

3.0 | PROJECT DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION

The proposed project in this Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is the General Plan 2035 for the City of Coachella published in May 2013, including the Errata published in June 2014. The General Plan Update project description for the EIR provides an overview of the City of Coachella General Plan Update 2035 (CGPU) and describes the project location, background, objectives, and characteristics. This Proposed General Plan Update replaces the 1998 General Plan and will provide long term planning guidance for the City's growing population and projected development. As described in Section 15124 of the CEQA Guidelines, a complete project description must contain the following information but is not required to supply extensive detail beyond that needed for evaluation and review of the environmental impact: (1) The location and boundaries of the proposed project on a regional and detailed map; (2) A statement of objectives sought by the proposed project; (3) A general description of the project's technical, economic, and environmental characteristics; and (4) A statement briefly describing the intended uses of the EIR (contained within Section 1.0, "Introduction," of this EIR).

LOCATION AND SETTING

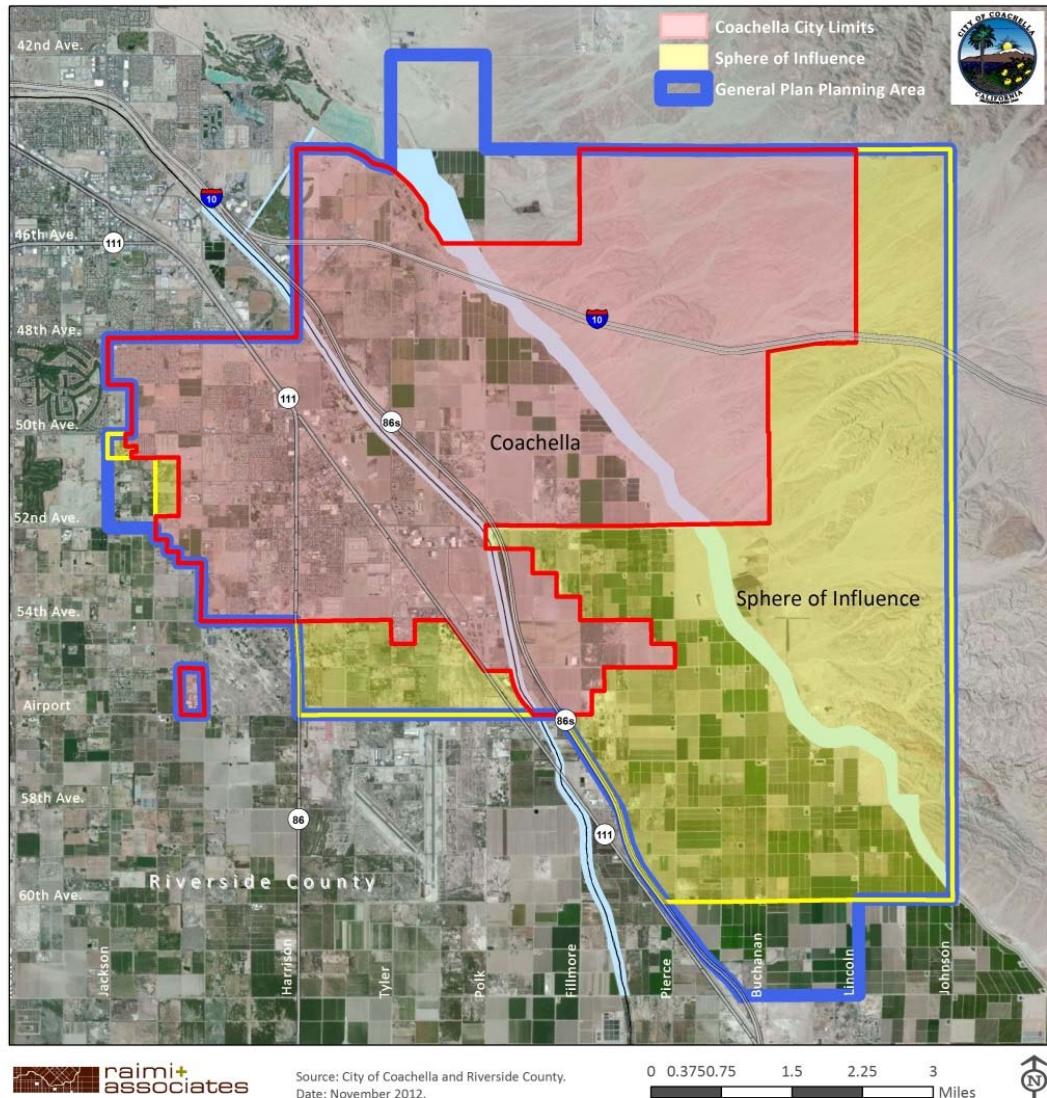
The City of Coachella is a desert community and located at the eastern end of the Coachella Valley, in Riverside County, California. Settlement by non-Native Americans began in the mid-1800's Coachella slowly grew as it became connected with the rest of Southern California on the Southern Pacific Coachella Valley railroad. The Colorado River water source for farming and irrigation also brought another boom in Coachella's growth. The Coachella Valley, including the City of Coachella, City of Indio, Thermal and Mecca, is successful in producing niche crops such as dates, grapes, lemons, oranges, avocados, figs, persimmons, and mangoes. Lastly, the Coachella Canal was one of the final milestones in Coachella's development, as it contributed to dramatic growth, especially in the southern and eastern portions of the City. Today the City's agricultural wealth offers many jobs for people in the Coachella Valley, additional job types include manufacturing, construction, retail, and professional and management jobs.

The proposed project is located in the City of Coachella, centrally located Riverside County Figure 3.0-1. The Planning Area for the proposed project includes the City limits as well as the City's additional Sphere of Influence that covers the land to east of the City limits. It is within these areas that data, maps, plans, analyses, and other documentation will focus on, including this Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The total area of land within the Planning Area is 45,300 acres. This includes 34,322 acres within the City Limits, roughly 40,000 residents, and around 9,000 occupied housing units. At the time this plan was prepared, 18,530 acres of the City was developed, leaving 27,000 undeveloped. Of that undeveloped land, approximately 10 percent of it has been entitled for future development. A detailed description of the existing conditions for each environmental resource can be found in Chapter 4.

Figure 3.0-1: Regional Location



Figure 3.0-2: City of Coachella and Sphere of Influence



BACKGROUND

As required by state law, cities must create a General Plan to guide city staff, decision makers, residents, and business owners, in the future development and growth of the City. The last General Plan update for the City of Coachella was in 1998. Much has changed since 1998 that has resulted in a need to update the 1998 General Plan. The economy and housing market underwent a massive adjustment. The community has developed new interests and priorities that pertain to health and sustainability. The state has passed new legislation addressing the form and performance of communities. New population projections are predicting tremendous growth for the Coachella Valley. In response to these trends, the City began the update to its General Plan.

In 2008, the City started a five-year process of public and administrative meetings and workshops to update the General Plan. In 2010, the City was awarded a grant from the California Endowment to supplement the General Plan update with a Health and Wellness Element and Climate Action Plan. Under this grant, the City conducted three community-wide workshops and seven Wellness Advisory Committee meetings in which substantive community input was provided on appropriate health and sustainability priorities and actions for the community. This input provided the foundation for the General Plan Update.

The resulting City of Coachella General Plan Update is a long-term development plan for the City and its Sphere of Influence. The goals and policies created by the General Plan update provide the framework for establishing the City's identity and character, as well as for all aspects of community members' overall welfare. The General Plan also makes necessary updates to bring the plan current with new legislation, changes in existing conditions, and to provide for a healthier and more sustainable pattern of development.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- The objectives for the proposed General Plan update are:
- Adapt to changing demographics to connect and create a vision for the growing population of the City
- Create a healthy and economically viable City with a diversity of activities and economic opportunities
- Implement new technology and innovations to increase the quality of infrastructure, social services, and environmental sustainability
- Update older development plans that no longer align with the community's new vision
- Chart the way to a low-carbon future
- Redirect development patterns for city growth, economic characteristics, and land-use to create a well-connected city
- Assess needs for projected growth within the City, and the Sphere of Influence
- Create a city with a range of housing for multiple generations, cultures, and incomes
- Ensure the City grows with improved living conditions
- Foster the community's desire for safe, active transportation

PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The proposed project analyzed by this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is the adoption and implementation of the General Plan Update for the City of Coachella. The General Plan Update includes the City of Coachella Climate Action Plan. Both documents are summarized individually below. The Climate Action Plan is a component of the proposed project and references to the proposed General Plan throughout the EIR include the analysis of the Climate Action Plan.

The City of Coachella General Plan Update encompasses future community development plans from now, until 2035. The General Plan will provide long term planning guidelines for the City's growing population and projected development.

The City of Coachella is expected to grow from its current population of 40,000, to a total population of 135,000, by 2035. The growth is expected to unfold in an incremental pattern as development projects continue to be built in the City of Coachella. Under the proposed General Plan, there is expected development of Single Family Dwelling Units, Multi-Family Dwelling Units, commercial, and industrial spaces. The General Plan plans for the growth and development of 18,564 acres within the City limits as well as the integration of 14,755 additional acres within the City's Sphere of Influence.

The CGPU is designed to guide Coachella into a new pattern of development that promotes environmental sustainability through land and transportation design and operation. Full implementation of the CGPU will direct the City's growth in a more energy and land use efficient pattern than the current business-as-usual development pattern. The current pattern of development in Coachella is that of sprawling development and disconnected suburban streets. The Proposed Project is a shift from old development patterns common in the inefficient and unsustainable sprawl throughout Southern California. The CGPU is based on a land use and transportation system that has intrinsic characteristics that promotes compact accessible, walkable development, mixed use, open space, and transit-supportive nodes. This shift in design will ultimately support an environmentally sustainable community, and one that will have less environmental impact than the current outdated business-as-usual development design.

The CGPU structure outlines the community's goals along with strategies to design, promote, create, foster, and implement a healthy and sustainable community. Additionally, many of these strategies serve as tools to ensure smart growth in the Planning Area by using place-based land-use designations, and a well-connected street pattern. It is these tools that decision makers, community members and developments will use to ensure the goals and vision of the CGPU are being achieved. Through the developers review process for projects within the community, decision makers will have CGPU policies to make sure plans are in compliance with the health and sustainability goals of the community.

The General Plan identifies long-term goals; provides a basis for decision-making; provides citizens a forum for input on the community's direction; and informs citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other interested parties of the ground rules for development within the City. The end result of the General Plan is a comprehensive report on goals and policies, formed through community outreach that will enhance the overall wellbeing for all residents, business owners, visitors, and any affiliates with the City of Coachella.

The Coachella Community Development Department, the Coachella Planning Commission, and the Coachella City Council administer the General Plan for the City of Coachella. Under these agencies, City staff, City Council, the Planning Commission, and other Boards of Commissions are responsible for implementation of the General Plan, and upholding the Plans goals and policies.

The General Plan is a comprehensive update of the 1998 General Plan. The proposed General Plan is intended to serve as the primary guiding document for the physical development of the City over the next 20 to 25 years. The General Plan is essentially the City's "blueprint" for development and is comprised of goals, policies, and actions that will provide the City's decision makers with a foundation for making future decisions related to land use, development, economic development, community wellbeing, and related topics.

The General Plan calls for a placed based community that promotes health, safety, and sustainability for the City and its residents. As required by state law, the General Plan for every City and County shall address a series of topics that are typically organized into seven specific elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The General Plan addresses all of the mandatory state topics and is organized as described below. However, the City's current Housing Element is not a subject of this update and will be updated through a separate process.

Following is a summary of the General Plan components:

Introduction: The Introduction explains the purpose and contents of the General Plan, including the role of the General Plan, the Statutory Requirements and Authority, and the Organization of the plan.

Vision and Guiding Principles: the Vision provides the context for the General Plan, including the primary Guiding Principles that led to the development of the goals and policies within each of the elements.

Land Use + Community Character: Through General Plan designations of Ranchos, Neighborhoods, Centers, Districts, Specific Plans, and Public uses, the land-use element will strategically incorporate and celebrate the community character of City residents. The land use element also creates a foundation for walkable and neighborhood-oriented community and economic activities. This will be done through a revitalization of the downtown core, expanding economic development opportunities, tourism and entertainment, and a focus on neighborhood.

Mobility: The Mobility element seeks to create a balanced transportation system that accommodates all modes of travel safely and efficiently, without prioritizing automobile travel. Through complete streets, traffic calming, and a network of bike paths, trails, and roads, the element will connect all modes of transportation to facilities and recreation, monitored by a transportation management team.

Community Health + Wellness: The purpose of the Community Health + Wellness element is to encourage a physical, social and civic environment that supports residents' health. The element will create community programs, local food systems, and educational facilities to increase awareness and practice of healthy living. The element includes the creation of a built environment that promotes physical activity, safe and affordable housing at all ages, reduction in tobacco use, and affordable and accessible high-quality health care and social services for all residents.

Sustainability + Natural Environment: This element presents goals and policies for the community of Coachella that will minimize risks of climate change, promote resource efficient and environmentally respectful communities, and offer access to open space and parkland. Heat island mitigation, alternative energy uses, agricultural land preservation, and water recycling programs are also presented in the General Plan to sustain an environmentally sound City for years to come.

Safety: The element identifies and mitigates safety risks to the City of Coachella, including earthquake, flood, fires, and severe weather. Mitigation includes requiring new buildings to be built seismically resistant, require new developments to report mitigation measures for developing in flood plain, and responsibly use, to a minimum, and hazardous materials and waste. The element ultimately ensures reduction in environmental safety risks for the residents of the City.

Infrastructure + Public Service: Ensure the City of Coachella has a well-maintained and efficient public infrastructure, with adequate water supply, drainage, sewer and wastewater, and solid waste management systems. Public service recommendations include; water supply planning for new development, water source protection, abates illegal onsite wastewater disposal systems, development of drainage system master plan, and support on-going green waste recycling efforts.

Noise: Establish projections, and mitigation strategies for noise emissions for activity within the City. Through land use and transportation planning, the noise element can be greatly formed to preserve the health of City residents.

Housing: The Housing Element for the City of Coachella was update in 2013. The Housing Element is not a part of this General Plan update and is not considered by the Notice of Preparation, Initial Study or Environmental Impact Report, for the proposed project.

Implementation Actions: The General Plan, along with providing goals and policies, also offers an implementation plan with time frames for each action to advise the City on strategy for prioritizing specific actions, understand short term and long-term goals, and make incremental changes complimentary to the City's growth projection patterns.

The CGPU is intended to help the City develop a resilient economy and to address the states changing environmental policy.

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Since the City's last General Plan update in 1998, new state legislation has been adopted addressing climate change and greenhouse gases (GHG). The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, Assembly Bill (AB) 32, requires California to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Local governments are encouraged to enact their own regional or local plan to reduce GHG emissions, including the City of Coachella. Senate Bill 375 provides for regional vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reductions by 2035. Senate Bill 97 amends the CEQA Guidelines to specifically require climate considerations in CEQA documents and to provide for CEQA streamlining benefits if a community prepares a qualified Climate Action Plan.

The City of Coachella has prepared a Climate Action Plan (CAP) as a part of the General Plan Update process that proposes strategies to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. The CAP also helps implement the General Plan update by providing strategies that will reduce energy use, resource consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions. The CAP documents the CGPU's intrinsic ability to meet the 2020 emissions reductions target, which can be achieved because of the CGPU's land use supporting policies that shift the City towards a more energy efficient development pattern. Additionally, the Cap provides strategies for further reducing greenhouse gas levels by 2035. The CAP also establishes a per service population 2020 emission reduction target of 15% below 2010 levels and a 2035 emissions reduction target of 49% below 2010 levels.

The City's CAP focuses on various sectors has indicators to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHGs) from agriculture, commercial, industrial, and public operations, lighting infrastructure, residential, solid water, transportation, and water. These sectors of GHG emissions are measured and compared to baseline levels established by the city's 2005 GHG inventory. Community-wide GHG emissions under a business as usual per service population emissions model are projected to be 8.9 (MTCO2e/SP) by 2035, a small increase from 8.5 (MTCO2e/SP) calculated in 2005. GHG targets under the CAP are expected to reach a GHG per Service Population of 6.2 (MTCO2e/SP) by 2020 and 3.7 (MTCO2e/SP) by 2035 after target reduction strategies are implemented. The 2020 target equate to a GHG reduction that parallels the goals of AB32.

Like the CGPU, implementation of the CAP will require a number of staff work efforts including municipal code amendments, launching and monitoring specific programs, and working with utility companies to increase participation in energy programs. To the extent possible, CAP programs and actions will be incorporated into departmental work plans. In 2011, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments completed a 2005 community inventory of greenhouse gas emissions for each Coachella Valley city. In the CAP, the 2005 inventory was supplemented with additional information about new emissions sources, such as agricultural and water emissions, and more recent data, such as vehicle miles traveled data from the updated regional transportation model. The 2005 inventory was supplemented with an inventory for 2010 greenhouse gas emissions to track emissions trends.

The CAP evaluates General Plan policies that have the potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or support emission reduction strategies. The CAP organizes General Plan policies into six strategies to reduce emissions reductions throughout the City: building and infrastructure energy efficiency; renewable energy generation; land use and transportation; vegetation and open space; solid waste; and water use. Each strategy is supported by a number of more specific programs, actions, and measures that will be implemented as part of the City's General Plan. In general, greenhouse gas reductions from any single policy represent a conservative estimate of the potential emissions reductions.

GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

The General Plan categorizes land uses into 15 different general plan designations, organized around six base use designations that address a range of place types anticipated in Coachella. The purpose of the designations is to give flexibility to implementation and effective long-term growth of the city. The 15 general plan designations encompass a broad range of uses, with enough variance to adapt to unforeseeable changes in the City's future. Additionally, the designations address numerous complementary aspects of use to better define the character of places sought by the City. The General Plan defines the designations as follows:

Ranchos:

The Ranchos land use designation is intended to preserve agriculture in the City as an economic development and aesthetic benefit. The land use also allows for some rural development with needed structures surrounded by preserved open space. Among the Rancho designations, there are two types; Agricultural and Rural.

Agricultural Ranchos:

Allow for the production of agriculture and use of small accessory to support the use. Agricultural accessories include housing for farm owners and workers, equestrian barns, and sheds for packing processing and selling produce grown on site. Dwelling Units per Acre (*DU/AC*): *1 unit per parcel or 40 acres, whichever is smaller.*

Rural Ranchos:

Allow residential property, except for home occupations, and uses accessory to agricultural production. These areas serve as a buffer between Agricultural and any of the urban designations of the General Plan, or edge of the urbanized portion of the City. *DU/AC:1 DU/2.5 AC – 1 DU/AC; FAR: n/a*

Neighborhood:

Neighborhood designations within the General Plan are made up of a variety of residential types that provide safe, attractive, well connected, and comfortable places to live. The neighborhoods will also present diverse architectural styles, walkable streets, schools, parks, and easy access to commercial amenities. Within the neighborhoods the sub categories are Suburban Neighborhoods, General Neighborhoods, and Urban Neighborhoods.

Suburban Neighborhoods:

Single family homes with some multi-family housing, with natural landscape, and larger lots. *DU/AC: 2-10, with 5 DU/AC average; FAR: n/a*

General Neighborhoods:

A mixture of single family and multi family residences to meet the varied family and income levels in the City. Single family homes, duplexes, courtyard housing, and complexes are allowed in this neighborhoods category. *DU/AC: 7-25; FAR : n/a*

Urban Neighborhoods:

These neighborhoods are higher density, walkable, and transit-ready, with predominantly multi-family housing. Residents in urban neighborhoods have easy walking distances to parks, schools, shops, transit and employment. *DU/AC: 18-50; FAR: n/a*

Centers:

Centers serve as areas with non-residential uses offering a variety of commercial uses. These pockets of activity offer a number of good and services to those living in close proximity, for easy access to every center's uses. The types of centers in the City are Neighborhood, Downtown, and Urban Employment.

Neighborhood Centers:

These centers are often located on two major intersecting avenues and provide a mix of commercial and civic services with mixed-use multi family housing nearby. Neighborhood centers are intended to be well connected to the adjoining neighborhoods and can offer high quality transit stops. *DU/AC:15-40; FAR: 0.5-1.5*

Downtown Neighborhood:

Downtown centers provide everyday activities of shopping, dining, entertainment, boutiques, arts and crafts, start up companies, and higher education institutions. The area is intended for us by all Coachella residents, and offers activities for all cultures, income levels, and social status. It is the city center and civic heart of the City. *DU/AC: 20-50; FAR: .75-3.0*

Urban Employment Center:

These centers offer the City's economy to sustain and thrive as it offers business, research and development, and other job creating activities. Some residential is allowed, but mainly business buildings in a walkable setting. *DU/AC: 30-65; FAR: 0.5 – 3.0*

Districts:

Districts serve to connect adjacent land uses and offer patrons a walkable environment to multiple activities including retail and entertainment. The General Plan has four district designations: Suburban Retail, Regional Retail, Industrial, and Resort.

Suburban Retail:

The district offers ‘big box’ and ‘large format’ retailers with convenient parking and pedestrian friendly design on a town scale. These districts will be 1 to 2 stories to maintain the small town design set within residential neighborhoods. *DU/AC: n/a; FAR: 0.35 – 1.0*

Regional Retail:

These shopping centers will offer retail to the region of Coachella and can attract people to the City for a number of shopping, dining, and entertainment uses. This district will cover large blocks of public and private streets, with larger building scale, and attractive pedestrian design. *DU/AC: 10-15; FAR: 0.35-2.0*

Industrial District:

Heavy commercial and industrial businesses will be in these areas. The district activities’ may contribute to noise, light, odors, or truck traffic and are designated as a district to not interfere to other land uses or districts. *DU/AC: n/a; FAR: 0.1-2.0*

Resort Districts:

The Resort District surrounds recreation, entertainment, or vacation destinations. The district has economic benefits for the City, and can have the option to develop theme parks, or large entertainment venues. *DU/AC = up to 8 FAR = 0.10 max, except for theme parks*

Public:

Public land uses consists of parking, schools, and public buildings. The land use will have convenient access, pedestrian friendly, and be well landscaped for aesthetic value.

Parks and Open Space:

This land use is intended to preserve and enhance Coachella’s parklands and open spaces. The designation includes Mini-Parks, Plazas/Greens, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Special Use Parks, Nature/Open Space, Greenway/Trails, and Linear Parks.

Schools:

As a public service, the City has designated school land use to include elementary, middle, high schools, colleges, and universities. The schools also are to be located adjacent to residential uses to improve access for students.

Public Facilities and Buildings:

The City allocates certain land to be used for governmental buildings and facilities to sustain a quality lifestyle offering ranges of public services. The facilities are intended to be in downtown areas, and centrally located for fair access by all residents.

SPECIFIC PLANS:

The General Plan Proposed Land Use Plan map (Figure 3.0-3) has designations for several existing specific plans within the Planning Area; La Entrada, Coachella Vineyards, and Bradenburg Butters, along with designations for future or revised specific plans. These specific plans follow the vision, guidelines, and policies of the General Plan, and are intended to blend with existing and future City development. Approved specific plans will act as General Plan Land Use Designations and act as a specific land use under the CGPU and provides specific land use designations unique to each specific plan. All specific plans within the Planning Area are described below:

La Entrada (Proposed)

Located east of the Coachella Canal, covering Subarea 14 of the CGPU land designations, the adopted La Entrada Specific Plan will add 7,800 residential units, over 2,200 acres of the Planning Area. This plan also proposes 135 acres of mixed-use, schools, 343.8 acres of parks, multipurpose trails, and 556.9 acres of open space.

Bradenburg Butters Specific Plan

The previously adopted Bradenburg Butters Specific Plan will add 1,381 residential units over 71.5 acres, and will include commercial and public uses. This specific plan is centrally located in the Planning Area in subarea 9, east of SR 86.

Coachella Vineyards Specific Plan

The previously adopted Coachella Vineyard Specific Plan provides for 807 units in the southeastern area of the City, in subarea 8 east of SR-86

Eagle Falls

The previously adopted Eagle Falls Specific Plan covers 60 acres in the City of Coachella and 30 acres in the City of Indio. The plan calls for 295 residential units, 202 of which would be within the City of Coachella. Eagle Falls also provides a gated golf course community and is included in the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians Springs Master Plan.

Shadow View

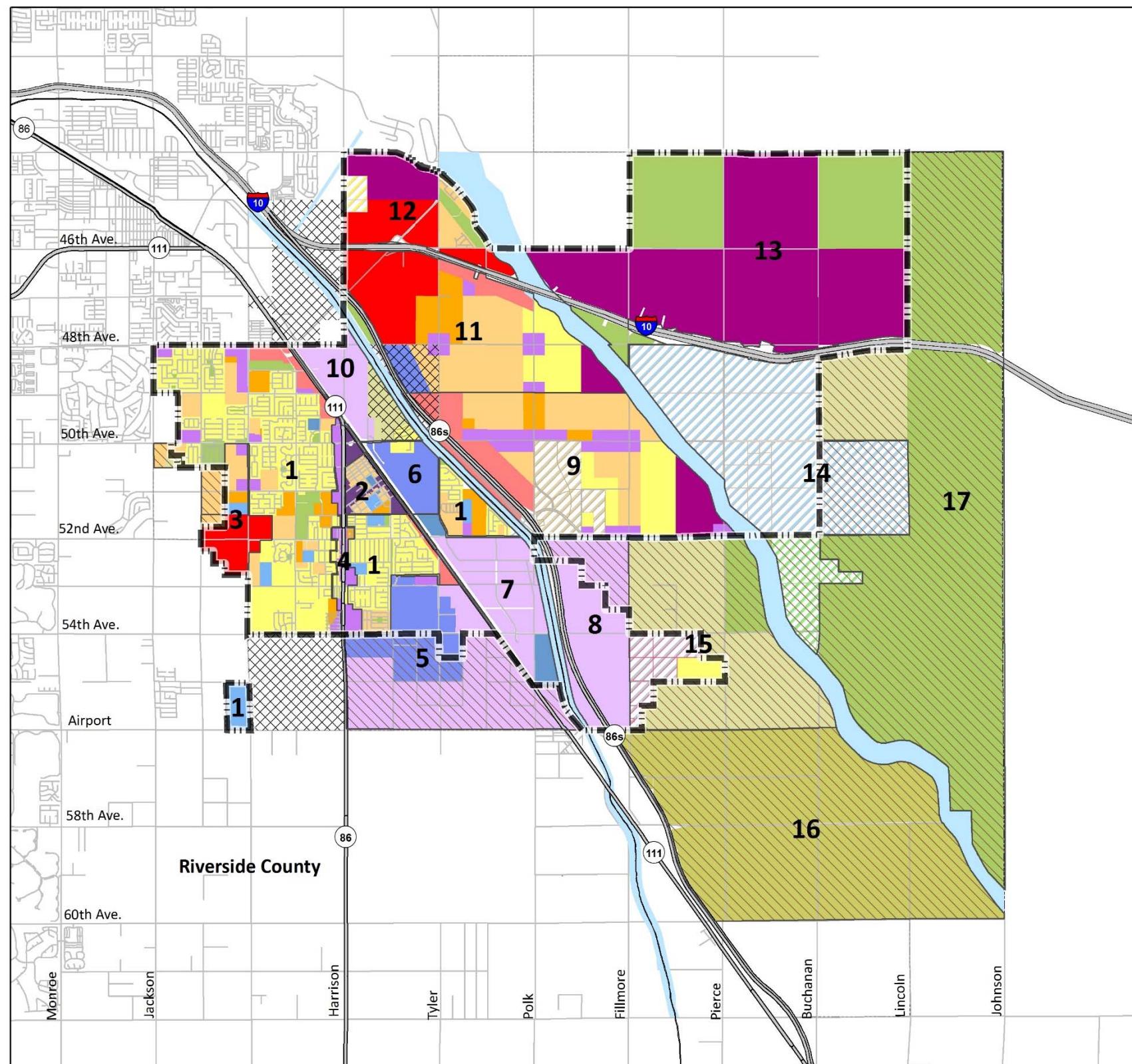
The previously adopted Shadow View Specific Plan covers 380 acres, with 1,600 residential dwelling units, 100 acres of mixed-use commercial, and a 37-acre park. The mixed-use commercial portion of the plan allows for the construction of up to 1,000 high-density residential units. Overall, the Shadow View Specific Plan has a suburban auto-oriented design pattern with disconnected streets and singular land uses. This pattern is not in line with the proposed CGPU policies, vision, or land use designations that support mixed use development, connected streets, and strategic density designations to promote a walkable and sustainable environment in the City.

LAND USE PLAN

This Proposed General Plan Update would replace the 1998 General Plan. The Following General Plan Designation Map (Figure 3.0-3) identifies the type, location and density/intensity of future development within the City intended by the CGPU.

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Growth Figure 3.0-3: Proposed Land Use Plan



City of Coachella General Plan Update 2035

General Plan Land Use Designations

Legend

Land Use Designation
Coachella City Limits
Tribal Land
Sphere of Influence
General Plan Planning Area
Downtown Center
Urban Employment Center
Neighborhood Center
Regional Retail District
Suburban Retail District
Resort District
Industrial District
Urban Neighborhood
General Neighborhood
Suburban Neighborhood
Rural Rancho
Agricultural Rancho
Open Space
School
Public Facilities
Brandenburg Butters Specific Plan
Coachella Vineyards Specific Plan
Eagle Falls Specific Plan
La Entrada Specific Plan
Philips Ranch Specific Plan



raimi + associates

Source: City of Coachella and
Riverside County
Date: January 2014

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LAND USE SUMMARY

The City of Coachella is largely underdeveloped, with a current population of 40,000. The City limits encompasses 18,564 acres of land. The City's Planning Area of 45,300 acres, which includes the City of Coachella Boundaries, some areas not within the City's jurisdiction, and the Sphere of Influence, is only partially developed, with nearly 27,000 acres undeveloped. Interstate 10 runs through Coachella connecting the City to the rest of Southern California, along with State Routes 86 and 111.

The existing land use of the City of Coachella is made up of fourteen land uses: including agriculture (11,174 acres, 33%), vacant land (18,224 acres, 54% of total Coachella's land), transportation/communication/utilities (1,889 acres, 6%), and single family residential (1,007 acres, 3%). Agricultural land comprises approximately 33% of the area. Transportation, communications and utilities comprised 6% of the land area, and both single family residential and industrial land account for 3% of the land area. All other uses comprised 2% of the land area. By excluding agriculture and vacant lands, transportation, communications and utilities comprised 38% of the land area, single family residential represented 20% of the land area, and industrial land accounted for 18% of the land area. All other uses comprised 24% of the land area.

According to the 2010 Census, the population density of Coachella was 2.20 persons per acre for the entire city. The population density was about four times higher than the county and six times higher than the state. Compared to other cities, however, Coachella's population density was lower than Palm Desert (2.82), Indio (4.07), and Riverside (5.58). When looking at population density for only the developed areas of the city (west of Highway 86), the result is much different; Coachella's developed areas have a density of 6.71 persons per acre. Although Coachella's residential development patterns are similar to the rest of the region, some of the neighborhoods have smaller lots and the household size in Coachella is much larger than the other geographic areas. Population is not uniformly distributed in Coachella. Population ranges from zero on the eastern and southern sides of Coachella to more than 30 people per acre.

The proposed land use plan would make changes to existing land use that plans for the growth and development through 2035. The land use descriptions of the CGPU allow for a flexible land use plan to allow for potential unforeseen economic, social, or natural changes circumstances that would require a shift in land uses within the Planning Area.

Table 3.0-1: Existing Land Use Designations¹

LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	ACRES	% OF TOTAL AREA	% OF TOTAL AREA EXCLUDING AGRICULTURE AND VACANT LAND
AGRICULTURE	11,174	33%	-
COMMERCIAL AND SERVICES	138	0.4%	3%
EDUCATION	98	0.3%	2%
FACILITIES	54	0.2%	1%
GENERAL OFFICE	101	0.3%	2%
INDUSTRIAL	892	3%	18%
MIXED COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL	5	0.01%	0%
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	55	0.2%	1%
OPEN SPACE AND PARKS	109	0.3%	2%
OTHER RESIDENTIAL	277	1%	6%
SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	1,007	3%	20%
TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNICATIONS, + UTILITIES	1,889	6%	38%
UNDER CONSTRUCTION	300	1%	6%
VACANT	18,224	53%	-
GRAND TOTAL	34,322	100%	100%

ANTICIPATED GROWTH

The City has enough undeveloped land to accommodate generations of growth. Accordingly, the City's General Plan provides for a framework of growth for the development of the entire City. However, while the rate of growth of a city is only a prediction and Coachella could end up growing at a faster rate than expected, the General Plan and EIR focus on the development of the City into 2035. The City has experienced a number of population booms and currently has a population of 40,704, a housing count of approximately 9,900 units, and a job count of approximately 5,830. The City is anticipating major growth in the coming decades and expects a population of nearly 135,000 people by 2035. The following table summarizes the incremental growth expected by 2035 analyzed in this EIR.

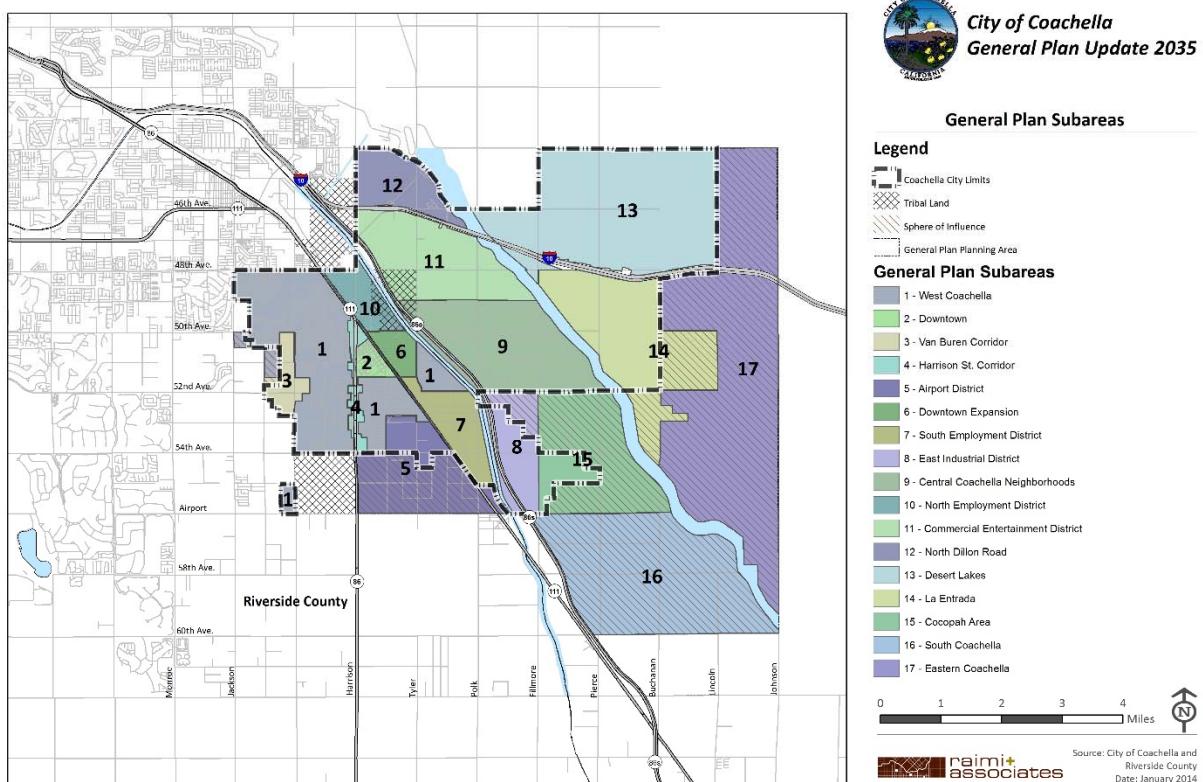
¹ U.S. Census Bureau (2011). 2010 Census Summary File 1— California).

Table 3.0-2: Incremental 2035 Growth under the proposed General Plan Update

PARAMETER	Incremental Growth by 2035
SINGLE FAMILY DWELLING UNITS	15,205
MULTI-FAMILY DWELLING UNITS	18,264
SINGLE FAMILY POPULATION	53,219
MULTI-FAMILY POPULATION	41,094
RETAIL (SQ. FT.)	10,431,312
OFFICE (SQ.FT)	3,746,701
INDUSTRIAL (SQ.FT)	5,220,111
TOTAL NEW JOBS	25,750

SUB-AREA DESIGNATIONS

In addition to land uses, the plan also defines 17 different sub-areas that cover all parts of the City. The purpose of the Sub-areas is to define an overall vision and specific policy direction that supplements the General Plan Designations and the citywide goals and policies at a finer grain of detail for that part of the City. The 17 Sub-areas are defined as follows:

Figure 3.0-4: Proposed Subareas

WEST COACHELLA NEIGHBORHOODS

The West Coachella neighborhoods are located west, south and east of the downtown and encompass most of the urbanized area City in 2010. The area is predominantly single-family homes, but also contains various types of retail uses, apartments, schools and parks. Over time, the West Coachella Neighborhoods will evolve with new development and improvements to existing neighborhoods to create a more finely-grained and block and street network that links existing and new development into a coherent town pattern. West Coachella will have to provide much needed housing that ranges from single-family houses to house-scale multi-family buildings. New development will occur as infill development that completes and repairs the neighborhood fabric of West Coachella. Over time, the discontinuous street networks will be retrofitted to interconnect with all new areas fully connected, providing easy access to the shopping and jobs located within adjacent areas. Streets will be pedestrian friendly with on-street parking, sidewalks shaded by street trees and safe crosswalks.

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown Sub-area of Coachella is diverse and dynamic, containing historic homes, shops, and numerous civic, housing City Hall, the Post Office, churches, schools, and parks. The Downtown is the original railroad town and laid out in a walkable, small block fashion west of the railroad tracks. The vision for the Downtown Sub-area will continue as the physical, civic and cultural heart of Coachella. As the City grows, new civic uses, cultural facilities, housing and retail uses will be located in the Downtown to enhance its role as the central meeting and gathering place for Coachella residents. The Sub-area will also expand into the area east of the railroad with additional specialty and local-serving retail, civic uses, restaurants, services, arts and cultural opportunities, and diverse employment opportunities.

VAN BUREN

The Van Buren Corridor extends from approximately 50th to 53rd Avenues along Van Buren. Existing uses along the corridor include single-family, retail, and schools. The Van Buren Corridor is at a key location between Indio, Coachella, and La Quinta and much of the land through the corridor is still available for quality development, providing Coachella with a great opportunity to create a strong neighborhood center and regional shopping district. The Van Buren Corridor is planned to transform into a major sub-regional retail destination that provides a wide variety of goods and services for residents in the City of Coachella, as well as neighboring communities. The commercial development will connect to the surrounding new and existing residential areas, allowing a high degree of access and balancing the impacts of traffic on the community.

HARRISON STREET

The Harrison Street corridor extends from approximately 54th Avenue north to the intersection of Harrison Street and Route 111 (at approximately 49th Avenue). At present, the corridor is an automobile oriented roadway with shopping centers, large surface parking lots and limited pedestrian facilities. Over time, the Harrison Street Corridor will become a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use corridor with a diverse mix of retail, commercial and residential uses. New development will be more urban in design with buildings that frame the street and parking located to the rear of the buildings while continuing to serve as a major thoroughfare and retail street for the City.

AIRPORT

This area of the City contains a variety of industrial uses, very low-density residential development and agricultural uses. Generally bounded by Harrison Street on the west, Airport Boulevard on the south, and SR-111 on the east, the area has exceptional regional highway and airport access and a significant amount of vacant parcels. The Airport District will continue to evolve into one of the primary industrial areas of the City. The area will be built with large buildings, lots, and block sizes to accommodate the large areas needed for a variety of industrial activities. Visitor and service retail is allowed along Harrison Street and Grapefruit Boulevard, serving the employees of the District, as well as the pass through traffic traveling these roads.

DOWNTOWN EXPANSION

The Downtown Expansion area is located on the east side of SR 111 and the railroad tracks and is bordered by 50th Avenue to the north, Tyler Street to the east, and Bagdad Avenue to the South. The area is currently in agricultural uses with fields and processing facilities. Over time, this area will serve as the expansion of Downtown Coachella and it is envisioned to have a wide diversity of employment and civic uses. The area is envisioned as having small, walkable blocks with office, R&D and supporting retail and services. Multi-family residential uses may be located on the edges of this area and adjacent to existing residential development, such as the area east of Tyler Street.

SOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The South Employment District contains a variety of industrial uses, a significant amount of vacant land, limited single-family residential uses, and a school. The area is bounded by the railroad and SR-111 on the west and by the Whitewater River and SR-86 on the east. This area will transform over time into an employment district that contains a diversity of job-producing uses. Toward the northern end of the Sub-Area, the uses will focus on office and research and development while to the south the uses should be more industrial and warehouse and distribution. Connecting this area over the Union Pacific Railroad and SR 86 should be a priority as development occurs.

EAST INDUSTRIAL

The East Industrial District is located east of the Whitewater River, west of Fillmore and between Airport Boulevard and 52nd Avenue. Approximately two-third of the Sub-area is within the City limits and the other one-third is located in the Sphere of Influence. The area is topographically flat and contains agricultural uses. This Sub-area will transform over time into an employment district that contains a variety of industrial uses. The area should take advantage of the SR 86S that runs along the eastern side of the Sub-area. Development along 52nd Avenue could also be retail and office development as this corridor transforms into a major east-west thoroughfare.

CENTRAL COACHELLA NEIGHBORHOODS

The area is bounded by the Whitewater River on the west and the Coachella Canal on the east, Avenue 52 on the south and Avenue 49 on the north. The area is primarily used for agricultural production, with a combination of cultivated row crops, orchards, and natural open space. The neighborhoods will contain a mix of housing types and most should be within walking distance of neighborhood services, a school or park and open space, including regional multi-use trails on the Whitewater River and Coachella Canal. Residential uses are primarily single-family, with some multi-family, but include a variety of housing types in order to promote choice, livability, and economic viability. The public realm is beautiful and comfortable, with diverse and finely-grained streets, parks, and plazas. The street networks are highly interconnected, providing multiple transportation paths for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists.

NORTH EMPLOYMENT DISTRICT

The North Employment District is currently in use primarily for agricultural activities, but also includes some industrial and residential uses. The area is bounded by the 50th Avenue on the south, Grapefruit Boulevard and the Union Pacific Railroad on the west, the Whitewater River on the east and the city limit on the north. While much of this area is under tribal governance and subject to their land use and development decisions, the North Employment District is intended to become a highly connected employment center for the community. The North Employment district will allow for mixture of office, and light fabrication in a block structure and building fabric that is compatible with a mixture of urban commercial and residential uses, becoming a jobs center that hosts a wide variety of employment opportunities.

COMMERCIAL ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT

The Commercial Entertainment District is located at the junction of Interstate 10 and SR-86, an area of town with exceptional regional accessibility and in close proximity to tribal lands and the existing Spotlight 29 Casino. Currently, the area is sparsely developed with a few roads, agricultural uses, and limited residential and commercial uses. The Commercial Entertainment District is intended to host much of the new development that attracts visitors to Coachella, including destination retail, hotels and resorts, and entertainment uses. This is a highly unusual area and extreme discretion must be used to select and approve correspondingly special and unique projects for the area. The Sub-area must also exhibit strong, fine-grained connections to the surrounding neighborhoods, allowing community members easy access to the shopping and entertainment uses.

NORTH DILLON ROAD

The North Dillon Road Area is largely undeveloped, but does contain some limited residential, recreational, and commercial development. Interstate 10 to the south, the Coachella Canal to the east and the City Limits to the north and west bound the area. The site has excellent views of the nearby mountains, is adjacent to the Coachella Canal, and is adjacent to the San Andreas Fault zone. The North Dillon Road area is intended to develop as a regional visitor serving area with uses that complement the regional Commercial Entertainment District to its south. Lodging, entertainment, and large scale service and fueling stations can all be found in this area along Interstate 10 and the uses are arranged in a highly logical way that builds value and eliminates use incompatibilities.

DESERT LAKES

The Desert Lakes area is an environmentally diverse and rich area of the City. It is part of the Mecca Hills that serve as a scenic backdrop of the City. The area is bounded on the south by Interstate 10 and on the west by the San Andreas Fault and Coachella Canal. The area is a very environmentally sensitive and constrained area, with desert washes and 100-year floodplains, active faults, and potentially sensitive habitat. As a very sensitive area with limited access and a need for substantial infrastructure investment, this area of the City is envisioned to remain undeveloped during the time horizon of the General Plan. When development does occur, the vision for this area is to have low-density resorts, rural residential development and some Suburban Neighborhoods and Suburban Retail in the western portion of the Sub-area. In the interim, this Sub-area will be preserved from development and contribute to the visual identity and aesthetic beauty of Coachella.

LA ENTRADA

La Entrada is envisioned with a diversity of neighborhoods and commercial services. Regional Commercial and Mixed-Use Development will be located in the western portion of the subarea along 50th Avenue that is being realigned to allow for a new interchange with I-10. The subarea will contain a diversity of residential neighborhoods that may include retirement communities and more traditional walkable neighborhoods. The rugged natural topography shall be maintained with lower density residential and open space. The area will have a well-defined open-space network with multi-use trails connecting neighborhoods, parks and natural open spaces. While some distance from Downtown, La Entrada will be directly connected to Central Coachella, Downtown and West Coachella via Avenues 50 and 52, which are broad four-six-lane boulevards with frequent pedestrian crossings and pleasant tree-lined sidewalks.

COCOPAH AREA

This area is primarily used for agricultural production, with a combination of cultivated row crops, orchards, and natural open space. The area is bounded by the Whitewater River on the west, Fillmore on the east, 52nd Avenue to the north and Airport Avenue to the south. The area is generally flat with a slight increase in elevation toward the east. The majority of the Sub-area is located outside of the City limits and within the Sphere of Influence. This Sub-area is identified as a long-term urban expansion area that is not expected to develop during the time horizon of the General Plan Update. Through 2035, uses are envisioned as agriculture and open space. Over the long term, this area may be urbanized with a diversity of residential neighborhoods supported by Neighborhood Centers and Suburban Retail Districts.

SOUTH COACHELLA

This area is primarily used for agricultural production, with a combination of cultivated row crops, orchards, and natural open space. The area is bounded by SR-86 on the west, the Coachella Canal on the east, Airport Boulevard on the north and 60th Avenue on the south. This Sub-area is identified as a long-term urban expansion area that is not expected to develop during the time horizon of the General Plan. Through 2035, uses are envisioned as agriculture and open space. Over the long term, this area may be urbanized with a diversity of residential neighborhoods supported by Neighborhood Centers and Suburban Retail Districts.

EAST COACHELLA

The Eastern Coachella area is an environmentally diverse and rich area of the City. It is part of the Mecca Hills that serve as a scenic backdrop of the City. The area is bounded on the southwest by the San Andreas Fault and Coachella Canal and is bisected by Interstate 10. The area is a very environmentally sensitive and constrained area, with desert washes and 100-year floodplains, active faults, and sensitive habitat and nearly all of the area has been set aside for conservation. This area of the City is planned to be a mostly undeveloped open space area that defines the eastern edge of Coachella and provides a beautiful visual backdrop to the City. The urban development that does occur should be rural residential with minimal impacts to the natural landscape from roads and homes.

INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

As the City of Coachella builds out under the proposed General Plan, a variety of infrastructure improvements such as storm drains, water lines, and roadways would be required to serve future development. The General Plan does not propose specific infrastructure improvements to water, wastewater, storm drain, or energy facilities. This DEIR evaluates the potential impact of building a city with a footprint that can accommodate 135,000 people and the infrastructure is included in that assessment. However, the growth anticipated under the proposed General Plan and the details of the infrastructure necessary to serve that growth would be considered as the infrastructure plans are periodically updated. Potential environmental impacts from project specific improvements would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Roadway improvements would be necessary under the development anticipated by the proposed General Plan. Future development projects would be required to identify project specific impacts and resolve the impacts through either the direct construction of the needed improvements or through payment of a fair-share towards necessary improvements. As with utilities described above, potential environmental impacts from project specific improvements would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

ALTERNATIVES

The following alternatives describe five project alternatives to the proposed project. Each alternative provides a variation on the development guidelines outlined by the CGPU, and is accompanied with respected benefits and impacts. The alternatives include; No Project, Proposed with Distributed Growth, Retail/Entertainment/Job Rich Alternative, Housing Rich Alternative, and Conventional Pattern Alternative.

NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

The No Project Alternative would allow the Planning Area to continue to operate and develop under the existing General Plan 2020 with no updates to land use, zoning, or climate action planning. The No Project Alternative would guide growth in the Planning Area to reach approximately 153,000 people by 2020, and include approximately 61,000,000 square feet of non-residential land, and approximately 50,000 dwelling units. The existing General Plan promotes a conventional suburban development pattern that heavily relies on automobiles as the predominant form of transportation.

DISTRIBUTED GROWTH ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Project anticipates the Planning Area's population growth to reach 135,000 by 2035. This growth is proposed to be somewhat concentrated in the western and central portions of the Planning Area, most closely adjacent to the current urban areas, and extending eastward along Avenue 50 and 52 into the hillsides of Subarea 14. The Distributed Growth alternative would not include any policy that would direct growth to preferred growth subareas or away from future growth areas. It allows for the population to remain at 135,000 by 2035, however the population distribution would be expected to develop more evenly throughout the Planning Area over the course of the next two decades, rather than restricting development in certain areas of the City until later in the planning period after the core of the City is developed by at least 60%. Overall, land use designations and total growth potential for each Subarea would remain as proposed by the CGPU. Additionally, this alternative expects that more development would occur in Subarea 13 by 2035 than expected under the Proposed

Project. This would redistribute population density, development, and increase population within the eastern, northern, and southern areas of the Planning Area. This alternative was selected for analysis to address concerns raised by some property owners that any policies that would restrict growth in any Subarea of the City or focus growth in certain areas of the City would interfere with market dynamics.

RETAIL/COMMERCIAL/ENTERTAINMENT RICH ALTERNATIVE

The Retail/Entertainment/Job Rich alternative proposes a stronger emphasis on employment generation within the Downtown Core, on Van Buren, on Harrison, and in the Commercial Entertainment area. The CGPU proposes these areas to be mixed use with neighborhood and regional centers supported by vertically and horizontally mixed residential uses arranged in patterns that support walking, bicycling, and transit. This alternative would shift a mixed-use focus to a higher concentration of employment-oriented uses. This would also decrease the projected population, reduce number of housing units, and increase jobs within the Planning Area. The proposed alternative could potentially secure more of an economic base for the Planning Area, establish Coachella as an economic anchor for the region, provide more jobs within the Downtown core, and generate a better jobs housing balance for the City. This alternative was chosen to address to concerns. First, the community is generally very interested in economic development and especially in economic development that results in new job opportunities for residents. Second, the propose CGPU would result in a significant unavoidable impact to SR-86 and I-10 due to increased congestion. A project that increases in-town jobs has the potential to help alleviate that congestion by reducing regional trips that originate in Coachella.

HOUSING RICH ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Project focuses on a mixed housing development pattern with commercial, multi-family residential, and single family residential to be intertwined, and connected to other land uses. The Housing Rich Alternative would focus development on housing, and create more defined single-family residential neighborhoods, with commercial and multi-family residential being developed exclusively outside of neighborhoods along corridors. Non-residential development would be reduced. Compared with the proposed project, this alternative would add an additional 13,000 residents, increase dwelling units by 4,377, and decrease jobs by over 7,000. Additional housing alternative would allow more people to live within the Planning Area, or the Coachella Valley, and benefit from the amenities and unique atmosphere of Coachella and the SOI. Though additional housing offers potential residents a greater housing market to choose from, the shift in increased housing would decrease jobs within the Planning Area. This shift in the jobs-housing balance would increase the number of Coachella residents to seek jobs outside of the Planning Area. This alternative was selected because the City received feedback from a landowner stating that housing was the most viable development opportunity and that the City could not wait years for large scale retail development.

CONVENTIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Project proposes to develop the Planning Area with greater street connectivity, mixed land uses, and closer distances between residential and commercial/retail/civic uses. Additionally, compared to the Proposed Project, the Conventional Development Pattern Alternative would have the same projected population, housing units, and jobs but replace the highly connected pattern of the Proposed Project with a more auto oriented development pattern that would include characteristics such as: separated land uses, wide streets, low intersection density, auto-oriented buildings with large set blocks and road-fronting parking lots, residential neighborhoods separated from other land uses, cul-de-

sacs, and disconnected street pattern. This pattern alternative would be in-line with previous development patterns, and has been built in most areas throughout the region. This pattern creates a quiet environment for residential activities to occur in the privacy of each neighborhood, and reduce potential conflicts of residential closely located to commercial, including crime, noise, high levels of non-residential traffic, and air quality.

However, separation of housing, commercial, business, retail, and civic uses creates a street pattern that reduces potential for pedestrians and cyclists to easily and quickly connect to other land uses. The separation also incentivizes the need for vehicle use as non-residential land uses could be located out of comfortable walking or cycling proximity, which could increase vehicle emissions, decrease healthy activities for residents, and create additional traffic volumes within the Planning Area. Conventional development patterns could also prevent certain populations, including young and elderly residents, from accessing civic, commercial, and retail activity, as they may not be able to use a car to move around the Planning Area. Though the Conventional Development Pattern Alternative could create a perceived predictable urban scape, it would could have potential environmental and social impacts for residents within the Planning Area.