



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.

The Palo Verde Area Plan guides the evolving character of this expansive desert. This eastern rampart of unincorporated Riverside County focuses on the mighty Colorado River and is anchored by the City of Blythe. The Palo Verde 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 details the physical, environmental, and economic qualities that the County aspires to achieve by the year 2020. Using that Vision as the primary foundation, the County of Riverside General Plan establishes policies for development and conservation within the entire unincorporated County territory. The Palo Verde Area Plan, on the other hand, provides customized direction specifically for this easternmost reach of the County.

The Palo Verde 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 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 found in this document.

Each section of the Area Plan addresses critical issues facing the planning area. 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 some of these designations reflect unique features found in Palo Verde, certain special policies are still necessary to address unique issues here. The Policy Areas section presents these policies. Land use isn't the only key factor in developing and conserving appropriate land areas. The Plan also describes relevant transportation issues in the Circulation section. A limited variety of routes and modes of travel are envisioned to serve this area than in the more westerly portions of the County, simply because of its remoteness and the vast desert that sets it apart. The key to understanding the valued open space network is described in the Multipurpose Open Space section. There are, of course, natural and man made hazards to consider and they are spelled out in the Hazards section.

It is important to understand that the incorporated City of Blythe, located entirely within the Palo Verde planning area, is not covered by this plan. It is governed by its own general plan and zoning. Nevertheless, city/county coordination is a critical component of this Plan. A key location factor is how this area relates to other planning areas within the vastness of Riverside County.



County of Riverside General Plan - Hearing Draft

Palo Verde Area Plan

The Palo Verde planning area is a gateway between Riverside County and points east. Being directly adjacent to the state of Arizona, the Palo Verde planning area plays a pivotal role in the access connections and impressions for the huge number of people entering Riverside County from the east. The Palo Verde Area Plan seeks to capture and capitalize upon, not only the special qualities of the land, but its strategic location as well.

The physical setting and location of Palo Verde define the planning area's uniqueness and identity. The rugged desert and Colorado River combine to define the development and land uses here. The Colorado River and its historic floodplain provide fertile soils and a steady water source for one of the most productive agricultural areas in the state. Not only that: the River is a major recreational feature and tourist draw, renowned throughout the greater Southwest. Development in the unincorporated areas is concentrated around the City of Blythe, along major transportation routes leading south and west, and along the Colorado River.

It is important to note that data in this area plan is current as of June 19, 2001. Any General Plan amendments approved subsequent to that date are not reflected in this area plan and must be supported by their own environmental documentation. A process for incorporating any applicable portion of these amendments into this area plan is part of the General Plan Implementation Program.



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.

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 Palo Verde Valley.

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.