside and Orange Counties. The BNSF line proceeding southward through Highgrove could be utilized to provide service to Perris and other southern Riverside County locations. The proposed San Jacinto branch line could utilize a Tier II station site in Highgrove as a transfer or staging point for needed equipment or employees.

Parcels easterly of the BNSF line could be appropriate for siting a transit station or accompanying service uses to support passengers or crew. Residential redevelopment up to High Density Residential (HDR-20 dwelling units per acre) would exploit the transit access for those who desire it and could create a greater localized demand in Highgrove for goods and services. Appropriate projects would seek to combine residential and nonresidential elements into a mixed land use pattern that could serve both the transit customer and the Highgrove resident.

The Riverside County Transportation Commission has obtained the San Jacinto branch line and will make decisions about necessary station locations as that process unfolds. Planning policies to guide development oriented toward a Tier II transit station can be found under "Urban Residential Development Policies".

Highgrove could utilize a multi-modal concept along the California Avenue corridor. California Avenue becomes Northgate Street within the City of Riverside. In implementing the Hunter Park Specific Plan, the City has proposed to vacate the right-of-way of Northgate Street southerly of Palmyrita Avenue. This right-of-way would be replaced by "the North-South Connector". This connector road, to be located between the existing Union Pacific rail line and the Gage Canal, would connect Palmyrita Avenue and Columbia Avenue, the main through street for the Hunter Park area.

Completing California Avenue northerly of Citrus Street would thus connect the Light Industrial-designated parcels in Highgrove to the Hunter Park area. The Highgrove parcels would not be able to tie into a meaningful pedestrian network along California Avenue/Northgate Avenue, since this corridor is not a pedestrian portal for the Hunter Park Specific Plan. But bicycle trails along California Avenue to Palmyrita Avenue could conceivably connect the residential areas east of Mount Vernon Avenue with Highgrove's proposed Light Industrial-designated parcels along California Avenue. Such a connection could help reduce vehicle trips on Center Street.

### **Natural Features Protection**

For years, with the permission of local citrus grove owners, local residents have utilized grove access roads to take walks, to ride horses, or to ride bicycles. As agricultural holdings are sold to development interests, such privileges are expected to be drastically curtailed. Highgrove residents have stated the desire to continue to access open space areas in the future. As formerly open areas are converted to urban uses over time, the challenge of siting recreational trails to serve the myriad needs of the community will only increase. This is especially true as landowners submit development applications to build in or along the major open space areas adjacent to Highgrove: the Box Springs Mountains and the Springbrook Wash.



In addition to serving as the primary drainage channel for stormwater runoff from the Highgrove study area to the Santa Ana River, the Springbrook Wash also provides wildlife habitat and opportunities for wildlife movement. Riversidean Sage Scrub vegetation, as well as riparian vegetative communities, have been identified as likely to occur along the banks of the Springbrook Wash. Riversidean Sage Scrub vegetation also has been indicated on lands designated as Rural Mountainous in this Plan. Hilly or steeply sloping lands in Riverside County and other southern California counties are prime areas for the occurrence of coastal sage scrub vegetation. Certain protected wildlife species, including the coastal California Gnatcatcher, can inhabit coastal sage scrub vegetation.

The Area Plan includes policy language to ensure that future development applications would implement appropriate mitigation measures for wildlife habitat reduction that they cause. Also, plan policies prevent any undue alteration of the Springbrook Wash during the site preparation process. Furthermore, easements acquired during the development review process to implement regional multi-purpose trails, as depicted in the Trails and Bikeways Plan, will provide Highgrove residents future access to these natural features in as unspoiled condition as is practicable.

### **Community Plan Goals**

Based on the above community concerns and issues, the following goals apply to the Highgrove community:

- a. To encourage a varied future pattern of development that will promote greater economic self-sufficiency in Highgrove.
- b. To identify existing and future residential areas with land use and zoning designations that will discourage incompatible development, encourage reinvestment in homes and businesses, and support property values.
- c. To enhance the Highgrove community's ability to respond to changing future development conditions through flexible planning policies within the Special Planning Area identified in Highgrove.
- d. To recommend future infrastructure improvements necessary to provide for adequate public facilities and services for the Highgrove Community Policy Area.
- e. To help sustain Highgrove's rural character as the community develops in the future.
- f. To safeguard the Box Springs Mountains and the Springbrook Wash from development impacts that would diminish their value as fish and wildlife habitat or as natural areas for public enjoyment.

### **Special Planning Area (SPA)**

Special Planning Area (SPA) is an overlay designation applied to the eastern half of the Highgrove Community Policy Area. These lands stretch from Mount Vernon Avenue westward to the Gage Canal, and roughly from Mount Vernon Avenue eastward to the Box Springs Mountains. The vast majority of property owners within the Highgrove Agricultural Preserve # 1 have satisfied their contract terms to release their holdings from preserve status. Implicitly, these land owners have sought a different General Plan designation to be able to develop their property in urban uses. Given that the Hunter Park industrial area