



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.



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.

The desert is a complex living environment which, under certain circumstances, can also be converted to a highly productive area beyond its natural environmental value. Occasionally, because we need to transport ourselves through it, we need to carve out special ways of creating focal points within its vastness. That is what Desert Center is.

In certain respects, Desert Center is a sort of gateway into the entire region along this major artery spanning the nation. It triggers a change in the prevailing pattern of the landscape whether leaving the urbanizing portions of the region or approaching them from the east. At a very minimum, it is for many a welcome oasis as they cross the desert. For a much smaller number of residents and business operators, it is a small world of tranquil reality, with clean air, and little traffic and noise, that sets them apart from every other part of Riverside County. The Desert Center Area Plan contains policies that guide the physical development and land uses in this oasis in the unincorporated portion of eastern Riverside County.

The Desert Center Area Plan doesn't just provide a description of the location, physical characteristics, and special features of the unincorporated area. It contains a Land Use Plan, statistical summaries, policies, and accompanying exhibits that allow anyone interested in the continued prosperity of this unique area 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 contained in this document.

Each section of the area plan addresses critical issues facing Desert Center. 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.

While a number of these designations reflect unique features found only in the Desert Center Area Plan, a number of special policies are still necessary to address unique portions of the plan. The Policy Areas section presents these policies. Land use issues are addressed in the Land Use section. The Circulation section addressed the limited variety in routes and modes of travel envisioned to serve this area because of its relatively isolated location and the limited functions the transportation system has to perform. The key to understanding the valued open space network is described in the Multipurpose Open Space section. There are natural and man made hazards to consider and they are spelled out in the Hazards section.