



Introduction

Throughout the Area Plan, special features have been included to enhance the readability and practicality of the information provided. Look for these elements:



Quotes — quotations from the RCIP Vision or individuals involved or concerned with Riverside County.



Factoids — interesting information about Riverside County that is related to the element.



References — contacts and resources that can be consulted for additional information.



Definitions — clarification of terms and vocabulary used in certain policies or text.

Winding up the grade out of Temescal Canyon on Cajalco Road or coming out of Riverside on Mockingbird Canyon Road are great ways to first experience the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area. All of a sudden, a whole new world opens up—one that has been left behind in most of southern California. Citrus groves and lazy local roads give the landscape that casual and comfortable feeling of people being close to the land. Yes, a number of newer, tighter, more structured developments appear here and there, but they don't dominate the view one sees. Ubiquitous rock outcroppings accent the hillsides and provide a distinct texture to the landscape. The first view of Lake Mathews itself is almost a shocking contrast to the semi-arid surroundings, even though they have been softened by the groves and imported landscaping of the many large single family homes scattered throughout the area. Located in the expansive City of Riverside Sphere of Influence, this is and seeks to remain a rural enclave, sort of floating above the surrounding patterns of urbanization. The only unincorporated place here that deviates from this pattern—and then, only slightly—is Woodcrest, a small, pleasant rural community interspersed with citrus groves. The community lies south of the City of Riverside in the northeastern portion of the planning area and is bisected by Van Buren Boulevard and a strip of commercial development located along that street.

The Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan is not a stand-alone document, but rather an extension of the County of Riverside General Plan and Vision. The County of Riverside Vision Statement details the physical, environmental, and economic characteristics that the County aspires to achieve by the year 2020. Using the Vision Statement as the primary foundation, the County of Riverside General Plan establishes policies to guide development and conservation within the entire unincorporated County territory, while the Area Plan provides policy direction specifically for the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area.

The Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan doesn't just provide a description of the location, physical characteristics, and special features here. It contains a Land Use Plan, statistical summaries, policies, and accompanying exhibits that allow anyone interested in the continued prosperity of this distinctive region to understand the physical, environmental, and regulatory characteristics that make this such a unique area. Background information also provides insights that help in understanding the issues that require special focus here and the reasons for the more localized policy direction found in this document.

Each section of the Area Plan addresses critical issues facing Lake Mathews/Woodcrest. Perhaps a description of these sections will help in understanding the organization of the Area Plan as well as appreciating the comprehensive nature of the planning process that led to it. The Location section explains where the Area Plan fits with what is around it and how it relates to the cities that impact it. Physical features are described in a section that highlights the planning area's communities, surrounding environment and natural resources. This leads naturally to the Land Use Plan section, which describes the land use system guiding development at both the countywide and area plan levels.



County of Riverside General Plan - *Hearing Draft*

Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan



Unincorporated land is all land within the County that is not within an incorporated city or an Indian Nation. Generally, it is subject to policy direction and under the land use authority of the Board of Supervisors. However, it may also contain state and federal properties that lie outside of Board authority.

A sphere of influence is the area outside of and adjacent to a city's border that has been identified by the County Local Agency Formation Commission as a future logical extension of the city's jurisdiction. While the County of Riverside has land use authority over city sphere areas, development in these areas directly affects circulation, service provision, and community character within the cities.

While a number of these designations reflect the unique features found only in the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area, a number of special policies are still necessary to address unique situations. The Policy Areas section presents these policies. Land use related issues are addressed in the Land Use section. The Area Plan also describes relevant transportation issues, routes and modes of transportation in the Circulation section. The key to understanding our valued open space network is described in the Multipurpose Open Space section. There are, of course, both natural and man made hazards to consider and they are spelled out in the Hazards section.

A Special Note on Implementing the Vision

The preface to this area plan is a summary version of the Riverside County Vision. That summary is, in turn, simply an overview of a much more extensive and detailed Vision of Riverside County two decades or more into the future. This area plan, as part of the Riverside County General Plan, is one of the major devices for making the Vision a reality.

No two area plans are the same. Each represents a unique portion of the incredibly diverse place known as Riverside County. While many share certain common features, each of the plans reflects the special characteristics that define its area's unique identity. These features include not only physical qualities, but also the particular boundaries used to define them, the stage of development they have reached, the dynamics of change expected to affect them, and the numerous decisions that shape development and conservation in each locale. That is why the Vision cannot and should not be reflected uniformly.

Policies at the general plan and area plan levels implement the Riverside County Vision in a range of subject areas as diverse as the scope of the Vision itself. The land use pattern contained in this area plan is a further expression of the Vision as it is shaped to fit the terrain and the conditions in the Lake Mathews/Woodcrest area.

To illustrate how the Vision has shaped this area plan, the following highlights reflect certain strategies that link the Vision to the land. This is not a comprehensive enumeration; rather, it emphasizes a few of the most powerful and physically tangible examples.

Community Centers. This method of concentrating development to achieve community focal points, stimulate a mix of activities, promote economic development, achieve more efficient use of land, create a transit friendly and walkable environment, and offer a broader mix of housing choices is a major device for implementing the Vision. One community center designation permitting this mix of uses occurs in Woodcrest.

Lake Mathews. The Lake Mathews reservoir and watershed area is a tremendously valuable local and regional resource. Aside from its function as a major source of fresh water for southern Californians, Lake Mathews and adjacent habitat reserve areas offer outstanding value in the area of drainage, flood control, natural habitat conservation/restoration, and visual aesthetics. The Plan reinforces these functions through the pattern of open space and public facility designations in this area.