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County of Riverside General Plan

Vision Statement

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Chapter 2: A Vision for Riverside County

Overview

If you are reading this vision statement it is because you have some interest in what is happening in Riverside County. You may be concerned about your current or future quality of life, how your property will be impacted by change, whether to locate your business here, or, as a government official, what a decision should be regarding a particular issue. This vision will tell you in broad terms what values prevail here and how future community-building decisions will be affected by those values.

A vision is a positive mental image of the future that is expressed as if it had already been achieved. It is used, not only to shape plans, but also to motivate long term commitment to those plans and their implementation. It is a tool for inspiring achievement and unifying energies toward a future that is considerably more desirable than it would be without such thoughtful preparation.

Our vision for Riverside County is designed to:

1. Build on lasting values;
2. Appeal to the best in people;
3. Have universal appeal, despite unavoidable differences in priority;
4. Communicate in terms people can easily understand;
5. Represent common ground as the basis for resolving inevitable differences;
6. Be both visionary and practical; and
7. Be rich with opportunities for personal interpretation within the framework of the common ground.

The process for developing this vision involved:

1. Listening to the people of Riverside County through outreach meetings and public opinion polling;
2. Consolidating information from workshops involving the Board of Supervisors, Riverside County Transportation Commission, County Planning Commission, cities, tribal governments, appointed advisory committees, and special interest groups;
3. Augmenting that input with technical and planning knowledge from the staff and consultants;



4. Discussions among participants in the planning process of important issues that must be addressed in the vision; and
5. Preparing and refining the draft vision based on these discussions.

This Vision is made up of four parts. The first is a summary version that captures the essence of the Vision, but does not contain the depth of content generated by the outreach process. It is designed to be published separately as an easy to read, stand-alone document. The second part is this overview, which sets the stage for the substance of the Vision. The third part is a statement of fundamental values that provide the foundation for the Vision. The importance of these values cannot be overstated. They are the rationale for everything that appears on the Vision statement. The fourth is the Vision Statement itself. This part describes what Riverside County is like after 20 years of collaboration, based on the common ground established through the process of preparing the Riverside County Integrated Plan.

The essence of the Vision Statement is a description of conditions related to twelve major topics arising from the public outreach process. Each topic contains a number of issues that had to be addressed if the stated values were to truly influence the future. The translation of these issues into a description of results after 20 years of implementation provides the substance of the Vision for Riverside County.

How is this Vision used? Here are some ways:

1. Each General Plan Element contains a description of how it implements the Vision.
2. Each Area Plan contains a description of how the Vision applies uniquely to that area and how it is implemented.
3. The land use and supporting transportation and open space systems respond directly to the Vision through the General Plan Elements and Area Plans.
4. Communities in unincorporated areas are shaped by the content of the Vision.
5. The General Plan Implementation Program is reviewed annually as part of the County budget process and achievements toward the Vision are documented. County resources are focused on supporting the Vision.
6. Achievement of the Vision is being tracked by indicators that are either measurable or at least clearly defined based on a shared definition of success.
7. Staff reports on public improvement projects and private development projects specify how they serve to implement the Vision.
8. Public interest groups regularly observe the implementation process to both celebrate achievements and raise concerns when they are warranted.
9. The Riverside County Vision is frequently the subject of news media stories that call attention to aspects of its status.



10. Educational programs throughout the County contain segments on current issues and how their resolution reinforces the direction stated by the Vision.
11. The entire General Plan is reviewed and refined periodically in response to changing conditions and the degree to which the Vision is being achieved.

In short, the Riverside County Vision is at the heart of a great many public deliberations and has the continual attention of the public. It is a central part of the decision-making systems that shape what happens, where it happens, and how it happens.

FUNDAMENTAL VALUES

The physical character of our communities cannot be divorced from the values they respect. Sooner or later, these values manifest themselves in how our development decisions are made and how those decisions shape our communities. Where our values and results are synchronized, our communities prosper; where they are in conflict, so are the communities.

The simplest way to summarize our vision for Riverside County is to say that:

Riverside County is a family of special communities in a remarkable environmental setting.

Our vision is based on values that provide the foundation for common ground that, in turn, underpin the General Plan's goals, policies, and actions. The people of Riverside County declare that they join together in holding the following values and seeking a community future based on them. It can be argued that our values are optimistic and very ambitious: that they require our best instincts to prevail. Of course-why would we seek less in shaping our communities?

So, with that theme in mind, let us express the values that have motivated our community building and that will continue to do so in the future.

Community

We are, in fact, a community within which a family of local communities exists. "Family" means that we treat each other with the compassion and respect that one rightfully expects of family members. The richness of our natural setting is a shared resource of inestimable value. Despite differences in priorities and approaches, we are engaged in community building for ourselves and our heirs based on the common ground we have forged.

Inter-relatedness

We acknowledge the inter-relatedness of the economic, environmental, cultural, and institutional realms of our community life as we continue to plan and build our communities in a manner that enables us to achieve mutually beneficial results.



Rights

We respect the rights of others in the often complex process of developing our communities: property rights, including those associated with Indian lands; the right to dissent; and freedom from infringement on constitutional rights as citizens and as fellow humans seeking their rightful place in society.

Responsibilities

We affirm that, concurrent with rights, lie significant individual responsibilities to our communities and to each other in pursuing our personal priorities along with others engaged in community building.

Risks

We readily acknowledge that there is a certain degree of risk and uncertainty regarding future expectations, especially as they relate to land resources and how we manage them. At the same time, through the unique planning opportunities present here, we seek to make the risks known and avoid arbitrary and capricious decision making that aggravates the normal risks in human affairs.

Diversity

We respect the diversity of our peoples, with their fundamental and common beliefs and convictions. Accordingly, we cherish their rights to live their lives without unnecessary governmental regulation. At the same time, we acknowledge that the diversity we value so much requires leadership and tradeoffs in balancing the interests involved in a community development decision.

Valued Contributions

We value the contributions to our communities on the part of many sectors of our population whose age, youth, disability, health, or other characteristics may limit their contributions and satisfaction as community members unless they have equal access and are assured opportunities to be full members of our communities.

Varied Communities

We value the contribution to our overall quality of life by the richly varied municipalities, Indian nations, unincorporated communities, and rural communities in Riverside County.

Balance

We acknowledge that balancing a variety of important considerations in making community decisions is a constant challenge. We have faith that the foundation provided through our participation in shaping this vision and its implementing mechanisms will achieve a workable balance of mutual benefit.



Participation

We seek and take seriously the public's involvement in shaping our communities and participation in determining how they evolve over time. We affirm that the people of Riverside County who require a part in whatever forums and opportunities for public dialogue take place include residents, workers, students, business owners and operators, and property owners.

Volunteerism

We value the voluntary effort invested by our citizens in community building and place great worth in the voluntary expression of good will, compassion, understanding, and democratic ideals displayed by those who freely give of their valuable time and resources. We seek to sustain the recognition and continued involvement of the volunteer and not-for-profit sector as they contribute so much to our community life.

Decision Making

We expect decision-making to be informed by the best available information and seek a quality of decision making that is democratic, timely and equitable.

Creativity and Innovation

We seek bold and creative planning approaches and initiatives to implement our communal future based on these shared values and aspirations. We value such innovation because, sometimes, thinking "outside the box" is necessary to achieve the benefits people in our County seek in selecting their preferred life style, community characteristics, and housing types.

Distinctiveness

We are proud of the distinctive identities that our communities now possess and cherish the sense of place that results from them. We want this sense of place and distinctiveness maintained and enhanced in our planning and development activities.

Housing

We acknowledge shelter as one of the most basic community needs and value the willingness of our communities and their leaders to accept housing for our growing population in our communities, particularly with respect to the ongoing shortage of affordable housing and its negative impacts on our communities.

Natural Environment

We value the unusually rich and diverse natural environment with which we are blessed and are committed to maintaining sufficient areas of natural open space to afford the human experience of natural environments as well as sustaining the



permanent viability of the unique landforms and ecosystems that define this environment.

Man-made Environment

We acknowledge and respect the long heritage of economic endeavors that have shaped portions of our environment through mining, agriculture, renewable energy development and similar enterprises and continue to take their value into consideration in shaping our environmental management.

Employment

We acknowledge gainful employment as one of the most basic individual needs and value a growing and diversified job base within which our residents may find a wide range of income opportunities in the agricultural, commercial, industrial, office, tourism, and institutional sectors of our economy.

Safety

We acknowledge security of person and property as one of the most basic community needs and commit to designing our communities so that vulnerability to natural and man made hazards, as well as criminal activities, is anticipated and kept to a minimum.

Planning Integration

We are proud of the multi-faceted approach taken in Riverside County to planning on Countywide and community scales and we dedicate ourselves to its continued support for the coherent and comprehensive implementation of this approach. At the same time, we seek an implementation approach that simplifies and focuses on essentials, without being unnecessarily complex.

Communication and Information

We expect the fullest possible communication between our community leaders and the people and believe in the value of information sharing as broadly as possible as the basis for effective communication and problem solving.

Quality Management

We seek and reward quality management of the institutions, organizations, and resources that belong to us. This includes the expectation that accountability and measures of achievement will be a prominent part of public management systems.

Sustainability

We are beneficiaries of the past and we value that. We seek the same for our heirs. We declare that they should have an expectation that they will inherit communities and a natural environment that offer them a reasonable range of choices.



Costs

We know that community-building involves significant costs. We seek sharing of benefits and costs in a proportional manner: the community should fund community-wide benefits and development related benefits should be funded by the development, all as part of an equitable overall financing strategy. We seek shared funding methods through partnerships that improve overall cost-effectiveness.

Governmental Cooperation

We expect the considerable number of governmental entities that guide and influence the quality of our communities to avoid parochial thinking and make their decisions and conduct their activities with the general community welfare and benefit in mind. This includes pursuing joint priorities where that approach offers community advantages that exceed independent action.

Youth in the Community

We affirm that the future of our community lies with our children and that their education and support are essential to community well being. We dedicate ourselves to building and sustaining a network of support for the youth in our community.



County of Riverside General Plan

Vision Statement

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A Vision for Riverside County

VISION AS A GUIDE FOR THE RCIP

Our values drive our vision. What we, the people of Riverside County want for our future, our communities, and ourselves will shape the Riverside County Integrated Plan. Implementing the plan will unify our resources to achieve our common purpose. What we choose to do or not to do will, in turn, validate or refine our vision so that it is not only imaginative in seeking a better future, but practical in creating expectations that are real. In short, this will lead to a comprehensive plan that says what it means and means what it says.

Why is this so important? It is because the only way for our vision to be translated into reality is to work at it and persist. In other words, completing the RCIP is not the end of the process; it is the beginning. That is when the hard-but truly rewarding-work begins.

Integration: The Hallmark of the Riverside County Plan

The key to the entire RCIP lies in the word “integration.” There are a number of movements throughout the nation that seek to improve quality of life. They all include useful ideas, usually organized around a major theme or emphasis. Examples include Healthy Cities, Sustainable Development, Livable Cities, Safe Communities, Smart Growth, Clean Cities and a number of others. The RCIP is not beholden solely to any one of these ways of defining “quality of life.” Rather, it seeks to integrate combinations of the best ideas from these programs and locally initiated concepts. That will allow us and our leaders to tailor the most applicable ideas to Riverside County’s needs and potentials. If any single quality is evident regarding Riverside County, it is diversity. So, the vision for its future must respect the fact that “one size does not fit all.” The foundation for this approach is integration of a host of ideas rich in potential, based not on a single theme, but on what makes the most sense for Riverside County.

It is essential to appreciate the fact that this vision for Riverside County allows for varied interpretations, depending on one’s priorities. This cannot and should not be avoided. Yet, it should become clear, as implementation of the vision occurs, if some aspect of the vision is completely ignored. That is not acceptable and will require serious attention. So this vision should be thought of as a consolidation of many legitimate agendas within which balanced response is expected. That this balance will vary at different times and in different locales does not diminish the value of the vision. After all, the vision is intended to motivate excellence, not impose a singular straightjacket on the future. Rather, it reflects the heritage of diversity that has always enriched the character of this place.

This thought leads to one final idea reflected in our community vision statement. We constantly refer to the term “quality of life” in describing what we seek in our living environment. We all agree that this is a desirable purpose, yet we may define quality to mean widely differing things. For purposes of this vision statement, quality of life is defined to include all of the ingredients contained in



our vision. It is not exactly the same thing in every portion of the County. It is a balancing of competing priorities that do not enjoy universal support throughout the County. Yet the vision statement includes an essential common ground that must be found to some degree in any quality of life definition used here.

With this in mind, the RCIP...

1. Adapts the best part of many themes to the needs of Riverside County.
2. Derives its power from the values that are held by the people here.
3. Balances stability in the landscape with the dynamism and flexibility to adapt to changing future circumstances.
4. Uses the best available data and analysis to guide decision making without constraining the overall vision.
5. Is flexible so that it can be adjusted to accommodate future circumstances, yet provides a solid foundation of stability so that basic ingredients in the plan are not sacrificed.
6. Protects high-value environmental resources and private property rights – and develops the complex tools needed to do so.
7. Integrates and works closely with cities and their planning efforts.
8. Provides a long-term means for economic stability to be achieved through investment by a variety of interests: residential, agricultural, property owner, environmental, institutional, business community, labor, and others.
9. Seeks a balanced transportation system where people do not need to be totally dependent on the single-occupant vehicle.
10. Stimulates an unprecedented level of intergovernmental cooperation and collaboration.

The RCIP will...

1. Provide on-going monitoring, measurement, and status on progress toward achieving the vision.
2. Preserve crucial open space and transportation corridors, resulting in more compact and efficient development than would otherwise happen.
3. Provide a range of community design options to respond to varied lifestyle choices.
4. Put a focus on high quality, efficient growth that uses land resources efficiently.
5. Provide a process for adjustment through General Plan reviews, in accordance with state law, at regular intervals or when triggered by key events.



Draft Vision Concepts

The most powerful way to state our vision is to place ourselves in the future and see what we have achieved; what our communities are like; what the quality of life means at that point in time. So, if you will “fast forward” to about the year 2020 and look around, you will see our vision.

Because the Riverside County Integrated Plan was adopted and implementation has been underway for almost 20 years...

1. Corridors and areas are preserved for distinctive purposes: multi-purpose open space, including wildlife; economic development, including agriculture; residences; public facilities; and transportation systems.
2. Growth involving new development or expansion of existing development is consistently accompanied by the public improvements required to serve it.
3. The rich diversity of the County’s environmental resources—even those modified by human activities—is preserved and enhanced for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
4. There is an adequate supply and quality of critical water resources essential to support development, agriculture, wildlife, and open space.
5. Multipurpose regional open space and community/neighborhood public spaces are permanent elements of the Riverside County landscape.
6. Public facilities such as schools, law enforcement related facilities, libraries, fire stations, community centers and other facilities essential to providing community services are in place.
7. Public access to recreation opportunities is part of the overall open space system, with multi-purpose parks, play fields, and community facilities at varied sizes in accessible locations.
8. Our communities maintain their individual distinctive qualities and character, surrounded in most cases (except in the Coachella Valley, where cities physically merge into a continuous development pattern) by open space or non-intensive uses to contribute to their sense of unique identity. Community centers, gathering places, and special focal points unique to each community also aid this identity.
9. A full range of housing has been achieved and an ongoing program is in operation to continually meet this need.
10. Development standards are consistently high, offset in cost by the absence of unpredictable time delays and conflict in the development review process. This is possible because the places where development should occur are clearly defined and the standards for development in cities and the County highly consistent.
11. Infill and redevelopment that enhance and revitalizes communities are contributing to the accommodation of growth.



12. Our communities—both improvements to existing ones and newly emerging ones—are models for new ways to provide and manage infrastructure, deliver education, access jobs, apply new technology, and achieve greater efficiency in the use of land, structures, and public improvements.
13. A comprehensive transportation system operates at regional, countywide, community and neighborhood scales. As part of that system, transportation corridors serve as unifying connectors between communities, provide high capacity linkages between jobs, residences and recreational opportunities, and offer multiple modes of travel.
14. Expanded local employment opportunities and broadening of choices provided by the transportation system and technological advances in communications systems have resulted in reduced vehicle miles and vehicle hours traveled (compared to what would otherwise have occurred), contributing to an improved quality of life generally and improved air quality specifically.
15. Clusters of similar businesses and industries are created within areas designated for job generating uses and our expanded educational institutions provide preparation and training for the new jobs created in these clusters.
16. Though overall acreage in agricultural production has diminished, proactive measures have retained economically viable agricultural lands, which are well protected as valuable economic resources and, in some areas, have expanded.
17. Many dimensions of the Riverside County Vision are being achieved through expanded levels of intergovernmental cooperation and partnerships that represent commitments to common ground not achievable in the past.
18. Because of the achievements in an improved quality of life, more people are involved in assisting the planning and implementation process than has historically been the case.

TRANSLATING ISSUES INTO VISION

A number of issues were raised by the people of Riverside County during the outreach process aimed at finding out their opinions and concerns about the future. The people had much to say. The issues they talked about and the ideas they had for improvement fell into twelve subject areas. Those subject headings follow, with vision statements applicable to each one. Each topic begins with a brief narrative summary, followed by a number of specific items that make up the vision for that topic.



Population Growth

There is no question that the process of accommodating almost a doubling of population in the last 20 years has been challenging. Yet, the emerging pattern of growth is now much clearer than it was during earlier growth periods.

Perhaps more importantly, because of this clarity, there is now a much stronger focus on the quality of growth and development, rather than a fear of being overwhelmed by the numbers. Population growth has been accompanied by an even greater expansion of jobs.

Riverside County and its cities are so well coordinated in their growth forecasting activities that regional forecast revisions accept locally generated forecasts as a matter of course. This has many benefits for the people of Riverside County, such as unquestioned qualifications for receiving funding under various state and federal programs and stronger competition for available discretionary funding programs to supplement local resources.

1. New growth patterns no longer reflect a pattern of random sprawl. Rather, they follow a framework of transportation and open space corridors, with concentrations of development that fit into that framework. In other words, important open space and transportation corridors define growth areas.
2. Growth focus in this County is on quality, not on frustrating efforts to halt growth.
3. Population growth continues and is focused where it can best be accommodated.
4. Growth is well coordinated between cities and the County and they jointly influence periodic state and regional growth forecasts affecting Riverside County and its cities.

Our Communities and Their Neighborhoods

Each community in the County is identified uniquely as a special place. This includes incorporated cities, unincorporated communities, new communities, and tribal holdings. The combination of multipurpose open space systems, transportation networks, and land suitable for development distinguishes those areas that logically fit into future expansion of cities, creation of new communities, and preservation of rural enclaves.

Cooperative policies and programs are now in place that closely coordinate cities, the County of Riverside, and the Local Agency Formation Commission in concentrating development where it is most appropriate and still allowing considerable choice in location for individual property owners, developers and future residents. This collaboration is widely respected as a means of assuring the integrity of communities within the County, whether they are incorporated, unincorporated, or tribal in status.

Earlier problems clearly associated with leapfrog development (development that "skips over" developable land and establishes inefficient development patterns) have virtually disappeared. Areas slated for development are clearly



identified and mapped. Areas not acceptable for development, based on cause, within the time frame of the General Plan are also clearly identified and mapped. Development proposed at some distance from existing communities occurs because of a conscious commitment to a new community there, and it must demonstrate its self-sufficiency in terms of public facilities and services. This may eventually facilitate infill development where that is clearly consistent with planning policy and mapped designations. New communities are demonstrating methods for achieving efficient development and building a sense of community from the very beginning.

The pattern of development is now leading toward more efficient use of land resources and the incentives for intensification of development are working very effectively. As a result, the initial components of a transit system are in place, and the capability for expansion is preserved through rights-of-ways that can be brought on line as service needs dictate and financial resources permit.

Not only are multipurpose open space areas permanently protected, but also numerous rural areas are likewise assured a continuation of that lifestyle. Limitations on the erosion of this lifestyle are well respected because of the clarity and strength of commitment by the County and other agencies, and because extensive opportunities for more urban and suburban development exist which are not vulnerable to successful legal challenge regarding their appropriateness.

1. A high degree of consistency now exists between County and city land use and transportation planning within city spheres of influence, resulting in a reduction in development policy conflicts and confusion. In some cases this has been driven by city initiatives, in others by County policy direction, and in still others through a negotiated blend of city/county preferences.
2. Innovative designs allow for increased density in key locations, such as near transit stations, with associated benefits. In these and other neighborhoods, walking, bicycling, and transit systems are attractive alternatives to driving for many residents.
3. Incentives and the competitive need to “raise the bar” in creating communities of excellence commonly stimulate the development community to exceed the norms of development standards.
4. The regulatory system consistently rewards implementation of concepts that contribute to achievement of the Riverside County vision.
5. All communities in the County have complied with legal requirements for universal access to public buildings, sidewalks, and public spaces. Many have established an incentive system to expand similar access in buildings and spaces not covered by legal requirements.
6. Incentives to achieve development efficiency often results in reduced fee costs.
7. The financial implications of implementing the RCIP are well documented and understood.



8. The planning process continues to refine acceptable densities as a means of accommodating additional growth so that the extensive permanent open space that now exists can be sustained.
9. The extensive heritage of rural living continues to be accommodated in areas committed to that lifestyle and its sustainability is reinforced by the strong open space and urban development commitments provide for elsewhere in the RCIP.
10. Each of our rural areas and communities has a special character that distinguishes them from urban areas and from each other. They benefit from some conveniences such as small-scale local commercial services and all-weather access roads, yet maintain an unhurried, uncrowded life style. Rural residents accept the fact that they must travel some distance for more complete services and facilities.
11. Some rural residential development and support uses are accommodated in open space preserves where the type of development and sensitivity of the natural resource are mutually compatible.
12. Considerable protection from natural hazards such as earthquakes, fire, flooding, slope failure, and other hazardous conditions is now built into the pattern of development authorized by the General Plan.
13. Major backbone infrastructure systems are funded in a number of locations by grants, ongoing funding programs and supplemental mechanisms supported by the public.
14. Local infrastructure systems to improve levels of service and the quality of life in existing communities and to support new growth are being installed and expanded, with costs paid by those who benefit directly from these improvements. Cooperative and equitable arrangements to accomplish this continue to be crafted to respond to specific local situations.
15. Development occurs only where appropriate and where adequate public facilities and services are available or are provided for at the time of development in accordance with adopted level-of-service standards.

Housing

Our housing choices range from rural retreat to suburban neighborhood, from exclusive custom estate to modest but sound starter housing for young families. Our housing choices also cover the complete spectrum of housing costs and include rental as well as for sale units. People are now seeking housing here, not because it costs less than more developed counties, but because the quality housing choices are attractive as a place to live. Housing here is thriving, not only because it offers an excellent value, but because the communities and neighborhoods are well planned and offer ample opportunities for families to move up or down the cost range as their needs dictate.

1. The people of Riverside County represent a richly varied range of income categories. Housing is available in every increment of this range, from highly affordable to exclusive executive housing and from rental to various



forms of ownership housing. This is being satisfied through a combination of new housing, rehabilitated housing, group housing, resale, mixed-use development, and various housing assistance programs where they are needed.

2. Regional forecasts of housing needs are well coordinated within Riverside county and are accepted by regional and state agencies.
3. Census data is well-integrated into housing needs forecasts.
4. There is now a balance between the residential development capacities of the County and city general plans within the County and regional housing needs.
5. Mixed-use development occurs at numerous urban concentrations in city spheres and unincorporated communities, many of which include residential uses.
6. All housing projects required by law to provide access to people with disabilities now do so.
7. Universal access guidelines are adopted and a system of incentives is in place to include them as a key feature of residential development projects.
8. Because of the clarity of direction now provided by the General Plan and the cooperative arrangements with most of the cities, constraints on providing affordable housing attributable to excessive local regulations have been eliminated.
9. Adequate housing for farm laborers is now provided.
10. Housing plans are well-integrated throughout the County at four levels:
 - a. Subregionally at the Area Plan level;
 - b. Within cities and unincorporated communities;
 - c. Within large-scale development projects; and
 - d. At the project site planning level where housing is involved.

Transportation

Our transportation system has more than kept pace with the growth in population, employment and tourism and their demands for mobility. New and expanded transportation corridors connect growth centers at key locations throughout the County. Several corridors have built-in transit service and all have expansion capability to accommodate various forms of transit. Some are now providing express bus service to Metrolink stations. These same corridors are designed with a high regard for the environment, including provision of critical wildlife corridor crossings so that our open spaces can sustain their habitat value. Air travel access by our residents and businesses is convenient and is an integral part of the Southern California air transportation network with worldwide connections.



1. Major new and expanded transportation corridors accommodating automobiles and other transit modes are now partially developed, with design and funding for additional segments underway. The existing components of the system now work together with each other to afford optimum mobility for the people being served.
2. Strategies of local job creation, coupled with improvements to the transportation system, allow County residents to have access to a wide range of job opportunities within reasonable commute times.
3. Riverside County and its communities are preeminent in their commitment to providing public transportation facilities and services to all people who need them. Where shortfalls remain, strategies are in place to expand universal access services as funding can be established.
4. Airports serving the County are tied into the regional air transportation system and operate as an efficient and convenient transportation mode to accommodate the traveling needs of the people and move selected goods quickly in the highly competitive international marketplace. Measures have been taken to preserve the long-term viability of airports by protecting them from the encroachment of incompatible development.
5. New fuels technologies are in place at key locations making a diversity of choices available according to the needs of users, particularly among the business fleet users.
6. Toll-way options are being explored as a means of achieving improved capacity in critical corridors.
7. Investment in, and expansion of, the existing freeway and arterial street networks continue to be a critical part of our comprehensive transportation system development.
8. Strategically planned truck routes (including exclusive truck lanes) provide for the movement of goods as a critical component of our transportation system.
9. The new California high-speed rail system now serves Riverside County directly, providing a strategic advantage for the County's business community.
10. Promotion of efficient intermodal freight facilities in the Inland Empire has achieved a shift of a portion of the goods previously moved by trucks onto the rail freight system.
11. The land use/transportation connection is a key part of the development process and has served to reduce the number of vehicle trips compared to earlier patterns of development.
12. Direct and immediate access to multi-purpose open space areas is provided in most areas of the County.
13. The transportation system now has sufficient financial supported to ensure that what is built can be adequately maintained.



14. Ample use is made of advanced transportation technology to ensure that the physical infrastructure is used to its maximum potential. This includes methods of achieving optimum efficiency of transit operations to provide increased frequency and reliability of transit delivery systems.
15. Reliable, real-time information is readily available to travelers for all major transit system routes, including fares, schedules, and current level of service on major roadways in the region to assist travelers in making choices regarding routes and mode of travel.

Conservation and Open Space Resource System

The County's conservation and open space resources are preserved and managed to a degree not thought possible 20 years ago. The multi-purpose open space system provides for the preservation of multiple species. This enables the natural diversity of plants and animals to sustain themselves because of the critical relationships between them. Land areas will be preserved, set-aside for this purpose, and linked by corridors of various designs to allow movement between habitat areas. In addition, the public's access to the open space system is significantly expanded for recreation purposes, enabling a variety of active and passive recreation pursuits. Trails provide a means of recreation in themselves, as well as access for less intensive recreation. Creative and effective means of acquiring open space have enabled establishment of this system so that private property rights are respected and acquisition costs are feasible. This system also provides an effective approach that has eliminated conflict over development activities because of the demonstrated commitment to permanently preserving critical open space resources.

1. Conserved multi-purpose open space is viewed as a critical part of the County's system of public facilities and services required to improve the existing quality of life and accommodate new development.
2. The open space system and the methods for its acquisition, maintenance, and operation are calibrated to its many functions: visual relief, natural resource protection, habitat preservation, passive and active recreation, protection from natural hazards, and various combinations of these purposes. This is what is meant by a multi-purpose open space system.
3. A major thrust of the multipurpose open space system is the preservation of components of the ecosystem and landscape that embody the historic character and habitat of the County, even though some areas have been impacted by man-made changes.
4. Native habitat for plants and animals endemic to this area that make up such important parts of our natural heritage now have interconnected spaces in a number of locations that allow these natural communities to prosper and be sustained.
5. An incentive-based market system for habitat protection is in operation that includes options to use transfers of development rights (TDRs), conservation credits, and management programs to achieve equitable sharing of costs and benefits.



6. The cost to the public of maintaining open space and critical habitat areas continues to be supported because of the habitat value, recreational contributions and economic benefits the areas provide.
7. Lands identified for habitat preservation are based on the best available scientific information regarding species and habitat requirements and that information is updated as better methods emerge.
8. Programs educating students about the rich natural environment are available and offered to local schools.
9. Strategies and incentives for voluntary conservation on private land are an integral part of the County's policy/regulatory system and are referred to nationwide as model approaches.
10. Where natural streams and watercourses are located within designated multipurpose open space systems, they have been preserved as natural living systems. Where they pass through areas that are developed or designated for development (including agriculture), to the extent allowed by existing conditions, their continuity is maintained and protected as environmental corridors linking open space areas. Their viability is enhanced in numerous cases by being included in publicly maintained open spaces rather than in narrow concrete channels.
11. Important watershed resources to support downstream habitat are being maintained. This includes watershed functions such as peak flows, water quality, recharge, and sediment transport, which are necessary for sustaining downstream resources.
12. The Salton Sea, as a result of sustained efforts to return it to a viable condition, is now a thriving water, recreation, and environment resource.

Air Quality

Air quality attainment goals established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District have been more than met despite the substantial growth in the region in the last 20 years. Most of this is a result of significantly improved engine technology and the replacement of more polluting vehicles. However, local initiatives that expanded transit options, concentrated development more efficiently, and increased local employment opportunities have also contributed to air quality improvement.

1. Air quality is viewed as such an important factor in quality of life that its measurements are used as a major factor in evaluating the Plan's performance.
2. Riverside County is an active participant in programs to base air quality improvement techniques on "best available science" methods.
3. Implementing strategies have been accomplished to transition public and private fleets from petroleum-based fuels to alternative fuels and Riverside County is known as a center for applied new technology.



4. The County actively participates with other regional jurisdictions in implementing strategies to reduce air pollution spillover into Riverside County from adjacent counties as well as limiting pollutants generated within the County. This participation has led to measures that contributed to exceeding attainment goals established by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.
5. Land use strategies being implemented in the County reflect an improved balance of jobs and housing, resulting in significant reduction in the average commute times and related motor vehicle pollutants.

Jobs and the Economy

Job growth in Riverside County has exceeded the remarkable population growth experienced during the last 20 years. This is a consequence of the natural pattern of jobs following labor force and the extensive efforts by local governments, the business community and educational institutions to stimulate and reinforce new economic activity. The effort has been aided by the fact that Riverside County offers an outstanding variety of living environments and housing choices and now enjoys a reputation as a highly desirable place for business relocation. The expansion of educational opportunities and complementary programs between education, industry, and the work force has played a significant part in this economic vitality.

1. Implementation of the RCIP provides a clear picture of the fiscal implications of land use policies and documents the financial, as well as physical and social viability of communities in the County.
2. Jobs/housing balance is significantly improved overall, as well as within subregions of the County.
3. Voluntary tax sharing arrangements continue to be available to cities and the County to reduce the negative impacts of large scale projects that would otherwise generate tax revenue problems for adjacent jurisdictions.
4. Economic development coalitions at several levels are active partners in implementing the County Plan through their involvement in stimulating new business development. This has resulted in new and expanded clusters of business activities, aided in part through cooperation with university and college research and development programs.
5. Jobs training programs to put people into new industry clusters are operational throughout the county and serve as an attraction to firms seeking a capable and stable labor force.
6. School programs are coordinated with economic clusters in terms of curriculum emphasis and cooperative internship and training arrangements with businesses.
7. Emerging and expanding employment sectors, such as the hospitality industry and high-tech industries, are receiving renewed emphasis in job training and investment focus.



Agricultural Lands

Agriculture remains a strong component of the County's economy. Even though some agricultural land has been urbanized, there has also been expansion in other locations. The place of agriculture in the community remains strong and conflicts between agricultural operations and nearby development are rare. The Riverside County agricultural industry is a strong competitor in the global agricultural market.

1. Riverside County continues to be one of the major agricultural forces among California counties and competes successfully in the global agricultural economy.
2. Many agricultural properties remain as economically productive businesses, whereas others are phasing into development through a carefully managed transition program designed to stage the transition from farming to clearly designated urban and suburban uses.
3. Productive agricultural lands are broadly understood to be a valuable economic resource and have expanded in some areas. In selected areas they also serve as a valuable buffer between suburban and open space uses. Where agricultural lands are slated for transition to other forms of development, they are still valued for their contribution to the County's economy and continue in productive operation.
4. Financial incentives, such as transfer of development rights, development easements, and other mechanisms are available for voluntary use to preserve the economic value of agricultural lands. Availability of these tools acknowledges the potential development value of these properties and enables property owners to capture some of that value without giving up agricultural production if they so desire.
5. Agricultural operations of varying sizes and types are accommodated under the Plan in response to prevailing market opportunities. In some cases this has resulted in expanding the lands devoted to agriculture.
6. Where agricultural activities, such as dairies, egg production, and animal husbandry are accommodated, they are accompanied by special provisions for mitigating impacts on adjacent development to facilitate their continued operation consistent with State and local Right-to-Farm laws.
7. Agricultural land that remains economically viable, either as a permanent or temporary economic resource, is well protected by policies, ordinances, and design regulations applicable to new development that may be planned nearby.
8. More efficient use of developable land is facilitating the continued use of agricultural lands and the acquisition of open space.
9. Agricultural lands remain as a valuable form of development. Although they are not publicly owned open space, through voluntary agreements, many of them have become part of the County's multi-purpose open space system for their visual value and as buffers to other forms of development.



Educational Facilities

The educational system in Riverside County is highly respected as a valued positive force in the County's communities and economic environment. From pre-school through advanced degrees, the educational infrastructure has expanded remarkably in synch with the County's growth. A particularly effective aspect of education's role in the community is the array of partnership programs with the business community and local governments, dealing with job training, environmental resource management, recreation, and a host of other initiatives. Basic educational programs have moved the County's student population near the top ranks in the State as revealed by academic testing.

1. The priority need for quality educational facilities and programs in the County (in order to educate our youth, serve the ongoing educational needs of our existing communities and attract additional industry, business, and quality development) is satisfied through universally established partnerships between school districts and local governments. This is reflected in cooperative planning for school facilities and access to them.
2. A considerable contribution to the educational excellence within Riverside County has been made by expanded and new facilities at the community college and university levels.
3. There are now numerous examples of arrangements for joint use and financing of school facilities, as well as cooperative community based programs made possible by reduced costs of facilities.
4. Several industrial/office park sectors of the County include community college branch facilities in which job training and employee professional development programs are conducted under a business/college partnership arrangement.
5. The special housing needs of educators and students are recognized through innovative partnerships between developers, communities, and educational institutions to provide a range of residential choices for this segment of the population.
6. Effective and widespread initiatives to bolster resources and focus energies on basic education for our student population have resulted in the County's academic performance making a remarkable surge toward the top of county rankings in the State.

Plan Integration

The major thrusts of the County's planning program have resulted in a high degree of program component integration. New transportation corridors (and expansion of older ones) are designed to either avoid environmentally sensitive areas or, if necessary, to pass through them in a very sensitive way. The multi-purpose open space system not only provides a remarkable habitat and recreation resource, but it also provides a framework that distinguishes our family of communities. These components are both integrated into the General Plan through the system of Area Plans covering all but the most remote desert



areas of the County. As a consequence, our communities and their development areas are well served by transportation networks and our priceless environmental resources are permanently preserved for future generations.

1. A key opportunity for plan integration is exemplified by the existence of critical corridors linking our communities – all of which are part of the service systems that enable our communities to prosper. This includes open space corridors for vistas and recreation, habitat corridors for wildlife and plants, transportation corridors for mobility, riding and hiking trails for recreational travel, and bikeways as an alternate mode of travel as well as recreation pursuit. In essence, this is resulting in a planned, interdependent network of systems to serve our communities.
2. Many of the corridors are recognized, not only as community links or buffers, but also as unifying elements that reinforce community identity.
3. The need for safe and efficient access to jobs, housing, commerce, and public services for residents of all ages, income groups, and physical abilities is reflected in the comprehensive transportation network serving the County.
4. Flexible planning tools such as mixed use zoning, incentives for creative use of land, overlay zoning, and multiple, flexible use of open space are in common use as our communities mature and new communities take shape.

Financial Realities

Few of the aspirations reflected in the current state of community development, transportation support, and multi-purpose open space preservation could have come about without an aggressive and creative financing strategy. The financing of improvements and programs has benefitted from the unique breadth and integration of the County's planning program. We are very competitive for grant funding. The burden for costs to achieve what we have today has fallen on those who benefit to a degree not achieved in many locales.

1. A wide variety of public and private funding arrangements are in operation, including creative use of state and federal grant and loan funds to confront the continuing financial reality of not having enough money to do everything that is desired.
2. The County has a reputation for being unusually creative in gaining leverage out of limited funds by using them as seed money to attract larger investments in community facilities and programs, to obtain public and private grants, and stimulate investment participation by the private sector.
3. Along with its emphasis on achieving community desires, the County remains highly respected for its sensitivity to private property rights.
4. Because of its fiscal achievements, Riverside County and its cities are exceptionally effective at forestalling unfunded mandates from state and federal levels.



Intergovernmental Cooperation

The integration of planning and importance of the transportation corridors, multi-purpose open space system, and development commitments have had an impact on governmental decision making at many levels. Numerous examples now exist of intergovernmental arrangements to facilitate continued implementation of the policy direction established almost 20 years ago. The result of this is not only improved governmental effectiveness, but also less conflict over policy issues, increased competitiveness for grant funding, and establishment of a strong tradition of intergovernmental cooperation.

1. Recognition that many aspects of the vision are boundary-less is exemplified by the extensive array of intergovernmental arrangements involving the County, cities, special districts, Indian tribes, and unincorporated communities.
2. A coordinated and streamlined permitting process is now in operation that is feasible because areas clearly slated for development are identified and appropriate open space areas are acquired or protected.
3. Because of additional regional County facilities and cooperative agreements with some cities and other institutions, public hearings on certain issues and projects are now held locally so as to be more convenient to those most impacted by the decisions.
4. New school sites are used as a focal point of neighborhoods as a result of collaboration between local governments.
5. Intergovernmental partnerships have eliminated the once common contentiousness surrounding annexations, incorporations, and preservation of unincorporated community integrity.
6. Several inter-county and intra-county compacts now exist regarding cooperative programs for open space management, transportation corridor planning and implementation, air quality and water quality improvements, water resource management, and other critical topics of mutual concern.
7. The tradition of intergovernmental cooperation is well established and office seekers habitually include this topic in their campaigns city and County decision-makers and other opinion leaders actively support intergovernmental initiatives.
8. A Countywide information and education program is in place to sustain an understanding of the unique planning program that has emerged from the RCIP. This program includes a section in school curricula, a summary brochure that is updated from time to time, an orientation program for newly elected officials, a strong internet presence, and an ongoing speakers bureau to reinforce this strong tradition.

County of Riverside General Plan

Vision Statement



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