



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.



Environmental Setting. The Palo Verde planning area includes a large valley that is situated between the Palo Verde Mesa to the west and the Colorado River to the east. The unique mesa, valley, and river combination creates distinct ecosystems within the planning area because the dry, arid mesa contrasts the fertile river valley. These unique assets have been preserved and capitalized upon by the Open Space Desert, Water, and Agricultural land use designations.

Colorado River. The Colorado River is both an asset to and opportunity for the Palo Verde planning area. The River is the basis for the powerful agricultural economy in the Palo Verde Valley, a regionwide recreational draw, and a natural biological resource. The area plan land use designations and the Recreational Policy Area reinforce the long-term value of the Colorado River.

Agricultural Lands. The agricultural lands found in the Palo Verde planning area were created by periodic floods from the Colorado River. The rich soil has yielded crops that are one of the major economic forces within Riverside County. The agricultural lands are so important, they have been listed as being of Statewide Importance, and are preserved for the business of agriculture and the character in the Palo Verde planning area.