



Features

The Riverside County Vision builds heavily on the value of its remarkable environmental setting. That applies here as well. While not as close to the surrounding mountains as some other areas, the central location of the Sun City/Menifee Valley area affords an ample view of the mountain vistas that dominate the remarkable setting of the western County. This section describes the setting, features and functions that are unique to the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan. These defining characteristics are shown on Figure 2, Physical Features.

SETTING

Menifee Valley consists largely of a flat valley floor surrounded by hillside and mountainous features. Rugged rock outcroppings are scattered throughout the area and serve to break up the visual sameness typical of unvaried landscapes. The communities of Sun City and Menifee surround Interstate 215, north and south of Newport Road. Pockets of rural residential and very low density development scatter throughout the periphery of the valley, with occasional estate development spotted among the hillside areas. This pattern, for example, typifies the Murrieta hills along the plan's southern border west of Interstate 215. Quail Valley, a small community of distinct character, lies to the west of Sun City, north of the City of Canyon Lake.

To understand the significance of what is happening in this broad valley today and what is envisioned in the future, it pays to examine the rich history and heritage surrounding this land. Over a hundred years ago—in fact, back in the 1880s—this community was settled by dryland grain farmers. They were not alone. The area has also hosted a gold mining district, the cultivation of alfalfa and other irrigated crops, and even inland rail connections between Colton, Temecula, Perris, and San Jacinto.

Looking to the future, the absence of significant seismic or geologic hazards, convenient access to the Interstate 215—an important corridor between Riverside and the Temecula Valley—and enough flat land to accommodate significant amounts of development, the area is well suited to accommodate growth pressures in a way that fulfills the Riverside County Vision.

UNIQUE FEATURES

Salt Creek

A huge swath of shallow watercourse known as Salt Creek bisects the plan area in a generally east to west orientation. While channelized within the developed areas of Sun City and Menifee, the Salt Creek returns to its natural state as it flows toward the west and the City of Canyon Lake. The much smaller Paloma wash tributary also bisects the landscape, crossing Interstate 215 south of Holland Road and continuing to the southern Plan boundary. The Eastern Municipal Water District operates a groundwater desalter and “brine line” to Orange County at a plant north of Salt Creek and west of Murrieta Road.