



Rural



Valle Vista

Another of Riverside County's most important land uses in terms of historic character and lifestyle choice is its rural areas and rural communities. Rural areas comprise one of the most distinctive and attractive segments of the County and are the expressed lifestyle choice for many residents. Rural uses include a range of choices, from agricultural, to equestrian, to estate, to remote cabins and resorts. Like agricultural uses, rural uses define the unique character of many communities in Riverside County and help to define their edges and provide separation between developed areas. Rural areas are also valuable in providing important wildlife habitat and habitat linkages. Many visitors are drawn to this County to enjoy the rural atmosphere. The importance of the rural character to Riverside County is reflected in the following RCIP Vision statements:

"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."

"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."

Due to increasing growth pressures, there is danger that the character of some rural areas may be diminished by encroaching urbanization. There is a delicate balance between accommodating future growth and preserving this rural lifestyle. In some instances, allowing limited growth is desirable and appropriate while in others, there is a need to maintain the character of an area. In either instance, it is necessary to ensure that an appropriate level of services and infrastructure is available.

There are a number of methods proposed to achieve this balance, including the creation of community centers, establishment of lot size minimums, consolidation of multiple lots, and the clustering of residential units. These options can be accomplished through a number of means, including programs and incentives. The County of Riverside has a commitment to ensuring that rural uses remain an integral part of the County's future and are protected through the policies of the General Plan, as reflected in the following General Plan Principle statements:

"Rural land use designations should be established that accommodate a rural lifestyle generally within existing rural towns and rural residential neighborhoods. Additional rural towns and residential neighborhoods should be minimized because of the need to provide more efficient community development opportunities."



Rural character includes and can be enhanced by small villages that function as a center for outlying areas by providing a concentration of civic and commercial uses. The General Plan Principles reflect the importance of these villages: *"These principles do not preclude the addition of small-scale villages of a contrasting character, even those that might include a mix of more intensive residential development, as a component of the rural landscape."*

The Rural General Plan Foundation Component is intended to identify and preserve areas where the rural lifestyle is the desired use, including areas of remote cabins, residential estates, limited agriculture, equestrian, and animal keeping uses. In the future, the challenge will focus on preserving the character of established rural areas while accommodating future growth, preventing the encroachment of more intense urban uses, and ensuring compatibility between rural and urban uses.

Rural Area Plan Land Use Designations

As shown on the Land Use Designation Key (Figure LU-5), the Rural General Plan Foundation Component consists of three Area plan land use designations: Rural Residential, Rural Mountainous, and Rural Desert. The Rural Village Area plan overlay is discussed at the end of this Element.

Rural Residential (RR) - The Rural Residential land use designation allows one single family residence per five acres, as well as limited animal-keeping and agricultural activities. For multi-lot developments, the minimum lot size per residential unit is 2.5 acres, though the overall density of the development must not exceed 0.2 dwelling units per acre. Limited recreational uses, compatible resource development (not including the commercial extraction of mineral resources) and associated uses, and governmental uses are also allowed within this designation. *Small-scale incidental commercial activities that are compatible with the surrounding uses are allowed.*

Rural Mountainous (RM) - The Rural Mountainous land use designation allows single family residential uses, limited animal-keeping and agricultural uses, with a maximum residential density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. This designation applies to areas of at least 10 acres where a minimum 70% of the area has slopes of 25% or greater. It also applies to remote areas that are completely or partially surrounded by slopes greater than 25%, and that do not have both county-maintained access and access to community sewer and water systems. Limited recreational uses, compatible resource development (which may include the extraction of mineral resources with approval of a surface mining permit) and associated uses, and governmental uses are also allowed within this designation. *Small-scale incidental commercial activities that are compatible with the surrounding uses are allowed.*

Rural Desert (RD) - The Rural Desert land use designation allows for single family residences, limited agriculture and animal keeping uses, with a maximum residential density of 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres. Limited recreational uses; renewable energy uses including solar, geothermal and wind energy uses, as well as associated uses required to develop and operate these renewable energy sources; compatible resource development (which may include the extraction of mineral resources with approval of a surface mining permit); governmental and utility uses are also allowed within this designation. This designation is generally applied to remote desert areas characterized by poor access and a lack



of water and other services. *Small-scale incidental commercial activities that are compatible with the surrounding uses are allowed.*

Policies:

The following policies apply to properties designated with the Rural Residential, Rural Mountainous, and Rural Desert land use designations on the area plan land use maps.

- LU 18.1 Require that grading be designed to blend with undeveloped natural contours of the site and avoid an unvaried, unnatural, or manufactured appearance. (AI 23)
- LU 18.2 Require that adequate and available circulation facilities, water resources, sewer facilities and/or septic capacity exist to meet the demands of the proposed land use. (AI 3)
- LU 18.3 Ensure that development does not adversely impact the open space and rural character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)
- LU 18.4 Encourage clustered development where appropriate on lots smaller than the underlying land use designation would allow. While lot sizes may vary, the overall project density must not exceed that of the underlying land use designation unless associated with an incentive program.
- LU 18.5 Encourage parcel consolidation. (AI 29)
- LU 18.6 Provide programs and incentives that allow rural areas to maintain and enhance their existing and desired character. (AI 9, 30)
- LU 18.7 Rural incidental commercial uses in the outlying rural areas of the county along rural highway corridors for the convenience of residents and travelers are allowed. The development standards for these commercial uses should reflect areas where urban services and facilities are generally unavailable and are not likely to be provided in the near future. The type of uses allowed and the development standards shall be in accordance to the Rural Commercial (C-R) Zone (AI 1).*
 - a. The portion of the lot proposed for small-scale commercial development shall be between 0.5 and 2.5 acres.*
 - b. The design and scale of the commercial development are encouraged to be compatible with the surrounding uses, protect view sheds and blend in with the rural nature of the area.*
 - c. The portion of the lot used for small-scale commercial development is encouraged to be located adjacent to an arterial, mountainous arterial or major roadway. However, it is discouraged to be located within 300 feet of a freeway.*
 - d. Rural incidental commercial uses may not be located within 2 miles of a Commercial land use designation of the Community Development foundation component.*



Rural Community

The Rural Community Foundation Component is intended to identify communities and neighborhoods having a rural lifestyle, where animal - keeping uses and limited infrastructure (compared with Community Development areas) are prevalent. *Rural Community areas will serve as transition areas between Community Development and Rural Foundation Components. Small-scale commercial activities, such as local grocery stores, gift shops and drug stores, located outside urban boundaries are needed to serve these rural communities. Small-scale incidental commercial uses are allowed.* Agriculture is permitted in these areas.

Rural Community Area Plan Land Use Designations

These communities often define their rural lifestyle in part through a desire to maintain particular lot sizes, such as 1 acre or 2 acres. The major challenges for these areas in planning for the future include maintaining their rural character even as other areas in the County experience rapid urban development, providing adequate public services in a rural context, and ensuring that buffers are provided between these areas and other uses that could be incompatible with their animal - keeping and agricultural nature.

Estate Density Residential (EDR) - The Estate Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of detached single family residential dwelling units and ancillary structures on large parcels. In the Rural Community Foundation Component (unlike the Community Development Foundation Component, which also permits the application of the Estate Density Residential designation), equestrian and other animal-keeping uses are expected and encouraged. Agriculture *and small scale incidental commercial uses* are permitted in this designation. The density range is from 1 dwelling unit per 2 acres to 1 dwelling unit per 5 acres.

Very Low Density Residential (VLDR) - The Very Low Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of detached single family residential dwelling units and ancillary structures on large parcels. In the Rural Community Foundation Component (unlike the Community Development Foundation Component, which also permits the application of the Very Low Density Residential designation), equestrian and other animal- keeping uses are expected and encouraged. Agriculture *and small scale incidental commercial uses* are permitted in this designation. The density range is from 1 dwelling unit per acre to 1 dwelling unit per two acres.

Low Density Residential (LDR) - The Low Density Residential land use designation provides for the development of detached single family residential dwelling units and ancillary structures on large parcels. In the Rural Community Foundation Component (unlike the Community Development Foundation Component, which also permits the application of the Low Density Residential Foundation Component), equestrian and other animal - keeping uses are expected and encouraged. Agriculture *and small scale incidental commercial uses* are permitted in this designation. The density range is from 2 dwelling units per acre to 1 dwelling unit per acre.

Policies:



- LU 16.1* Require that grading be designed to blend with undeveloped natural contours of the site and avoid an unvaried, unnatural, or manufactured appearance. (AI 23)
- LU 16.2* Require that adequate and available circulation facilities, water resources, sewer facilities and/or septic capacity exist to meet the demands of the proposed land use. (AI 3)
- LU 16.3* Ensure that development does not adversely impact the open space and rural character of the surrounding area. (AI 3)
- LU 16.4* Encourage clustered development where appropriate on lots smaller than the underlying land use designation would allow. While lot sizes may vary, the overall project density must not exceed that of the underlying land use designation unless associated with an incentive program.
- LU 16.5* Encourage parcel consolidation. (AI 29)
- LU 16.6* Provide programs and incentives that allow rural areas to maintain and enhance their existing and desired character. (AI 9, 30)
- LU 16.7* *Rural incidental commercial uses in the outlying rural areas of the county along rural highway corridors for the convenience of residents and travelers are allowed. The development standards for these commercial uses should reflect areas where urban services and facilities are generally unavailable and are not likely to be provided in the near future. The type of uses allowed and the development standards shall be in accordance to the Rural Commercial (C-R) Zone (AI 1).*
- a. The portion of the lot proposed for small-scale commercial development shall be between 0.5 and 2.5 acres.*
 - b. The design and scale of the commercial development are encouraged to be compatible with the surrounding uses, protect view sheds and blend in with the rural nature of the area.*
 - c. The portion of the lot used for small-scale commercial development is encouraged to be located adjacent to an arterial, mountainous arterial or major roadway. However, it is discouraged to be located within 300 feet of a freeway.*
 - d. Rural incidental commercial uses may not be located within 2 miles of a Commercial land use designation of the Community Development foundation component.*
- LU 16.8* *Areas located within this foundation that are within a City's Sphere of Influence may proceed with a General Plan Amendment application to change into Community Development Foundation without waiting for the 5 year review cycle upon meeting the following conditions:*
- a. Area is located within an existing community that is characterized by lots smaller than 20,000 square feet in net area.*



- b. There is a Memorandum of Understanding between the County and the City that requires sewer services for the establishment of lots smaller than one acre.*
- c. A tract or parcel map is processed concurrently and approved with a condition of approval that requires the extension of a sewer line.*
- d. The proposed project is located within two hundred (200) feet of an existing sewer line.*

Open Space



Recreational open space park

One of the most distinctive features of Riverside County is its variety of open spaces. These open spaces vary by terrain, from remote deserts and mountains, to rolling hills and canyons, to lakes and streams, to protected habitat areas, to passive and active recreational areas, and are vital to the heritage, character, and lifestyle of Riverside County. This importance is reflected in the RCIP Vision:

"Multipurpose regional open space and community/neighborhood public spaces are permanent elements of the Riverside County landscape."

Open spaces also provide the setting for the County's unique and distinctive communities. They help define the unique character of many communities in Riverside County and help to provide edges and separation between developed areas. These open space also are an important economic benefit to the County in that they draw thousands of visitors each year. Neighborhood and community parks and recreational fields also provide important facilities that enhance the quality of life for local residents and visitors. Providing access to these open spaces is a continued goal of the County, as stated in the RCIP Vision:

"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."