



## Introduction



The Pass derives its name from its location: the narrow gap between two of southern California’s most spectacular mountain ranges—the San Bernardino and San Jacinto Mountains. This gap provides an obvious physical gateway between the mountains and provides a passage between the desert areas to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. This area plan guides the evolving character of this place within unincorporated territory in this part of the County. The Pass 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 Pass Area Plan, on the other hand, provides customized direction specifically for the planning area.

The Pass 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 special 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 this plan addresses critical issues facing the Pass. Perhaps a description of these sections will help in understanding the organization of the planning area 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 applicable to the planning area, a number of special policies are still necessary to address specific portions of the Pass. 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 in the Circulation section. The key to understanding the valued open space network is described in the Multipurpose Open Space section. There are also natural and man made hazards to consider and they are spelled out in the Hazards section.

It is important to understand that the incorporated Cities of Banning, Beaumont, and Calimesa, located within the Pass, are not covered by this area plan. They are governed by their own general plans. Nevertheless, city/county coordination is a critical component of this area plan. A key location factor is how this area relates to other planning areas within the vastness of Riverside County. The

*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 County of Riverside General Plan - *Hearing Draft*

## *The Pass Area Plan*

relationship between cities and County territory can be seen on Figure 1, Location.



*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 Pass is a gateway between Riverside and San Bernardino Counties as well as between the Los Angeles metropolitan region and the Coachella Valley and points east. Consequently, it plays a pivotal role in the access, connections, and impressions for Riverside County. The Pass Area Plan seeks to capture and capitalize upon, not only the special qualities of the land, but its strategic location as well.

### **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 Pass.

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.

**Remarkable Environmental Setting.** The Pass boasts some of the most beautiful natural features within Riverside County. From the San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountains to the San Timoteo Badlands, there is an ever changing scenery as visitors and residents pass through the landscape. These features have been preserved to ensure their beauty for future generations. Some of the other special features unique only to the Pass are the Benches, or mesas that have been formed by ancient watercourses and fault lines. Water still has a strong presence within the Pass because of the number of mountain creeks that run through the planning area including the San Gorgonio River, the San Timoteo Creek, and the Noble Creek, to name just a few. These watercourses connect with the larger watersheds that cover the remainder of Riverside County.

**Character Rich Communities.** There are a few special communities within the unincorporated lands in the Pass, and their character and lifestyle have been preserved within this area plan. The community of Cherry Valley, located in the